

# **Tenancy and Housing Rights of Racialized International Students**

By  
**Ahrthyh Arumugam**

A Thesis Submitted to  
Saint Mary's University, Kjiptuk/Halifax, Mi'kma'ki/Nova Scotia  
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Degree of Master of Arts Women & Gender Studies.

August 2023 Kjiptuk/Halifax, Mi'kma'ki/Nova Scotia

© Ahrthyh Arumugam, 2023

Approved:  
Dr. Sailaja Krishnamurti  
Supervisor

Approved:  
Dr. Michele Byers  
Reader

Approved:  
Dr. Ajay Parasram  
Examiner

Date: August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023

## **Tenancy and Housing Rights of Racialized International Students**

**By Ahrthyh Arumugam**

### **Abstract**

This thesis examines violations of tenancy and housing rights of racialized international students (RIS) in Kijipuktuk/Halifax. It explores the factors that influence tenancy and housing options available to RIS, such as the internationalization of post-secondary education institutions and financialization of the housing sector in Kijipuktuk/Halifax. It investigates the distinctive relationships between RIS' experiences of tenancy and housing rights violations and their resilience. The interactions of RIS' multiple identities such as race, regional origin, nationality, gender, socio-economic status (SES), Canadian citizenship status, age, and education level with external factors are studied to understand RIS' perceptions of resilience using their own voices.

This thesis makes two central arguments. First, RIS preferred social support over institutionalized support services. RIS participants avoided disputing violations of their tenancy and housing rights due to perceived repercussions to their legal status as non-permanent residents in Canada as well as the tangible consequences in their social relations with rental property administrators. Second, participants revealed carefully woven webs of strategies to navigate challenges and to achieve optimum wellness characterized by physical, emotional, and psychological safety. I developed the concept of *states of embodied awareness* to understand RIS' self-defined and unique forms of resilience.

[August 2023]

## Table of Contents

Tenancy and Housing Rights of Racialized International Students.....	1
Abstract.....	2
Table of Contents.....	3
Acknowledgements.....	7
List of Figures.....	8
List of Abbreviations.....	9
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction.....</b>	<b>10</b>
Thesis and research questions.....	10
Background and Purpose of the Thesis.....	11
Participants.....	13
Theories, Methodology, and Methods.....	13
Positioning The Researcher.....	16
Findings.....	18
Construction of Racialized International Student as the Other/Outsider/Non-Citizen .....	20
Resilience.....	20
Conclusion.....	24
<b>Chapter 2: Literature Review.....</b>	<b>25</b>
Housing Sector and Immigration Sector Trends in Mi'kma'ki/Nova Scotia.....	26

Internationalization of the Post-Secondary Education Sector and Financialization of the Housing Sector in Kijipuktuk/Halifax, Mi'kma'ki/Nova Scotia .....	28
Differential Tuition Fees .....	29
Limitations of Governmental Services for International Students.....	36
Immigration Settlement Services.....	36
Enforcement of RTA in Mi'kma'ki/Nova Scotia .....	37
Affordable Housing .....	38
On Campus International Student Services .....	42
Discrimination .....	43
Concepts of Belongingness and International Students .....	51
Precarity of RIS in Canada .....	54
Conclusion.....	61
<b>Chapter 3: Theory and Methods .....</b>	<b>63</b>
Theories and Concepts .....	63
Indigenous Research Pedagogy and Feminist Critical Race Theoretical Frameworks .....	64
Methodology .....	70
Research Methods .....	71
Positioning the Participants.....	72
Data Analysis .....	74

Positioning Self: Researcher Reflections .....	74
Outsider Within Status.....	79
Strengths and Limitations of Research Methods.....	86
Ethical dilemmas .....	86
 <b>Chapter 4: Construction of Racialized International Student as</b>	
<b>Other/Outsider/Non-Citizen: Citizenship, Language, and Racialization.....</b>	<b>89</b>
Financialization of Mi'kma'ki/Nova Scotia's Post-Secondary Education (PSE) Sector and Housing Sector .....	91
RIS' Encounters with Sexist, Classist, and Racist Property Management.....	94
Naming Hidden Discrimination: Violation of Housing and Tenancy Rights .....	96
Precarity of RIS .....	100
Ineffective Enforcement of RTA and Inadequate Tenancy Protection for Youth and Student Tenants .....	103
RIS as Cash Cows: The Phenomenon of Alienation and Commodity Fetishism .....	104
RIS Challenge Fetishization of International Students as Commodity and as Strangers .....	108
"Row on Calm Waters": Home as Symbolic Space for Preservation of Power .....	110
Providing Strength-based On Campus Support Services .....	114
"Crawling Under My Skin": Safety, Health, and Academic Excellence .....	116
Recruitment, Language, and Multiculturalism.....	118

<b>Chapter 5: Resilience</b> .....	<b>128</b>
Defining and Complicating RIS' Resilience.....	128
Participants' Strategies to Achieve Resilience.....	133
Anti-Racist Feminist Examination of Resilience: Contextualizing RIS' Resilience in White Settler Society of Canada .....	142
<b>Chapter 6: Conclusion</b> .....	<b>151</b>
Contributions.....	152
Recommendations .....	154
Limitations .....	159
Future Research Directions .....	159
<b>References</b> .....	<b>162</b>

## **Acknowledgements**

My thanks, appreciation, and respect go to Dr. Benita Bunjun who planted the seeds of this thesis. I would like to recognize and sincerely thank my thesis advisor, Dr. Sailaja Krishnamurti for the trauma-responsive advisory guidance and support she provided especially during the excruciatingly arduous writing and editing process.

Dr. Krishnamurti went to great lengths as visionary and reassuring mentor by encouraging me to identify personalized writing strategies based on my needs. She shared writing techniques and editing tips, for example, narrative prompts, and expressive writing. These writing skills had informed my journey of practicing and harnessing the transformative power of discourse as I stumblingly synthesized, distilled, and curated nascent wisdom through writing. You change lives with your exceptional and humane teaching, and mentoring skills.

My gratitude to the courageous participants I interviewed is limitless. Their participation was inspired by generosity and community-minded aspirations. This thesis is a living proof of the resilience and resistance of those who transgress any form of injustice to preserve individual and collective dignity because they shared their truths. This work is dedicated to you.

I thank my partner whose pertinacious support resulted in this work seeing the light of day. To my parents, siblings, and best friends who motivated, encouraged, sustained, assisted, and loved me as I am to make this achievement a reality, I thank you for your love.

## **List of Figures**

Figure 1 *Rubber Plantations in Johor, Malaysia*

Figure 2 *Canadian and International Tuition Fees by Level of Study 2017-2022*

Figure 3 *Canadian and International Tuition Fees by Level of Studies 2017-2022 in Nova Scotia*

Figure 4 *Approximate Cost of Tuition and Fees for Four Bachelor of Arts courses in the Fall and Winter Terms of Academic Year 2021-2022, Residence Fees, and Meal Plan Fees*

Figure 5 *Approximate Cost of Tuition and Fees for Four Bachelor of Commerce Courses in the Fall and Winter Terms of Academic Year 2021-2022*

Figure 6 *Study Permit Applications (including extension) Approval Rates from January 2020 to November 2020 by Country of Citizenship*

Figure 7 *Almost three in five NPRs were in unsuitable housing and with roommates in 2021*

Figure 8 *Theory of Modalities of Entitlement*

Figure 9 *Global Promotion Efforts of the Atlantic Education Sector*

Figure 10 *Racialized International Students Accessing a Food Bank During the COVID-19 Pandemic*



**List of Abbreviations**

Halifax Regional Municipality	HRM
Nova Scotia Medical Service Insurance	MSI
Designated Learning Institution	DLI
Racialized international students/student	RIS
Saint Mary's University	SMU
Socio-economic status	SES
Post-secondary education	PSE
Residential Tenancies Act	RTA
Post-Graduate Work Permit	PGWP
Protective and Promotive Factors and Processes	PPFPs
Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada	IRCC
Temporary Resident Visa	TRV

## **Tenancy and Housing Rights of Racialized International Students**

### **Chapter 1: Introduction**

This thesis examines violations of tenancy and housing rights of racialized international students (RIS), also known as migrant students in Kijipuktuk/Halifax. It explores the factors that influence tenancy and housing options available to RIS. It investigates the relationships between RIS' experiences of tenancy and housing rights' violations and their resilience. The interactions of RIS' multiple identities such as race, regional origin, nationality, gender, socio-economic status (SES), citizenship, age, and education level with external factors are studied to understand RIS' resilience.

#### **Thesis and research questions**

How do geographical and socioeconomic factors such as tuition fee increases, rent payment, citizenship status, and the implementation of the Residential Tenancies Act (RTA) affect the housing options available to RIS? How do RIS navigate and overcome differential treatments and citizenship barriers when finding housing to thrive emotionally, physically, socially, and academically? The thesis aims to comprehend violations of RIS' tenancy and housing rights and to identify how these might influence their resilience. This was achieved by studying the first-person accounts of RIS' navigations of socioeconomic intersections to sustain emotional, physical, social, and academic health. The research also investigated sociopolitical and structural factors influencing housing options available to RIS, including the effects of internationalization<sup>1</sup> of the PSE sector and financialization of the PSE and housing sectors in Kijipuktuk/Halifax.

---

<sup>1</sup>The European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education Internationalisation of Higher Education defined the process of internationalization as "the intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global

## Background and Purpose of the Thesis

I investigated tenancy and housing rights of RIS in Kjiptuk/Halifax for two reasons. The first is the increasingly severe and urgent crisis of affordable housing in parts of Mi'kma'ki/Nova Scotia. The second is to understand adequately the unique vulnerabilities and strengths of the RIS population and respond effectively to their needs. I found that most RIS acquire understanding of not only tenancy rights but also legal rights as migrants<sup>ii</sup> in Kjiptuk/Halifax, Canada when they experienced violations of tenancy and housing rights.

I studied RIS' tenancy and housing rights in the context of the internationalization of the PSE sector and the financialization of the housing sector in Mi'kma'ki/Nova Scotia to provide intersectional examinations of the factors that affect RIS' housing experiences and strategies to thrive. In the context of this research, the internationalization of the PSE sector refers to efforts to add an international dimension to an education institute for financial purposes. A key impact of government funding reductions in Canada for public universities is the rise in “expansive marketing to attract students (and their tuition fees)” to establish adequate funding (Association of Nova Scotia University Teachers [ANSUT], 2012, p. 19). For instance, the number of international college students increased by 154% and the number of international university students increased by 39.6% from 2015/2016 to 2019/2020 (Statistics Canada, 2022, p. 6). In 2019/2020, 37% of the tuition fee revenues received by Canadian universities were from international students (Statistics Canada, 2022, p. 6).

---

dimension into the purpose, functions, and delivery of postsecondary education” (European Parliament’s Committee on Culture and Education (2015), as quoted in Hawawini G., 2016).

<sup>ii</sup> Migrant refers to a person who is outside their country of origin. International students are migrants in Canada (Refugees and Immigrants-A Glossary, 2023).

August (2022) wrote that the financialization of the housing sector is a worsening trend due to “the growing dominance of financial actors in the housing sector...transforming the primary function of housing from a place to live into a financial asset and tool for investor profits...undermining the realization of the right to adequate housing” (p. 4). Both trends can be traced back to declining government funding for public education institutions and public housing for low-income individuals (ANSUT, 2012, p. 4; von Hoffman, 2016, p. 6; Pomeroy, 2004, p. 5).

Examining RIS’s navigation of tenancy and housing concerns contextualized in current sociopolitical and economic climates painted a clearer picture of relations between precarious legal, social, and economic positions – non-permanent resident, international student, and tenant – that an RIS embodies. For example, many migrant students and Canadian students attending PSE institutions who did not have Canadian credit history and rental history were less likely to find affordable, adequate, and suitable housing (Canadian Centre for Housing Rights [CCHR], 2018). What differs between each RIS participant of this project is their approach to tackling a housing problem as influenced by individual knowledge of tenancy rights, awareness of social statuses, and advocacy skills.

My study of the effects of tenancy and housing rights of racialized international students was purposeful. I am implicated in the global migration patterns curated by neoliberal forces and complicit in the ongoing dispossession of Indigenous peoples in Canada, a White settler nation, as a migrant student. I conducted this research to understand the (in)voluntary participation of migrant students as economic subjects in multiple sites of labour such as universities, in relationships with each other, and with the government of Canada. How do RIS’ multiple roles as education consumer and labourer sustain neoliberal economies and maintain expansive conditions of coloniality characterized by the exploitation of humans and non-living beings? I

wanted to understand shifts in subjectivities of RIS as temporary settlers, migrants studying, working, and living on Indigenous territories.

### **Participants**

Six RIS from Southeast Asia, East Asia, Latin America, and Africa who were studying in Kijipuktuk/Halifax were interviewed. Participants were graduate and undergraduate students from management, arts and social sciences, and science faculties at universities in Kijipuktuk/Halifax. Participants are identified in this research by the pseudonyms they chose. Inidima is a female-identifying social sciences graduate student from West Africa. She received an academic scholarship from the university to pursue a master's degree. Tigrou is a female commerce undergraduate student from Southeast Africa. Prim is a female-identifying social sciences undergraduate student from East Asia. BlueJay is a female-identifying science graduate student from Southeast Asia. She received an academic scholarship from the university to pursue a doctoral degree. Evaluna is a female-identifying social sciences undergraduate student from South America. Zia is a female-identifying science undergraduate student from Southeast Africa.

### **Theories, Methodology, and Methods**

As this is a Women and Gender Studies master's thesis, my research is a knowledge production project informed by intersectional Indigenous pedagogy and critical race feminist theories. The goal of applying intersectional Indigenous pedagogy and critical race feminist theoretical framework in the development of the research questions, literature review, data collection, and data analysis is to implement social justice-based examination of tenancy and housing rights' violation of RIS, and of RIS' resilience. One of the key themes of the literature review was that the lack of use of disaggregated data – data that can be broken down into subpopulations or subcategories – and a lack of an intersectional analysis of any data collected

on racialized poverty in research concerning international students and by some Canadian government's agencies. Limiting the framework of research perpetuates the colonial ways of understanding social factors affecting international students. For example, inept research methodology restricts original and affect-based explorations of topics such as "risk-taking behaviours" of international students from being examined as challenging status quo and interprets the behaviours as lack of ability to conform to dominant societal standards.

Consequently, my research is a critical intervention moving away from generally neoliberal and imperialist approaches undertaken to learn about the migrant/international student population.

Intersectional Indigenous pedagogy and critical race feminist theoretical framework informed the research at all stages. Smith's (2012) Indigenous research methodology and anti-racist feminist standpoint theories – particularly Collins' (1999) 'outsider within' concept and Haraway's (1988) situated knowledges concept – guided the development of this research's data collection and analysis methods, and the ethics that informed the engagements with the study participants. I use discussions of nationhood, citizenship, immigration, and embodied learning by critical race feminist theorists such as hooks (1989), Ahmed (2000), Bunjun (2011), and Ng (2018) to thread actions and experiences of the study's participants.

Omi and Winant (1986) defined the racialization process as "the extension of racial meaning to a previously racially un-classified relationship, social practice, or group" (p. 64). Racialization is an exclusionary process of grouping individuals along racial, ethnicity, and class lines which were conceptualized through imperial practices such as slavery and indentured labour to develop, accommodate, and implement integrationist national projects (Omi & Winant, 1994; Murji & Solomos, 2005). For my study, I recruited individuals who self-identified as a racialized international student only. The term racialized international students (or an individual

student – an RIS) refers to a migrant student on Turtle Island (in this context I mean the Canada-governed part of the continent of North America) holding a study permit. Statistics Canada categorized migrant or international students' citizenship status as non-permanent residents (NPR) in the 2021's census of population (Statistics Canada, 2022).

I made the decision to recruit RIS only because while a study consisting of RIS and White international student participants might have provided comparative information on how inequality occurs, existing research has affirmed the plethora of ways structural inequalities affected non-racialized and racialized members of international student populations differently. By focusing solely on the diverse tenancy and housing experiences of RIS participants, I unearthed specific unequal social, legal, and political hierarchies at the global, national, and local levels that augmented RIS' vulnerable positions in Canada.

Statistics show that the largest groups of international students in Canada are racialized, with the largest populations being Chinese, Indian, and Bahamian (MPHEC, 2020; Statistics Canada, 2015). Research shows that RIS studying in Eurocentric (where European knowledge, and knowledge production frameworks are centred) academic settings had vastly different social and academic experiences than White students. For example, RIS invested more resources such as time to attain academic excellence and social acceptance (Rienties et al., 2012; Glass & Wesmont, 2014). Some scholars recommended that studies investigating migrant students' experiences as international students must examine factors such as countries of origin and interactions within homogenous groups of migrant students to identify relevant services and interventions (Glass et al., 2014, pp. 107-114; Elharbi & Smith, 2018, p. 31).

Similarly, Raghuram (2012) urged researchers to move beyond the spatialities of migration by considering the spatialities of knowledge to better understand student migration's

roles in knowledge migration. Vasilopoulos (2016) put forth an alternative concept to better understand the complex, unpredictable, and ever-changing factors influencing international student experiences. He proposed the ‘becoming’ and assemblage framework based on the Deleuzian ontology after conducting a critical review of research on international students’ adjustment. He found that restrictive positivist and poststructuralist research with quantitative and qualitative methodologies used fixed constructs of language and adjustment, isolated interrelated variables, homogenized diverse international student populations by essentializing their identity, and were ultimately unable to explain change and variance (2016, p. 293).

This research was designed and implemented using intersectional Indigenous pedagogy and critical race feminist theories to seek a better understanding of how RIS navigate power matrices entailing racial, national, economic, and ethnic hierarchies. To achieve this understanding, I developed the concept of *states of embodied awareness*. This concept allows me to examine how RIS’ affective experiences of their environments as racialized people result in embodied learning that inform their strategies of resilience. I used semi-structured in-depth interviews, content analysis of a social media thread, and analysis of online media articles on tenancy and housing rights of RIS as methods to carry out this project. I used the data analysis software, MAXQDA – which operates using grounded theory-based analysis – to identify keywords and categories of concepts or themes present in the interview data. All thematized data were analyzed using feminist critical discourse analysis and phenomenological analysis.

### **Positioning The Researcher**

My name is Ahrthyh (pronounced R-T) Arumugam. I am a Malaysian Tamil of third (paternal lineage) and fourth (maternal lineage) generation, non-binary settler currently residing in Mi’kma’ki/Nova Scotia, where I am a migrant student and hold the non-permanent resident



(NPR) Canadian citizenship status. Indigenous peoples are the stewards of the many lands I have lived on. In this research, I use both Indigenous names and colonial names of the places discussed. Mi'kma'ki refers to all of Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, parts of New Brunswick, parts of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Gaspé Peninsula in Quebec in Canada, and parts of Maine in the United States of America. In the context of this research, Mi'kma'ki specifically refers to the unceded and unsundered territory known as the Province of Nova Scotia.

**Figure 1**



*Note.* The rubber plantations in Johor, Malaysia, at which my maternal grandparents, aunts, and uncles worked into the late 1990s.

My intergenerational migration history and my journeys as a migrant student led me first to the University of British Columbia (UBC), located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Musqueam people (Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada) in 2010 for an undergraduate degree, and then to Saint Mary's University (SMU) in Kijipuktuk/Halifax, the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq (Mi'kma'ki/Nova Scotia, Canada) in 2018 for a master's degree in social sciences. These migrations taught me about the relations between the hegemony of Eurocentric knowledges, imperialism, and neo-colonialism, and my

position in the local and global world orders. As such, intergenerational migration journeys informed the development and implementation of methodological and theoretical frameworks used in this research. In Chapter 3, I discuss how the intergenerational migration journeys inform the research methodologies.

## **Findings**

Using an anti-racist, anti-capitalist, and anti-colonial approach, I examined the associations between violations of RIS' tenancy and housing rights, and the strategies RIS used to achieve optimum wellness. The research offers new understanding on RIS' management of risks associated with systemic inequalities and practices of resilience.

This thesis makes two central arguments. First, RIS favoured social support over institutionalized support services and tended to not dispute violations of their tenancy and housing rights. Participants avoided contact with institutionalized services due to perceived repercussions to their legal status as temporary resident visa holders in Canada as well as undesirable consequences in their social relations with rental property administrators.

Second, participants revealed carefully woven webs of strategies to navigate challenges and to achieve optimum wellness characterized by physical, emotional, and psychological safety. Participants maneuvered resources cautiously, especially to enhance their sense of safety, rather than attempting to achieve a more complete sense of belonging or maintaining physical, emotional, and mental health. These findings were identified by examining hegemonic social relations between this study's participants, their housemates, and the property owners and managers. Data analysis supplied cogent evidence that institutionalized neoliberal and White supremacist violations of RIS' tenancy rights perpetuated long-standing legalized social and material inequalities of migrant students in Kijipuktuk/Halifax.

The research probed why and how RIS challenged systemic inequalities, and how they established optimum wellness. It found that all participants prioritized securing housing and achieving academic success over maintaining physical health and mental health when they were experiencing violations of tenancy rights and housing problems. The study participants could not maintain overall health, ensure academic success, and navigate housing issues simultaneously. The participants' top priority was preserving access to education which guaranteed their legal immigration status in Canada<sup>iii</sup>. To that end, they focused on securing and retaining housing even if it meant paying illegal advanced rent and tolerating their dwelling's inadequacy<sup>iv</sup>, unsuitability<sup>v</sup>, and non-affordability.<sup>vi</sup>

Through this research's findings, I established that racialized international students allocated significant levels of energy (emotional, physical, and mental) as well as capital such as time and money to carefully create ingenious strategies to maximize resources available and minimize risks to achieve desired goals and outcomes. RIS' calculated navigations of challenges illustrated critical cognitive adaptation and transformation through embodied learning informed by experiencing injustice as racialized international student tenants. In conclusion, RIS participants avoided disputing any violations of their human rights to protect the non-permanent resident status in Canada. Amidst navigating violation of tenancy rights and human rights to shelter, participants chose to strategically invest resources including emotional strength, physical

---

<sup>iii</sup>International students' legal status in Canada is determined by their status of enrollment at a designated learning institution (DLI). International students are legally ineligible to work on or off campus or undertake a co-op or internship placement during an authorized leave from an academic program even if their study permit at the time allows working in Canada ([IRCC, 2019](#)).

<sup>iv</sup>Inadequate housing is housing that needs major repairs which may include defective plumbing, electrical wiring, structural repairs to walls, floors, or ceilings as reported by residents ([Zhou et al., 2021](#)).

<sup>v</sup>Unsuitable housing does not have enough bedrooms for the size and makeup of resident households as required by the National Occupancy Standard (NOS) (Zhou et al., 2021).

<sup>vi</sup>Unaffordable housing refers to shelter (accommodation) costs that are more than 30% of total before-tax household income (Zhou et al., 2021).

energy, financial reserves, and social/communication skills to preserve good academic standing and achieve any other goals associated with preserving legal citizenship status.

### ***Construction of Racialized International Student as the Other/Outsider/Non-Citizen***

Studying tenancy and housing rights of RIS proved that discrimination and exploitation of racialized migrant students is rife in Kjiptuk/Halifax's competitive, non-attainable housing market. RIS participants were not only priced out of housing, but they were also denied adequate and suitable housing through racial, gender, national origin, and class-based discrimination. I explored the embodied experiences of RIS to identify and examine the operations of entitlement and power relations that obscured unjust acts against RIS. They experienced 'hidden' discrimination characterized by judgement of nationality, accent and language skills, physical characteristics, and gender. My study found that many RIS, particularly female-identifying RIS and RIS of lower SES, were more adversely affected by the violations of their housing and tenancy rights.

The exploitation of and disregard for RIS' tenancy and housing rights are not isolated circumstances; rather, it is one of the deleterious results of "putatively race-neutral immigration and diversity-welcoming multicultural policies" in Canada (Coloma, 2017, p. 364). The neoliberal policies facilitated the internationalization of post-secondary education institutions and the financialization of the housing sector in Kjiptuk/Halifax. Over the years, these economic apparatuses actively shaped and cultivated denigration of local and global communities through reduced access to necessities such as affordable education and housing.

### ***Resilience***

Despite being in excruciatingly challenging situations as RIS, the participants in this study demonstrated witty and adaptative approaches to tackle adversities. RIS negotiated

relations with rental property management and environments that were inherently imbued with unequal power to increase their chances of success and to thrive. They did so through inter-relational reflexive observations of their status as well as roles in the White settler society they were living in, informed by embodied knowledge. As a result, resilience is a recurrent theme in all participants' efforts to achieve optimum wellness.

Each participant's description of resilience was self-defined and unique. A universal theme in all participants' definitions of resilience is the practical reconfigurations of dominant forms of power. I utilize Ungar's (2019; 2021a) multisystemic model of resilience to study RIS participants' definitions of resilience because the model recognizes the role power plays in shaping participant realities and in researcher-community members relations (Ungar, 2019; Ungar et al., 2021b, p. 4). Of many definitions of resilience originating from various schools of thoughts, Ungar's (2021a) multisystemic model of resilience is inclusive of social justice dimensions (p. 9). For example, Ungar (2019) emphasized that resilience is a process that *evolves* in the context of exposure to atypical levels of stress. Resilience is facilitated by the interactions within and between various systems including individual biopsychosocial mechanisms, relational, sociocultural, institutional, and ecological operations to leverage environmental protective and promotive factors and processes (PPFPs) (Ungar, 2019, p. 2).

I used the multisystemic model of resilience as a theoretical scaffold to examine participants' definitions of resilience as situated knowledge, which is an important feminist research praxis. Consequently, key details about research participants' subjectivities and assertion of self-defined agency in leveraging PPFPs, risks, and outcomes emerged at the data analysis stage. Based on these findings, I developed a feminist, intersectional approach to study the multitudes of resilience as cultivated and narrated by the participants. RIS of lower SES in

this study could not rely on personal nor familial financial stability to seek alternative housing options and found themselves in precarious housing to avoid experiencing absolute homelessness. Besides, manifestations of discrimination in housing varied, wearing various faces of prejudice such as anti-Black racism and misogyny, depending on the intersectional identities of the participants. This study established that having a non-cohesive social safety net meant that RIS experienced crushing social, physical, material, and psychological conditions concurrently. Caught in these situations, this project's RIS participants prioritized financial stability to pay exorbitant differential fees so that they could remain in school, renew study and work permits, and have some form of shelter. They avoided confronting injustice due to fear of reprisal from property owners and management and government agencies.<sup>vii</sup>

RIS participants could not adequately prioritize physical health and mental health when managing violation of their tenancy and housing rights. Prioritizing academic success precipitated greater possibility of staying in Canada during and after their studies, even if it necessitated enduring violations of their rights to adequate, affordable, and suitable housing. Additionally, all RIS participants of this study compromised their physical, emotional, and psychological safety by living in relatively cheaper but unsuitable and inadequate housing to pay differential international tuition and fees and afford necessities such as food and rent.

I used anti-capitalist, anti-racist, and anti-colonial feminist lenses to document state-sanctioned violations of RIS tenants' tenancy rights and right to shelter by chronicling structural and social barriers that RIS faced as migrant student tenants in Kjiipuktuk/Halifax. I challenged homogenized constructions and presentations of RIS' experiences by assessing myriad forms of

---

<sup>vii</sup> International students who had raised their concerns in the past about being exploited faced immigration-related repercussions, including deportation, and declared inadmissible into Canada (Rho, 2023).

discrimination experienced in their homes and academic spaces. I studied sexism, anti-Asian racism against those whose physical appearances were labelled as East Asian characteristics, Anti-Black racism against individuals who were racialized as Black, and sexism and ageism<sup>viii</sup> towards youth, which RIS endured. This project deconstructed homogenization of RIS' populations by centering their resilience strategies that delegitimized and disrupted connotations of their diverse social, cultural, ideological, and economic identities, and backgrounds.

*States of Embodied Awareness.* In this research, I define resilience as a *state of being* that RIS embody. I formulated this definition by developing and studying the concept of *states of embodied awareness*. The states of embodied awareness concept chronicles processes of adaptation and transformation that RIS participants experienced when they negotiated PFPs as they were exposed to uncharacteristic levels of stress. I use the states of embodied awareness concept to demonstrate that resilience as a state of being is neither a static nor permanent condition. It is neither an ability nor the result of RIS participants' navigation of networks of systems and resources. Rather, it is an individual's mechanism of embodied feedback loop that continuously calibrates optimum wellness as they negotiate PFPs and resources to minimize exposure to risks to achieve desired outcomes.

By studying RIS' resilience using the states of embodied awareness concept, I deduced that RIS' interactions with inefficient and inaccessible institutionalized services and support systems reduced many RIS' trust in service providers including the PSE institutions, Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM), and the Province of Nova Scotia. RIS' hesitancy to engage with

---

<sup>viii</sup> A 2021 global report on ageism found that ageism in housing, employment, politics, and health against youth manifested as denial or dismissal of their input (World Health Organization, [p. 28](#)). Lack of awareness of youth's needs due to gaps in data contributed to Canadian citizens aged 18 to 25 finding their rights as tenants being disproportionately violated (Canadian Centre for Housing Rights [CCHR], 2018).

cookie-cutter styled institutional support was instructive in gaining insights into how they adapted by building meaningful and contextualized support systems. I posit that participants in this project demonstrated remarkable states of resilience by negotiating PFPs and resources while experiencing atypical levels of stress to achieve desired outcomes.

## **Conclusion**

In Chapter 2 of this thesis, I provide a review of existing research on international students' resilience, and international students' experiences of housing. I discuss the theoretical framework, research methods, and data analysis techniques used to conduct this study in Chapter 3. In Chapter 4 and 5, I delve deeper into two key findings of this research: the construction of RIS as the Other, an outsider, and a non-permanent resident, and of RIS' resilience strategies.

This research provides rich insights by examining RIS' tenancy experiences using a critical race feminist theoretical framework. Expanding intersectional knowledge of tenancy and housing issues in Kjiptuk/Halifax informs municipal and federal governments, non-profit organizations, and university researchers and administrators. I also hope that this research will inform and galvanize RIS to address social discrepancies which affect their quality of life daily. Finally, the project demonstrates the importance of collecting disaggregated data on RIS populations informed by strengths-based approach. Comprehensive critical analysis of disaggregated data can create and deliver dignified, empowering, and agency-centered services for youth, regardless of their SES and citizenship status in the colonial construct of the nation called Canada.



## Chapter 2: Literature Review

The public discourse about international students informed the themes explored in the literature review. Online preliminary research unfolded hundreds of news articles reporting on the violation of tenancy and housing rights of international students in Kijipuktuk/Halifax, Canada. The articles' content was systematically explored following a sequential timeline to identify concepts, categories, and information with the highest reoccurrences. In addition, a Reddit<sup>ix</sup> discussion thread in which property owners discussed renting practices targeting international students was examined using a feminist critical discursive analysis. I use the feminist critical discursive analysis to investigate the construction of a 'problem tenant' character in the interactions between property owners about international students.

To study the tenancy and housing rights of RIS, I conducted a literature review of the geographical factors, socioeconomic factors, differential treatments, and citizenship barriers that influence housing options available to RIS. I assessed the housing and immigration trends, including the internationalization of PSE institutions and the financialization of the housing sector in Kijipuktuk/Halifax, Mi'kma'ki/Nova Scotia. I examined PSE institutions' differential tuition for migrant students, RIS' housing experiences, consequences of non-permanent citizenship status on migrant students in Canada, impacts of discrimination on health, the vulnerability of youth in Canada, and the violence against female-identifying migrant students. I explored the limitations of governmental services provided to migrant students. Lastly, I summarized and analyzed existing research on RIS' sense of belongingness.

---

<sup>ix</sup> Reddit is an online platform that hosts discussions, among other functions of the website.

The lack of literature available on RIS' housing experiences set this research up to document the economical, physical, psychological, and emotional adverse impacts on RIS from experiencing and managing tenancy and housing rights violation. The process of reviewing existing research called attention to the importance of situating the exploration of RIS' tenancy and housing violations within the contexts of the internationalization of the PSE sector and the financialization of housing sector in Kjiptuk/Halifax, Mi'kma'ki/Nova Scotia, and in Canada. Additionally, I recognized the importance of centering international students' viewpoints of *how* they experienced housing, education, and resilience. Consequently, I chose research methods that facilitated the emergence of RIS' perspectives and priorities.

### **Housing Sector and Immigration Sector Trends in Mi'kma'ki/Nova Scotia**

In 2021, Kjiptuk/Halifax had the highest year-over-year raise of residential rental costs in the country (9.3%) (CMHC, 2023). The city had a record low average apartment vacancy rate of 1% compared to the lowest national vacancy rate recorded since 2001 (1.9%) (CMHC, 2023). The sharp increase in residential rental costs was accompanied by a high housing demand for students. In 2022, the vacancy rate dropped further to 0.6% in the student-dominated Peninsula South zone in Kjiptuk/Halifax. In May 2023, Mi'kma'ki/Nova Scotia saw a 25% increase in the rental costs of a 3-bedroom apartment in comparison to May 2022 (Rentals.ca, 2023).

In 2022, Kjiptuk/Halifax saw record population growth fuelled by immigration. The city was the second-fastest growing urban region in the country in 2022, after Moncton, New Brunswick. Much of the population growth came from international migration and movement from other parts of Canada (Statistics Canada, 2023). In the same year, the government of Nova Scotia introduced a one-year 2% interim rent cap in response to a housing affordability crisis (CCHR, 2023). The interim rent cap was extended to 2025 and increased to 5% in 2023. The

provincial government stated that the interim rent cap was a temporary measure, and that it would not be implementing permanent rent control measures (CCHR, 2023). Based on the 2021 Census, Halifax had the highest percentage of racialized peoples in the country who could not afford suitable housing for the size of their families. Core housing need (CHN) is a two-stage indicator that helps to identify individuals needing housing assistance. Racialized immigrants<sup>x</sup> were more likely to be in the CHN category than non-racialized immigrants. Transitory socioeconomic status such as being a recent arrival through the immigration system were among reasons that put racialized immigrants in precarious housing situations (Statistics Canada, 2023).

In the academic year of 2020-2021, Nova Scotia had the largest international full-time undergraduate and graduate student population within the PSE students' population. It also had the lowest rate of Canadian student enrolment compared to other provinces and territories in Canada – 7,474 international students (29%) of 16, 251 enrolled full-time students (BONARD, 2021). In the same year, Kjiptuk/Halifax had the highest average monthly rent (CAD \$966 for a single room) in off-campus purpose-built student accommodation (PBSAs) in Canada, second only after Toronto (BONARD, 2021). The emergence of off-campus PBSAs in Canada resulted from both the unmet demand for accommodation from students and investors' search for an investment product in the student housing sector. According to BONARD (2021), Canada's position as an established education market and its low student housing provision rate could allow a substantial growth of the private housing sector for students.

Property prices in Kjiptuk/Halifax rose by more than 30% from late June 2020 to late June 2021, compared to an average price growth of 9.8% in 150 cities across the world

---

<sup>x</sup> Immigrant refers to a person who has settled permanently in another country (Refugees and Immigrants-A Glossary, 2023).

(Brownstone, 2021). In 2019, annual price growth of properties in Kjiptuk/Halifax was 2.7%, below the global average of 3.5%. However, in 2021, Kjiptuk/Halifax's annual property price growth rate was more than 11 times higher than it was in mid-2019. In comparison, the global annual price growth tripled between 2019 and 2021 (Brownstone, 2021). In July 2023, Nova Scotia had the highest annual home price increase of 14% across the country, compared to the national average of 6% (WOWA, 2023). The drastic price growth of rental units in Kjiptuk/Halifax caused low affordability of housing for low-income Nova Scotians (Leblanc, 2020).

### **Internationalization of the Post-Secondary Education Sector and Financialization of the Housing Sector in Kjiptuk/Halifax, Mi'kma'ki/Nova Scotia**

The Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE) is an education service provider focusing solely on the internationalization of the education industry. The organization conducts periodic benchmarking surveys to evaluate the experiences of international students in Canada. According to a survey CBIE conducted in 2018, international students chose Canada as their destination for international education for three top reasons: the quality of the Canadian education system, Canada's reputation as a tolerant and non-discriminatory society, and its reputation as a safe country (CBIE, 2018, p. 5). International students' interest in studying and working in Canada, PSE institutions' interest in recruiting international students, and Canada's interest in attracting international students were affirmed by the steady increase in the international students' PSE enrolment and the PGWPs' rate of approval (CBIE, 2018).

The CBIE survey of international students established that most respondents (97%) felt safe in their accommodation (2018, p. 8). However, the housing crisis was a push factor for international students (CBIE, 2018, p. 8). The survey found that one of the largest expenses an international student in Canada incurred was accommodation costs. Seventy-nine percent of the

respondents indicated feeling concerned about being able to cover the cost of their accommodation. That number rose to 84% for students studying at institutions in Vancouver, Toronto, Victoria, Calgary, and Hamilton/Burlington. In these cities, almost half (46%) of the respondents were very concerned about their accommodation's affordability (CBIE, 2018, p. 8).

Forty-eight percent of the respondents shared that arranging a place to live prior to arriving in Canada was challenging (CBIE, 2018, p. 8). For students headed to study in locations with severely critical housing markets, 55% of respondents said that arranging accommodation for their studies was tough (CBIE, 2018, p. 8). CBIE predicted that concerns about housing issues could result in declining international student recruitment numbers (CBIE, 2018, p. 8). These findings were consistent with the trend of decreasing affordability and accessibility of the Canadian housing market for racialized individuals and young people over the years (MacAdams, 2020).

Advocates noted that “students have fewer resources to spend on housing or even things like food” when the differential tuition increased by 5.5% in 2018 for international students (Draus, 2018). Hikes in rent prices pushed international students to tighten their budgets to afford necessities. For example, the Students Nova Scotia reported that students settled for low quality housing, students “live in very poor conditions, sometimes even being rented out of a closet to live in” (Ward, 2016).

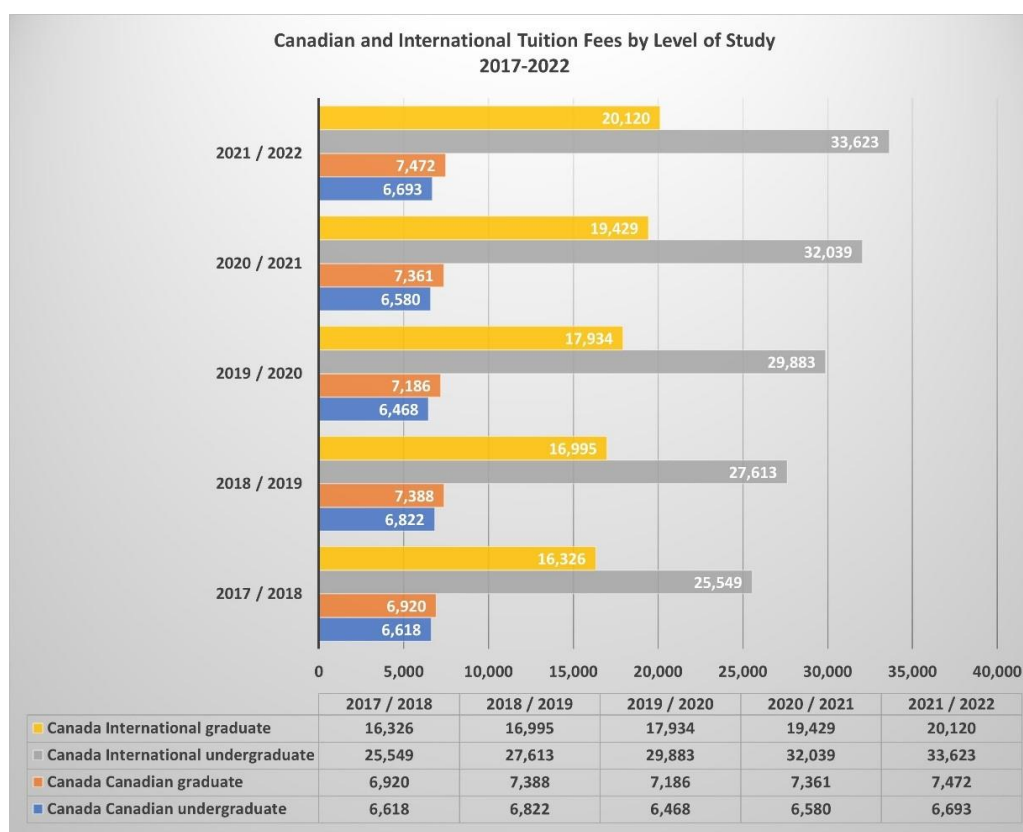
### ***Differential Tuition Fees***

In the past decade, there has been a tremendous increase in international students' enrolment rate in Canada – 88% between 2004-2005 and 2013-2014 in comparison to a meager 22% growth of domestic students (Statistics Canada, 2016). Canadian student populations had

been decreasing compared to increasing international student populations in Canada and Mi'kma'ki/Nova Scotia (Statistics Canada, 2016).

## Figure 2

*Canadian and International Tuition Fees by level of study 2017-2022*



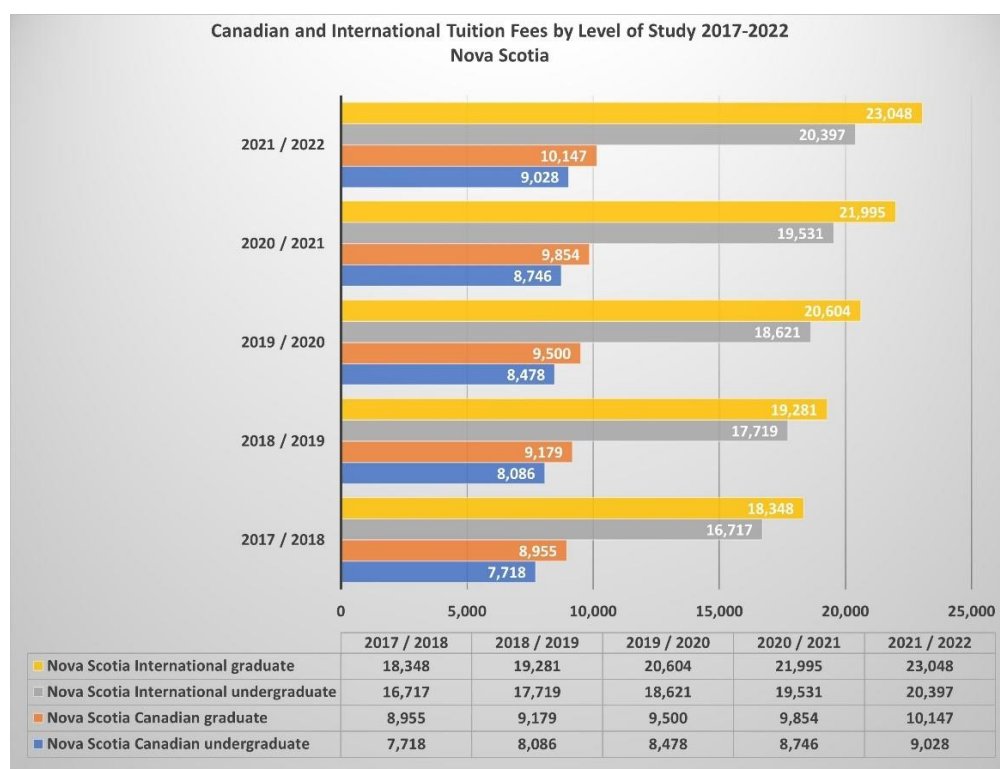
*Note.* Copyright of Statistics Canada, 2022

Mi'kma'ki/Nova Scotia had one of the highest rates of international tuition and fees in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2021). In Canada, over a period of five years (2017-2022), undergraduate tuition and fees for Canadians increased by an average of just \$75, an increase of 1.12%, while undergraduate tuition and fees for international students increased by \$8,074, an increase of 31.6%. In Nova Scotia, undergraduate tuition and fees for Canadians increased by

\$1,310, an increase of 17%, while undergraduate tuition and fees for international students increased by \$3,680, an increase of 22% over the same period (2017-2022).

**Figure 3**

*Canadian and international tuition fees by level of studies 2017-2022 in Nova Scotia*



*Note.* Copyright of Statistics Canada, 2022

Furthermore, international students must provide proof of sufficient funds to pay first-year tuition fees and living expenses when they apply for the temporary resident visa and study permit, before entering Canada as international students (Statistics Canada, 2022). As of 2021, international students were required to show a proof of at least \$11,000-\$30,000 for one-year living expenses and approximately \$20,000 for international tuition fees. Examples of tuition fees required at two PSE institutions located with Kjiptuk/Halifax in 2021 and 2022 are examined below. Figure 4 details the approximate cost of taking four Bachelor of Arts courses in

each of the fall and winter terms of the academic year 2021-2022 at Saint Mary's University, the costs associated with the first-year residence fee determined by the type of a residential unit, and the mandatory meal plan fee for first-year international students (Tuition Calculator, 2020).

According to the 2020-2021 Undergraduate Fee Schedule, a returning undergraduate international student paid Dalhousie University \$5,044.50 per term and a new international student paid \$6,538.50 per term (Dalhousie University, 2020).

#### Figure 4

*Approximate cost of tuition and fees for four Bachelor of Arts courses in the fall and winter terms of academic year 2021-2022, residence fees, and meal plan fees*

<b>COST BREAKDOWN</b>	
International Tuition	\$ 15,728.00
Mandatory Fees	1,691.00
<b>TUITION &amp; FEES</b>	<b>\$ 17,419.00</b>
Awards	-
Residence	7,600.00
Meal Plan	5,170.00
<b><i>DUE Sep. 17</i></b>	<b>\$15,856.50</b>
<b><i>DUE Jan. 18</i></b>	<b>\$14,332.50</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$30,189.00</b>

*Note.* Sourced from Saint Mary's University's Tuition Calculator online application.

An undergraduate international student planning to take four commerce courses in each of the fall and winter terms of the academic year 2021-2022 at Saint Mary's University paid



international student tuition and fees of \$19,139 (Figure 5), according to the university's tuition calculator. This amount did not include the estimated textbook costs, campus residence costs, nor the tuition and fees for the spring and summer terms of the academic year 2021-2022.

**Figure 5**

*Approximate cost of tuition and fees for four Bachelor of Commerce courses in the fall and winter terms of academic year 2021-2022*

COST BREAKDOWN		STUDENT FEES*:	
International Tuition	\$ 17,448.00	Metro Transit U-Pass	\$ 166.00
Mandatory Fees	1,691.00	Student Association	167.00
<b>TUITION &amp; FEES</b>	<b>\$ 19,139.00</b>	Medical & Dental	1,358.00
Awards	-		<b>\$ 1,691.00</b>
Residence	-	<b>ACCOMMODATIONS &amp; MEAL PLANS:</b>	
Meal Plan	-	Residence:	<b>Not Applicable</b> \$ -
		Meal Plan:	<b>Not Applicable</b> -
<b>DUE Sep. 17</b>	<b>\$10,331.50</b>	<b>AWARDS (Enter Total For Study Period):</b> \$ -	
<b>DUE Jan. 18</b>	<b>\$ 8,807.50</b>	<i>Institutional awards are disbursed equally by term and are available September - April. For more information visit: <a href="http://smu.ca/scholarships">smu.ca/scholarships</a></i>	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$19,139.00</b>	<b>TEXTBOOK ESTIMATE:</b> 8 x 180.00 = \$ 1,440.00	
		<i>Estimate not included in totals.</i>	

*Note.* Sourced from Saint Mary's University's Tuition Calculator online application.

Due to public funding cuts, Canadian universities were turning to tuition fees as a main source of revenue (Brownlee, 2016; Canadian Federation of Students (CFS), 2015). International differential fees were not regulated by federal nor provincial governments (Memorandum of Understanding [MOU], 2019). As a result, Nova Scotian universities can increase tuition fees for international students well beyond inflation rates. In 2022/2023, international undergraduate students paid 429% more than Canadian students compared to paying 204% more than Canadian students in 2006/2007. International graduate students paid 184% more than Canadian students in 2022/2023 compared to 106% than Canadian students in 2006/2007. The gap has widened egregiously over the years (Statistics Canada, 2022, p. 7).

In Nova Scotia, the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the provincial government and the Council of Nova Scotia University Presidents (CONSUP) is a funding agreement that negotiates government funding allocation to universities and a cap on some domestic tuition fees (ANSUT, 2012, p. 4; ANSUT, 2021, p. 34). Specifically, universities can increase tuition and fees by up to three-per-cent annually for Canadian undergraduate students. But the cap on the three-per-cent tuition and fees increase does not apply to international students, out-of-province students, to graduate programs, and professional programs such as law (ANSUT, 2021, p. 34).

Educational costs in Nova Scotia were also detrimental to domestic students. Nova Scotia had the highest domestic tuition rates for bachelor's and master's educations in the country in 2010, 2019, and 2022 (Statistics Canada, 2022, p. 1; 2023). In 2022, Nova Scotia's Canadian graduate tuition was 42.4% above the national average, and the Canadian undergraduate tuition was 36.5% higher than the Canadian average (Statistics Canada, 2022, p. 1). The province also had the highest percentage of master's graduates who owed debt at graduation in 2010 (51%) in

Canada. In 2015, Nova Scotia had the highest average debt level for both the bachelor's graduates (\$41,000) and master's graduates (\$35,000) in Canada. In the same year, Nova Scotia and Quebec recorded the highest percentages (41%) of master's graduates who owed debt at graduation across Canada. But Nova Scotian master's graduates had an average debt load of \$35,000 compared to Quebecer master's graduates' average debt of \$20,000 in 2015 (Statistics Canada, 2023).

In general, average tuition fees have been decreasing for Canadian students but international tuition fees have been increasing from 2018/2019 to 2022/2023 (Statistics Canada, 2022). Nevertheless, Nova Scotia's high average debt and percentage of graduates owing debt at graduation were even more concerning considering the slow recuperation of the number of domestic students registered at Nova Scotian universities following considerable decline since 2000 (Statistics Canada, 2023). Of the many factors contributing to the high level of non-immigrant<sup>xi</sup> Nova Scotian student debt was the province's weak student assistance program (O'Neill, 2010). Students faced the highest total education costs and net out-of-pocket costs as a share of median income. The province also had the second highest incidence of unmet need, which is the gap between assessed financial need and financial assistance provided to Canadian students.

It can be concluded that high education costs and inadequate support systems put all PSE students, especially those with less social and economic capitals into socioeconomical straitjackets. The financial concerns affecting international students' ability to afford suitable and adequate housing were intensified by the post-arrival difficulties they faced due to limited settlement support and inaccessible municipal and provincial services. Many students did not

---

<sup>xi</sup> Non-immigrants refer to immigration status of individuals who are Canadian citizens by birth.

know of strategies for dealing with discriminatory and exploitative renting practices, such as keeping records of all communications and transactions with property owners.

## **Limitations of Governmental Services for International Students**

### ***Immigration Settlement Services***

A significant body of research advocated for settlement services for international students who transition to work and permanent residency (Dauwer, 2018; Cox, 2014; Belkhodja, 2013). In advocating for CIC-funded settlement services for international students, Dauwer (2018) argued that most international students entering the Canadian workforce were young individuals with minimal life experience, who were encountering significant and life-changing decisions. It was presumed that because international students have studied and worked in Canada, were familiar with the Canadian society, and may speak the official languages fluently, they would not experience substantial issues in making the transition to work and acquiring permanent residency in Canada. Therefore, the importance of, and the need for, settlement services catered to international students were not recognized and resulted in the limited and inconsistent settlement support available to them (Bauwer, 2018).

International students required unique settlement services such as assistance in securing employment and permanent residency. Cox (2014) argued that international students should be made eligible for Immigration and Citizenship Canada's (CIC) settlement-funding model because "the long-term economic intentions for international students should position them within the qualifying boundaries for CIC-funded settlement services" (p. 79). Belkhodja (2013) determined that the lack of settlement services impacted transition of international students negatively in the long-term. For example, Belkhodja (2013) found that the discrepancy between strong intentions to remain in Canada and success rates of immigration of international students

were greatly influenced by challenging employment gain, racism, and lack of support in navigating various immigration processes (p. 15). Given the above, international students require settlement services because they faced structural and systemic barriers before, during, and after completing a Canadian education.

### ***Enforcement of RTA in Mi'kma'ki/Nova Scotia***

The Residential Tenancies Act's section 23 stipulates a summary conviction and a fine up to \$1,000 are applicable to any landlords found guilty of contravening any provision of the RTA or retaliating against a tenant who tries to assert their rights under the Act (*Residential Tenancies Act, 2021*). Nova Scotian tenants were encouraged to report any violation of tenancy rights through the Residential Tenancy Board. But many tenants found that engaging the Residential Tenancy Board put them in disadvantageous positions compared to the property owners or management because the burden of proof sat squarely on their shoulders to prove that their tenancy rights were violated (Henderson, 2016, 2017; Woodford, 2018, 2021). Bearing the responsibility to prove violation of tenancy rights resulted in arduous experiences for many due to the following.

Firstly, government agencies and policies that oversee and enforce the RTA are located in areas requiring hour-long bus rides, if not longer, and do not provide student-specific protection that consider their vulnerabilities (Muisse, 2016). Secondly, in Mi'kma'ki/Nova Scotia, the Department of Community Services (DCS) oversees administration of affordable housing, including public housing and rent supplements. The DCS does not include youth aged 15 to 29 attending school regardless of their housing circumstances in the collection of data they used to make decisions regarding affordable housing (Students Nova Scotia, 2014; Statistics Canada, 2023). Thirdly, according to the RTA (2014), Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations is

responsible for governance and regulation respecting all residential rental premises, but it does not oversee housing provided by universities, colleges, and institutions of learning (Service Nova Scotia, 2018). Thus, any individuals whose housing rights were violated on the premises of residences provided by PSE institutions and educational bodies are not protected by the RTA in Mi'kma'ki/Nova Scotia.

Consequently, it is not surprising that a review of the Department of Justice's records verified that the RTA's summary conviction and fine had not been applied since 1990, despite tremendous number of complaints against landlords contravening the Act's provisions (Seguin, 2022). Lack of regulation and enforcement of RTA against landlords who violated tenants' housing and tenancy rights, the structural barriers built into the tenancy and housing related services, and lack of protections for student tenants' rights to housing contributed to ongoing exploitation of RIS and discrimination against equity-seeking groups by emboldened property owners and management.

### ***Affordable Housing***

Some government bodies funded, developed, owned, leased, and managed public housing for people with limited incomes on a permanent basis prior to adopting the low-income rental programs in the 1960s. Afterwards, public housing shifted primarily to private ownership with government subsidies. The move made public housing more profit-oriented and less focused on ensuring access to affordable housing for people with low income.

The Government of Canada introduced a National Housing Strategy (NHS) in 2020 to achieve one of its goals of reducing chronic homelessness by 50% (Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation [CMHC], 2021). This strategy sought to prioritize the most vulnerable Canadians: women and children fleeing domestic violence, seniors, Indigenous peoples, people

experiencing homelessness, people with disabilities, individuals with mental health and addiction issues, veterans, young adults, racialized groups, and newcomers (CMHC, 2021). Despite the measures, only limited increases in accessibility to affordable housing were observed across Canada (CCHR, 2022a).

The minor effect in limited increased access to affordable housing despite increased number of affordable housings can be attributed to largely non-relevant affordable housing indicators used to determine income thresholds. The indicators originally developed to allocate government funding to affordable housing projects are now guided predominantly by private sector interests such as the banks and building developers (Pomeroy, 2004, p. 4). Pomeroy (2004) noted that the data collected to determine affordable housing becomes out-of-date repeatedly by the time it is published when it relied on the five-year census cycle (p. 5). He proposed that mitigation strategies could re-consider “definitional and methodological issues involved in designing indicators on homeowner affordability and accessibility” by creating housing supply indicators that focus on the availability of the lower-rent housing stock. He recommended augmenting annual income data by household and lower-rent housing supply assessment with data on the income of renters and the consequent requirements for lower-rent units based on current low-income housing stock to inform the policies and interventions (Pomeroy, 2004, p. 4).

The core housing need (CHN) indicator is a statistical tool used to determine housing needs in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2023, para. 1). Zhou et al. (2021) explained that:

A household in core housing need is one whose dwelling is unsuitable, inadequate and/or unaffordable and whose income levels are such that they could not afford alternative suitable and adequate housing in their community (p. 2).

The CHN is used by the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) to provide statistical and empirical data on the housing and rental environment in major urban centres, and at the provincial and national levels. CMHC's annual Rental Market Survey (RMS) informed decisions made by federal policy makers, industries, and the public about housing. It was also used to evaluate the needs for and impacts of affordable housing initiatives.

Unsurprisingly, the RMS was based on primary rental market<sup>xii</sup> data largely unrepresentative of needs for affordable housing and omitted secondary rental market<sup>xiii</sup> data (Zhao et al., 2021, p. 3). Alternatively, Zhao et al. (2021) explored another rental data source, the median rent data from the census of population statistics to assess private households' housing status. They found that the RMS' focus on primary rental market resulted in incomplete representation of total rental market, undermining its integrity in evaluating housing affordability. Most of RMS rental data sources were from downtown core areas. It did not represent much of the rental market in the downtown areas because these areas had higher shares of secondary rental market than primary rental market (Zhao et al., 2021, p. 4). On top of that, the median rents of secondary rental market dwellings were generally higher compared to the primary rental market dwellings. Thus, RMS' data had underestimated median rents in the overall rental market by measuring primary rental market only (p. 5).

The authors observed much higher CHN at an average of 10% (18% to 24% in major cities) when they used census median rents compared to the RMS data (2021, p. 1). The authors found that the underestimation of CHN incidences was more significant in areas with higher shares of secondary rental market than primary rental market (p. 5). They deduced that the "rate

---

<sup>xii</sup> Primary rental market refers to purpose-built rental buildings, such as apartments, with at least three rental units.

<sup>xiii</sup> Secondary market refers to non-purpose-built units such as basements of rented detached homes, rented condominium apartments, single-family homes, and rented townhouses.



of households in CHN may be higher than current estimation using the RMS data” (Zhao et al., 2021, p. 6). A report about affordable housing options for students in college towns in Mi’kma’ki/Nova Scotia (CMHC, 2009) noted that students living in areas with mostly secondary rental market dwellings reported high incidences of unsuitable, unaffordable, and inadequate housing (p. 3). In summary, inconsistent and unreliable rental data severely limited CMHC’s RMS’s usability in housing affordability matters. But RMS had continued to be a critical source of information for affordable housing initiatives.

In addition, the housing and rental needs of young people who were not earning above minimum wage or own a property were not assessed in the CHN housing threshold indicators. Individuals aged 15 to 29 attending school and who were in non-family households were assumed to occupy a transitional economic phase. Since “low incomes earned by student households are viewed as being a temporary condition,” they were not considered to be in CHN even if they were in dire housing circumstances (Statistics Canada, 2023, para. 7). Ultimately, students’ housing affordability, suitability, and adequacy concerns were systematically excluded in the census data and RMS studied by policy makers.

With increasing prices, affordability remained the biggest barrier to housing for most immigrants and refugees. Ninety percent of recent newcomers to Canada spent at least 30% of their total income on accommodation (AMSSA, 2016; Hiebert, 2011). A study on income inequality noted that lack of affordable and adequate housing was a key barrier to moving out of poverty, and minimizing the income gap parity (Fong, 2017). What’s more, one in five renters spent more than 30% of their income on shelter costs. For renters, shelter costs increased by 17.6% between 2016 and 2021 while homeowners experienced an increase of 9.7% (Statistics Canada, 2023). In an analysis of the 2023 federal budget announcement, CCHR reported that the

budget did not have any additional funding for new social and affordable housing, nor for rental supports (2023).

### ***On Campus International Student Services***

In 2021, CBIE's annual international student survey found that while student respondents indicated that they were aware of their institution's support in the housing and mental health areas, very few availed the services. For example, 46.9% respondents did not use the residence and housing and 61.7% of respondents did not use counselling and mental health services, the figure rose to 61.7% (CBIE, 2021, p. 20). Additionally, the survey determined that international students felt most safe in their accommodations, compared to other settings such as online or public spaces (CBIE, 2021, p. 31). Roach (2011) identified that PSEs and private international student offices were 'overburdened' given the increasing responsibilities and growing complexity as well as uniqueness of those services. One international student office in Roach's study acknowledged that providing immigration-related services to international students was one example of many services international students required that were beyond their capacity to offer. They resorted to merely referring international students to government websites because they could not adequately respond to complex international student needs (Roach, 2011). Roach concluded that the qualifications of staff providing services to international students, the nature and uniqueness of services required, and the lack of sufficient funding were crucial factors affecting the efficient delivery of international student services (2011). Several studies focused on service delivery methods to address the connection between efficacy of services provided to international students, their experiences of belongingness, and international students' physical and mental resilience (Poyrazli, 2015; Carmack et al., 2016; Alharbi & Smith, 2018).

Montsion's (2018) research on spatialization politics of information hubs in universities demonstrated that student services and spaces in which service delivery occurred were curated based on assumptions about demographics of students. Service delivery spaces for Indigenous students were resource orientated (2018). For international students, the service delivery spaces prioritized support for navigating Canada's immigration systems and provided Canadian experiential opportunities (2018). Montsion (2018) argued that institutional assumptions about populations of students – implemented through the very structures of the student service spaces – influenced the international students' experiences of PSE and immigration. A study by Zhou and Zhang conducted in 2014 described feedback received from international students that on-campus residence experiences can be improved by increasing food services' availability, avoiding grouping students in residential buildings by countries or origin, and in general, providing specific guidance related to financial and academic needs.

### ***Discrimination***

**International Student Recruitment and Admission into Canada.** English language-proficiency agencies, high schools, and recruitment agencies that promise post-graduate education which originated from imperial, white-settler dominated countries such as Canada and Australia have long been entry points for education-driven migration. Following the success of global education economics in White settler states, neocolonial regions and countries such as Hong Kong and Singapore are increasingly participating in the neoliberal processes which characterize globalized education. Students are recruited on the promise of receiving global education that confers global citizen status upon them (Kuehn, 2012). Global citizenship is validated by having normalized the cultures and beliefs of white-settler and neocolonial societies – RIS come to Canada expecting to live in a more just society and to participate in an education

system with higher quality in comparison to their countries. As is reflected by the high number of international students coming from formerly colonized countries, one can argue that the colonial ideals of excellence in education system and societal values have prevailed in neocolonial Global South nation-states.

Services received before international students arrive at their educational destination affect their sense of belonging in their country of arrival. A study focused on exploring recruitment practices in China found that students struggled to achieve academic resilience in English language-based universities in the UK, US, and Singapore (Su & Harrison, 2016). Participants were ten Chinese self-funded international students who were recruited from an English language testing centre located in China. An analysis of interviews with the students revealed their frustrations with recruitment agencies they hired to make decisions about studying abroad, especially the non-transparent recruitment processes utilized by the recruiters.

The Chinese international students in Su and Harrison's (2016) study identified that their academic expectations did not match the recruitment agencies' descriptions of education in English-speaking countries due to financially motivated marketing. The students were targeted as revenue generators or consumers by practices that the authors described as being part of academic capitalism (Su & Harrison, 2016, p. 914). Additionally, the lack of global or national regulation of international recruitment agencies exacerbated scrupulous recruitment practices.

The study also found that some PSE institutions' academic rigor was traded for tuition revenue. They established that scores of PSE institutions lowered their admission standards and admitted applicants who had not yet met the English language requirement only to enroll them in unnecessarily complex English remedial courses. Undeniably, such practices capitalized the "Chinese students' consumption by charging additional tuition and fees," and by retaining them

in these courses longer (Su & Harrison, 2016, p. 915). The authors concluded that Chinese international students who struggled in the English language courses experienced decreased academic satisfaction characterized by physical and social isolation. These experiences were affirmed by the study's finding that English language mastery was a "highly meaningful factor in determining participants' ability to navigate both academic and social challenges" (p. 911).

Figure 6 provides the credible evidence for arbitrary implementation of inherently racist, sexist, and classist immigration laws leading to the 70% or higher refusal rates of international student applications received from countries of the Global South. (Tao, 2022). The Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration studying the recruitment and acceptance rates of

### Figure 6

*Study Permit Applications (including extension) Approval Rates from January 2020 to November 2020 by Country of Citizenship*

Study Permit Applications (Excluding Extensions) Approved and Refused January 1, 2020 - November 30, 2020 by Final Decision Year, Country of Citizenship									
Country of Citizenship	Overall Study Permit				Country of Citizenship	Overall Study Permit Applications			
	Approved	Refused	Approval Rate	Refusal Rate		Approved	Refused	Approval Rate	Refusal Rate
VESPA COUNTRIES - 2020					SDS COUNTRIES - 2020				
Australia	107	12	90%	10%	Antigua and Barbados	14	7	67%	33%
Barbados	103	5	95%	5%	Brazil	1,362	858	61%	39%
Denmark	72		100%	0%	People's Republic of China	6,560	2,243	75%	25%
Finland	57	2	97%	3%	Colombia	1,733	1,130	61%	39%
Federal Republic of Germany	1,182	13	99%	1%	Costa Rica	23	20	53%	47%
Iceland	13	9	59%	41%	India	27,468	35,869	43%	57%
Republic of Ireland	56	7	89%	11%	Morocco	1,278	1,083	54%	46%
Italy	576	34	94%	6%	Pakistan	690	1,463	32%	68%
Japan	2,258	39	98%	2%	Peru	203	164	55%	45%
New Zealand	27	1	96%	4%	Philippines	2,155	2,272	49%	51%
Norway	39	4	91%	9%	Senegal	322	1,468	18%	82%
Sweden	66	2	97%	3%	St. Vincent and the Grenadines	11	4	73%	27%
United Kingdom and Overseas Territories	709	75	90%	10%	Trinidad and Tobago, Republic	226	30	88%	12%
United States of America	3,321	128	96%	4%	Socialist Republic of Vietnam	2,013	1,377	59%	41%
<b>Total (VESPA Countries)</b>	<b>8586</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>Total (SDS Countries)</b>	<b>44058</b>	<b>47988</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>52%</b>
<b>Total Applications</b>	<b>8917</b>				<b>Total Applications</b>	<b>92046</b>			

*Note.* Sourced from Tao, 2022, p. 6.

foreign students to Canada heard from 31 witnesses including Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) officials, and examined various written statements including some briefs in early 2022 (Zahid, 2022a). In a brief presented to the Standing Committee on

Citizenship and Immigration, Tao (2022) provided documented evidence of anti-Black racism and discrimination based on age, gender, and nationality pervasive amongst immigration officers, normalized by the Canadian Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (Zahid, 2022a, p. 2).

In reports published in May and November 2022, the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration determined that it found discriminatory IRCC regulations of prospective foreign students especially from African countries and South Asian nations (Zahid, 2022b, p. 68). The committee listed a total of 72 recommendations to increase efficacy of IRCC's foreign student programs. Some of the recommendations were greater regulation of recruiters in the international educational sector, an algorithmic impact assessment, an independent race equity review of the software used to review student applications, a comprehensive racial equity review of Government of Canada's immigration and refugee system, and the tailored funding of settlement services, as well as parallel sponsorship measures for international students on their path to permanent residency (Zahid, 2022a, p. 10; 2022b, p. 3). In response, the IRCC published a statement saying that it was exploring the likelihood of establishing an Ombudsperson Office to review the implementation of the recommendations (Government of Canada, 2022).

**Discrimination in Housing.** Research conducted by Calder et. al. (2016) at the University of Alberta suggested that most students struggled to find options for accommodation for various reasons, but that international students faced unique barriers. They found that the housing concerns of international students were more complex compared to those of domestic students due to lack of suitability, affordability, and adequacy of housing. The obstacles international students faced were complicated by food insecurity, financial instability, and the lack of emotional support, as well as concerns about physical safety. Calder et al. (2016) also

highlighted challenges such as inadequate housing, currency fluctuations, supervisor or faculty roles (supportive or indifferent), lack of clarity about housing contract rights, inconsistent employment opportunities, requirements of professional regulatory bodies, limited or non-available provincial funding, and disconnection from non-university communities as complicating factors in international students' search for housing.

A study about intricate cultural differences in the notion of security found that living in an unfamiliar culture and environment affected students' sense and level of security. Forbes-Mewett and Nyland (2007) argued that access to basic needs such as food, housing, and healthcare, "the continuous improvement of living conditions, and the highest possible level of mental and physical health," were forms of security and should be seen as rights. They concluded that due to hazardous housing conditions, many international students experienced loss of rights in the countries in which they were studying, and as a result, were less secure and safe (2007, p. 199).

The CCHR conducted studies of discrimination in housing focused on equity-seeking communities and newcomers in 2009 and 2022. Both studies found that hidden discrimination plagued racialized peoples' search for affordable, suitable, and adequate housing (CCHR, 2009; CCHR, 2022b). Hidden discrimination manifested as indirect comments about race or ethnicity (CCHR, 2022b, p. 20). Prospective tenants found it difficult to prove their experiences of discrimination in the rental housing market. CCHR's report on discrimination in housing experienced by equity-seeking communities and newcomers argued that its paired testing methodology was able to verify hidden discrimination by comparing the disguised differential treatment of control prospective tenant profiles and test character prospective tenant profiles (2022b, p. 20). The CCHR created five test character prospective tenant profiles for the studies.

The test profiles of prospective tenants included a woman receiving social assistance, a Black lone parent, a lone parent, a South Asian man, and a man with a mental disability.

The study found significant levels of moderate and severe discrimination across diverse character profiles (CCHR, 2009). Specifically, the study documented that the highest discrimination rate against the man with a mental disability (35%), followed by the Black lone parent (26%), the woman receiving social assistance (24%), and the lone parent (14%). The hidden discrimination experienced by test character profiles were unveiled when they experienced situations in which units were unavailable, were subjected to more rigorous application requirements, or when they received negative and discriminatory comments from housing providers. The charge of hidden discrimination was further reinforced when the control group of prospective tenant profiles were offered the units identified as unavailable, faced less rigorous application requirements, and reported fewer disparaging comments made by the same housing providers (CCHR, 2009, p. 15).

Another equity housing audit conducted amongst newcomer immigrants in Toronto, Ontario, reported that newcomers experienced discrimination almost 11 times more than non-newcomers (CCHR, 2022b). The discrimination rate only increased when racialized newcomer auditors compared to non-racialized non-newcomer auditors responded to rental listings (CCHR, 2022b, p. 6). Most notably, the experiment found that female-identifying newcomer auditors faced a 62% increase in discrimination and male-identifying newcomer auditors faced a 267% increase when they presented racialized accents, in comparison to newcomer auditors without racialized accents, during telephone conversations (CCHR, 2022b, p. 6). In email interactions, female-identifying newcomer auditors reported a 30% increase in discrimination when they presented racialized names (CCHR, 2022b, p. 6). The audit found that in all forms of



interactions, property owners and management outlined stringent rental requirements after auditors disclosed their newcomer status. Many of the property owners and management were able to deny housing to newcomers in Canada without engaging in any acts that the Ontario Human Rights Code would have determined as discriminatory (CCHR, 2022b, p. 6).

Both audits – conducted 13 years apart – determined that housing discrimination against equity-seeking communities and racialized newcomers decreased the availability of adequate, suitable, affordable rental housing to those who need shelters unequivocally. Worse, it pushed individuals with less social capital into over-priced units; those of lower-income status were relegated to inadequate dwellings and potentially into homelessness.

**Health Impacts of Discrimination.** Poor housing conditions can trigger a range of acute and chronic secondary stressors (Turney et al., 2013). Poor physical environments including roach and rodent infestation, dampness in the walls, extremely hot or cold interior temperatures, the absence of green open spaces, and inadequate lighting, were linked to stressors that cause poor mental, physical, and emotional health (Krieger & Higgins, 2002, p. 758). The CCHR's 2009 housing equity audit reported that moderate and significant levels of discrimination acted as major barriers to accessing housing (2009). CCHR found that more than one-third of housing seekers with disclosed mental illness experienced discrimination (CCHR, 2009, p. 21).

Existing literature has documented 'paradoxical' relationships between physical and mental health in racialized communities. These findings illuminated how socioeconomic inequalities affect racialized persons' health outcomes (Williams, 2019). Metabolic syndrome refers to concurrent health risks that include increased blood pressure, high blood sugar, excess body fat around the waist, and abnormal cholesterol or triglyceride levels, which increase prevalence of heart disease, stroke, and diabetes. College completion was associated with higher

metabolic syndrome among racialized individuals with lower childhood socioeconomic status (SES). In comparison, college completion was associated with lower metabolic syndrome in White individuals regardless of childhood SES. Research found that college completion predicted lower levels of depression irrespective of childhood SES and racial background. (Hudson et al., 2016). Racialized youth with lower socioeconomic status experienced chronic discrimination while ascending upward socioeconomic mobility compared to peers with stable SES (Colen et al., 2018).

John Henryism or high-effort, active coping, refers to the phenomenon of “individuals who actively cope with psychosocial stressors in the face of low socioeconomic resources are more likely to exhibit higher blood pressure levels than those with greater socioeconomic resources” (Fernander et al., 2004). High-effort, active coping improved health of racialized individuals with high SES but caused worse health in racialized individuals with low SES. High-effort active coping and discrimination increased depression. Active coping mechanism did not moderate relations between discrimination and depression. Despite recording higher stress levels, racialized individuals had lower mental illness outcomes than White individuals (Gaydosh et al., 2018; Torsney et al., 2022).

Additionally, a ‘healthy immigrant effect’ was observed by Vang et al. (2015) in the newcomer population in Canada. Upon arrival in their new country, immigrants and refugees were physically healthier than the Canadian-born population (Vang et al., 2015). As they spent more time in Canada, the health of newcomers – particularly racialized immigrants, low-income immigrants, and refugees – deteriorated (Vang et al., 2015). Anti-immigrant policies and initiatives can trigger hostility toward immigrants that can lead to perceptions of vulnerability, fear, and psychological distress for directly targeted and non-directly targeted immigrants

(Szkupinski et al., 2014). A person felt unsafe in such environments based on prior experiences of discrimination that violated expectations of fairness, morality, dignity, and rights. Another study found that experiences of exclusion triggered profound feelings of a “defilement of self,” which included feelings of being over-scrutinized, overlooked, underappreciated, misunderstood, and disrespected (Fleming et al., 2012, p. 480). Exposure to discrimination predicted worse mental health (e.g., anxiety and depression symptoms) and was inversely associated with positive mental health such as resilience, self-worth, and self-esteem (p. 482).

### **Concepts of Belongingness and International Students**

Belongingness, acculturation, and integration have been well researched as determinants of international students’ resilience. During my literature review, I analyzed the concept of ‘belongingness’ (which differed based on the authors’ theoretical and methodological approaches, and the studies’ socio-environmental surroundings). For example, belongingness could be construed as involvement in university residence (Tolman, 2017), as participation in the ‘host culture’ (Smith & Khawaja, 2011; Hendrikson et al., 2011; Glass & Wesmont, 2014; Su & Harrison, 2016), as having the motivation and skills to seek services needed (Chen et al., 2015), or as physical and mental resilience (Chalungsooth & Schneller, 2011).

The literature review also highlighted that the concept of belongingness had a strong racialized dimension important to discussions of international students and feelings of societal safety – which extended to considerations of adequate housing and their comfort in advocating for healthy living conditions. Humphries, Knight-Grofe, and Klabunde (2009) examined on-campus experiences of belongingness of international students from various geographical locations studying in Canada. A large number of international students (5,925) from 22 universities and four colleges across Canada participated in their survey. While more than 50%

of the students who responded to the survey suggested that faculty showed general and personal interest in them, about 25% of students shared that their instructors were insensitive to racial issues (p. 10). Students from North Africa/Middle East (42%) and East Asia (41%) were the most likely to disagree with the statement that their instructors were sensitive to racial issues.

Likewise, a study by Glass, Gomez, and Urzua (2014) highlighted variations in adaptation patterns of international students based on regional differences. They urged academic institutions to address regional specificities through a re-envisioning of education tools and by decreasing the social chasm between domestic and international students. Glass and Wesmont's (2014) research on friendship and sense of belongingness using a resilience-based model of acculturation specified that academic courses with intergroup dialogue or multicultural content had more cross-cultural interaction but did not lead to a greater sense of belongingness for international students (p. 107). However, cultural events, leadership programs, and community service did provide more opportunities for increased cross-cultural interaction between international and domestic students (Glass & Wesmont, 2014). Relationships developed in these settings improved international students' sense of belongingness, their average grades, and buffered experiences of racism (Rienties et al., 2012).

Yax-Fraser and Cottrell (2015) studied housing experiences of immigrant women including international students in Kjiptuk/Halifax. In defining the process of building a sense of home in Kjiptuk/Halifax as immigrant women, Yax-Fraser and Cottrell (2015) wrote that integration of immigrants was based on the expectation that they would conform to Canadian standards and was measured by their ability to successfully embody these ideals. They argued that understanding the distinction between Eurocentric perspectives and immigrants' experiences of homelessness were a crucial part of creating effective services. They observed that:

...immigrant women's experiences are likely to constitute "relative homelessness," or what we refer to as being in core housing need, or invisible homelessness, such as living in a crowded house, sharing an apartment with other relatives, couch surfing, or paying more than 30 per cent of income on housing. (Yax-Fraser & Cottrell, 2015, p. 89)

Achieving an understanding of the difference in Eurocentric perspective on homelessness and immigrant women's perspectives of their housing experiences was a significant feminist contribution to the analysis of homelessness (Yax-Fraser & Cottrell, 2015, p. 90). Using the participants' definitions of sense of home, the authors distinguished between absolute and relative homelessness, highlighting the importance of recognizing non-Eurocentric sources of knowledge.

Importantly, they explored how greater understanding of immigrant women's experiences of relative homelessness created opportunities to develop holistic, integrated, and community-oriented services that were effective at the individual level. Yax-Fraser and Cottrell (2015) maintained that data collection methods that centred participants' non-Eurocentric knowledge allowed the participants to experience trust and respect. It also enabled the preservation of their dignity, and that they felt heard as well as seen when they were able to process their housing experiences in non-assumptive environments. Finally, the authors established that access to safe, affordable, adequate, and suitable housing affected the construction of a sense of home in Kjiptuk/Halifax for the immigrant women. The construction of a physical home provided the immigrant women with social relations that were not otherwise feasible and fostered a sense of home in a foreign land (2015).

### *Precarity of RIS in Canada*

RIS are also referred to as migrant students or non-permanent residents due to the non-permanence condition of their citizenship status in Canada. This section brings to attention the existing inequalities racialized youth experience in housing. The discussion of existing inequalities for racialized youth is used to contextualize the intersections of socioeconomic conditions deepening the precarity of RIS in Canada. There is a housing crisis in Kijipuktuk/Halifax faced by many vulnerable populations, especially community members with lower incomes, neurodivergent and different physical abilities, addiction, and the elderly. However, the average depth of need of immigrant youth renter households was 17.8% higher than for non-immigrant households, and the depth of need of visible minority renter households was 20.4% higher than for non-visible minority households (MacAdams, 2020).

In a participatory study focused on youth tenants, youth identified several key barriers to gaining affordable and suitable housing (CCHR, 2018). Racialized youth reported experiencing trauma from repeated rejections of housing applications. Others shared that they experienced violations of housing rights because property owners assumed that young people are not aware of their fundamental rights. Many youths experienced significant power imbalance in relationships with landlords and feared creating conflict by enforcing their rights (Gaetz et al., 2016; 2018). Thirty-six percent of all youth had been denied an apartment for age-related reasons and 74% of participants failed the housing applications due to the nature of their source of income. Participants named systemic barriers including age restrictions by hydro and power companies that prevented those below 18 years of age from signing leases (CCHR, 2018).

On the contrary, data on impacts of the pandemic on international students published by Migrant Students United (2022) found RIS struggling to navigate labyrinths of extreme

vulnerabilities. They faced barriers in acquiring long-term rental units and were required to pay differential fees despite cancellation of courses. International students did not consider taking a break from schooling temporarily because an active student status at a PSE institution was not only a requirement to hold a work permit attached to a study permit, but a full-time student status was also a condition of eligibility for post graduate work permits<sup>xiv</sup> (PGWP), with some exceptions.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, international “students who identify as Black reported the highest levels of harassment and discrimination and students who identify as White reported the lowest. Within classroom settings, Asian respondents reported having experienced the highest levels of discrimination and harassment” (CBIE, 2021, p. 32). Respondents with gender identities other than male or female reported the lowest levels of sense of safety. South Korean students felt the least safe, followed by Chinese and Vietnamese students, and French students had the highest average of sense of safety (CBIE, 2021, pp. 31-32).

Flynn and Bauder (2013) and Dauwer (2018) identified that a student with temporary migrant status experienced a “major settlement service gap” during the period of transition when they were applying to renew their study permit or applying for a post-graduate work permit. When they were in a liminal legal space after a current permit expired and before a new permit was approved, international students had ‘maintained status,’<sup>xv</sup> a condition allowing foreign

---

<sup>xiv</sup> Former international students may be eligible to work in Canada using a post-graduation work permit (PGWP) after graduation. The Post-Graduation Work Permit Program (PGWPP) is a temporary worker program under the International Mobility Program (IMP) It is a key component of the International Student Program. Former international students may be eligible to work in Canada using a post-graduation work permit (PGWP) after graduation.

<sup>xv</sup> Maintained status, previously known as implied status, refers to the fact that a visitor, student, or foreign worker can legally remain in Canada until a decision is made on the application when they apply to extend their status before it expires. However, temporary resident permit holders who are applying for subsequent temporary resident permits are not eligible for maintained status ([Government of Canada, 2022](#)). This information is true and correct at

students to remain in Canada legally but who were not always allowed to study or work. Depending on the application processing times, international students had reported being in maintained status “anywhere from eight months to two years” (Flynn & Bauder, 2013, p. 9; Dauwer, 2018, p. 12). In maintained status, foreign students were often ineligible for government services such as healthcare due to expired provincial health cards. Even if they started the permit renewal process well in advance before the expiry of their current permits, international students faced uncertain situations when the application processing times by CIC were indeterminate (Flynn & Bauder, 2013, p. 9).

Moreover, international students with ongoing study permit renewal applications reported that the processing delays by Citizenship Immigration and Canada (CIC) were resulting in staggering real-life implications. They cannot be deported under maintained status. However, without an approved study permit, international students did not have access to healthcare, other services, and employment because their Security Insurance Number (SIN) and provincial health coverage either expired or were expiring. SIN and provincial health coverage renewal were contingent upon work permits’ status. On top of that, unlike some provinces in Canada, Nova Scotia requires international students to have resided in the province for 13 months without having been away for 31 consecutive days to qualify for Nova Scotia Medical Service Insurance (MSI). Furthermore, many international students could not claim Employment Insurance (EI) because they did not meet the required terms to claim EI. They did not have enough accumulated hours or had not been paid \$5,000 cumulatively in 12 months because they were restricted to 20

---

the date of publication but may change after the time of publication. Please visit Government of Canada’s website for up-to-date information.

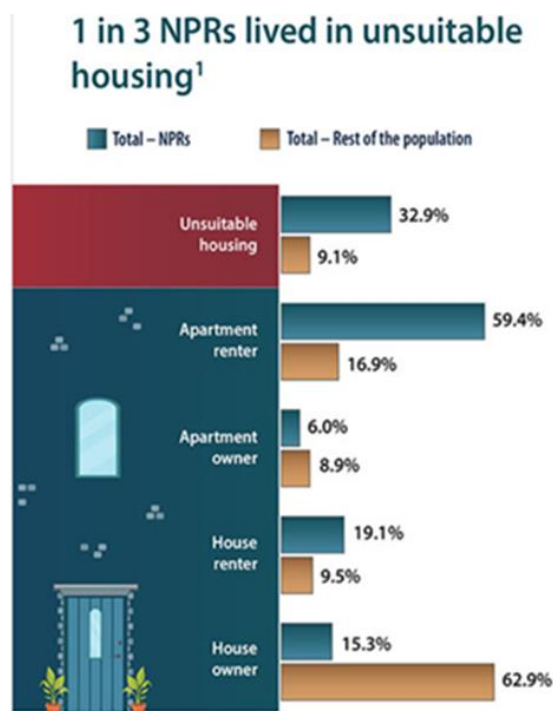


hours of work per week (2021). These factors had negative implications on gaining suitable housing.

Canada grants temporary foreign workers, international students, and asylum claimants the right to live in Canada temporarily. In mid 2023, Statistics Canada published comprehensive data on non-permanent residents (NPR), a category which is inclusive of migrant or international students. In 2021, close to 1 million (924,850) non-permanent residents (NPRs) were enumerated in the census, making up 2.5% of Canada's population (Bastien & Tuey, 2022). Key data points highlighted by Statistics Canada affirmed that a large majority of NPRs were young adults with Canadian education living in precarious housing conditions and experiencing labour force exploitation in Canada (Bastien & Tuey, 2022) (see Figure 7).

### Figure 7

*Almost three in five NPRs were in unsuitable housing and with roommates in 2021*



*Note.* Copyright of Statistics Canada (Bastien & Tuey, 2022).

A greater number of NPRs lived in apartments, unsuitable housing, and with roommates, than the rest of the population. Almost three in five (59.4%) NPRs lived in rented apartments, at a significantly higher percentage compared to recent immigrants (41.5%), established immigrants (18.4%), and non-immigrants (15.3%). Over four in five NPRs were part of a racialized group. At 83%, NPRs were three times more likely to be part of a racialized group than the rest of the Canadian population (25.1%). Notably, more than three in five or 60.1% of non-permanent residents (NPRs) were young adults between ages 20 to 34 years, in comparison to 37.3% of recent immigrants and 18.4% of the non-immigrant population. Compared to 50.7% of the rest of the population, 62.5% of NPRs aged 20 to 24 years attended school. The NPRs were overrepresented in low-skill labour, regardless of their qualifications (Bastien & Tuey, 2022). In 2021, the proportion of recent immigrants with a bachelor's degree or higher was considerably bigger (51.1%) than the rest of the population (26.1%). Almost half or 47.8% of NPRs aged 15 years and older had a bachelor's degree or higher (Bastien & Tuey, 2022). Nonetheless, despite constituting a small proportion (2.5%) of the total Canadian resident population, NPRs' labour force participation was comparably higher, and their underutilization of skills was extremely common.

In fact, the precariousness and poverty cycles that racialized migrant youth found themselves in were systematic and in many cases, long-lasting. A study by IRCC's Research and Evaluation Branch in collaboration with Statistics Canada examined data of international students obtaining PGWPs segregated by age from 2008 to 2018. It concluded that international students were a growing source of labour well beyond their periods of study for the Canadian labour market (Crossman et al., 2022). Relatedly, studies have established that intergenerational

poverty and wealth carry over (Chen & Hou, 2019; Block et al., 2019; Crossman et al., 2021). A report exploring relationships among race, immigration, and employment incomes found that:

...the rapid growth in the racialized population is not being matched by a corresponding increase in economic equality. Non-racialized immigrants do better in the Canadian labour market, and do better sooner, than racialized immigrants do. Moreover, income inequality between racialized and non-racialized Canadians extends to the second and third generations – and beyond (Block et al., 2019, p. 5).

It follows that in Canada, the significant earning gap between immigrants and non-immigrant residents recorded from 2000 to 2020 remained stable or increased (Crossman et al., 2021, p. 15).

Finally, Fitzsimmons, Baggs, and Brannen (2020) reported that on the surface, both first and second-generation immigrant workers seemed to be paid more than non-immigrant workers. However, upon closer examination, the only first and second-generation immigrants who were being paid more than White non-immigrant men were first generation immigrant White men (white Anglophone or Francophone men) – from the United Kingdom, France, and Australia – and their second-generation immigrant male children (Fitzsimmons et al., 2020, pp. 7-8).

**Experiences of Safety and Violence Amongst RIS.** Park (2018) conceptualized intersectional understanding of violence against female identifying RIS in housing, especially in university residences in the USA and in Canada. She studied connections between local, national, and global forms of violence because “the violence is clearly racialized as well as gendered and is shaped by national and global education and migration policies” (p. 30). Park’s (2018) analysis of violence using intersectional Indigenous, critical race, and feminist theoretical

framework contextualized the systematic oppressions experienced by female RIS international students and made it explicit.

The research found that female-identifying international students were particularly prone to varied forms of violence due to several reasons. For example, Park (2018) argued that RIS holding temporary resident status as study permit holders faced many restrictions in accessing support, were underserved, and were more likely to be persecuted unfairly (p. 32). Female-identifying RIS faced greater barriers in reporting harassments experienced in university residences as they were not taken seriously by authorities (Park, 2018, p. 30). Park (2018) also drew attention to the universities' strategy of downplaying safety issues on campuses and in residences to maintain steady income from accommodations and tuition, and to maintain the university's public reputation because "safety on and off campus is an important selling feature" in attracting prospective students (p. 31).

Park's findings were echoed in a study about immigrant women's experiences of violence and immigration in Atlantic Canada. The participants of this study maintained that being an immigrant was one of the reasons they did not receive nor seek adequate or appropriate help and protection. The participants named experiences of racism as a reason for not approaching service providers. They were perceived as being different because of their immigrant status, were provided inadequate services insensitive to immigrants' concerns, and were stereotyped as immigrants lacking comprehending skills. They named the lack of specialized services for immigrants who have experienced violence in the past as one of the contributing factors to their limited knowledge about services, rules, and rights in Canada (Tastsoglou et al., 2015, p. 127).

Limited official language proficiency (English or French), cultural differences, and physical distances isolated many participants from support networks, friends, and family.

Multifaceted realities of isolation reduced the participants' opportunities to seek support. Isolated participants confirmed that they did not have access to important information about their rights and available services, especially within the health care sector, such as counselling (2015, p. 121). Furthermore, uncertain immigration status prevented immigrant women experiencing intimate partner violence from advocating safety for themselves (Tastsoglou et al., 2015). Immigrant women shared that they feared retaliation by being deported or legally penalized for reporting violence, and retaliation by way of domestic violence if their partner found out about their report. Participants were wary of approaching authorities based on past encounters in countries of origin (2015, p. 120).

## **Conclusion**

This review probed existing literature on geographical and socioeconomic factors affecting the housing options available to RIS. Literature available on strategies RIS used to navigate and overcome discrimination and citizenship barriers were also reviewed. The major socioeconomic themes identified are the inadequate access to affordable housing, financial motivations of international student recruitment and immigration, and ineffective governmental policies, practices, and services.

Current literature asserted that international student recruitment supported PSE institutions financially across Canada. Ineffective governmental policies, practices, and services rooted in systemic inequalities promoted and sustained the manipulation and exploitation of international students, especially those from racialized and lower SES backgrounds. Examination of affordable, suitable, and adequate housing availability in Canada reveals that increased availability of affordable housing did not directly result in increased accessibility to suitable and

adequate housing for all – especially in the cases of youth, differently abled individuals, racialized immigrants, migrants, and single parents.

Important aspects identified related to RIS' strategies to overcome barriers and thrive were the participant-centric evaluation methods, and non-neoliberal methodological approach to understand RIS' experiences of housing, and safety. Research studying physical and mental wellness of RIS differed in their findings based on the methodological and theoretical approaches used. Studies that used neoliberal constructs to measure RIS' wellness such as belongingness, acculturation, and integration were focused on examining RIS' success in conforming to the standards of the dominant cultures. On the other hand, studies using student-centric approaches such as grounded theory provided in-depth information on strategies racialized domestic and international students used to thrive emotionally, physically, socially, and academically. To summarise, data collection and analysis processes that do not consider the role of power differentials created misrepresenting and individual-oriented solutions to tackle systemic inequalities.

### **Chapter 3: Theory and Methods**

In this chapter, I discuss the theories, methodological frameworks, and methods I used to investigate my research question about the relationship between the financialization of the housing sector, the internationalization of the PSE sector, and the rapidly expanding Maritimes immigration sector to determine how they affected tenancy and housing rights of RIS. The chapter begins with an overview of theories and key concepts I used to study RIS' violations of tenancy rights and their resilience. Exploration of the methodological framework is followed by an outline of my research methods. Ethical dilemmas and challenges encountered during the research are dissected to inform future research.

#### **Theories and Concepts**

Studying an issue concerning a population as heterogenous as RIS requires applying theories that can adequately explore complex, interactive sociological, economic, political, geographical, and ethical contexts. For this project, I used intersectional, Indigenous, feminist, and critical race theories to study the factors that influence housing options available to RIS in Kijipuktuk/Halifax, and to learn how RIS can overcome discrimination to thrive emotionally, physically, mentally, and academically.

To conduct an intersectional examination of RIS' experiences of housing, immigration status, safety, and violence, I found it very helpful to engage with the work of feminist theorists including Bunjun (2011) on the theory of modalities of entitlement, Ng (2018) on embodied learning, Ahmed (2000) on stranger fetishism, and Smith (2012) on decolonizing pedagogies. These theorists and concepts helped me to apply a feminist approach to the multisystemic model of resilience (Ungar, 2019). Situating the research using critical race feminist theoretical framework placed RIS' resilience mechanisms within the ecosystems of resistance against unjust

status quo. Finally, this study foregrounded accessible, adequate, and suitable housing as key protective and promotive factors of the RIS population's resilience.

### ***Indigenous Research Pedagogy and Feminist Critical Race Theoretical Frameworks***

Canada's colonial nation-building discourse is rooted in national identities built based on the empty land/terra nullius ideology and White settler mythology. It upheld the discovery doctrine of the Americas by the European travelers, established the White British and French settlers as hard-working developers of the lands into profitable entities, and relegated Indigenous peoples of the lands as 'savages' rather than residents of independent, intricate civilizations (Razack, 2002). Further, Galabuzi (2006) noted that Canada's political and economic development shared similarities with other settler societies. Settler societies established dominance by disrupting many Indigenous peoples' non-capitalist stewardship of lands and reproduced a European imperial, colonial economy that established the "foundation for the policies of slavery, marginalization, and socio-economic exclusion of racialized immigrants" (p. 75). Canada's neoliberal politics and economy maintained economic success achieved through privatization of public services, deregulation of capitalist markets, and promotion of individualism in place of community-minded approaches.

White supremacy culture consists of practices espousing the idea that Whiteness holds exalted value. White supremacy culture affects and harms all, but it does not violate everyone equally. White supremacy culture is "inextricable from other oppressions, destroying lands and living beings for profit and power" (Okun, 2021, par. 1-2). Correspondingly, Thobani's (2007) concept of exalted embodiment of citizenship discussed the constructions of 'legitimate' citizens through the implementations of settler nations' laws. Settler nations' laws demanded and preserved the right to the control of the state power by disciplining the 'strangers' as the threat



and burden to the nation and its 'true' citizens (2007, pp. 3-4; p. 75; p. 182). Thobani argued that citizens who engaged in practices of exaltation of Whiteness by subscribing to cultural ideology (superior race), material and wealth possession (lands and resources), and citizenship status, maintained the settler state's structural, violent, and continual dispossession of Indigenous peoples' lands (2007, pp. 55-61). Terra nullius ideology and exalted embodiment of citizenship actively inscribe hierarchal social differences as markers of power.

Ahmed (2000) expanded on Marx's (1844) model of commodity fetishism to consider the concealed material social relationships in stranger fetishism (p. 6). Commodity fetishism refers to the displacement of social relations of labour into commodity or product. Stranger fetishism is the displacement of social relations of labour through the transformation of objects into figures (Ahmed, 2010, p. 5). She reiterated that the stranger is a product of fetishizing a figure through the processes of inclusion, exclusion, incorporation, and expulsion determining the boundaries between bodies and communities (p. 6). Stranger fetishism is then a stranger transformation into a figure cut off from the social and material relations related to histories of its determination (p. 5). Most importantly, encounters with stranger fetishism through processes of inclusion and exclusion such as racialization and citizenship status established hierarchal social differences through determining the self in relation to the stranger. In the case of colonial powers, stranger fetishism maintained the exaltation of settler identities by their relations to the colonized others (p. 10).

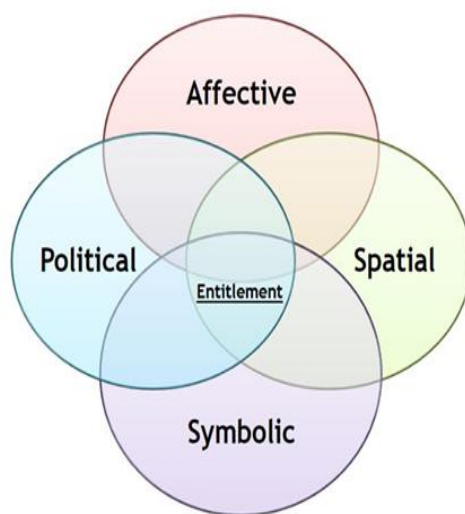
Referring to the concept of coloniality of power, Quijano (2000) wrote that globalization was essentially the process of constituting American and Eurocentric capitalism as the new globally hegemonic power by presupposing elements of coloniality (p. 533). Coloniality of power is a matrix operating through controlling authority (politics), labour (production),

sexuality (reproduction), and subjectivity (interpretative views). The coloniality of power can be traced in the practical realms of “the nation-state, capitalism, the nuclear family, and Eurocentrism” (Martinot, n.d., par. 5). Additionally, the wide arrays of colonialities are subjected in body and mind, marking colonial relations (par. 3).

Relatedly, Bunjun’s (2011) theory of modalities of entitlement was relevant to the study of the housing experiences of RIS because it unpacked coloniality of power by identifying embodiment of power relations in spatial, political, affective, and symbolic entitlements. Bunjun (2011) developed the theory of modalities of entitlement (Figure 8) “to explicate the reproduction and contestation of spatial, symbolic, affective and political entitlements” within organizations, social movements, and global/international and national politics (p. 277).

### **Figure 8**

#### *Theory of Modalities of Entitlement*



*Note.* Sourced from Bunjun, 2011, p. 188.

Bunjun wrote that “power relations as entitlements are dynamic processes that are not fixed in time and space but rather are constantly interacting and being contested, resisted, and

reproduced” (2011, p. 188). Specifically, examination of the research questions using this theory provided clearer understanding of the factors that contributed to the exclusion and dehumanization of RIS.

To understand RIS’ strategies to achieve optimum wellness, I drew on the multisystemic model of resilience (Ungar, 2019; Ungar, 2021a), and the critical integrative embodied approach, otherwise known as embodied learning (Ng, 2018). The analysis of the triangulated data from the interviews, social media content, and online media content revealed the mechanism of the embodied feedback loop calibrating RIS’ optimum wellness as informed by their lived experiences of social inequality.

I developed my concept of states of embodied awareness to understand resilience as states of being as an embodied feedback loop, by drawing on the theories of differential consciousness (Sandoval, 1991), hybridization (Ahmed, 2000) and critical consciousness (hooks, 1989). Sandoval developed a theory of five modes of oppositional consciousness: equal rights, revolutionary, supremacist, separatist, and differential, to theorize Third World feminists’ self-determined political opposition as they navigated hegemonic forms of feminism in the USA (1991). Sandoval (1991) stated that the predominantly racialized Third World feminists were multiply oppressed and had to develop abilities to engage with different aspects of their identities to participate in political advocacy effectively. Sandoval theorized this tactic as differential consciousness. Differential consciousness referred to the Third World feminists’ instituting fluid identities as a political strategy to navigate changing terms of oppression or modalities of power (Sandoval, 1991, p. 3). Differential consciousness is a “kinetic and self-consciously mobile” subjectivity (Moya, 2022). RIS’ fluid navigation of PFPs, and the management of their

resilience in oppressive environments, mirrored a self-determined oppositional consciousness as theorized by Sandoval.

Moreover, study participants who resisted exploitative conditions demonstrated inquisitive reflections of their emotional, physical, and social experiences. They asked themselves contemplative questions to gain deeper understanding about the inequalities they experienced. Ng (2018) wrote that embodied learning referred to “cultivating critical inquiry that is at once embodied and reflexive – a mode of inquiry that is contemplative and dialogic, and that acknowledges the equal participation of body, mind, emotion, and spirit in scholarly pursuit and in knowledge construction” (p. 41). Transformation in participants’ states of embodied awareness followed after RIS applied inter-relational reflexive reflections of their evocative day-to-day lived experiences.

Ahmed (2000)’s concept of hybridization refers to the meeting of two identities transforming each one (p. 13). She argued that the process of hybridization allows the reassertion of dominant agency and reconceptualization of power over another party through proximity in terms of border crossings (p. 23). While hybridization provides the context for recolonizing encounters, such as in the case of White settler society and racialized international students, the process also highlights RIS participants’ dynamic capability of rewriting social scripts to reconfigure power in relations with the property owners and management, housemates, university administrators, government agencies, and other bodies with considerable ability to affect their physical, emotional, and psychological safety, as well as priorities such as education excellence.

Additionally, RIS’ affirmation of their agency and self-advocacy attested hooks’ argument that to speak as an act of resistance is to come “into political awareness, to developing

critical consciousness” (1989, p. 14). The moment of acting upon oppression is a significant point of change. hooks (1989) reassured her readers that the act of talking back, of “moving from silence to speech is for the...exploited...a gesture of defiance that heals, [that] makes new life and new growth possible” (1989, p. 9). Talking back transforms an individual state of being from an object to a subject through liberatory expression (p. 9). Likewise, RIS who exercised agency and engaged in self-advocacy expressed sentiments of radical self-acceptance and increased self-worth.

By bringing these theoretical concepts together with Ungar’s (2019; 2021a) model of multisystemic resilience, I identify three states of embodied awareness that are crucial for understanding RIS’ strategies to develop optimum wellness: hypervigilant awareness, conscious awareness, and transformed subjectivity. The concept of states of embodied awareness describes participants’ embodied feedback loop. Hypervigilant awareness is a state of being dominated by fear, lack of sense of safety, and preoccupation with risk reduction rather than enhancing the functioning of one system or more during exposure to atypical levels of stress.

Conscious awareness refers to an individual’s state of being that prioritizes certain PFFPs to preserve the functioning of one or more systems to maintain physical, emotional, and psychological safety when they experience atypical levels of stress. Transformed subjectivity is an individual’s state of being in which they identify and mitigate risk exposure. In this state of embodied awareness, individuals seek to enhance the functioning of one or more systems that provides a buffer to risk exposure in the long term and that contributes to achieving preferred outcomes. All states of embodied awareness are states of being that characterize resilience.

## Methodology

I drew on Smith's (2012) Indigenous research methodology and antiracist feminist standpoint theories to develop this research's methodological framework. I used the Indigenous research methodology and feminist standpoint theories to inform the methodological framework to facilitate critical analysis of RIS participants' strategies to overcome systemic barriers. I also engaged with intersectional Indigenous pedagogy and feminist standpoint theories to recognize the effects of power relations on knowledge production and to critically analyse the relations between embodied experiences, power, and epistemology.

Methodology is "a theory of how research is done or should proceed" and method is "a technique for (or way for proceeding in) gathering evidence" (Harding, 1987, p. 2, as cited in Hesse-Biber, 2007, p. 10). Situated knowledge refers to "knowledge that is embedded in, and thus affected by, the concrete historical, cultural, linguistic, and value context of the knowing person" (APA, 2023). A situated knowledge asserts feminist objectivity. Feminist objectivity as discussed by Haraway challenges positivism by positioning knowledges as situational, relational and power permeated, rather than visible and conceivable through scientific evidence only (Haraway, 1988, p. 580; pp. 591-593). Similarly, the matrix of domination framework rethought the interactions between factors of inequalities and individual and collective agency to "reconceptualize social relations of dominance and resistance" (Collins, 1999, p. 229).

Smith's (2012) decolonial research methodology to conduct ethical, respectful, and trustworthy study within one's community as an insider researcher was used to guide the ethical development of my role as the author and investigator of this research. Phenomenological analysis or phenomenology is a qualitative research approach that focuses on studying phenomena through examining personal and direct experiences. Methodological application of

phenomenology required “deep engagement with the data via reading, reflective writing, re-reading and re-writing” (Neubauer et al., 2019, p. 95).

## **Research Methods**

My study of tenancy and housing rights of RIS is of exploratory nature due to the limited existing literature on this topic. RIS’ diverse backgrounds also contributed to the decision to use a mixed methods approach. Triangulation of data collected from mixed methods created comprehensive analysis of how RIS from vastly different socioeconomic locations managed systemic barriers, housing concerns, and violation of tenancy rights.

Data collection methods used in this research are in-depth interviews and content analysis of primary sources including online media sources and a Reddit social media thread. Content analysis is a technique used to identify the dominant ideologies by examining mass media (Hesse-Biber, 2017, p. 248). The textual analysis method drew on online local, provincial, and national newspaper articles to study topics of international students and tenancy issues in Kijipuktuk/Halifax metropolitan area. This method was used because tenancy as well as housing rights and resilience of RIS were not adequately investigated in the academic realms but had been scrutinized prominently in online media in Mi’kma’ki/Nova Scotia. As such, online media and social media sources provided diverse range of data including geopolitical and socioeconomic contexts and international student narratives.

The semi-structured individual interviews were conducted to analyze the major themes identified in the literature review. A total of six participants were recruited. The number of participants recruited for the study was determined by the feasibility of a master’s thesis research scope. Recruitment of the study participants took place by promoting a recruiting poster on social media. As participants responded to the poster and participated in the interviews, they

shared the information about the study within their networks. Other participants were recruited using a snowballing method. The average duration of the interviews was an hour-and-a-half. The interview questions were developed from the themes identified during the literature review using the grounded theory approach. The questions were exploratory and semi-structured to facilitate emergence of participants' narratives as it related to the key concepts researched.

### **Positioning the Participants**

Six participants from different regions across the world were interviewed. Data analysis conducted using the MAXQDA software identified the common themes in all participants' narratives. The themes were financial management, discriminatory interactions with property management and sometimes housemates, pursuance of academic excellence, mental wellness, and moderating housing-related risks factors such as pest infestations, security deposit recovery, and illegal rent practices. The following section describes participants' experiences thematically.

Inidima is a female-identifying social sciences graduate student from West Africa. She received an academic scholarship from the university to pursue a master's degree. Inidima managed financial needs by renting a room further away from the university, working part-time, and by making home-made meals to afford tuition, fees, and rent. After disagreements with housemates, she prioritized living alone even if the rent was higher to maintain resilience.

Tigrou is a female-identifying commerce undergraduate student from Southeast Africa. Her financial management techniques included renting apartments with housemates, and by making home-made meals to afford tuition, fees, and rent. Tigrou experienced inadequate and unsuitable housing conditions due to pest infestations. She also faced scrupulous rent practices. She had to engage a lawyer to retrieve a sizeable security deposit. After, she entered a



negotiation with another landlord to afford the latter's illegal advanced rent practice so that Tigrou could live in suitable and adequate housing.

Prim is a female-identifying social sciences undergraduate student from East Asia. She managed financial needs by renting with housemates, working part-time, and by making home-made meals to afford tuition, fees, and rent. After experiencing racism in shared households, Prim prioritized living alone despite higher rent to maintain resilience. She encountered racism and sexism in her interactions with landlords and housemates. She also suffered from physical illness caused by bed bugs. The preexisting bed bug infestations in the apartment she lived at caused much mental anguish and was a financial burden for Prim.

BlueJay is a female-identifying science graduate student from Southeast Asia. She received an academic scholarship from the university to pursue a doctoral degree. She maintained her financial needs by making home-made meals to afford tuition, fees, and rent. Despite wanting to remain in Nova Scotia post-graduation, BlueJay shared that she will move away to provinces with greater RTA enforcement after experiencing deficient tenant protection in Nova Scotia.

Evaluna is a female-identifying social sciences undergraduate student from South America. Evaluna managed financial needs by renting an apartment with housemates in the first year. She rented an apartment further away from the university with cheaper rent and worked part-time to afford living by herself. Evaluna experienced ageism and racism in her interactions with the property management.

Zia is a female-identifying science undergraduate student from Southeast Africa. Zia's financial priorities were paying tuition, fees, and rent. She managed her finances by living in a shared room in the university residence in the first year of university. In the later years, Zia was

experiencing relative homelessness when she lived in inadequate and unsuitable housing. She worked multiple part-time jobs rather than holding one employment so as to not exceed the 20 hours per week restriction of the study permit. She also applied for scholarships and maintained a CGPA above 3.5 to be eligible for the scholarships and occasional tuition rebates. She practiced meal planning to make home-made meals each week. Zia shared that she was experienced imbalanced power dynamics with the property managers when she attempted to protect her rights as a tenant.

## **Data Analysis**

### ***Positioning Self: Researcher Reflections***

Through studying and embodying Indigenous, feminist, and critical race theories, I underwent a complex intellectual, physiological, and psychological process of comprehending the histories of both Malaysia and Canada as former colonies of Britain, and as settler nations on Indigenous lands. Fanon (1963) wrote that “in the colonial situation the colonized are confronted with themselves” (p. 230). I grappled with the multiple and competing aspects of my identities as a descendent of indentured labourers, as a settler citizen in Malaysia, and as a non-citizen settler, precarious resident in Coast Salish and Mi’kmaq territories when I journeyed to and remained in Turtle Island. Navigating multiple concurrent, shifting identities led me to ask questions about the sociopolitical and economical structures I was participating in.

The questions and ongoing attempts to steer my multiple identities in any given context informed the development of all stages of this research. It made me more attuned to RIS participants’ discussions of their multiple identities in the interviews. RIS experienced not only the transition from being a young person to adulthood and a student to a professional; they also developed critical understanding of global, local, historical, and present inequalities during their

education and immigration journeys. I realized retrospectively that had I travelled to Canada as a non-student, I may not have had access to intersectional learning environments within the post-secondary education system and may not have been able to apply this knowledge to build relations with various communities.

**Deconstructing the Colonized Intellectual.** My identities intersected more complexly when I travelled to Turtle Island/Canada to acquire post-secondary higher education. I am a descendant of Tamil indentured labourers shipped to Malaya (Malaysia's colonial name) to work on the rubber plantations in the 18th century by the British East India Company from Tamil Nadu located in the southern region of the nation known today as India. My ancestors laboured in the Malayan rubber plantations to produce raw materials for the export and import markets of colonial Britain. In Malaya, its lands and abundant resources, and the peoples – Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike – were designated as 'subjects' and properties for maximizing extractions and exploitations.

Through the migration to Musqueam/Point Grey and access to an academic scholarship, my SES shifted to middle class. Access to various communities, academic spaces, and stable financial support opened a world of opportunities to learn, re-learn, and unlearn beliefs about my social position(s). I learned that Tamils are not desirable in Malaysia – a *pendatang*<sup>xvi</sup> – through state policies and socialization. At globalized UBC located in metropolitan Vancouver, studying social studies and making friends from across the globe accelerated my understanding of the racialization process and its substantial role in worldwide socioeconomic structures.

---

<sup>xvi</sup> *Pendatang* (immigrant) is a racist doctrine establishing racial indigeneity in *bumi* or soil, to legitimize hegemony of Malay race in post-colonial Malaysia through legal, social, political, and economic structures ([Gabriel, 2015](#)).

I comprehended that I held privileged identities while simultaneously belonging to stigmatized groups as I journeyed to and lived on different lands, through educational attainment and by participating in labour markets. Martinot (n.d.) wrote:

The origin of race is inseparable from land in seizure. Race, slavery, the concept of property in human beings as wealth itself, are all tied together in the juridical commodification of the land. The transformation of land into property was consolidated socially through invention of racialization in the colonies. (par. 9)

Anti-Indigeneity and anti-blackness are rampant in many communities in Malaysia<sup>xvii</sup>. As a biologically female-presenting Tamil Malaysian of working-class background with internalized discriminatory beliefs, I was socialized to prioritize safety first: “watch your back,” “study to have access secure income,” and to “not dare to dream big.”

I was afraid to take interpersonal risks as I worried about accidentally hurting others through my lack of experiences with Black and Indigenous communities. Despite being in classes with those who identified as Black and Musqueam persons during my undergraduate years, I made few attempts to build personal relations with these communities beyond organizing social justice events. In Kjiipuktuk/Halifax, I used the skills cultivated during my undergraduate studies to develop new social scripts and strong relations with international students from the African continent and Caribbean countries, with African Nova Scotians, and some Mi'kmaw individuals. Being part of a diverse, connected graduate cohort and studying in a much smaller university facilitated prosperity of these relations.

---

<sup>xvii</sup>Portions of this section were published in the author's chapter in the edited book *Academic Resilience of Racialized Students* (Bunjun, 2021).

Through spaces utilizing integrative, critical, and embodied pedagogical (embodied learning) strategies, I learned to develop respectful relationships with Black and Indigenous friends. I shifted from being fearful of making mistakes to building courage to forge informed relations through inter-relational reflexive practices, self-awareness, and observations. I acquired relational skills and knowledge about communities through interactions with community members. I learned from making mistakes which humanized these relations. Martinot (n.d.) further noted:

What consolidated the seizure of land, in areas in which indigenous people had no concept of property in land, was race...When people have lived with the land as ecology and habitat, to separate and alienate them from it as their most intimate means of living...to work on that same land to which they could no longer lay claim, requires a great wrenching of consciousness, a massive indoctrination. One cannot simply impose the name of "owner;" the invention of a discernible distinction, a process of self-superiorization through the inferiorization of others, is necessary. (par. 9)

In Nova Scotia/Mi'kma'ki, my SES shifted from middle class to lower middle class as I was supporting myself, despite waived tuition provided by a two-year scholarship designed to recruit students. As a result, I was working several jobs and found that others were in similar financial situations. Through relations with various community members within the university, I made sense of how the economy of the province was heavily reliant on immigration. It made me acutely aware of Nova Scotia's unique economic position, and to a larger extent, that of the Atlantic Provinces, in comparison to other Canadian provinces and territories. Eventually, I realized that as an international student, I was participating in Nova Scotian and Canadian

immigration systems: a (white) settler nation's tool to implement, consolidate, and assert Indigenous lands as properties and human labour as subjects.

**Consensual Allyship and Respectful Solidarity: Ground up Movements.** As an international student, I observed that we occupy a unique position as potential agents of social change. We have direct access to academia – a material and social privilege – that can be utilized as a tool to create changes in systemic, unequal structures. Discussing her experience as an international student in a Eurocentric academic institution, Bannerji (1995) explained that exercising agency in academia has two effects: a student can be an active producer of knowledge who creates social change or a passive consumer who sustains continuation of status quo (p. 65). Moreover, active education produces transformative connections based on a reflexive and relational social analysis (1995, pp. 85-87). My desire to create changes in my immediate surroundings moved me to study housing inequality in Kijipuktuk/Halifax.

In conclusion, I learned and practiced critical race and feminist theories as an undergraduate student of UBC's Gender, Race, Sexuality, and Social Justice (GRSJ) Bachelor of Arts program and as a student organizer at the Race, Gender, Age, and Autobiography (RAGA) Centre in 2011 to 2014. I re-learned my personal history as a descendent of indentured Tamil labourers through anti-colonial, anti-racist, and critical feminist theories and praxis. I unlearned previously unexamined harmful narratives. As an RIS, lived experiences allowed me to understand and provide clearer view into the intricate web of strategies RIS engaged with to navigate life as a racialized international student in a new environment. I applied these skills to study the research questions of this thesis to choose its theoretical methodologies, and to calibrate as well as implement research methods.

### *Outsider Within Status*

I studied the research questions as an academic researcher (outsider), and an international student (insider) who interacted with, learned from, and informed fellow international students. As a critical race and feminist theory researcher, I utilized methodological and theoretical frameworks that investigated lived experiences of international students in Canada. As an international student, similar characteristics and experiences with this study's participants allowed greater explications of nuances of international students' experiences. Navigating my 'outsider within' position as an international student researcher culminated in deep reflections on responsibilities and accountability of an insider community researcher. I discussed the key points that emerged in the reflections in the following section. I described the adaptations implemented in the data collection and data analysis stages informed by insights from the reflections.

Based on Indigenous knowledge production methods, Smith (2012) urged insider researchers to remain humble, critical, respectful, and ethical because "the researcher belongs to the community with different sets of roles and relationships, status and position" (p. 140). Smith's point underlined my position as a researcher of the community's concerns, which situated me as an outsider within (Collins, 1999, p. 15). As a researcher, my relationship(s) with the community I was part of and was researching was imbued with hierarchal power. I mitigated hierarchy of power inherent in academic research settings by establishing feminist objectivity, practicing ethical reciprocity, inter-relational reflexivity, and upholding confidentiality.

**Inter-relational Reflexivity.** Indigenous, critical race, and feminist research frameworks identified addressing power imbalance in knowledge production as key to developing and maintaining researcher-participant trust. The semi-structured interview method was selected to moderate the power relations inherent in researcher-participant relations by prioritizing the

interviewees' hierarchy of importance accorded to themes, and concepts (Hesse-Biber, 2017, p. 153). Care was taken to develop trustworthy relations with participants to facilitate inductive development of interview data (Hesse-Biber, 2017, p. 165; p. 169). Accordingly, consent was treated as an ongoing negotiation of trust and as a process (Hesse-Biber, 2017, p. 13; Smith, 2012, p. 137). Process-based consent meant that a participant could withdraw from the research at any stage and could participate without being recorded.

Trust was strengthened during the data gathering process by practicing characteristics of critical research such as interviewer reflexivity, collaboration, meaning-making conversations, and addressing the affects (for example, sighs and gasps) during an interview (Bunjun, 2018; Hesse-Biber, 2017, pp. 126-127). Attention paid to disagreements, awkward moments, and negotiations during the interviews provided insights into diverse tactics of social relations that participants of this study engaged with (Riessman, 1987, p. 179, as cited in deVault & Gross, 2007, p. 216).

As an anti-colonial, anti-racist, and critical feminist theorist and practitioner, I examined, reflected on, and implemented evidence- and reflection-based adjustments at every stage of this research. Smith (2012) wrote that as an insider, a researcher takes risks by conducting research within one's community because there will be moments of challenging personal assumptions about that community. She maintained that factors such as the researcher's age and gender influenced the dynamics of relation with the participants (pp. 140-141). It followed that practising reflexivity as a researcher was crucial because my identities as an RIS assigned female at birth influenced the research processes. However, to explore manifestations of power in researcher-participant relations thoroughly, I looked to inter-relational reflexivity.



Inter-relational reflexivity is a crucial component in developing the ability to think in an intersectional manner. Take for example the impacts of studying narratives on social and physical development. Reading narratives have been demonstrated to increase competence in social and emotional functioning (Whalen, 2010, p. 146). Participants presented greater critical thinking skills, increased empathy for others, and increased ability to interpret social cues as they related the narratives to real-life situations (2010, p. 144). Another study affirmed that colonization-related intergenerational trauma and injustice-induced illnesses were alleviated when engaging with contemplative traditional ceremonies (Yellow Bird, 2013).

Further, contemplative narratives reactivated brain pathways responsible for processing ‘gut feelings’ or transient bodily sensations and emotional intelligence, which is the ability to perceive emotional states of self and others. In the process, chemicals associated with self-worth and attention were elicited and reduced physical, emotional, and mental impacts of traumatic stress (Yellow Bird, 2016). Given the immense importance of narratives in re-designing one’s relations to others, to self, and its contributions to re-envisioning structures of dominance and resistance through emotional intelligence, centering participants’ narratives affirmed not only the participants’ wisdom – the practice affirmed others with similar experiences.

Practicing inter-relational reflexivity during data collection and data analysis processes altered the power dynamics in academic knowledge production. In the context of social work research, reflexivity focused on the co-construction of meaning (Gilbert & Slipe, 2009, p. 469). By comparison, inter-relational reflexivity considered the inquiring intentions and assumptions of self in relation to others, resulting in positive, performative actions (2009, p. 471). I posit that maintaining feminist objectivity by examining the data as situational, relational, and power permeated knowledge strengthened the data analysis process. When I applied inter-relational

reflexivity as a tool to check in on the insider researcher's power and privilege in the data analysis process, I identified and developed the concept of hypervigilant awareness. The concept of hypervigilant awareness emerged from studying strategies RIS created to navigate structural inequalities and the lack of culturally and contextually meaningful resources within the housing system and the PSE system in Kijipuktuk/Halifax.

Practicing inter-relational reflexivity also deepened comprehensions of how my political beliefs, ethics, and knowledge of socioeconomic relations were shifted by studying the housing and tenancy rights of the international student community. Hesse-Biber (2017) encouraged researchers to ask the "so what" question during data analysis (p. 261). When examining the online media sources and Reddit social media thread, I asked the "so what" question. I found that most violations of international students' tenancy rights were characterized by property owners' unsubstantiated fear of profit loss, racism, and inadequate regulation of Nova Scotian RTA. To conclude, moving beyond reflexivity to inter-relational reflexivity ensured accountable knowledge production by dismantling power embedded in relations with self and with others.

**Feminist Objectivity, Confidentiality, and Ethical Reciprocity.** As an insider researcher, I learned to conduct data synthesis and analysis that protected the confidentiality of participants' non-public narratives especially because participants shared sensitive but crucial information when we developed trust-based researcher-participant relationships. Karp stressed that participants had their stories to tell and that researchers needed to find balance among listening, setting parameters, and obtaining the data needed (as quoted in Hesse-Biber, 2017, pp. 142-145; pp. 324-325). As a community researcher in an interviewer role, I developed strategies such as being clear about the limitations of the research, maintained my role as an active listener, and asserted my role in regulating the flow of the data gathering process in consensual manners.

Ethical reciprocity in this research was achieved by maintaining the integrity of participants' narratives. It was important to keep the integrity of participants' narratives intact because their stories demonstrated the process of developing self-defined agency and a sense of self. The internal processes of participants provided rich information about how RIS from distinct backgrounds experienced housing and tenancy violation in Kijipuktuk/Halifax. The goal of inter-relational reflexivity in comparison to individual reflexivity is to deconstruct power through dialogues that negotiated accountability and responsibility for action (Gilbert & Sliep, 2009, p. 468). As such, an inter-relational reflexive examination of RIS' strategies distributed the onus of accountable actions of supporting international students' resilience to all parties involved, rather than as the sole responsibility of the individual student to do so. Implicit neoliberal approaches in much research about international students' 'belongingness,' 'acculturation,' and 'integration' presupposed individual responsibilities for overcoming adversities. Practicing inter-relational reflexivity during the data gathering process provided the platform to create confidential, ethical, and reciprocal data analysis processes that moved away from reproducing neoliberal bias and focusing on the specificities of RIS' diverse strengths. While reflecting on studying participant experiences ethically, I came across the narrative humility theory that encouraged critical examination of power in shaping narratives.

Focused on physician-patient relations, DasGupta (2008) advocated for narrative humility as a conceptual inter-relational reflexive tool physicians could use to not undermine their patients' narratives by witnessing their experiences accountably (2006, pp. 980-981). She suggested that cultivating narrative humility initiates recognitions in physicians of their powerful position as healthcare providers and its influences on their inferences about patients' health narratives (p. 981). Consequently, I created the accountable empathy concept and the voyeuristic

empathy concept to challenge reproductions of power hierarchies in data analysis process. By naming voyeuristic empathy as a research analysis tool, I did not witness my participants' social and emotional development in difficult times in a consumptive manner. I practiced accountable empathy to regulate my role in developing a feminist approach of studying resilience based on participants' narratives ethically as I was deriving themes using the MAXQDA software program. Committing to accountable empathy versus voyeuristic empathy in data analysis process provided the rigour required for maintaining feminist objectivity by analyzing data as situated knowledge.

Feminist critical discourse analysis offers evaluative perspectives to disrupt tangible consequences of power and unequal ideologies in discourses in individuals' daily lives (Lazar, 2007). A key principle of the feminist critical discourse analysis is being grounded in praxis-oriented research. A feminist critical discourse analysis is applied to "create critical awareness and develop feminist strategies for resistance and change" (Lazar, 2007, p. 145). Another principle of the analysis is the examination of pervasive, subtle cognitive forms of power and dominance embraced as discursive norms in printed and verbal texts (Lazar, 2007, p. 148). The feminist critical discourse analysis also investigates how power is discursively resisted in gendered access to forms of discourse and culturally valued discourse genres (p. 149).

Once the transcription was completed, all interview transcripts were imported into the qualitative data analysis software, MAXQDA. Frequencies of participants' discussions of themes and concepts were recorded. After, relevant words and phrases were categorized to corresponding themes and concepts. Data was coded into conceptual and objective categorizations. Conceptual categories coding included characteristics such as financial management, types of housing solutions, and relations with property management. Objective

categories coded participants' cumulative income and expenditure, and age range, to name a few characteristics.

The content analysis method examined the prevalent discourses in social media on housing situations faced by international students in Mi'kma'ki/Nova Scotia. I examined the contents of 15 online news articles published from 2011 to 2019, and one Reddit discussion thread on international students' housing issues and housing in Kjiptuk/Halifax. The content analysis was a preliminary data analysis process used to identify key themes prominent in international students' tenancy and housing rights in Kjiptuk/Halifax. I recorded and analyzed the emerging narratives to inform the literature review.

Media text is polysemous because it provides different meanings based on its readings (Hesse-Biber, 2017, 249). Analyzing textual characteristics such as narratives, categorizations, and affects contextualized Kjiptuk/Halifax-specific tenancy matters, especially concerning international students from racialized populations. Furthermore, a content analysis of the Reddit discussion thread and online media sources elucidated property owners' attitudes towards RIS and provided robust data establishing the differences in RIS' and non-racialized international students' housing experiences.

Collected data were investigated using phenomenological and feminist critical discourse approaches. The data analysis identified two themes presented in chapters 4 and 5. First, RIS preferred social support over institutionalized support services and avoided disputing violations of their tenancy and housing rights. Most of the participants feared retaliations affecting their legal status as temporary resident visa holders in Canada and tangible consequences in their social relations with rental property administrators. Second, RIS participants discussed carefully

developed strategies to navigate challenges and to achieve optimum wellness characterized by physical, emotional, and psychological safety.

### **Strengths and Limitations of Research Methods**

Using the snowballing sampling recruitment method meant that some groups of RIS were not efficiently reached. Mi'kma'ki/Nova Scotia's second largest international student population was from China. But this research did not have any interview participants from China. However, some experiences of Chinese international students in Mi'kma'ki/Nova Scotia were analyzed through content analysis of online media sources. Relatedly, a strength of the research was the use of mixed methods approach. The approach widened the scope of data that were available for analysis. The mixed methods approach facilitated detailed methodological and theoretical explorations of complex and scarcely studied issues.

### ***Ethical dilemmas***

Ethical dilemmas navigated included protection of confidentiality, moderating risks of harm, practising informed consent as an ongoing process of negotiating trust, and addressing SMU's Research Ethics Board's (REB) concern about participant eligibility. Diverse configurations of focus group were explored as a data collection method at the research proposal stage but was not utilized in the data collection stage. The focus group method did not allow the protection of confidentiality given the dense international student population in Kjiptuk/Halifax and the specificity of the participant demographic.

A trauma-responsive action plan was developed at the design stage of the research and was approved by the SMU REB before data collection commenced. Some participants did experience evocation of trauma during the interview process. Empathetic and informative responses were offered to distressed participants. Contact information of crisis support services

were shared. The practice of closure debrief was implemented for all interview sessions to create opportunities to address and respond to the participants or the researcher's possible concerns.

Several measures were put in place to implement informed consent as an ongoing process of negotiating trust. Clear, accessible, and proactive communication on participants' rights of access to their information, the rights to withdraw at any stage of the study, and the rights to participate without being recorded was maintained.

Lastly, SMU's REB recommended a revision of the language used in the recruitment poster, reflecting on the research's participant selection. A board member suggested:

“...reflect on...the inclusionary/exclusionary criteria outlined in the application...It is unclear...if the researcher is just aiming to interview visible minorities, or if non-minority participants will be excluded from the research...change the language from “are you a racialized/visible minority?” to ask if participants...identify as visible minorities...to ensure that participants are not unnecessarily excluded (personal communication, 2019).”

The research moved away from the Canadian government-assigned term – visible minority – and used the term ‘racialized’ to refer to individuals who experience racialization as an exclusionary act. The purpose was to reflect the nature of racialization as a spatial, social process rooted in settler society myth. In fact, it was an act of discursive counter-resistance because the term ‘visible minority’ assumed that a community was a minority in comparison to a dominant community.

On the other hand, the REB member's suggestion depicted racialization as if it was a neoliberal social process that can make any individual a visible minority by self-identification. The questioning of “who qualifies as a racial minority, in what setting, and by whose criteria”

(personal communication, 2019) displayed anxiety evoked by the participant eligibility criteria. The possibility of wresting away any type of status quo from non-minorities through the process of exclusion was unsettling. Unquestionably, the REB approval process aided in illuminating the role of Indigenous, feminist, and critical race methodological framework in this research.

In summary, chapter 3 discussed theories, methodological framework, and methods used to study the research questions in a robust fashion. The chapter presented outlines of theories, key concepts, and rigorous, original methodological design used to study violation of RIS' tenancy rights and their resilience. Rationale for the selection of data collection methods and data analysis were shared. Lastly, I examined the strengths and limitations of research methods used and discussed the ethical dilemmas to inform future research.



#### **Chapter 4: Construction of Racialized International Student as Other/Outsider/Non-Citizen: Citizenship, Language, and Racialization**

In this chapter, I examine the violations of tenancy and housing rights of RIS to demonstrate the power relations brought to view in interactions between tenancy and residential laws, citizenship, age, gender, socioeconomic status, and global mobility. I studied social media comments by property owners and the experiences of Tigrou, Prim, Zia, Inidima, and Evaluna to map out constructions of RIS as the Other.

Examining power relations occurring in encounters between international student tenants and property owners allowed me to trace and disrupt neoliberal public health pedagogies used to measure and establish determinants of RIS' resilience. These included assimilation, integration, and adaptation into 'exalted' Canadian society: a kind and polite middle-class consisting of individuals educated in Eurocentric institutions, who embrace cultural diversities. Kim (2016) recognized the benefits of multicultural sentiments in Canada but pointed out that the same sentiments reinforced the hegemony of White supremacist culture through:

...the relation between the "multicultural" or migrant periphery and a dominant or white center; the language of belonging, whether as an imperial subject or citizen, and the unequal sets of rights that accompany it; the need to regulate racialized migration differently from "un-racialized" migration, executed in a manner that balances foreign policy concerns against domestic ones; and the migrant as not only a racialized and thus undesirable social body, but one that also acts as a cheap, and therefore necessary, source of labor. (p. 23)

Respectively, Prim noted:

Something that I [had] noticed after I came to Canada...I thought that Canada is very diverse and very developed, and everybody's identity and culture would be accepted...not so much. Yes, Canada accepts a lot of immigrants, and the policies are nice but after accepting immigrants, are you really accepting? Accepting in the society? Maybe not. They need to work more. Just bringing the people in for economic reasons is not good enough. I care about immigrants and refugee kids integrating into the society and receiving education. We are people too; we are not just numbers.

Migration “has taken specific characteristics within imperialist capitalism” by being “an integral element of the evolving process of production restructuring and working-class reconfiguration” (Pradella & Cillo, 2015, p. 47, in Vickers, 2021, p. 1). Borders structured by imperialism enabled multiple regimes of accumulation differentiated geographically and socially (Vickers, 2021). Therefore, international education is presented as an appetizing opportunity – especially to Global South citizens – that seemingly allows individuals desperate to escape burgeoning precariat classes to be part of the elite society.

As Prim's “we are not just numbers” point reflects, international students are “golden applicants,” meaning they are highly desired applicants of Canadian permanent residency because they have Canadian academic credentials and work experiences (Trilokekar & Masri, 2019, as cited in Kwak & Kim, 2019, p. 26). Financialization of international education transformed it into a consumer commodity that has become an agent of global inequality (Kuehn, 2019, p. 11). As a result, the higher tuition fees international students pay compared with Canadian students coupled with the rising number of international students contributed to the increase in its share of tuition fee revenues of Canadian universities (from 21.5% to 28.8%)

versus provincial funding (41.5% to 32.5%) between 2010/2011 and 2020/2021 (Statistics Canada, 2022, p. 6).

### **Financialization of Mi'kma'ki/Nova Scotia's Post-Secondary Education (PSE) Sector and Housing Sector**

Education was used as a medium to recruit individuals from the Global South to strengthen White settler's states' economies. The research found that the financial motivation behind the recruitment of international students by the PSE institutions in Mi'kma'ki/Nova Scotia coupled with inefficient enforcement of RTA, and lack of adequate, affordable, and suitable housing contributed to heightened incidents of acute dehumanization of precarious international student population. The laissez-faire capitalist approach of different levels of Canadian governments and the PSE institutions is characterized by severely lacking social housing and migrant settlement programs, irregular enforcements of tenancy rights, gaps in tenancy laws and policies in Kjiptuk/Halifax, irresponsible and unethical international student recruitment practices, non-regulated differential fees, and reactive, even arbitrary on campus international student services.

The widely documented housing crisis in Kjiptuk/Halifax affected vulnerable members of the society in various ways (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives [CCPA], 2021). The theory of modalities of entitlement guided in-depth analysis of *how* RIS developed anti-racist, anti-capital, and anti-colonial thought processes and applied them to navigate tenancy and housing concerns. Examining the spatial, political, affective, and symbolic entitlements demonstrated by abrasive property owners and management provided proof of violation of RIS' human rights and tenant rights. Moreover, the internationalization of the PSE system and immigration system to increase the size of working-age populations in Mi'kma'ki/Nova Scotia

provided evidence that imperialist and capitalist systems, through neoliberal policies and global mobility, upheld the subjugation of individuals and kept conditions of coloniality intact.

## Figure 9

### *Global Promotion Efforts of the Atlantic education sector*



**Note.** *A Canadian politician's social media post about an Atlantic education sector promotion event in Shanghai, China. Sourced from the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, 2018.*

The examination of RIS' fight against violation of tenancy rights was set against the backdrop of a national and provincial housing crisis in Canada worsened by the global COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, there is a lack of cohesive social safety nets for RIS as temporary resident visa holders. Tigrou described how the conditions of coloniality such as precarious citizenship status and limited access to affordable, adequate, and suitable housing prevent many RIS from questioning the violation of their rights:

I think the main reason why an international student does not want to be involved in legal stuff is because we are not in our home country. We are on a study permit. What if

something happens with the landlord and the lawyer and our study permit is cancelled?

We would have to go back tomorrow. We don't want that to happen. We want to be seen as a good immigrant in Canada. We don't want to be in trouble. We just want to have good working status in Canada.

Tigrou's description of the need to preserve the citizenship status to remain in Canada over advocating for her tenancy and housing rights can be understood as the colonial state's method to uphold its refusal to protect non-permanent residents' rights, while at the same time benefitting tremendously from the financialization of the housing sector and the internationalization of the PSE sector.

Relatedly, Tigrou's "good immigrant" point augments Bannerji's (1996) argument that the "agent of multiculturalism must learn to disarticulate from his or her real-life needs and struggles, and thus from creating or joining organizations for anti-racism, feminism, and class struggle" (pp. 123-124). Similarly, Tigrou and her friends fear of advocating for their rights also highlights Thobani's (2007) argument that the implementation of Canada's Multiculturalism Act subdues the strangers' (non-citizens) anti-racist and political organizing (2007, p. 155). Thobani argued that the desire to be included as legitimate citizens and to no longer be strangers increased the dependence on upward mobility achieved by obtaining education to gain political and economic power (2007, pp. 159-162). These socioeconomic conditions put in perspective the multilayered challenges RIS face in advocating for their tenancy and housing rights.

Researching power relations embedded in tenant and property owner relationships shone a light on participants' dynamic, survival-motivated, and self-preservation-oriented strategies. Participants' engagement with these relations showed that RIS created unique multisystemic

resilience by actively mitigating housing and academic struggles through anti-racist, anti-capital, and anti-colonial lenses.

### **RIS' Encounters with Sexist, Classist, and Racist Property Management**

Nova Scotia as a province is making valiant efforts to attract immigrants and international students to strengthen its economy and increase the numbers of its younger populations. The 2014 report of the Nova Scotia Commission on Building Our New Economy stressed that significant efforts need to be made to change the “attitudinal barriers”<sup>xviii</sup> immigrants face in Mi’kma’ki/Nova Scotia (Ivany, et al., 2014). However, many RIS have reported that they experienced difficulties in finding affordable and clean housing in the province due to housing shortages and lack of employment opportunities ([CTV Atlantic](#), 2018; [Kennedy, 2019](#)). In Kjiptuk/Halifax specifically, international students’ challenges were not only about finding affordable and clean housing but also about finding property owners and managers who were professional and considerate.

Ge’s experience with a property manager was an example of mistreatment of RIS tenants by property owners and managers in Kjiptuk/Halifax. Ge’s tenancy experience was reported in the media because the property owner faced assault charges related to her altercation with Ge ([Xu, 2017a](#)). Ge called the police when she was thrown out of her apartment with her luggage at about 9 p.m. on April 10, 2017. Ge reported that she was also pushed and threatened. She returned to her apartment that night and did not press charges. Ge called the police the following morning and claimed that the property owner, Liao, almost threw a plate at her and seized her

---

<sup>xviii</sup> The Nova Scotia Commission on Building Our New Economy’s commissioners used the term ‘attitudinal barriers’ to refer to many Nova Scotians’ discriminatory beliefs about Indigenous peoples, African Nova Scotians, and immigrants in their 2014 report (p. vii). They found evidence of racism against immigrants where some Nova Scotians blamed immigrants as taking their jobs (p. 9). The commissioners also used the term ‘attitudinal barriers’ to refer to some Nova Scotians’ resistance to embrace private sector leadership. They argued that this outlook towards private sector leadership was parochial and favouring locally owned businesses (2014, p. 9).

luggage. Assault charges were laid in May 2017, but there were few details available on whether the property owner was subsequently found guilty or acquitted ([Xu, 2017b](#)).

Ge maintained that she and her housemates paid two months of rent and a security deposit of \$500 but did not receive a lease. She was worried that she could be evicted at any moment without the protection of a lease. Xu, the journalist who reported on Ge's ordeal, contacted Dalhousie Legal Aid Clinic and confirmed that tenants are indeed legal occupants if they can provide proof of rent paid, even if they did not have a written lease (Xu, 2017a).

Prior to this incident, Liao was in a media story which exposed that her overcrowded rental property did not meet the requirements of Kijipuktuk/Halifax's land use bylaw. In that news article, a former tenant of Liao, also an RIS, claimed that Liao was rude to all tenants. This tenant shared that another tenant had disclosed to him that they did not receive a lease despite paying \$700 per month, and that he had contacted the authorities as he was concerned about tenants' safety in the overcrowded property ([Luck, 2016](#)). Liao's tenants' distressing housing experiences in Kijipuktuk/Halifax illuminated the heightened vulnerabilities of RIS. RIS' precarity are due to lack of social safety nets (including supportive adults such as parents), lack of services available to temporary resident visa holders, and unfamiliarity with the Canadian legal system. Interestingly, RIS in this case called upon authorities to intervene, but other studies have found (as has this research) that RIS are highly unlikely to seek support from service providers and authorities ([Han et al., 2013](#); [Glass et al., 2014](#); [Zhou & Zhang, 2014](#)).

Another example of being Othered is Xu's experience, which she shared with a local media outlet in Kijipuktuk/Halifax. In her case, the property manager raised his voice when Xu did not have the cheque for the security deposit prior to moving in. "He was so rude to me, and he yelled at me," Xu said, to which the manager responded "...at one point, I may have been a

little [stern]...this is my job” (Leavitt, 2017). The manager told the tenant that she was “an unknown risk,” and that “we don’t know you and you don’t know us” ([Leavitt, 2017](#)). When asked what this risk assessment was based on, the manager was unable to provide any statistics or records of international students who have lapsed in their rent payments or have violated a tenancy agreement at the property he managed. The manager countered “she [Xu] went to the media...at the very least don’t (sic) make a complaint about it” (Leavitt, 2017). Xu’s decision to bring the matter to the media was interpreted as an antagonistic move on her part. The property manager’s querulous reaction to Xu’s actions suggested that the management did not anticipate being challenged by the tenant, let alone being held accountable. Xu’s experiences with the property manager were helpful with understanding why RIS were wary of advocating for themselves and file complaints or grievances.

***Naming Hidden Discrimination: Violation of Housing and Tenancy Rights***

Studying relations between citizenship, race, capital accumulations, and space in the context of property ownership and management reveals facile, fierce protection of accrued spatial, capital and citizenry privileges by White and racialized property owners and managers. Bunjun (2011) wrote, “fear and stranger danger are specifically invoked as spatial, political and symbolic anxieties increase” (p. 191). Landlords’ mannerisms, choice of words, and actions – spurred by desires to remain in coveted upper echelon of a White settler society – expose their affective, spatial, political, and symbolic entitlements as they operate based on unfounded fear of RIS, rooted in considering them as strangers, outsiders who are migrants. In the process of fortifying their privileges, landlords utilize the colonial settler state’s legal apparatus, reproducing and reinforcing the violence it enacts, to discipline and remind RIS of their ‘rightful place’ in Canada as outsiders.



An examination of a recent Reddit thread illuminates property owners and property managers' biases and how they exploit gaps in tenancy and housing protection laws. In this thread about renting to international students, the person asking the question (the OP or original post) noted that they cannot use the credit checking/reporting service to investigate the financial stability of a prospective tenant if they are not a Canadian citizen. A Reddit account holder wrote that "I'm a Canadian landlord and I live in a university town that is attracting more international students...landlords out there who've rented to international students, is there anything you might suggest looking out for from a landlords (sic) perspective?" ("Renting to international students," 2015).

In response, property owners shared strategies on how they secured rent and identified 'problem tenants.' Problem tenants was a term the property owners and management used in the Reddit thread to frame international students as potentially difficult tenants based on uneducated assumptions of financial uncertainty, lack of experience or immaturity because of age, status of citizenship, and cultural differences. Their responses provide examples of the property owners and property managers' discriminatory attitudes and illegal renting practices.

- I only ever rent to them if they can provide either a full years up front rent or if they have a guarantor who is a Canadian resident living in Ontario. Also, make sure you see a copy of their study permit to make sure they will be in the country long enough to fulfil their lease term.
- we did rent to a few international students...we required a larger deposit and pre-paid rent...I base my decisions off what financial information I can verify, like bank statements and financial aid letters, and personality.

Property owners and property managers' prejudice was displayed through their written descriptions of their strategies to protect their investment and income obtained through property ownership. The financial and fear factors they provided as reasons for taking these measures bring to the surface their biases about international students. The property owners and property managers' practices of demanding proof of citizenship status in Canada, requiring illegal advanced rent, and fear of losing profit demonstrate their political, symbolic, spatial, and affective entitlements.

- If I think they are going to be a problem I just don't rent to them.
- The kind of people who travel abroad for education are not usually the type to be "problem tenants" if you get my drift. They either have the means or a track record of academic responsibility.
- Cultural differences (lack of awareness of what are included in the lease).
- Also, I've had friends with horror stories about specific ethnicities of Asian int'l (sic) students. Strong entitlement attitude issues, utter failure to clean (ever), every conflict was met with an artificial language barrier, and ultimately, skipping out on the final couple months' worth of rent, damage, utility, and cleaning bills.

As demonstrated by some property owners and property managers above, racist assumptions about whole groups of RIS populations informed not only their interactions with RIS tenants but were also freely shared with other property owners. Exploring the impacts of the politics of multiculturalism on the anti-migrant sentiment and unemployment rates in Canada, Bannerji (1996) wrote that "minimizing the importance and administering the problem of racism at a symptomatic level...is unavoidably accompanied by the ethnicization and communalization

of politics, shifting the focus from unemployment due to high profit margins, or *flight of capital* (emphasis mine), to “problems” presented by the immigrant's own culture and tradition (p. 123). In the case of international students, they are allowed entry into the White settler nation by its colonial government as economic subjects, and they are treated as capital with flight risk by the property management and owners at the expense of the international students. Even more so, all international students are required to provide a proof of dual intent, which refers to a temporary or non-permanent resident individual’s “obligation to meet the requirements of a temporary resident, specifically the requirement to leave Canada at the end of the period authorized for their stay” (Government of Canada, 2023). Therefore, property management and owners’ racist and discriminatory insistence on proof of credit history or demanding advanced rent penalizes international students for holding a non-permanent resident citizen as accorded to them by the White settler nation of Canada.

Ahmed (2000) wrote “the assumption that we can tell the difference between strangers and neighbours...functions to conceal forms of social difference” (p. 3). I argue that relegating RIS as outsiders, hence stripping them of any personal identities dehumanizes RIS enough to permit property managers and owners to remain emotionally and psychologically indifferent to precarity of some RIS to accumulate profit. Some property managers and owners focus on profit consign the burden of proof of good credit standing based on Canadian standards on RIS. The property managers and owners had rather violate the law by demanding advanced rent that place significant constraint on RIS of lower SES rather than considering other options. For example, all international students are required to provide financial proof to support themselves in Canada prior to approval of their temporary resident permit. Property managers and owners could consider those documents for housing.

Some of the property managers and owners' responses also highlighted their frustration with rigorous tenancy laws that prevent them from discriminating against prospective youth tenants based on their personal prejudices:

- In my jurisdiction, we have very liberal government legislation that ties my hands to a great degree...I can't necessarily turn someone away just because they're younger and inexperienced. ([“Renting to international students,”](#) 2015).

While these comments come from an anonymous Reddit thread, they provide context for the attitudes held by property owners renting to RIS. More importantly, they demonstrated in writing some of the assumptions which are made about the diverse population of international students. The comments validate CCHR's report on the hidden discrimination that prospective racialized tenants experienced (2009, p. 15; 2022b, p. 20). Finally, the examination of the Reddit thread demonstrates the complex situations that property managers and owners and international students experience due the unclear residential and tenancies laws' implementation and regulation in some areas in Canada. The lack of RTA implementation and property managers and owners' prejudices place RIS' in precarious positions to acquire a basic need—housing.

### **Precarity of RIS**

As is demonstrated by the property owners' comments above, the profit factor is the main concern property owners have about renting to non-citizen international students. While the RTA requires no more than half-month of rent for a security deposit and the first month's rent to be paid *after* signing the lease, many students are required to pay advanced or prepaid rent ([Maitland v. Templeton Place Ltd., 2016](#)). As individuals with little to no Canadian credit or rental history with low prospects of finding Canadian guarantors and facing an all-time low vacancy rate of rental properties in Kijipuktuk/Halifax, many domestic and international students

often rush to secure a place by providing a security deposit before signing a lease. International students embrace various strategies, including tolerating illegal renting practices and endure unsafe housing to afford an education in Mi'kma'ki/Nova Scotia.

In comparison to domestic students, international students faced challenges such as high currency exchange rates and the annual uncapped increase of tuition and fees, in addition to paying large amounts of advanced/prepaid rents. While some could afford it, lower-income international students settle to live in egregious conditions to make ends meet. Prim, who was a resident of a popular residential choice amongst international students due to its geographical proximity to various universities and amenities, shared an observation that:

International students can't always afford even one bedroom [in a property], so I know that in a two-bedroom apartment, there are six people who are sharing it. Each person is paying [approximately] \$200.00 or a little more because that is what they can afford, especially for people from other countries with less purchasing ability.

Prim's account above demonstrated that international students experienced relative homelessness. Many students who were from countries with lower exchange rates endure compromised housing conditions to afford their academic financial needs and living expenses to ensure that their education is not interrupted. Zia, a participant who is from a country with a lower exchange currency rate compared to Canada, chose to live in a makeshift space in a one-bedroom apartment, shared with a housemate, to mitigate the cost of rent and additional costs associated with housing. Zia had limited privacy for herself or when she had visitors over in her home. She noted that:

There are other costs [associated with] moving. When you move in [into a unit], you must have an account with Nova Scotia Power. [If] you are an international student, you

do not have a credit history in Nova Scotia or Canada, you must pay \$200 security deposit that they keep for two years...[you] need \$100 to set up Wi-Fi, because as a student, you need Wi-Fi...there is also \$100 installation fees...

Zia worked multiple jobs to pay an education loan (taken in her nation of origin) while studying hard to achieve a 3.67 GPA or above to qualify for her university's Academic Achievement Scholarship which provided some financial relief.

### **Figure 10**

*Racialized International Students Accessing a Food Bank During the COVID-19 Pandemic*



*Note: A line of international students at the SMU Student Building waiting to access a food bank during the COVID-19 pandemic (October 2020).*

Many RIS took up menial jobs or unsuccessfully negotiated to pay tuition fees in installments, especially when rent increased periodically and tuition increased every year (Forbes-Mewett & McCulloch, 2016). RIS considered on-campus housing to be safer but chose off-campus housing due to lower rent in the city where the study was conducted (Zhou & Zhang, 2014). When forced to choose between paying tuition, buying food, or affording accommodation, international students prioritized paying tuition and frequented food banks, couch-surfed, stayed in university buildings overnight, and completed cleaning chores for or

engaged in transactional sexual relations with the property owner in exchange for cheaper rents (Forbes-Mewett & McCulloch, 2016, p. 350).

### **Ineffective Enforcement of RTA and Inadequate Tenancy Protection for Youth and Student Tenants**

In Kjiptuk/Halifax, the tremendous increase in the student population and the low housing vacancy rate brewed a unique housing crisis. All participants pointed out that finding affordable and secure housing was a challenge. They explained that their biggest financial needs as international students were the differential tuition fees and the expenses associated with housing, including rent and pest extermination fees. Participants shared that they had to pay advanced (multiple month) rent in addition to security deposits to secure stable housing. In her interview, Zia said: “we had to pay four months of advance rent, the security deposit, and the first month’s rent as a package to get the house.” Similarly, Tigrou shared that:

As international students, we had to pay the rent [ahead of time] because we didn’t have a [Canadian citizen] guarantor. We had to pay three months of rent in advance – they are afraid we would leave Canada [and break the lease]. We [Tigrou and housemates] had to pay a full month prepaid rent in addition to a cheque for four months and later, a cheque for five months.

The mass infringement of international students’ rights as tenants in Kjiptuk/Halifax has been reported and documented widely. For example, Templeton Properties<sup>xix</sup> was ordered to return illegal application fees, security deposit, and prepaid rent ([Frederiksen, 2016](#); [Musgrave v. Templeton Properties Ltd., 2016](#)). Despite multiple complaints brought forth by domestic

---

<sup>xix</sup> Templeton Properties owns the Fenwick Place, a popular apartment building of choice of many students but mostly international students due to relatively cheap rents and its proximity to Saint Mary’s University and Dalhousie University in south end Kjiptuk/Halifax, as well as other rental properties across the city.

students, and successful recognitions of landlords in violation of the RTA, lack of enforcement of the RTA's summary conviction and punitive award against landlords reduced efficacy of the protection the Act was supposed to provide.

The dismissal of international student tenant rights aggravated RIS' precarity. For example, in an email correspondence with a journalism student from King's College, Desserud of Service Nova Scotia (a provincial department which oversees the Residential Tenancies Program) wrote that "landlords are not permitted to charge an application fee when a tenant is applying to become a tenant" and that "landlords are not permitted to collect rent in advance" ([Xu, 2016](#)). As of today, few significant changes to the RTA had been made to address the challenges domestic and international students faced in accessing affordable housing ([Woodford, 2021a](#); [Woodford, 2021b](#)). Lack of access to adequate, affordable, and adequate housing violated international students' rights to security.

### **RIS as Cash Cows: The Phenomenon of Alienation and Commodity Fetishism**

It is important to contextualize the violation of RIS' security, tenancy, and housing rights within the profit-oriented efforts of internationalizing PSE institutions/ Designated learning institutions (DLIs) and the financializing of the housing sector in Kijipuktuk/Halifax. International students are treated as commodities by the government and non-government entities, the PSE institutions, and by property managers/owners across Canada. Internationalization of Nova Scotian PSE sector is sustaining White settler colonialism by operating as an economic conduit fueled by political, symbolic, spatial, and affective entitlements.



This thesis exposes how international students, especially RIS from the Global South, are commodities highly sought after by both Canadian universities and provincial and federal governments. Referring to Marx's concept of alienation, Hamlin (2018) explained that:

...the product of labour is labour embodied and made material in an object, it is the objectification of labour. The realization of labour is its objectification. In the sphere of political economy, this realization of labour appears as a loss of reality for the worker (par. 8).

The objectification and appropriation of an individual's labour is effectively the loss of relation to the object, resulting in estrangement and alienation. The temporary migrant status of RIS is the mechanism which alienates RIS intellectually, physically, and emotionally, disenfranchising them from self, and others. Tigrou shared how she was Othered at work by a colleague's remark:

...they do not try to understand what they are saying. I was cleaning and she [co-worker] said, "oh yes you should do that, you were my slave." There were three people in the room, and they laughed in my face. As a new hire and an international student, there was power imbalance. I only worked there for two months because I was not able to see them again. This reference was never, ever used [to refer to Tigrou] in my life.

Tigrou's background as a racialized individual, her citizenship status as a non-permanent resident migrant, and the act of cleaning provided the context to demonstrate the affective, political, symbolic, and spatial entitlements embodied by the female White co-worker as displayed by her remark. Tigrou emphasized that she was shocked to hear the comment as she never had a conversation with her colleagues about her lineage.

The act of cleaning was the visual cue that activated the heuristic bias of servitude associated with individuals racialized as Black and some people of colour. The colleague's acts of joking about the action of cleaning and slavery without pausing for a second to think that it is a racist behaviour, and of not thinking of the impact of it on Tigrou are entitlements that situate a stranger as an outsider to the White settler nation. Tigrou pointed out that she had never been referred to as a slave in any other context in her life. The use of a slave narrative shrouded in humor by a White citizen provides insight into the readily available, clearly demarcated racial and material hierarchies and entitlements in White settler state of Canada, but is ensconced in multicultural nicety.

All participants' desperate attempts to maintain academic integrity despite enduring injustice is the very process in which their labour is objectified. They do so to succeed economically, to achieve what they came to Canada for. As a racialized migrant body, Tigrou's resignation from her workplace shows that she could not attain a complete sense of acceptance or *fully* belong as a community member in that environment. She added that she did consider using the university's counselling services to receive support following the racist incident but did not use it because her friends who had used them said the counsellors did not understand their problems because they did not have the experiences or perspectives.

Academic success and financial contributions are their labour realized and objectified. RIS lost control over their reality when they were alienated mentally, emotionally, and physically, having no power over citizenship status despite having produced excellent grades and made exorbitant financial contributions. What is the purpose of designating RIS as temporary

migrants, situating them in horrific housing conditions, dehumanizing racism, and degrading sexism, making it almost impossible to retain any sense of dignity and self-worth?

Alienated RIS dependent on the nation for legal citizenship status and stripped of control over the product of labour were more easily implicated in cementing Canada's status as a strong global economy leader. Recruitment of international students from Global South nations reinforces the White settler society myth. Rendering RIS alienated through temporary migrant status bolstered Canada's identity as lands developed by hard-working, deserving settlers. RIS on temporary status work hard to earn privileges of citizenships which both inspire and intimidate citizens. Already in alienated state, where social relations to humans have been replaced with relations to things, hard-working, deserving citizen property owners protect their landed properties by disciplining non-citizen tenants to remain in their place. As such, temporary migrant status conditioned RIS to experience alienation. RIS' alienation contributed to strengthening Canada's external and internal economic standing and sociopolitical environment.

RIS in this study entered Canada as international students with the expectation that education attainment would be a means of production for individual capital accumulation. However, the accordance of a temporary migrant status is a means to an end; a temporary migrant status disenfranchises an individual and inculcates them as the means of capitalist production, as labourers who must work hard, make contributions, to qualify for bestowal of citizenship. Property owners' exploitative renting practices and the inadequacies of the RTA reproduced conditions that violated RIS' tenancy rights, right to shelter, and right to security. Participants in this research experienced different forms of violation of their rights in their rented spaces. The interactions between RIS and property owners revealed the exploitative behaviours and methods of property owners.

### *RIS Challenge Fetishization of International Students as Commodity and as Strangers*

Participants reported many instances in which property management commodified them as rent producers. Property management and owners' financial motivation rendered RIS as desirable commodity, rather than as persons. Both Tigrou and Zia were required to pay three to five months' rent in advance, a violation of the RTA. Another option available to them was to find a guarantor or co-signer who meets the following requirements: the individual must be a Canadian citizen who earns a minimum of \$50,000 per year. After ongoing negotiations and confrontations with the property manager of the building she lived in, Zia sought the help of a Canadian friend who agreed to be a guarantor of her lease. Zia recounted the following experience when asked about discriminatory behaviours by residence managers with regards to citizenship status:

...I did see the difference when she was interacting with me and then she interacted with my co-signer who is a professor who introduced herself and said that she facilitated workshops around tenancy rights and showed her paystub where she definitely earned more than \$50,000 as they asked; there was a whole difference in the way she [management] talked while she was talking to me and when she talked with the professor. I think it was knowing that they were Canadian, they earn a lot of money, they are a professor, they know tenancy rights...it was that difference, that was obvious.

Zia's articulation of her housing experience demonstrates how power inequality embedded in the immigration status of RIS increases the likelihood of predatory tenancy practices. The landlord in this case immediately devalued Zia because of her student status and privileged the professor with the stable income and Canadian citizenship. In fact, citizenship status was clearly demonstrated repeatedly as a determining factor of treatment.

Zia's refusal to pay the multiple months' rent and her engagement with RTA to advocate for her tenancy rights were met with constant hostility by her residence manager. Zia's strategy of documenting any interactions with the property management was regarded with a sardonic "you are very good at writing letters, aren't you?" Zia provided an example of an 'ideal,' 'model' international student tenant, her housemate: "they like my roommate, who doesn't like conflict, and who just does what they say." Her home quickly transformed into an unbearable space when tenancy issue-related conflicts with the management and her housemate intensified, negatively affecting her emotional, psychological, and physical health. Zia added:

It was a lot of stress. They [management] were very hostile...usually, they would be super friendly, but they started to be rude about other things too. It is as if they never feared...They think international students are dumb, and very easily exploited.

The management's blatant disregard for RIS's tenancy rights dehumanized and reduced their subjectivities into exploitable, deconstructed non-valued entities.

Zia's experiences, and Prim's account reaffirm the fact that international students forgo their privacy as well as physical and mental resilience to maintain academic excellence and financial stability. Experiences of international students with less financial privileges such as Prim's friends and Zia delivered significant insight into exploitations of international students by exposing abhorrent property management practices, profit-oriented governmental housing agendas, and unfair and prejudice of entitled property owners who among other things, held indisputable citizenship status. The property manager's response to Zia's concern proved systemic gross prioritization of profit over the basic needs and rights of an individual, enabled by the lack of tenant rights protection for those who are not citizens.

Temporary resident visas, work, and study permits as the legal immigration status of international students establish them as transitory entities, frozen in a labyrinth of time and space, and often at the mercy of landlords, employers, and governments. The globalized neocolonial and neo-imperial forces situate international students as neither subjects nor objects of its devices; an RIS is a deconstructed entity, a consumer of services sorted neatly into disaggregated categories such as student, tenant, and migrant who might stay in or leave Canada. Human rights, morale, and ethics are not applicable to a deconstructed entity that has no subjectivity. Bunjun (2011) wrote:

Colonial encounters with and across white national subjects and racialized subjects are invoked through power relations that are distinct to nation-building discourses. Both white and racialized subjects are invested in the accumulation of national capital, yet the processes of investments and accumulation, as well as the value of the national capital as currency are differently realized and materialized. (p. 175)

Financially disadvantaged students with no social safety nets are treated with disrespect and suspicion of defaulting payments, more so if they were temporary resident, racialized, student tenants. International students are placed in a social contract dominated by a lack of trust due to property owners' assumptions that RIS tenants will default on rent because they may leave Canada at any time. In Zia's case, the property manager acted as a gatekeeper of the property to ensure that illegal advance rent was extorted despite Zia's multiple attempts to invoke RTA.

### **“Row on Calm Waters”: Home as Symbolic Space for Preservation of Power**

Unsubstantiated fear from landlords and property managers that international student tenants might default on their payment require RIS to carry the burden of proving their financial commitment by providing advance rent or by securing a Canadian guarantor of at least middle-

class status. Moreover, lacking enforcement of RTA's regulations and ineffective policies that grossly overlook the grim realities of RIS' housing experiences trap them in vulnerable positions through prevalent unregulated illegal rental practices.

Before Inidima moved out, she faced hostility from her housemate and her housemate's male partner who is a lawyer. As a result, Inidima could not focus on her academic goals because her comfort/safe space, her home, was no longer physically and emotionally safe for her. Her housemate complained about the smell of her traditional food despite her efforts to accommodate the former by cooking when no one is home and lighting scented candles after making her meals. Bannerji (1996) noted that "the multiculturalist stance may support a degree of tolerance, but beyond a certain point, on the far edge of equality, it asserts "Canadianness" and warns off "others" from making claims on "Canada" (p. 122). The expectations on RIS to 'acculturate,' 'integrate,' and belong on the terms of the dominant societies place immense pressure on RIS to blend in, dumb down, and erase part of their identities to survive in Canada.

The hostility escalated to violence and forced Inidima to move out. Inidima explained that her housemate specifically asked her cis-male partner to reprimand Inidima and a third housemate for using the living room. She narrated the situation using her housemate's partner's words which were directed to Inidima: "You little one, I see the power play you were making this afternoon." Inidima said that she felt very scared in that moment. When asked if she took any actions to protect herself, she noted that:

I have heard of people's experiences with the police, and I don't feel safe with the police. I don't feel that they will have my back. And this is a white male. He is a lawyer. Who am I? Who am I? An international student from somewhere...Nobody would care about

me...because of my position in Canada, it's not safe so I was calm...row on still waters, don't make any splash so that you can get what you came to do and get out.

Apart from feeling vulnerable due to the lack of familiar support systems, international students' experiences of aggression due to race, citizenship status, and gender within their homes intensify their precarious situations, such as the case with Inidima's decision to not seek help from institutions.

The lawyer's unlawful criticizing of Inidima's use of shared space in the house she was renting aggravated her fear of being on uncharted waters – unfamiliar social and legal situation in a foreign country. Inidima's fear is based on several factors. Inidima's use of the living room space was referred to as “power play,” suggesting that the homeowner was anxious about losing spatial authority, entitlement, and comfort in their home, resulting in spatial surveillance of Inidima within her rented home. The anxiety was demonstrated through Inidima's housemate's words and his volatile temperament during the confrontation in the living room.

The homeowner's act of reprimanding Inidima by interpreting her use of the living room as a power play demonstrated political, symbolic, spatial, and affective entitlements. Bunjun asserted that the invocation of home “is always embedded in the specific power relations of colonial violence and encounters...[and] produces affective entitlements of what home feels and tastes like” (2011, p. 178). She elaborated that symbolic and political entitlements are threatened when spatial entitlement and affective entitlement are threatened; the subjects “engage in power struggles to reassure that these entitlements are not revoked, lost, displaced” (2011, p. 179). Verbal harassment by the White, Canadian male lawyer is a form of violence inflicted upon Inidima, a Black, female-identifying international student. The act of violence consolidated the power of the perpetrator when Inidima was fearful for her safety precisely due to unequal



sociolegal and socioeconomic standings – race, gender, citizenship status, and land ownership. Harmful interactions with property owners and management affect international students' sense of security and belonging negatively, violating their rights.

Mechanisms employed to manage 'risk' of renting to presumed flighty international students in these encounters played on the prejudice and inequality already accorded by temporary citizenship status and dehumanized international students. The practice of advance rent is pervasive amongst property owners in Kijipuktuk/Halifax. In numerous instances, tenants are required by property owners to pay advance rent, which entails paying rent for several months in a lump sum at the beginning of each lease. Additionally, the lack of affordable housing in Kijipuktuk/Halifax complicated international students' search for housing. Any affordable units by the standards of student financial status are often inhabitable, inaccessible, or not safe.

Immigrant-positive narratives often capitalize on the abilities of international students to multi-task, which they developed while navigating normalized systemic failures. International students navigate the dichotomy of acceptance and rejection within the academic spaces as conditionally accepted political and economic recruits but culturally rejected/unfit residents. Examined within these circumstances, alleged risk-taking behaviours of international students that negatively affect mental and physical resilience, but which support their academic journey, can be understood as attempts to navigate systems that fail to support them adequately.

The following experiences by participants demonstrated such circumstances. For example, Zia described the exploitative situation she was living in solely to afford her education. It was physically and mentally challenging:

While doing their [the property management] renovation, they removed the bricklayer outside the [apartment]'s building and the borders of the windows became loose. In the winter, it was very bad, because it was super cold. My roommate and I wanted to save on the electricity bills because heat is not included in our rent. We would not switch on the heat until it was super cold. We would walk around in sweaters, socks and a blanket...It was super cold because of the air coming in through the gap. I went to talk to the building manager and she told me to keep my heat on the whole day.

The violation of Zia and her housemate's rights as tenants was appalling. While the conditions Zia described above clearly violated the Halifax Regional Municipality's By-Law M-200 for Respecting Standards for Residential Occupancies, the response of the building manager, however, proved that the exploitation of international student tenants is enabled by property owners and managers' knowledge of international students' vulnerable and precarious citizenship status, lack of social safety net, financial constraints, and inadequate legislation protection for students. The manager's dismissive, non-empathetic behaviour demonstrated the prioritization of profit over the basic needs and rights of an individual. Zia's experience showed that international students' risk-taking behaviours in their housing situations stemmed from a myriad of socioeconomic factors rooted in overtly discriminative situations.

### **Providing Strength-based On Campus Support Services**

Many services provided for international students do not address the complexities of international students' experiences that are profoundly shaped by the intersections of their environments, nationalities, and socio-economic statuses, amongst other factors. International students attempt to pay their exorbitant international student fees and living expenses in Kijipuktuk/Halifax by working while studying, with limited financial and emotional support from

their families. The time and energy-consuming natures of achieving academic success, working while studying, and managing a social and personal life require international students to juggle, negotiate, and balance physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental resilience. Tailored support services would provide a long-lasting positive impact on students' resilience.

For example, Prim shared that she changed her academic Major due to the contextualized services provided by the new academic department. Not only were the administration staff and faculty members respectful of her inquiries, but they also provided humanized services at all levels that she felt were absent in her previous department. For example, the front desk person was welcoming and warm to her in the new department, while she felt 'othered' by staff in the previous department. These findings demonstrate that the need for institutionalized changes in support services, curriculum as well as pedagogy, as well as in administrative and teaching bodies, is more urgent than ever.

Researchers stipulated risk-taking behaviours of international students include not utilizing PSE institution's services such as counselling (Poyrazli, 2015; Carmack, et al., 2016; Alharbi & Smith, 2018) briefly nor in extensive manner. My data analysis finds that international students do not engage with services provided by government levels including the province and municipalities, and by institutions such as universities for several reasons. Repetitive ignorant and authoritarian confrontations with property managers and owners reduced RIS' trust in other forms of institutionalized support. All participants confirmed that while they solicited some support from community members to manage housing concerns, and some initially sought support from institutional counselling services, they stopped engaging when they found that these services were not responsive to their needs.

Participants also experienced discrimination while seeking other forms of support, and therefore some participants reached out to their immediate and intimate networks as it required less energy to navigate unfamiliar services. For example, Tigrou came home to feel safe and secure from the micro-aggressions she faced in classrooms thanks to housemates who were also close friends – despite a mice infestation in her apartment. In contrast, Inidima spent more time with her friends elsewhere to mitigate the tension and discomfort she was experiencing in her home space. Similarly, Zia shared that she hastily left her home to go to a friend’s house when she walked in and found five male maintenance workers in her apartment without serving an entry notice. She said, “I had no idea what was happening. At that point, I just felt so unsafe that I took my clothing and left the apartment.” Zia left the apartment because her privacy was violated, and she was afraid of experiencing harm or violence by these male strangers.

### **“Crawling Under My Skin”: Safety, Health, and Academic Excellence**

In addition to creating more financial pressure, illegal tenancy practices affected international students’ emotional, physical, and mental resilience adversely. Experiences of international students with less financial privilege such as Zia’s provide some understanding about how precarity of international students is exacerbated by abhorrent illegal and discriminatory property management practices. In addition to saving money for her fees, Zia was also working several jobs to save for the large amount needed for of her advance rent. Zia tolerated inhumane living conditions to afford all her expenses. Prim too shared that:

...[it’s] difficult to afford things in Canada. We did not have the option to think about moving out at the time so we kept staying there and hoping that the bed bug would go away but it didn’t. I paid \$320 per room in an apartment with two other people...I had to move and pay \$795 for room with private shower...there are six tenants in the house...it

is expensive, but I am concerned about my health. I had a lot of health issues because of bed bugs infestation...I had sleepless nights because...even if I felt a little bit itchy, I started to think “oh, that’s bed bug”...I started to feel like there is bed bug maybe in my skin or on my skin...It was emotionally frustrating. It is super itchy. I couldn’t focus-it was so frustrating especially when I couldn’t sleep. It affected my mood; it was stressful, and I couldn’t study too. I didn’t want to bring any bed bugs to the new place, so I just threw out everything. I couldn’t afford to buy new furniture. Now I am fine. There is no bed bug issue. I can sleep well, no stress, I am happy.

Data from this research supported the literature review showing that international students are more vulnerable due to specific factors such as differential tuition fees which are higher than domestic tuition fees (Calder et al., 2016), lack of social safety network such as parents (Rienties et al., 2016), and embedded discriminatory treatments such as hypersexualization in the residences and in educational settings (Forbes-Mewett & McCulloch, 2016; Park, 2018).

My research confirms that international students in Kijipuktuk/Halifax experienced discriminatory housing practices much more acutely because of their intersectional experiences as temporary resident visa holders (TRV), differential fees payers, and as students in unfamiliar Eurocentric academic environments. Importantly, the research data contributes to the current literature review on the latent power inequality embedded in the relationships between international students and landlords as well as property managers through employing critical race feminist theoretical framework. Evaluna shared the following:

...fear...this feeling that you do not belong here therefore you should shut the fuck up and do not be too opinionated about this [inequality in Canada] because this is not your land.

Evaluna points out that many racialized international students do not speak up about violations of their rights because of fear of losing their non-permanent resident citizenship status and the limited protection this citizenship status provides. Most of the research participants compartmentalized their tenancy problems to succeed in their university settings. They ignored or repressed their experiences of discrimination and exploitation to focus their energies on their academic achievements. Compartmentalization became a strategy of coping. Participants of this project named the high costs of international student fees, non-permanent resident status in Canada as an international student, and the lack of relevant and meaningful support services as the common causes of why they sometimes chose to ignore experiences of discrimination and exploitation.

Four out of six participants articulated their academic performances, methods of coping, and financial statuses as competing priorities they carefully balanced while attempting to manage tenancy and housing concerns. Unreasonably high international student fees affect the international students in several ways. Firstly, the participants shared that they could not allow their tenancy problems to interfere with their academic performances because repeating a course would incur additional and unforeseen costs, and delayed graduation. They cannot afford to take any academic risks because it is tied to complex family relations and responsibilities, as well as expectations.

### **Recruitment, Language, and Multiculturalism**

The Multiculturalism Act, which was adopted in 1988 by the Canadian government, aimed to create a more inclusive, respectful, and celebratory Canadian society. But the Official Languages Act of 1969 and the Multiculturalism Policy of 1971 entrench White British and French as the two founding races of Canada by emphasizing its languages and cultures vis-à-vis

centralization of biculturalism and bilingualism within the multiculturalism ideology, effectively relegating Indigenous peoples and non-White Canadians, immigrants, and migrants and their backgrounds (Haque, 2012). The embodiment of Canada's White settler society's neocolonial politics in the English language-proficiency industries primed many RIS to assume that native English speakers were necessarily White individuals.

Ahmed (2000) noted that “the colonial project was not external to the constitution of the modernity of European nations: rather, the identity of these nations became predicated on their relationship to the colonized others” (p. 10). Ahmed explained the importance of centering physical encounters in historicity to understand how colonialism functions structurally and systematically, rather than incidentally. The journey towards the stranger becomes a form of self-discovery, in which the stranger functions yet again to establish and define the ‘I’ (Ahmed, 2000, p. 6). Prim, who identifies as a Japanese cisgender undergraduate student, shared her shock when she encountered a White male Canadian English teacher in Japan:

Things changed for me after [attending] English conversation private lessons through a mutual friend...it was a different engagement for me than in elementary school. The teacher was Canadian. It was shocking to me...meeting a stranger...white, tall, kind. I was very curious: why do you look different? Why do you speak differently? My boundaries expanded...I wanted to know the unknown...

In Japan, English is not a primary language. The Japanese language is given the utmost importance in all aspects, especially in the education system. The encounter with a White male sparked Prim's curiosity. She wanted to explore the unknown. The “white, tall, kind,” male Canadian subject who travelled to teach English in a non-English speaking country was the primary introduction to Canada for a prospective international student. Prim shared:

I first came here for a two-weeks study abroad program through an English Institute...I saw diversity and multiculturalism on a subway in Toronto...I decided to come to [university name] in Nova Scotia because it was less multicultural than UBC or University of Toronto...since I was an international student, I wanted to learn English and I wanted to live with “Canadian” friends.

Prim chose what she thought was a less diverse city to experience the welcoming white settler nation she experienced in her classroom embodied by the White Canadian teacher. However, a real-life situation made Prim question who are truly accepted in the Canadian multicultural, diverse society. Prim’s housing search experiences demonstrated how an RIS is evoked as an outsider, the Other:

I got rejected from a house...That house was all “Canadians”...We texted at length before I viewed the house and we agreed to sign the lease when we meet...I went to see the room...two minutes after I left the house, I got a text message from the person who showed me around and she asked me, “where are you from?” You could have asked me face to face if you wanted to ask. I texted back Japan and after that, she stopped communicating.

Prim’s encounter with the household of all “Canadians,” an identity she associated with Whiteness based on her understanding of Canada at the time, contained elements of ‘stranger danger’ as theorized by Ahmed (2000). The encounter with Prim who was not White and who did not have a Canadian English accent raised questions about where she was from, how she was different, and *how* different she was. The assumptions based on her appearance and accent located her as an outsider to the Canadian White-settler society.



The encounter evoked Prim's status as an Other. She was forcibly reminded that she did *not* belong to the dominant Canadian society despite her English proficiency program qualification and three years of Canadian post-secondary education. Ultimately, the question about where she was from was really asking if her difference from the rest of the "Canadian" household would allow her to *belong*, and if she could possibly *fit in*. Prim noted:

When I first came here, since I was an international student, I wanted to learn English and I wanted to live with Canadian friends. Since I had two [White and racialized] roommates, I have experience...now I know my patterns. I don't like parties and I want respect. Our culture is different. It is not about nationality. I start to prefer living with diverse people like international students because we share the same concerns. We come here and we live alone. We know struggle, we know financial limitations, and they are more acceptable of food culture, eating habits... We have experience dealing with diverse lifestyles. For local Canadians, they never really engage with people from other cultures, they don't have the experiences and they don't feel comfortable to my lifestyle, culture and eating habit too. ...now I am a little bit scared to live in a "Canadian" house...

The experience left Prim frantically searching for another place to stay in a short period of time prior to her move and left her indelibly marked by a distasteful experience.

Haque (2012) and Thobani (2007) theorized that multiculturalism has become an ideological platform that has permeated Canada's social fabric structurally (migrant services), through policies (inclusion and diversity policies), and culturally (the 'nice Canadian' trope). The culpability of the nation-state in presenting alluring but misrepresented ideals of Canada as an immediately lucrative educational opportunity, 'nice and polite,' and a 'safe haven' for RIS to settle as a long-term Canadian citizen also contributed to RIS' hypervigilance state following

harrowing housing experiences, paying uncapped differential tuition and fees, navigating complex immigration processes, and prohibitive employment requirements. Prim made the following observation:

...about how Canadians think of themselves and how others think about Canada...When I first came here, there were people who would say “oh how do you like Canada? Canadians are nice, huh?” or “we say sorry and we're different from the US.” Even online, when there is a USA and Canadian comparison on YouTube, Canadians are so proud of being nice and saying sorry, but it doesn't apply to all the people...don't assume that everybody's nice...in the class, it is harder to get into the Canadian groups. I don't really have any Canadian friends. I was thinking, “why is it so hard to have a Canadian friend?” I thought that it would be super easy. It is just so easy to make an international friend from any background, but it was so hard to make any new Canadian friends...I thought that Canadians should know that they shouldn't assume that they are nice. They should be aware of their behaviours. I think this is why imperialistic, colonial thinking still exists here, racism still exist in Canada regarding Indigenous people, African Nova Scotian and even for immigrants, and international students...they are living with an assumption that they're really good people, but they don't really learn how to...be not nice. I don't even know where that sentence [Canadians are nice] came from, you Canadians are telling us that.

The treatment of Prim as an Other illustrated the harms caused by prejudices ascribed to RIS.

Participants experienced tenuous relations with their landlords based on prejudices about citizenship status and language proficiency. A participant who speaks English as a second language shared that she felt treated like a sub-human by a property manager. Evaluna recalled

an incident with a building manager when she sought assistance to remove a queen bee from her apartment. Evaluna pointed out that property manager treated her “as if I was a child or a person with two neurons,” when she spoke with them. Evaluna’s articulation of her experience illustrated that racism and a focus on profits substituted social relations between humans with material-oriented relations between RIS tenants and the property management. RIS are not treated as humans with intellectual capacities and emotional faculties in their interactions with property owners and managers because they are reduced to sources of rent income, a commodity removed from their human subjectivities.

RIS experienced discrimination both in housing and academic environments due to being identified as Other. Participants who were recruited through English-language proficiency agencies were introduced to a welcoming, multicultural, diverse Canada with British and French as the founding peoples that provides global citizenship opportunities through its education system and immigration system. Prim’s experience adds to the fact that the implementation of the Multiculturalism Act with the intentions to make Canada more inclusive did not fully materialize. She noted that:

An icebreaker game was hard for me because we had to break into groups and come up with songs with the word baby in it. I didn’t grow up listening to English songs or North American songs that much, the music is also culture, so I didn’t grow up around it; so that icebreaking was not icebreaking at all for me. I don’t know anything; I just know Justin Bieber’s baby song. Even though it was an ice breaking activity, I couldn’t really talk or engage with the other people. I expected the professor to acknowledge that there are not only people who grew up in North American countries in the classrooms. If you do ice breaking like that, it is not inclusive of students from different countries, or somebody

whose first language is not English. I'm also a little bit shy. If I become silent in the beginning, everybody will think “oh this girl is not interested in talking” or “oh this girl doesn't care about class.” But it's not the case! I don't want to give that impression but sometimes it creates assumptions and it's hard to break barriers.

Additionally, Evaluna noted that:

You feel policed for what you are saying because you are not a citizen, and because you are seen as an Other. Therefore, even though some of the things and opinions you may have about the [Canadian] society you would like to share in classrooms, you do not have the space to talk about it because it ends up being an argument rather than a discussion. That would have an impact on what you share and not...and have a huge impact on how the professors grade you. That's the space [classrooms] where I have to talk my mind. At the end of the day, I don't need people to agree or disagree with it because this is the safest space where I have the privilege and the entitlement to speak [as a student].

Similarly, Tigrou, a Bachelor of Commerce student, felt excluded from her classroom group work as her colleagues were impatient with her spoken English. She said:

...as a Black woman who speaks French-based Creole, speaking in English was hard...people could not understand my English...we were left alone...it was hard for me to approach Canadians in my class, especially for teamwork or group...My access to spaces were restricted despite knowing French...I did feel punished for speaking English the way I do. At first, I blamed myself. It was really hard to communicate. I was the only Black [from Southeastern coast of Africa] international student in any group work in school. I was feeling really guilty about my inability to speak English ‘properly’. Speaking Creole at dinner at home [in Canada] provided relief as we did not feel

excluded...not feel lonely...like a family...friends had your back. Speaking what [in language] you are comfortable with reduced feeling of loneliness.

Tigrou tried to participate actively in groups in various courses but speaking English with an accent marked her as an outsider. Tigrou was frustrated because she observed that other RIS were not part of the groups in which the 'native' English speakers congregated together. Evaluna shared similar experiences. She described how prejudice against her accent manifested in the classrooms and her approach to navigate it:

There are slow [as in not immediately apparent] ways...the ways they speak to you, the ways they ignore you when you speak. Sometimes it's very hard to do teamwork/group work because I learned academic English but when it comes to conversations between local students are native English speakers, slang or other cultural context in their conversations, I just can't follow anything. It was pretty hard in the first year. I wanted to avoid that situation as much as possible, but I also knew that I had to learn how to do that. I also could teach the local students like how to have conversation with non-native speakers too...It is still hard because there are not many international students in the program...because it is easier to make friends with international students.

As a result, Evaluna, Prim and Tigrou, who were non-native English speakers, did not fully benefit from the international learning experiences they had been promised would be enriching for international students by the overseas higher education recruitment agencies representing the Canadian universities.

Relatedly, profit-motivated goals that do not examine inhumane impacts of capitalist endeavors nor conduct risk mitigation symptomatic of inefficiencies in the housing sector and post-secondary education have directly resulted in the exploitation of RIS as sources of revenue.

The dramatic increase in numbers of international students in Kijipuktuk/Halifax and across Mi'kma'ki/Nova Scotia – facilitated by both Canadian and Nova Scotian immigration policies as well as aggressive marketing strategies in the Global South nations<sup>xx</sup> by PSE institutions, coupled with the municipal, provincial, and federal governments' prioritization of profits from rental market rather than increasing accessible and affordable housing options perpetuate the housing crisis in this province (Canadian International Education Strategy, 2020).

Violation of tenancy and housing rights of RIS exemplify ongoing discriminatory legal and social conditions in Turtle Island that began with usurping Indigenous communities' stewardships of lands and their sovereignty as Peoples and Nations. Disproportionately high rental housing costs (including illegal advanced rent, exorbitant/withholding security deposits, utilities, and pest control), unregulated international tuition and fees, and other living costs, combined with low incomes, mean that many RIS living below poverty line of income face incredible financial challenges. This in turn dramatically reduces access to basic human needs such as stable housing and nourishing food, resulting in nutritional vulnerability, and poor mental health.

In conclusion, the experiences of RIS participants in this study show the tangible manifestations of spatial, affective, symbolic, and political entitlements of property managers and homeowners, racialized and White Canadian citizens, in their relationships with an RIS tenant. This study thus presents a better understanding of psycho-affective violence in student tenant (lessee)-lessor relationships, student-university relationships, and temporary

---

<sup>xx</sup> This thesis uses the term 'Global South' to refer to communities that are negatively affected by globalized capitalism and is not categorized in a geographical sense. The term has a positive connotation despite its grouping of nations based on economic disadvantages because it focuses on the sovereignty of each of the country and the cooperation between them to tackle similar challenges (Mahler, 2017). For a list of Global South nations according to regions, see here: World Population Review, [2021](#).

citizen/migrant student-Canadian state relationships. The research also demonstrates how inhospitable housing, lessors' violation of student tenants' human and tenancy rights, corporatized education, and mechanized capitalization of RIS as cash-cows to oil the state's neoliberal practices subjugate RIS mentally, emotionally, and physically.

## **Chapter 5: Resilience**

This chapter explores the strategies that international students use to maintain resilience. Based on the findings in my research, I define resilience as the consciously cultivated state of being in which racialized international students thrive emotionally, physically, socially, and academically by navigating and overcoming barriers they face. These hurdles are present when RIS navigate structural inequalities that assume middle-class, able-bodied, cis-gendered Whiteness as the neutral state of the learning environment and society in which they are participating.

Participants developed the ability to navigate the processes of moving away from home, learning in Eurocentric academic institutions, and managing tenancy related obstacles by expanding on existing conflict-resolution skills. Ungar's (2019 and 2021a) multisystemic model of resilience provided me with a useful framework to discuss participants' negotiations of PFPs and management of exposure to risks to achieve their desired outcomes. Ng's (2018) discussion of embodied learning was used to examine participants' embodied housing experiences to expand the concept of states of embodied awareness that I have identified. I drew from Inidima, Tigrou, Prim, Zia, and Evaluna's experiences to inform my analysis of RIS' resilience.

### **Defining and Complicating RIS' Resilience**

My second research question explores how RIS navigate and overcome differential treatment and citizenship barriers to thrive emotionally, physically, socially, and academically. The use of concepts such as 'sense of belonging' during data collection was informed by the key trends identified in the literature review. The definitions have since been contested and contradicted during the data analysis stage by the sheer vastness of participants' strategies to thrive and be resilient. As a result, the manifestations of these concepts have evolved to reflect



RIS' interpretations of wellness and resilience, rather than the themes identified in the literature review. RIS in this study demonstrate that they recognized the situations in which they needed to resist and when they needed to reproduce hegemonic power relations to preserve their physical, emotional, and psychological safety.

By studying RIS' responses in highly stressful and precarious housing situations, one can comprehend how RIS' coping mechanisms engaged in a state of hypervigilant awareness shift to conscious awareness through continuing embodied learning. The condition of subjugation makes RIS live in a state of constant hypervigilance characterized by fear, insecurity, anxiety, and distrust of authority. For example, Evaluna said:

...international students...those without citizenship are a lot more vulnerable because they do not have access to protection. It also comes with self-esteem and dignity. Think about it...If you have different encounters, like racist, oppressive, sexist, homophobic, microaggressions daily, your self-esteem is going to be shit. If you are a person of colour, then you are going to feel like shit and...you are going to hate yourself and you will want to be Whiter. Because White is right here in Canada.

Studies have found that hypervigilance is a common response to trauma and violence experienced in adverse environments, and that it negatively affects one's health by inducing hypertension and impairing cognitive functions that regulate attentional and emotional control (APA, 2022). Referring to the blatant violation of her housing rights, and therefore her rights to safety and security, Tigrou said the following:

It affected me personally, my mood and my health...I was disgusted, I was just so done with that [landlord's refusal to manage pest infestation thoroughly], I was so angry. Sometimes, I would just go straight to my room and not talk to any of my roommates.

Every time I was entering the house, the thought was always, “the mice, the mice, the mice”...it was just such a nightmare...Being tired from school and then get back to that house and not being able to enjoy it, it was really frustrating because it was disgusting.

This is the only word that I have. It was such a nightmare, it was disgusting.

Under duress, participants in this research attempted to do everything they could to find and hold on to stable housing, even if it affected their resilience adversely. Participants’ narratives echoed numerous experiences of other international students who's right to housing and tenancy housing were violated and were documented in the online media. The participants also provided eloquent accounts of how they challenged adversity in their own ways. For example, Inidima altered her resilience strategy following a visceral confrontation in her rented space. She moved out at a critical juncture of her academic tenure as an international graduate student to prioritize her physical and emotional safety over educational resilience and housing stability. Inidima’s move is one example of many trade-offs that the participants were willing to make to avert a crisis threatening their desired outcome. Participants’ active and almost intuitive responses in precarious housing situations are significant as they provide valuable insights into how RIS built optimum wellness using networks of systems to find effective resources, as well as to ensure that no aspects of their lives is critically endangered at a given time.

The transition from hypervigilant awareness to conscious awareness defines a transformed subjectivity of an RIS. A transformed subjectivity is the result of complex, underlying decision-making processes which facilitated an RIS’ development of multisystemic resilience. These complex decision-making processes can be further understood using Ng’s (2018) embodied pedagogy theory. I explain how the participants’ decision-making processes interacted with factors such as racism while located in the geographical and sociopolitical

intersections of Kijipuktuk/Halifax's housing crisis to inform RIS' multisystemic resilience development.

Ng's (2018) embodied pedagogy theory focused on the praxis of critical race theory in university classrooms. Ng (2018) wrote that embodied learning encourages students to learn about how their daily experiences can be a way to produce knowledge. Education and learning are both transformative and embodied, with lifelong impacts on all involved. As such, their self-defined agency is bolstered, and the learning process is a two-way consensual journey, rather than a forceful acceptance of knowledge being imparted by an expert standing at the front of the classroom. The participants' conceptualizations of resilience were directly and indirectly informed by – and formulated through – their housing experiences. In precarious housing situations, international students are forced to grapple with discrimination and microaggression, in addition to facing housing instability. Participants developed the ability to navigate the processes of moving away from home, learning in the Eurocentric academic institutions, and managing tenancy related obstacles by further developing their existing conflict-resolution skills.

I argue that RIS develop multisystemic resilience while enduring duress in the forms of housing instability, through inter-relational reflexive decision-making processes that create transformed subjectivity by shifting from hypervigilant awareness to conscious awareness. In short, participants' multisystemic resilience is developed through embodied, intersectional albeit stressful interactions in pedagogical and home environments. Inter-relational reflexivity in the context of embodied learning process explains how RIS informed their strategies to create resilience based on their positionalities in relation to others. It shifts the focus of examination from the adjustment of an individual in a 'host culture' to understanding how altered student's subjectivity during constant exposure to atypical levels of stress informed their coping

mechanisms and resilience; in the case of this study, RIS navigating the affordable housing crisis in Mi'kma'ki/Nova Scotia.

When the subjectivity of an individual undergoes transformation, it does not necessitate preconceived results of movement or development achieved through experiencing hypervigilant or conscious awareness in any particular manner. One individual's management of PFPs in any state of embodied awareness is not alike to another. The flexibility with which an individual can achieve transformed subjectivity without being subjected to rigid conventions is precisely the factor that empowers an individual. Shaping their individuality based on how they negotiated the PFPs enabled a unique mastery of who they are. In the process, they rebuilt a sense of self-worth that had been negatively affected by degrading experiences. As such, transformed subjectivity can also be defined as an individual's ability to exercise self-defined agency while responding to challenges, as they participate in their immediate surroundings in affirming ways that create resilience. Finally, we can conclude that participants applied agency when negotiating heterogenous and systemic PFPs. They demonstrated that the ability to exercise some control over their situations by mitigating PFPs on their own accord strengthened their resilience as it countered some adverse effects of continuous exposure to atypical stress.

A critical race feminist lens applied through the multisystemic model of resilience carefully examined how each participant overcame adversities by utilizing their unique strengths, learning about their weaknesses, and growing intellectually as a scholar and as an individual without following a linear path to cultivate relevant and meaningful support systems. RIS engaged in different strategies to maintain their resilience which exemplify that, while managing stressful situations created by lack of adequate safe housing, they consciously cultivated abilities to navigate and overcome challenges to thrive and be emotionally, physically, and socially safe.

My research affirms that RIS' migration processes altered their coping strategies to adjust to Canadian learning and housing environments. Tigrou shared that while she actively attempted to participate in group work and class discussions, she faced many structural barriers that prevented her from doing so, such as the incompetence of her instructors in addressing discrimination in their classrooms. The discriminatory experiences which students felt in academic spaces relegated them to their rented spaces for comfort and to recuperate. Tigrou shared that due to the ignorance of Canadian students and instructors, she often retreated to her rented space and cherished it as it felt safer. In her home space, Tigrou sought comfort and safety in the form of common language and food shared with RIS housemates and other friends from her country.

### **Participants' Strategies to Achieve Resilience**

All participants prioritized financial stability while many participants also prioritized academic excellence over other concerns. All participants named tuition and rent as their most important financial commitments. Inidima, Tigrou, Prim, BlueJay, Evaluna, and Zia managed their finances by working part-time and making home-made meals. Inidima and Evaluna rented rooms and apartments further away from their respective universities for cheaper rents. Some of the participants shared apartments with housemates. After enduring challenging experiences of living with housemates, all these participants prioritized living by themselves even if their rents were higher to maintain overall sense of resilience.

My research asserts that RIS maintained multisystemic resilience by using hypervigilant awareness while navigating spaces with power imbalance. Hypervigilant awareness is a protective mechanism. In a state of hypervigilant awareness, RIS scrutinized the ways in which they carried themselves and observed the ways they were construed to avoid feeling alienated

and being Othered. The participants monitored their behaviours, mannerisms, and actions by being cautionary, and by not bringing attention to any behaviours considered undesirable.

Evaluna described hypervigilant awareness when she shared that she would force herself to stay alert to navigate her life in Canada as an RIS:

You have to motivate yourself and you have to also force yourself. Force yourself. How many times...it is impossible to not feel anxiety, a little bit of self-hate, or self-intimidation on a daily basis, but you have to force yourself.

Similarly, the bed bug infestation in her home made Prim hyper vigilantly aware of herself:

This is so ugly [referring to the scars]...When I have the bite, it was so red...I had a lot of scars...I don't like that because other people may feel, "oh, you are not that clean." I didn't want to wear short [sleeved] t-shirts...because it is not only about beauty, but also about cleanliness and sanitary. Maybe my hand was dirty, I didn't want to shake my hands with people.

Through hypervigilant awareness, RIS constantly assessed the risks that they were facing in their environments in order to curate their responses. Most of their resources such as time and money are spent on managing support systems that they were familiar with and have not experienced negative experiences from. For example, Prim did not seek any health care services nor mental health support services at the time she was experiencing inadequate and unsuitable housing, and discrimination by the property management. She managed by consulting her mother and her social networks in Canada. By doing so, RIS conserved the resilience of the systems (for example, physical safety or emotional safety) that were experiencing adversity and negotiated with co-occurring systems to deploy immediate resources (for example, relying on a safety network for physical or emotional safety). Similarly, Parasram et al. (2023) found that Dalhousie

University's international students in Mi'kma'ki/ Nova Scotia were "self-organizing to support themselves, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic" (2023, p. 193). On the other hand, Glass and Westmont's (2014) research defined resilience as an international student's sense of belonging in their immediate surroundings, such as their universities (also see Yang & Noels, 2013). However, while some studies recognized that international students faced more barriers to building a social network and in developing sense of belonging due to a lack of familiarity with the academic and other surroundings, they did not examine the sociopolitical context of the barriers and the systemic power imbalances that international students navigate to achieve sense of belonging.

RIS make the decisions to preserve systems, allocate resources, and address immediate necessities by considering factors that are contextually meaningful to them. The allocation of resources depended on the priority of the necessity and the immediate importance of each system that is at risk, as assessed by the individual concerned. In the cases of all participants of this research, each one prioritized their academic resilience, and made decisions for the resilience of other systems based on its relation to maintaining educational success.

In a hypervigilant awareness state, RIS look out for their safety from a gendered and racial perspective to protect themselves and minimize the impacts of discrimination experienced within the housing environment in Kjiptuk/Halifax. Prim had a conflict with one of her housemates regarding cleanliness. She noted that:

I do not get angry easily, but I was getting angry always...he would tell me to not to be affected by [external] environmental things and to keep my inner peace, and that would make me angrier! Of course, I'll be angry, you're not keeping the room clean! I'm a very clean person, I'm so organized. In Japan, we learn in school to clean things. In Canada, I

heard from Canadian students that in their schools, students don't clean but there are cleaning staff to clean the classrooms. My roommates from other countries like India, even in their house, they have hired maids, these women clean the house. They didn't really grow up learning how to clean compared to us. I did that for 18 years of my education and it is not normal letting other people clean my own dirty things, my mess. There was a time when I started to feel like I was the issue, so I lost my confidence, I lost myself. I started to think that everybody around me was not happy because of me. That was a bit of a tough time. I'm still not sure; I still think a lot about how to keep it under control. I started meditation to keep peace or to not to get affected by surroundings.

Prim was aware that her housemate was disrespectful towards her. However, she prioritized focusing her energy away from anger to where she had the power to make a difference. She practiced meditation to preserve her physical and emotional energy.

Inidima, a graduate RIS of African ancestry, shared information about the racism she experienced from her sublessor who was also one of her housemates in their shared rented home. The White female-presenting sublessor made innocuous but impertinent remarks when Inidima cooked her home-based food in the kitchen. Inidima shared the techniques she used to address these remarks: "I used scented candles, left the windows open, and made sure that my housemates are not home when I cook." Inidima accommodated the sublessor so much so that she resorted to cooking her meals on Fridays, when the sublessor was mostly away from home. She also pointed out that she never made disparaging comments about the smell of food that the sublessor made in the kitchen, such as pickles, which were unfamiliar to her. Unlike her sublessor, Inidima exercised caution by not communicating her experience to the sublessor to avoid risks of misunderstandings; at the same time, she did not share it due to her respect for



cultural differences in food-making. These actions demonstrate how Inidima engaged in hypervigilant awareness.

The power imbalance between the tenants was multilayered; Inidima was an international graduate student sublessee, a female-identifying Nigerian, and was in Canada without her family, who were her primary social support and safety net. On the other hand, the woman-identifying sublessor was in contract with the homeowner, had the upper hand in choosing the sublessees, and could end the lease with the sublessee. She also had a stable income, and an immediately available social support system through her boyfriend, who worked as a lawyer.

In this situation, recognizing that she was more vulnerable, Inidima assessed her options to identify the systems that were at immediate risks to protect them, and to utilize the limited resources that were available to her to navigate the conflict in her living space. Inidima prioritized the need to maintain a low-cost living so that she can afford her international student tuition fees by cooking, rather than ordering or buying her meals, and by renting an affordable but shared living space. Inidima considered aspects of her educational resilience to be more crucial compared to living in a discrimination-free home before the conflict with the sublessor intensified.

Following a frightening encounter with her sublessor's White male boyfriend in the living room, Inidima shared that she spent most of her time in her small room and outside of the house towards the end of the lease term. During the encounter, the man said to Inidima: "You little one, I see the power play you are using this afternoon, and I will show you." The man interpreted Inidima's presence in the living room (to watch television with another housemate) as an attempt to undermine the sublessor's power and authority. That Inidima's use of a common space was seen as a threat to the superiority of the sublessor, and by extension her male partner,

exemplifies that his understanding of spatial entitlement is rooted in the assumption that White people with property ownerships are the righteous, exalted citizens in White settler societies – the industrious, superior, and civilized race which founded Canada. Inidima, a non-citizen Black woman, is read as an ungracious tenant undermining the exalted national subject.

The man threatening Inidima was a lawyer who had drafted the lease she signed. Inidima feared for her physical and emotional safety, as well as the stability of her status as a tenant because he was physically intimidating, emotionally aggressive, and verbally abusive. Inidima recalled that “(while) pointing at (me), he was screaming that we were guests in the house, the house we were paying rent for, (and that) we should stop doing what we were doing.” Inidima’s housing experiences exemplify how the violence invoked against Black women situates the latter in extremely vulnerable and hostile situations. Inidima understood that she was experiencing racism when she was ridiculed for cooking her home food but recognized that she could be in a perilous situation after the man threatened ‘to show her’ the consequences of a perceived transgression undermining the sublessor’s authority.

Initially, Inidima used hypervigilant awareness to develop coping strategies that placated the intensity of racism she was experiencing in her home. She wanted to ensure that her home situation had minimal negative impact on her educational resilience, even if it was a non-pleasant living condition. Following the confrontation, Inidima reassessed her situation and prioritized looking for another rental space to protect and maintain her physical and emotional safety. She spent more time with her friends to avoid being home, ensured that she had the correct legal paperwork to leave the lease agreement without penalty, and took a hiatus from writing her master’s thesis until after she moved to a new home, which she made sure to be a single occupancy apartment. Inidima developed multisystemic resilience by recognizing that she

needed to prioritize different systems at a given time to remain mainly safe and somewhat healthy emotionally, physically, and mentally.

It is important to recognize the shift in Inidima's engagement with hypervigilant awareness after the visceral confrontation with the sublessor's threatening boyfriend. As a protective mechanism, the hypervigilant awareness strategy enables participants to create situations or spaces in which they have some levels of control (that is, they have agency) whilst facing adversity. Having even the slightest semblance of agency bolstered a participant's sense of safety.

Conscious awareness refers to participants using coping skills and strategies to prevent or respond to discrimination with the goal of developing and asserting their agency confidently. Conscious awareness is used to build states of being within unfamiliar environments in contextually meaningful and *empowering* ways. Using conscious awareness, RIS manage adversities with an understanding that structural discrimination does not take their agency away from them, even if it restricts manifestations of their self-defined agency. In response to the conflict with the housemate about cleanliness, Prim demonstrated conscious awareness when she made the following decision, "we were supposed to move in together in September, but I said no to that. ...I'm not the housewife."

Informed by embodied knowledge, RIS' interactions with systems of power provide them with critical and historical understanding of one's status as well as roles in the society. A contextualized understanding informed by embodied learning contributed to developing conscious awareness that moderate hypervigilant awareness. Referring to how Inidima's understanding of her identity evolved after arriving in Canada, she described Irving Goffman's (1963) theory of self-representation that discussed management of appearances based on the

environment one is in. Inidima shared that she was never addressed as a Black person in her home country. In the moment that she was reprimanded in her home, her Otherness was invoked and imposed upon her. Through embodied learning, Inidima comprehended the ways in which she was Othered in Canada. She said that she *became* Black when she travelled to Canada: “I see that word [Black] and I see that this is how this society feels like it should categorize me as [because of her physical appearance].” Inidima preferred to be identified by her ethnicity and nationality, as she was referred to in her country in Western Africa.

Inidima’s affirming internal conviction evinced a critical thinking process she engaged with to understand why and how she was Othered. Inidima did not confront the act of Othering directly in the moment it happened to preserve her safety but quietly, defiantly rejected it by embracing what she perceived as her identity. The act of rejecting a social construct thrust upon her preserved her dignity. The act of establishing her own identity in an unfamiliar environment proved that having any amount of control – in other words, having agency – contributed to Inidima’s resilience during uncertain housing circumstances. The societal labelling did not give her the platform to identify in her own terms. However, she empowered herself by claiming a self-determined identity. Inidima’s recognition and subsequent rejection of the labelling thrust upon her, and her act of reclaiming national and ethnic identity were valuable in understanding her interpretations of her social, political, and economic location in the immediate environment and how she circumnavigated it.

Homogenization of RIS’ experiences, social statuses, and backgrounds render their complexities barren. Examining RIS’ experiences of belongingness and well-being using neoliberal and colonial constructs of acceptance such as integration and acculturation take away from students’ ability to name and define their how they want to create a sense of home,

inclusivity, and of acceptance. Additionally, neoliberal and colonial constructs of acceptance render mechanisms of inequality such as anti-Black racism and sexism invisible. Othering or casting RIS as outsiders and going into “stranger danger” mode to treat them as threats is made easier when RIS are devoid of identities, complexities stripped of their humanity. Therefore, RIS’ agency is denied when they cannot fully engage in immediate environments in self-determined ways.

Conscious awareness repairs an individual’s relations with self, and others, as well as their product and labour by restoring an individual’s agency and strengthening their self-esteem and self-worth. Affirmed RIS demonstrated that they manage resilience by prioritizing thriving over surviving. Consciously aware RIS wants to create a humane society that builds on social relations between humans, not social relations between things. This research’s participants’ commitment to social changes were demonstrated by their participation and contribution to this study. They expressed desires to see social, legal, and economic changes spurred by the publication of the violations of their human, tenancy, and housing rights, so that other RIS and students from equity-seeking groups are not subjected to similar systemic inequalities.

Inidima’s account of how she managed her housing woes provides an intimate and crucial insight into the vulnerable situations international students can find themselves in due to being away from familiar personal and institutional support systems. The participant chose to not engage emotionally with her problems and focused on the solutions to overcome it. She said:

I didn’t tell my mum until after I moved out...especially since we are not in contact [physically] – we can’t hug and touch each other...when you see it through someone’s eyes, someone who loves you, you realize how they feel about it; it becomes more real.

Inidima's strategy shows that RIS reframed colonial encounters by minimizing the power that hegemonic systems have over them and responding intellectually to violation of their rights. Inidima's actions succinctly illustrate RIS' conscious awareness moderating harmful effects of hypervigilant awareness. RIS's state of precarity is created through intersections of race, gender, socioeconomic status, citizenship, and other factors such as availability of social safety nets. The concept of interpellation expands the literature canon of resilience by examining how conscious awareness cultivated by multilayered and inter-relationally reflective strategies of RIS informed the development of multisystemic resilience. Understanding how RIS achieve multisystemic resilience can educate efforts to support the needs of RIS at the institutional and societal levels.

### **Anti-Racist Feminist Examination of Resilience: Contextualizing RIS' Resilience in White Settler Society of Canada**

The main housing-related struggle that the RIS participants faced was securing and retaining clean, safe, and stable housing, made more difficult amid Kjiptuk/Halifax's affordable housing crisis. A second concern that most participants had was the unequal power relations with property owners, management, and housemates due to gender, race, immigration status, and socioeconomic status. Data gathered in this research documented RIS' dehumanizing experiences as tenants. RIS participants faced violations of their tenancy rights due to status as 'foreign' residents with temporary resident visas and ageism against youth.

Despite these violations, RIS actively created resilient solutions as they develop agency when navigating structurally unequal housing situations. Due to the nature of participants' vastly diverse identities, their ideas of resilience varied. However, a common trend in RIS' approach to achieve resilience was to tread with caution when facing a challenge so as to not harm their educational resilience. All participants managed conflicts with owners, realtor administrators, and housemates tactfully to preserve goodwill and avoid conflict.

Hypervigilance cognitively primes an individual to associate authorities with harm-causing situations, especially if they or their community members have prior experiences with violence by authorities (Smith et al., 2019). In a hypervigilant awareness state, the RIS in my research diligently avoided any housing-related advocacy that could lead to contact with law-enforcing authorities. Specifically, they were fearful of losing their temporary resident visas and study permits if they raised any complaints about the housing discrimination and injustices they were facing. The temporary status of their legal existence in Canada induced feelings of impermanence that the RIS felt acutely and constantly. Tigrou felt safer in her rented space as she did not experience racial microaggressions, but she feared to advocate for her rights as a tenant (the right to live in a home not ridden with pests) as she was afraid that any confrontations with the homeowner would affect her immigration status unfavorably. For Tigrou, home had an important significance in maintaining an optimum wellness characterized by psychological, emotional, and physical safety:

A healthy place is a place to relax, good friends around you – positive atmosphere, no mice, and good food. Being healthy means being able to sleep, no mice walking on bed, walking by my head...when I can actually hear them. It impacts your health in terms of you just don't feel healthy in your body and having infections and diseases caused by mice. Being healthy also means that having a place which is comfortable, having good food...when I just bought bread...leave it on the table...ten minutes later, mice would have eaten the bread and I would have to throw it out. I have to go back to the grocery store...I have to try my best to actually not have mice eat it.

However, Tigrou traded off the opportunity to a clean-living environment to maintain the stability of her educational and financial resilience. She did not consult the Tenancy Board when

the homeowner used pest control unsuccessfully and responded inadequately, even though living in a mice-infested home compromised her mental and physical resilience. Additionally, barriers to stable housing directly impacts job retention, school dropout rates, and poor nutritional health among youth aged 14 to 24 (Dachner et al., 2015, p. 134). Tigrou's experiences provide the evidence for how her lack of stable housing affected her emotional, physical, and mental health.

Fear of an encounter with the authorities also discouraged Zia from approaching the Residential Tenancy Board to advocate for herself. In fact, Zia felt more vulnerable and at risk when she advocated for her rights as a tenant due to threatening and intimidating responses from her apartment manager. For instance, Zia requested a formal letter in which the apartment management's request for multiple months' rent to be paid in advance was documented in writing. In response to Zia's request, the manager said, "Oh, you document everything, don't you?" While management did provide her with a letter detailing the deposit, they did not document their practice of requiring multiple months' rent to be paid in advance. Zia noted that:

I was in the property management office when I witnessed the property manager asking another international student for four months of advanced rent as well. Usually when you are doing something illegal, you would try to hide it, but they were not afraid.

The property management's refusal to document the advanced rent practice showed that the management was aware that the practice of requiring multiple months' rent to be paid in advance is illegal according to the RTA.

Documented instances of inefficient and inaccessible government services such as the Residential Tenancy Board made Zia feel that she was on her own. Therefore, she felt hopeless, denigrated, and discouraged by the interactions with the manager who made disparaging comments every time Zia tried to practice her rights as a tenant. After several denigrating



comments by the property manager, Zia understood through these interactions that her actions of exercising her rights as a tenant was provoking the property management's anger. She was acutely aware of the power imbalance between herself as an international student with less support networks and the property management entity that could and did exploit her status as a non-permanent RIS without repercussions.

Accordingly, Zia advocated for herself while operating in a state of hypervigilant awareness, and tried to ensure that she stayed out of trouble without giving up on her rights as a tenant. Zia knew that it is not illegal for her as an international student to practice her rights as a tenant. But the fear of potential negative impacts on her housing status prevented her from reporting the illegal advanced rent required or naming it openly. She added:

I was never able to say the word "illegal" because I was scared that it would come back to me because I live there. That was supposed to be my safe place, the safe place that I return to everyday. But then, you cannot afford that type of interaction with your landlord if you want to have that place and be able to sleep in peace and not fear that they will barge in your apartment at night and ask you to leave. I wish I was able to tell them that "this is illegal." Maybe I can afford [to do] that [someday].

In their study about racial microaggressions experienced by international students, Houshmand, Spanierman, and Tafarodi (2014) established that RIS experienced invalidating and degrading racism that appear innocent and harmless on the surface. They found that the students coped with racial microaggressions by engaging with racial and cultural groups they are familiar with, withdrawing from academic spaces, and by seeking comfort in the surrounding multicultural (higher density of people from non-dominant identities in Canada) environment (p. 377). These coping mechanisms allowed the participants to avoid racial microaggressions and

surround themselves with people who are of similar legal status in Canadian society and who have encountered almost identical barriers (Houshmand, et al., 2014).

This research's participants shared that they engaged in the coping tactics while in a state of hypervigilant awareness. My application of a critical race feminist theoretical framework in this project allows me to show how RIS created cognitively complex and authentic learning opportunities they used to inform their coping strategies, helping them understand their intersectional positionalities. In turn, the research participants acquired ways to improve physical, emotional, and mental resilience that not only strengthened their resilience but also challenged and navigated aggressions.

Zia demonstrated a shift from hypervigilant awareness to conscious awareness by moderating the power imbalance in property owner-RIS tenant interactions during an apartment unit viewing appointment. She attended the appointment impeccably dressed (wearing heels and formal clothing), made sure to mention her level of education, and demonstrated by action that she was a fluent English speaker. She signalled to the property owner that she was a worthy prospective tenant and will not be a financial 'flight risk' through the curated presentation of herself. In addition, she asked specific and detailed questions about aspects of the building and the lease. She demonstrated to the property owner that she was well-versed about her rights and the RTA. While she knew that she could still be exploited due to the inadequate protection of tenants by the RTA, she signaled to the landlord that she was aware of the loopholes that can be used to exploit prospective international student tenants. As a result, the prospective landlord became aware that not all RIS are equally vulnerable to the abuses of the gaps in the RTA.

Tigrou's journey of overcoming fear describes a transformed subjectivity. Tigrou enlisted a pro-bono lawyer when the landlord delayed returning a safety deposit amounting to

approximately \$6,000 Canadian dollars after the moving out process. While Tigrou actively sought help to retrieve the security deposit for herself and roommates, she experienced fear about this process affecting her eligibility for the postgraduate work permit, Canadian citizenship, and her current legal status in Canada. The act of participating in the process of practicing one's legal rights is not punishable legally, but Tigrou worried that there may be social consequences. Tigrou was fearful of seeking help, especially from government organizations. Tigrou was hyper-vigilantly aware of being a non-permanent resident, and fearful from past experiences of racism and microaggressions in Canadian housing and academic spaces.

When engaging in self-advocacy, her fear subsided as she became more knowledgeable about her rights as a tenant. Her fear dissipated as she navigated her adversities as an informed tenant, and through participating in research on the tenancy rights of international students. During her second tenancy lease signing, she and her fellow housemates negotiated to pay multiple months as security deposits (advanced rent) in ways that would not put financial stress on them. While they recognized that their property manager was practicing an illegal security deposit practice, they proposed ways to pay the advanced rent that were beneficial to both parties, enabling Tigrou to have access to stable, safe, hygienic, and affordable housing.

Self-guided, active learning, and student-led educational spaces provide the tools and spaces to RIS to create new relations between bodies and spaces that centre agency and sustainable resilience. Critical praxis of agency involving inter-relational reflexive analysis within academic and non-academic communities that inform one's navigation of unequal housing crisis transformed this RIS' subjectivity. Tigrou no longer operated from hypervigilant awareness; she interacted with her intersectional identities and surroundings through conscious awareness.

After experiencing micro and macro aggression forms of discrimination in Kjiptuk/Halifax, Tigrou said that she developed an informed understanding about Canada as a White settler nation:

...before I came [to Canada], people would say, “oh you are going to Canada? That’s a great country. You will have less disadvantages in terms of work and school.” I responded, “yes, Canada is a good country.” But through four years of my experience [in Canada], I have different perspectives and opinions of Canada. Canada is not the Canada that people think Canada is...a really good country, welcoming country...I am not saying that all Canadians are bad people, or wrong people, it is just they don’t make the effort to understand people, or international students...They would say something racist but for them it is not racist.

Tigrou also reflected on how she came to comprehend that she was protected by her parents’ high socioeconomic status (SES), despite facing structural racism against those of African ancestry in her country. Tigrou’s reflections on her perspectives about Canada before and after studying in Mi’kma’ki/ Nova Scotia echoes the experiences of participants in Parasram et al. (2023) who also shared that “the Canada that they had imagined was different from the Canada they experienced” (p. 196).

Prim’s conscious awareness is illustrated by her self-reflexive decision-making processes, by not pandering to racist behaviors, by finding common solutions, and by communicating clearly with all parties involved. Prim shared that her White housemate, who was also her best friend at the time, ridiculed her food. She said that “I felt angry when my housemate called my food weird. In Japan, ‘weird’ translates to a term that is almost rude.” Prim was also ridiculed for not leading a “frequent-partying lifestyle.” Prim experienced shock at the ignorance of her best

friend, even as she understood that her friend came from an area in Nova Scotia where there were not many people other than White people. Prim's housing experiences made her feel like an outsider.

Through these experiences, she began to question the notion of 'Canadians are nice.' Prim consulted another White Canadian friend to better understand her White housemate's rationale for acting disrespectfully towards her and refusing to be open to differences. Prim named the non-housemate Canadian's worldliness and openness to different cultures as the factor that made him a *safe* person whom she could reach out to. Despite being upset due to the conflicts, Prim continued to communicate with her housemate to establish boundaries while living together.

Moreover, Evaluna's experience with apartment managers and owners encouraged her to think critically about land ownership and entitlement by non-Indigenous people in Canada and in her country, and her privilege in terms of racial identity and intergenerational wealth. She shared that her housing experiences and her participation as an RIS in Eurocentric classrooms made her realize that she wanted to engage in socially conscious models of property-ownership. She identified a strategy that more affluent RIS could engage with when they are considering studying and working in Canada. She said:

It is basically a privilege. Owning a house is like having a passport. Owning a property is like having citizenship. Business owners, house owners, property owners, they do hold more power...if you want to study and move here, and you come here with friends, I recommend that you sit down with your parents and talk about a collective investment in Canada. It is not only because of the commodities, but also because that will improve your status in Canada when you want to live here.

Her point demonstrated that RIS are aware that the ownership of a property increases individuals' economic and social status, and that owning a property might improve their social and economic capital in Canada. Evaluna demonstrates a transformed subjectivity through her intersectional understanding of land entitlement in settler-dominated Canada and her racially complex relations to land ownership in her home country.

In conclusion, RIS used varied coping mechanisms and advocacy as tools to maintain resilience. Both Zia and Tigrou practiced agency more determinedly when they understood their intersectional positionalities vis-a-vis inter-relational reflexive reflection after experiencing visceral confrontations. These interactions forced them to acknowledge that they were being exploited due to non-permanent resident citizenship status as temporary resident visa and study permit holders, loopholes in the legal system exploited by property owners, a lack of contextualized support and advocacy on their behalf and being seen as an outsider. All participants' varied states of embodied awareness, Tigrou's deeper understanding about anti-Black racism, and Evaluna's inter-relational reflexive examination of Indigenous relations to lands were facilitated by embodied learning informed by having to navigate and overcome atypical levels of stress induced by experiencing tenancy and housing rights violation, exclusion, and other forms of discrimination.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

How do geographical and socioeconomic factors affect the tenancy options available to racialized international students? RIS' constructions as the Other and heightened awareness of 'stranger danger' emerged through analyzing RIS' interactions with rental property managers and owners. As temporary student migrants, many RIS were treated as inferior, unscrupulous migrants, and even as 'dodgy' tenants. Despite being coveted as permanent resident candidates and embraced for their cultural distinctiveness, RIS were regarded suspiciously by many. Consequently, they were less likely to seek institutionalized support services in the event of violations of their tenancy and housing rights. RIS also tended to abstain from advocating for themselves because they feared negative repercussions impacting legal status as temporary resident visa holders in Canada. Additionally, RIS experienced tangible consequences of advocating for themselves, such as retaliations manifesting in their social relations with rental property administrators and housemates.

Given the complex environments RIS find themselves in, how do they navigate these and overcome differential treatments and citizenship barriers to thrive emotionally, physically, socially, and academically? Research participants' self-advocacy demonstrated carefully woven webs of strategies utilized to navigate barriers. These students maneuvered exploitative situations to meet prioritized needs by delicately balancing acts of pushing back and remaining silent. I probed deeply into RIS' management of exposure to risks and navigation of PFFPs by developing the concept of multiple states of embodied awareness – hypervigilant awareness, conscious awareness, and transformed subjectivity. I found that racialized international students allocated considerable resources such as money, time, and

energy (emotional, physical, and mental) to create ingenious strategies that maximized resources available and minimized risks to achieve desired goals and outcomes. RIS' calculated navigations of challenges illustrated critical cognitive adaptation and transformation through embodied learning informed by experiencing injustice as racialized international student tenants.

### **Contributions**

One of the contributions of this research as a Women and Gender Studies thesis informed by Indigenous research methodology pedagogies and critical race feminist theoretical framework is the concept of *states of embodied awareness*. The concept chronicles individuals' embodied processes of coming into awareness of their intersectional identities. By examining the pathways that RIS employed to achieve critically informed resilience, I provide proof of RIS resisting manipulation and exploitation through intricate, complex, and brilliant navigation of PFPs to tap into networks of support systems and resources. The following substantive contributions will minimize structural and overt racism within services catered to RIS. Contextualized, respectful services will provide significant support in individuals' journeys as international students, migrants, and tenants.

The critical race feminist praxis allowed in-depth analysis of RIS' tenancy-related experiences in Kjiptuk/Halifax, of how racialization processes manifests in day-to-day interactions, and the determinants of multisystemic resilience. The methodology framework of this research centers knowledge of tenancy matters in Kjiptuk/Halifax as experienced by RIS. It is hoped that this research will inform, inspire, and galvanize RIS to address social discrepancies which affect their quality of life. Lastly, identifying the types of support which are relevant and responsive to the needs of RIS would create the space to



nourish critical leadership and knowledge that enable practical social emancipation for and by RIS.

The main theoretical contribution of this research is the use of the critical race feminist analytical framework to uncover the layers of relationships between housing and tenancy concerns of RIS, and multisystemic resilience. I bring together the critical race feminist theoretical lens with the interdisciplinary model of multisystemic resilience to investigate heterogeneous international student population's strategies to achieve optimal wellness. This approach allows identification of factors that affect health of diverse populations. I used the concept of states of embodied awareness as a tool to understand management of PFPs. Most importantly, the application of Indigenous, critical race, and feminist framework create shared responsibility for ensuring international students' optimal health by resisting neoliberal bias inherent in research pedagogy, policies, and services delivered to them. My study will be informative to many parties who are engaging with international students such as municipal and federal governments, non-profit organizations, researchers, and PSE institution administrators.

Additionally, my study exposes factors influencing neoliberal global education migration as well as shaping Indigenous and racialized, non-permanent citizen settler relationships. Use of research methodology informed by Indigenous pedagogy, and critical race feminist theoretical analysis, of the effects of nation-building discourses on these relationships illustrates how stronger relations between international students, the Mi'kmaq, African Nova Scotians, and other community members can be cultivated and sustained.

## Recommendations

In the interviews conducted, participants were asked to share any recommendations that they had as an RIS and student tenant. In response, participants provided substantive suggestions. BlueJay said that while she had hoped to live in Kijipuktuk/Halifax following graduation, she decided to move to another province due to unaffordable rent and lax tenancy regulations. Zia recommended that greater regulation of housing rights be implemented. Offerings such as the Municipal Services and Information Centre (via a 311 Contact Centre), which responds to immediate by-law infractions, is useful but inadequate as it does not hold property owners and management accountable. Zia said that regulations of property ownership and management are fundamentally crucial to reduce predatory rental practices against *any* tenants, but particularly vulnerable RIS. Tigrou encouraged RIS to not be afraid, to fight for themselves, to use available resources, and to try and get help when they need it, regardless of the challenges they face.

Prim said that she organized student societies for international students so they can get together and share information with each other. She did so because she wished that she had access to such supportive spaces when she arrived in Canada. Inidima encouraged RIS to prepare as much as they can by researching their options in Canada prior to arriving. She opined that being an international student is the most risky and vulnerable position one can be in due to limited settlement services, non-existing tenancy rights, and expensive university fees, on top of the discrimination such as sexism and racism experienced by many Canadian study permit holders. As such, she advised RIS to be strategic with their housing and academic decisions by prioritizing creating situations that enable completion of education as soon as possible.

One of the services that could be offered is housing support delivered by an international student housing advisor. This position can provide informed and updated consultation on housing to students and university administration. Examples of services that would be rendered include pre-arrival housing/residential briefing services, educational workshops on topics such as the RTA, tenant rights, and tenant insurance policies.

Development and implementation of comprehensive international student services at universities would address many of the challenges discussed in this research. Hiring a specialized legal advisor who actively informs, increases awareness, intervenes, and advocates for international students regarding violation of tenancy rights and right to housing would provide some buffering effect from rampant predatory rental practices and protection from landlord abuse and harassment. This position is critical in supporting international students with their housing needs and is different from the suggested international student housing advisor.

The specialized legal advisor's key role is advocacy whereas the international student housing advisor's top priority is education and capacity-building. The specialized legal advisor's core competencies would include background in law to provide crisis prevention, and resolution support including legal representation. The international student advisor's role would be prevention focused. Both positions could be made more impactful through the support of a housing outreach worker, with non-clinical counselling training among other qualifications, providing direct services to international students. Multifaceted services with adequate structural and institutional resources are more likely to be effective and successful in providing relevant, meaningful, and trustworthy services to international students.

RIS' housing and tenancy rights violations documented and studied have shed light on the need for intergovernmental, multi-sectoral intervention to prevent appalling housing conditions. This research has identified substantive recommendations from groups such as the Canadian Centre for Housing Rights (CCHR), the Migrant Workers Alliance (MWA), and the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) – their suggestions will directly contribute to and improve RIS' socioeconomic conditions in Canada. CCHR recommended youth-targeted actions such as developing and delivering youth-led, rights-based housing education to all young people, and providing funding and support to equity-seeking communities to access targeted advocacy against housing discrimination. Additionally, the organization suggested that governments fund housing discrimination audits in collaboration with housing organizations and establish a simplified, strengthened enforcement system that holds property owners, management, sublessors, and tenants accountable.

The end goals of all these recommendations are to reduce discriminatory practices in housing and the potential of homelessness forced on equity-seeking members of society. These goals *can* be implemented in Kijipuktuk/Halifax. Targeted actions to improve students and young peoples' access to affordable, adequate, and suitable housing could include a Student Housing Strategy developed collaboratively by students of various backgrounds, advocacy groups, provincial government departments, and municipalities. They should all sit at the decision-making table to consult and implement an effective and anti-discriminatory student housing plan.

In April 2023, the Regional Council of HRM passed Bylaw R-400 Respecting Registration of Residential Rental Properties. The approval enables HRM to enforce the M-

200 Respecting Standards for Residential Occupancies bylaw. HRM should collaborate with community organizations such as the Nova Scotia Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (Nova Scotia ACORN) and DAL Legal Aid, which has long advocated for the enforcement of section 23 of the RTA, to act upon infractions of the RTA efficiently and swiftly.

MWA and CFS have also advocated for the removal of the 20-hours per week limit and industry restrictions on work for international students. They have tirelessly represented international students across Canada in their advocacy campaigns for lower international tuition and delivery of comprehensive services for international students. Such services refer to healthcare, housing, settlement, scholarships, and in-school support, to name a few. In Kijipuktuk/Halifax, an example of improved services would be provision of full provincial MSI health coverage upon the start of international students' education, rather than after thirteen successive months of being in the province without having been away during that period for more than 31 consecutive days.

### **Implications**

As I demonstrated in this thesis, anti-colonial methodology utilizing critical race feminist lens revealed impacts of structural, discursive, and affective forms of discrimination. Innovative use of methodology and theory in this research underscores the impacts of utilizing an anti-colonial research method informed by critical race feminist theoretical framework. I developed situated knowledge of a diverse population of international students by creating the concept of states of embodied awareness. Methodology informed by both Indigenous pedagogy and critical race feminist theory could inform development of contextual and meaningful supportive systems for

international students. Concurrent application of the model of multisystemic resilience theory, embodied learning theory, and inter-relational reflexive theory creates opportunities to re-conceptualize any organizations' approaches related to international students. Efforts already ongoing to preserve and improve housing affordability in Canada such as the Housing Assessment Resource Project (HART) must remain flexible and inquisitive in its approach to seeking solutions.

This research provides valuable information for stakeholders concerned with international students' services on campus and off campus. The research also aimed to increase awareness amongst RIS about their human rights and housing rights. An important contribution is the influence on policy and decision-making structures in Kijipuktuk/Halifax to shift strategies and practices affecting RIS, including but not limited to migrant/international student recruitment, purpose-built student accommodation (PBSAs), and revision of the RTA to accord stronger tenant rights protection.

Furthermore, the examination of racialized international students' experiences highlights importance of research that is based on the specificities of international students' identities, experiences, and interactions with societies they have become part of. This approach informs RIS' navigation of Halifax-specific communities, including populations of students from the African continent and of African diasporas, Black Nova Scotian students, White settlers, and racialized settlers. Relatedly, this research promotes nuanced understanding of racialized students' experiences and influences in forming spatialized ethnic community enclaves.

The research's deeper implications are revelations of the impacts of the state's geographical, economic, and social policies related to housing and urban development on

PSE student populations, particularly RIS. Introspection of power, national, and capital accruements influencing RIS' performances of 'good citizen' behaviours, such as not challenging discriminatory property owners, is an example of how these interactions have been expounded upon in this research.

### **Limitations**

The primary limitation of this research is the small pool of interview participants. My sample of participants does not represent all RIS due to the heterogenous nature of the international student population. Regardless, I performed the analysis of RIS' experiences within the context of continuously deepening inequalities non-immigrant youth and individuals who are racialized, differently abled, gender-diverse, and of lower SES in Kijipuktuk/Halifax experience. I extrapolate some results of the research to develop the concept of states of embodied awareness to better understand the overall trends in RIS' endeavours to achieve physical, emotional, and psychological safety.

Another limitation is the lack of access to institutional documentations which could have demonstrated the shifts in recruitment and innovative approaches in addressing international students' needs. The lack of previous critical research in this field is also a limitation as a master's thesis project faces constraints of time and resources and cannot faithfully examine all elements of a topic of interest. As there are few methods or critical theories that have been applied to address these areas of inquiry, this research has had to limit the scope of this topic to enable an exploratory approach.

### **Future Research Directions**

My project presents opportunities for future research because of its exploratory nature. Studies utilizing methodology informed by Indigenous research pedagogy and

critical race feminist theoretical framework are required to generate comprehensive knowledge needed to develop affordable housing for the international student population. Future studies of public health outcomes of racialized immigrant and migrant communities employing comprehensive theoretical framework and innovative methodological framework, especially Indigenous pedagogy and critical race feminist approaches can result in enhanced understanding of the paradoxical relationships between physical and mental health in racialized communities and to reduce the phenomenon of healthy immigrant effect. Moreover, the concept of states of embodied awareness provided valuable and critical insight about RIS' negotiations of PFFPs to attain optimum wellness characterized by physical, emotional, and psychological safety. Future research could probe into and test the states of embodied awareness concept to create a holistic understanding of the factors influencing RIS' physical, emotional, and psychological health.

Future research could investigate how affordable, adequate, and suitable purpose-built student housing can be developed by considering Canadian and international students' socioeconomic status, safe expression of gender and sexuality orientation, and non-permanent resident citizenship status, among other factors. Finally, future research that identifies the types of support relevant to and informed about the needs of RIS emerging from their perspectives would enable practical social emancipation for and by RIS.

Lastly, future research could also engage with analysis of capital accumulation through white settler nationhood and citizenship status with regards to RIS' accumulation of national, social, and economic capital as settlers on Indigenous lands. The focus on the development of social and economic capital can provide better understanding about how



RIS's socioeconomic location influences and interacts with the states of embodied awareness and decision-making.

In conclusion, this research has the potential to inform policy-making processes and the development of strategies focused on creating accessible, affordable housing, and on developing equitable public health outcomes for Canadian and migrant student populations and racialized communities. As an RIS studying the tenancy and housing rights of racialized international students, I was held in awe and motivated by the resilience, strength, courage and brilliance RIS participants demonstrated daily in the face of structural adversities and personal vulnerabilities. These qualities and the research findings also served as a stark reminder of the past and ongoing exploitation of individuals with precarious income, citizenship status, and different physical and mental abilities. It is my hope that the issues discussed in this thesis will highlight the urgency and importance of creative exploration being continued to determine empathetic and committed short-term, intermediate, and long-term solutions to the housing crisis we are collectively experiencing.

## References

- Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC (AMSSA). (2016). *Newcomer Housing: Barriers, needs, and experiences*. Migration Matters. <https://www.amssa.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/InfoSheet31-Housing.pdf>
- Ahmed, S. (2000). *Strange encounters: Embodied others in post-coloniality*. NY: Routledge.
- Alharbi, S. E., & Smith, A. (2018). Review of the literature on stress and wellbeing of international students in english-speaking countries. *International Education Studies*, 11(6), 22-44. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ies.v11n6p22>
- American Psychological Association (APA). (2022). *Discrimination: What it is and how to cope*. Racism, Bias, and Discrimination. <https://www.apa.org/topics/racism-bias-discrimination/types-stress>
- American Psychological Association (APA). (2023). Situated knowledge. In *Dictionary*. <https://dictionary.apa.org/situated-knowledge>
- Association of Nova Scotia University Teachers (ANSUT). (2012). *Culture of entitlement 2012*. Publications and Research. [https://www.ansut.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/ANSUT\\_A- Culture of Entitlement\\_web2.pdf](https://www.ansut.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/ANSUT_A- Culture of Entitlement_web2.pdf)
- Association of Nova Scotia University Teachers (ANSUT). (2021). *Culture of entitlement 2021*. Publications and Research. [https://www.ansut.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Culture-of-Entitlement-Report-2012-2021\\_FINAL-REVISED.pdf](https://www.ansut.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Culture-of-Entitlement-Report-2012-2021_FINAL-REVISED.pdf)
- Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency. (2018) *News release*. Atlantic Growth Strategy mission strengthens trade relationship with China. <https://www.canada.ca/en/atlantic-canada-opportunities/news/2018/11/atlantic-growth-strategy-mission-strengthens-trade-relationship-with-china.html>
- August, M. (2022). *The financialization of housing in Canada: A summary report for the office of the federal housing advocate*. The Office of the Federal Housing Advocate. <https://www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/attachments/august-financialization-summary-report-ofha-en.pdf>
- Bannerji, H. (1995). *Thinking through: Essays on feminism, Marxism, and anti-racism*. Toronto, ON: Women's Press.
- Bannerji, H. (1996). On the dark side of the nation: Politics of multiculturalism and the state of "Canada". *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 31(3), 103-128. <https://doi.org/10.3138/jcs.31.3.103>

- Bastien, N. & Tuey, C. (2022). *Non-permanent residents in Canada: Portrait of a growing population from the 2021 Census*. Insights on Canadian Society. Statistics Canada. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/75-006-x/2023001/article/00006-eng.htm>
- Belkhodja, C. (2013). *Improving the assessment of international students' contribution to Canadian society*. Pathways to Prosperity Partnership in collaboration with World Education Services (WES). <http://p2pcanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/International-Students-Contribution-to-Canadian-Society.pdf>
- Block, S., Galabuzi, E., & Tranjan, R. (2019). *Canada's colour coded income inequality*. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA). <https://policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2019/12/Canada's%20Colour%20Coded%20Income%20Inequality.pdf>
- BONARD. (2021). *Student housing in Canada and the world*. Insights. <https://www.bonard.com/insights/student-housing-annual-report-2021>
- Brownlee, J. (2016). The roles of government in corporatizing Canadian universities. *Academic Matters. OCUFA's Journal of Higher Education*. Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations. <https://academicmatters.ca/the-role-of-governments-in-corporatizing-canadian-universities/>
- Bunjun, B. (2011). *The (un)making of home. entitlement. and nation: An intersectional organizational study of power relations in Vancouver Status of Women, 1971-2008*. (Doctoral dissertation). UBC Library Open Collection. doi: I014288/ 10072302
- Bunjun, B. (2018). *Ethnography and In- Depth Interviews*. Class Notes.
- Coloma, R. S. (2017) "Too Asian?": on racism, paradox, and ethno-nationalism. In R. S. Coloma, & G. Pan (eds.). *Asian Canadian studies reader*. (pp. 363-382). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Calder, J., Richter, S., Mao, Y., Kovacs Burns, K., Mogale, S., & Danko, M. (2016). International Students Attending Canadian Universities: Their Experiences with Housing, Finances, and Other Issues. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, 46(2), 92–110. <https://doi.org/10.47678/cjhe.v46i2.184585>
- Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE). (2018). *The student's voice: National results of the 2018 CBIE international student survey*. CBIE research in brief. [https://cbie.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Student\\_Voice\\_Report-ENG.pdf](https://cbie.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Student_Voice_Report-ENG.pdf)
- Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE). (2021). *The student's voice: National Results of the 2021 CBIE international student survey*. CBIE research in brief. <https://cbie.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/CBIE-2021-International-Student-Survey-National-Report-FINAL.pdf>

- Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA). (2021). *Keys to a housing secure future for all Nova Scotians*. Reports and Studies.  
<https://policyalternatives.ca/publications/reports/keys-housing-secure-future-all-nova-scotians>
- Canadian Centre for Housing Rights (CCHR). (2009). *Sorry it's rented: Measuring discrimination in Toronto's rental housing market*. Reports.  
<https://housingrightscanada.com/reports/sorry-its-rented-2009/>
- Canadian Centre for Housing Rights (CCHR). (2018). *Youth housing rights: A toolkit for creative legal education*. Government of Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy.  
<https://www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/attachments/Getting%20It%20Right%20-%20Putting%20human%20rights%20at%20the%20centre%20of.....pdf>
- Canadian Centre for Housing Rights (CCHR). (2022). *Sorry it's rented: Measuring discrimination in Toronto's rental housing market*. Reports.  
<https://housingrightscanada.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/CCHR-Sorry-its-rented-Discrimination-Audit-2022.pdf>
- Canadian Centre for Housing Rights (CCHR). (2022). *Housing investments in Canada's 2022 federal budget*. Housing policy news: September 2022.  
<https://housingrightscanada.com/housing-investments-in-canadas-2022-federal-budget/>
- Canadian Centre for Housing Rights. (2023). *The provincial government extends the interim rent cap to the end of 2025*. Housing policy news: March 2023.  
[https://housingrightscanada.com/housing-policy-news-march-2023/?mc\\_cid=8cb669397d&mc\\_eid=9128de410f](https://housingrightscanada.com/housing-policy-news-march-2023/?mc_cid=8cb669397d&mc_eid=9128de410f)
- Canadian Federation of Students (CFS). (2015). *Tuition fees for international undergraduate students*. Factsheets. [https://assets.website-files.com/620e68df56083744894afe58/620e68df5608372a1e4afee0\\_2015-05-Factsheet-IntUGrads-EN.pdf](https://assets.website-files.com/620e68df56083744894afe58/620e68df5608372a1e4afee0_2015-05-Factsheet-IntUGrads-EN.pdf)
- Canadian International Education Strategy. (2020) *Building on success: International education strategy (2019-2024)*. International Education.  
<https://www.international.gc.ca/education/strategy-2019-2024-strategie.aspx?lang=eng>
- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). (2009). *Affordability challenges and rental market dynamics in small Nova Scotia communities with community college campuses*. Research Highlight.  
[https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2009/schl-cmhc/NH18-23/NH18-23-109-008E.pdf](https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2009/schl-cmhc/NH18-23/NH18-23-109-008E.pdf)

- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). (2021). *Research insights on social inclusion from the Canadian housing survey*. The Housing Observer. <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/blog/2021/research-insights-social-inclusion-canadian-housing-survey>
- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). (2023) *Rental market report*. January 2023 Edition. Housing Market Information. <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/-/media/sites/cmhc/professional/housing-markets-data-and-research/market-reports/rental-market-report/rental-market-report-2022-en.ashx>
- Carmack, J. S., Bedi, S., & Heiss, N. S. (2016). International Students, University Health Centers, and Memorable Messages About Health. *Journal of International Students*, 6(1), 52-72. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1083289.pdf>.
- Chen, W. H. & Hou, F. (2019). *Intergenerational education mobility and labour market outcomes: Variation among the second generation of immigrants in Canada*. Statistics Canada. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/11f0019m/11f0019m2019006-eng.pdf?st=fdPJ5dTM>
- Chen, J. A., Liu, L., Zhao, X., & Yeung, A. S. (2015). Chinese international students: An emerging mental health crisis. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 54, 879-880. doi:10.1016/j.jaac.2015.06.022
- Crossman, E., Hou, F., & Picot, G. (2021). *Are the gaps in labour market outcomes between immigrants and their Canadian born counterparts starting to close?* Statistics Canada. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/36-28-0001/2021004/article/00004-eng.pdf?st=GlxMjIRS>
- Crossman, E., Lu, Y., & Hou, F. (2022). *International students as a source of labour supply: Engagement in the labour market after graduation*. Economic and Social Reports. Statistics Canada. <https://doi.org/10.25318/36280001202101200002-eng>
- Chalungsooth, P. & Schneller, R. G. (2011). Development of Translation Materials to Assess International Students' Mental Health Concerns. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, 39, 180-189. Retrieved from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/j.2161-1912.2011.tb00150.x>
- Chong, J. K. & Razek, N. (2014). Feeling Welcome with No “Buts”: Chinese Student Engagement in Residence Life. *Counselor Education and Human Services Faculty Publications*. (2). Retrieved from <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/232844234.pdf>
- Colen C. G., Ramey D. M., Cooksey E. C. & Williams D. R. (2018). racial disparities in health among nonpoor African Americans and Hispanics: The role of acute and chronic discrimination. *Social Science & Medicine*, 199, 167–80.

- Collins, P. (1999). Learning from the outsider within: The sociological significance of Black Feminist Thought. In S. Hesse-Biber, C. Gilmartin, & R. Lydenberg (Eds.), *Feminist approaches to theory and methodology: An interdisciplinary reader* (pp. 135- 178). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Cox, C. R. (2014). *International students in Canada: Policies and practices for social inclusion*. (Master's Thesis, Ryerson University).
- CTV Atlantic. (2018, September 4). Influx of international students creates housing crunch at Cape Breton University. *CTV News*. Retrieved from <https://atlantic.ctvnews.ca/influx-of-international-students-creates-housing-crunch-at-cape-breton-university-1.4080120>
- Dachner, N., Mitchell, A., & Tarasuk, V. (2015). Household food insecurity in Canada, 2013. PROOF. Programmatic Grant in Health and Health Equity, Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). <https://proof.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/foodinsecurity2013.pdf>
- DasGupta, S. (2008). Narrative humility. *The Lancet*. doi: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(08\)60440-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(08)60440-7)
- Dauwer, Z. (2018). *Assessing Canada's support of international students: A comprehensive review of Canada's retention and settlement of its "model immigrants"*. Ryerson Centre for Immigration & Settlement. [https://www.torontomu.ca/content/dam/centre-for-immigration-and-settlement/tmcis/publications/workingpapers/2018\\_2\\_Dauwer\\_Zaheer\\_A\\_Assessing\\_Canadas\\_Support\\_of\\_International\\_Students\\_A\\_Comprehensive\\_Review\\_of\\_Canadas\\_Retention\\_and\\_Settlement\\_of\\_its\\_Model\\_Immigrants.pdf](https://www.torontomu.ca/content/dam/centre-for-immigration-and-settlement/tmcis/publications/workingpapers/2018_2_Dauwer_Zaheer_A_Assessing_Canadas_Support_of_International_Students_A_Comprehensive_Review_of_Canadas_Retention_and_Settlement_of_its_Model_Immigrants.pdf)
- DeVault, M. L., & Gross, G. (2012). Feminist qualitative interviewing: Experience, talk and knowing. In S. N. Hesse-Biber (Ed.), *Handbook of feminist research: Theory and praxis* (2nd ed., pp. 206–236). Los Angeles: Sage.
- Draus, A. (2018, September 5). Halifax students struggle to find affordable housing. *Global News*. Retrieved from <https://globalnews.ca/news/4429334/halifax-students-affordable-housing/>
- Fernander, A., Duran, R., Saab, P., & Schneiderman, N. (2004). John Henry: Active coping, education, and blood pressure among urban blacks. *Journal of the National Medical Association*, 96(2): 246–255. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2594971/#:~:text=Abstract,those%20with%20greater%20socioeconomic%20resources>
- Fitzsimmons, S., Baggs, J., & Brannen, M.Y. (2020). *Research: The immigrant income gap*. Harvard Business Review. <https://hbr.org/2020/05/research-the-immigrant-income-gap>

- Fleming, C. M., Lamont, M., & Welburn, J. S. (2012). African Americans Respond to Stigmatization: The Meanings and Salience of Confronting, Deflecting Conflict, Educating the Ignorant and 'Managing the Self. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 35(3):400–17.
- Flynn, E. & Bauder, H. (2013). *The private sector, institutions of higher education, and immigrant settlement in Canada*. Ryerson Centre for Immigration & Settlement. [https://www.torontomu.ca/content/dam/centre-for-immigration-and-settlement/tmcis/publications/workingpapers/2013\\_9\\_Flynn\\_Emma\\_Bauder\\_Harald\\_The\\_Private\\_Sector\\_Institutions\\_of\\_Higher\\_Education\\_and\\_Immigrant\\_Settlement\\_in\\_Canada.pdf](https://www.torontomu.ca/content/dam/centre-for-immigration-and-settlement/tmcis/publications/workingpapers/2013_9_Flynn_Emma_Bauder_Harald_The_Private_Sector_Institutions_of_Higher_Education_and_Immigrant_Settlement_in_Canada.pdf)
- Fong, F. (2017). *Income inequality in Canada: the urban gap*. Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada. Retrieved from <https://www.cpacanada.ca/en/public-interest/public-policy-government-relations/opinions-events/2017/july/income-inequality>
- Forbes-Mewett, H., & McCulloch, J. (2016). International Students and Gender-Based Violence. *Violence Against Women*, 22 (3), 344-265. doi: 10.1177/1077801215602344
- Forbes-Mewett, H., & Nyland, C. (2008). Cultural Diversity, Relocation, and the Security of International Students at an Internationalised University. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 12(2), 181 -203. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315307308136>
- Frederiksen, M. (2016; August 5) Joe Metlege, Templeton, and landlords of an “unscrupulous” nature. *David McKie*. Retrieved from <http://www.davidmckie.com/joe-metlege-templeton-and-landlords-of-an-unscrupulous-nature/>
- Gaetz, S., O’Grady, Kidd, S., & Schwan, K. (2016). *Without a home: The national youth homelessness survey*. Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press. <https://homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/WithoutAHome-final.pdf>
- Gaetz, S., Schwan, K., Redman, M., French, D., & Dej, E. (2018). *The Roadmap for the Prevention of Youth Homelessness*. A. Buchnea (Ed.). Toronto, ON: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press.
- Gabriel, S. (2015). The meaning of race in Malaysia: Colonial, post-colonial and possible new conjunctures. *Ethnicities*, 15(6): 782-809. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1468796815570347>
- Galabuzi, G.-E. (2006). *Canada's economic apartheid: The social exclusion of racialized groups in the new century*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars’ Press.



- Garson, K. (2016). Reframing Internationalization. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, 46(2), 19-39. <https://doi.org/10.47678/cjhe.v46i2.185272>
- Gaydosch, L., Schorpp, K. M., Chen, E., Miller, G. E., & Harris K. M. (2018). *College Completion Predicts Lower Depression but Higher Metabolic Syndrome among Disadvantaged Minorities in Young Adulthood*. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences 115(1):109–14. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5776811/>
- Gilbert, A., & Slipe, Y. (2009). Reflexivity in the practice of social action: From self-to inter-relational reflexivity. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 39(4): 468-479. <https://doi.org/10.1177/008124630903900408>
- Glass, R., Gomez, E. & Urzua, A. (2014). Recreation, intercultural friendship, and international students' adaptation to college by region of origin. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 42, 104-117. doi: 10.1016/j.ijintrel.2014.05.007
- Glass, R., & Westmont, M. (2014). Comparative effects of belongingness on the academic success and cross-cultural interactions of domestic and international students. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 38, 106–119. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2013.04.004>
- World Population Review. (2021). *Global South Countries 2023*. <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/global-south-countries>
- Glossary. (2020). Racial Equity Tools. <https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary>
- Goffman, E. (1963). *Stigma. Notes on the management of spoiled identity*. London: Penguin Books.
- Government of Canada. (2022). *Temporary residents: Maintained status during processing (previously called implied status)*. Operational Instructions and Guidelines. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/temporary-residents/visitors/implied-status-extending-stay.html>
- Government of Canada. (2023). *Temporary residents: Dual intent*. Operational Instructions and Guidelines. <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/operational-bulletins-manuals/temporary-residents/visitors/dual-intent-applicants.html>
- Hamlin, J. (2018). *Sociological Theory*. Department of Sociology and Anthropology. University of Maryland. <https://www.d.umn.edu/cla/faculty/jhamlin/4111/4111schd.html>



- Han, X., Han, X., Luo, Q., & Jacobs, S. (2013). Report of a mental health survey among Chinese international students at Yale University. *Journal of American College Health, 61*(1):1-8. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07448481.2012.738267>
- Haraway, D. (1988). Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective. *Feminist Studies, 14*(3): 575-599  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/3178066>
- Harding, S. (1987). In Hesse-Biber, *The handbook of feminist research: Theory and praxis*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.
- Haque, E. (2012). *Multiculturalism within a bilingual framework: Language, race, and belonging in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Hawawini, G. (2016). *The internationalization of higher education and business schools A critical review*. Springer Singapore. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-1757-5>
- Henderson, J. (2016, November 10). No political will to fix Nova Scotia's inadequate tenancy laws. *The Coast*. Retrieved from <https://www.thecoast.ca/halifax/no-political-will-to-fix-nova-scotias-inadequate-tenancy-laws/Content?oid=5788957>
- Henderson, J. (2017, July 13). Good luck getting that damage deposit back. *The Coast*. Retrieved from <https://www.thecoast.ca/halifax/good-luck-getting-that-damage-deposit-back/Content?oid=8345345>
- Hendrikson, B., Rosen, D., & Kelly Aune, R. (2011). An analysis of friendship networks, social connectedness, homesickness, and satisfaction levels of international students. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 35*, 281-295. Retrieved from [https://www.academia.edu/325631/An\\_Analysis\\_of\\_Friendship\\_Networks\\_Social\\_Connectedness\\_Homesickness\\_and\\_Satisfaction\\_Levels\\_of\\_International\\_Students](https://www.academia.edu/325631/An_Analysis_of_Friendship_Networks_Social_Connectedness_Homesickness_and_Satisfaction_Levels_of_International_Students)
- Hesse-Biber, N., Sharlene. (2017). (Ed.), *The handbook of feminist research: Theory and praxis*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.
- Hiebert, D. (2011). Immigrants and refugees in the housing markets of Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver. *Canadian Journal of Urban Research, 26*(2): pp. 52-78.  
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/26290770>
- hooks, b. (1989). *Talking back: Thinking feminist, thinking Black*. Toronto: Between the Lines.
- Houshmand, S., Spanierman, L., & Tafarodi W. (2014). Excluded and avoided: Racial microaggressions targeting Asian international students in Canada. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 20*(3), 377-388.  
<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0035404>

- Hudson, D. L., Neighbors, H. W., Geronimus, A. T., & Jackson J. S. (2016) Racial discrimination, John Henryism, and depression among African Americans. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 42(3): 221–43. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095798414567757>
- Humphries, J., Knight-Grofe, J. and Klabunde, N. (2009). *Canada First: The 2009 Survey of International Students*. Ontario, Canada: The Canadian Bureau for International Education. Retrieved from [www.cbie.ca](http://www.cbie.ca).
- Immigration, Refugee, Citizenship Canada 2019 <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/study-canada/study-permit/prepare-arrival/study-permit-conditions.html>
- Ivany, R., d'Entremont, I., Christmas, D., Bragg, J., & Fuller, S. (2014). *The Report of the Nova Scotia Commission on Building Our New Economy*. One Nova Scotia. <https://www.onens.ca/sites/default/files/editor-uploads/now-or-never.pdf>
- Karp., D. (1997) as quoted in Hesse-Biber (eds). *The handbook of feminist research: Theory and praxis*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications. pp. 142-145; pp. 324-325.
- Kennedy, K. (2019, February 1). Job scarcity in NS sees students using soup kitchen. *The Pie News*. Retrieved from <https://thepienews.com/news/canada-soup-kitchen-feeding-20-international-students-per-day/>
- Krieger, J. & Higgins, D. (2002). Housing and health: Time again for public health action. *American Journal of Public Health*, 92(5): 758-768. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1447157/pdf/0920758.pdf>
- Kuehn, L. (2012). *International students in British Columbia, 2011-2012*. British Columbia Teachers' Federation Research Report. Section V. 2012-EF-03. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED538373.pdf>
- Kuehn, L. (2019). The many faces of privatization in BC education: Public education is a public good. British Columbia Teachers' Federation Research Report. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED596499>
- Kim, J. (2016). Global Cultural Capital and Global Positional Competition: International Graduate Students' Transnational Occupational Trajectories. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 37(1): 30–50.
- Lazar, M. (2007). Feminist critical discourse analysis: Articulating a feminist discourse praxis. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 4(2): 141-164. doi: 10.1080/17405900701464816

- Leavitt, K. (2017, August 31). Falling through the tenancy cracks. *The Coast*. Retrieved from <https://www.thecoast.ca/news-opinion/falling-through-the-tenancy-cracks-9136088>
- Leblanc, S. (2020). Affordable housing crisis hitting communities across HRM. NDP Dartmouth North. <https://www.nsndp.ca/affordable-housing-crisis-hitting-communities-across-hrm>
- Luck, S. (2016, March 18). Halifax rooming houses that skirt rules a problem near universities. *CBC News*. Retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/halifax-international-students-apartment-1.3490327>
- MacAdams, J. K. (2020). *Youth households living in Core Housing Need*. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). <https://assets.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/sites/cmhc/data-research/publications-reports/socio-economic-analysis/2020/socio-economic-analysis-youth-households-living-core-housing-need-69652-en.pdf?rev=de5494a1-b721-450c-b23b-50b4d7c9ca8d>
- Mahler, A.G. (2017). *What/Where is the Global South?* University of Virginia. <https://globalsouthstudies.as.virginia.edu/what-is-global-south>
- Maitland v. Templeton Place Ltd.* (2016) NSSM 24. <https://decisions.courts.ns.ca/nsc/nssm/en/item/145726/index.do?r=AAAAAQAJdGVtcGxldG9uAQ>
- Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC). (2020). *University Enrolment 2018 – 2019*. Retrieved from <https://www.mphec.ca/media/192719/Annual-Digest-2018-2019.pdf>
- Migrant Students United (2022) *Letter to Minister Sean Fraser re Renewable PGWP and End to the 20 Hour Work Limit*. <https://migrantworkersalliance.org/policy/msumay2022letter/>
- Musgrave v. Templeton Properties Ltd.* (2016) NSSM 6. [https://www.legalinfo.org/index.php?option=com\\_docman&view=download&alias=339-residential-tenancies-case-decision&category\\_slug=small-claims&Itemid=1359](https://www.legalinfo.org/index.php?option=com_docman&view=download&alias=339-residential-tenancies-case-decision&category_slug=small-claims&Itemid=1359)
- Montsion, M. J. (2018). Resource Centre or Experience Desk? Producing Spaces for Delivering Services to Indigenous and International Students at Universities in Ontario, Canada. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, 48 (1), 132-147. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1178099.pdf>
- Moya, P. (2022). *Learning from experience: Minority identities, multicultural struggles*. University of California Press. <https://publishing.cdlib.org/ucpressebooks/view?docId=kt8t1nd07c;brand=ucpress>

- Muise, C. (2016, April 14). Navigating the slow labyrinth of tenancy disputes. *The Coast*. Retrieved from <https://www.thecoast.ca/news-opinion/navigating-the-slow-labyrinth-of-tenancy-disputes-5331516>
- Murji, K. & Solomos, J. (2005). Introduction: racialization in theory and practice. In: Murji, K. & Solomos, J. (Eds.) *Racialization: Studies in theory and practice* (pp. 1-27). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Neubauer, B., Witkop, C.T., & Varpio, L. (2019). How phenomenology can help us learn from the experiences of others. *Perspectives on medical education*, 8(2): 90–97. doi 10.1007/s40037-019-0509-2
- Ng, R. (2018). From Subjugation to Embodied Self-in-Relation: An Indigenous Pedagogy for Decolonization. In Batacharya, S. & Wong, Y.L. (Eds.), *Sharing breath: Embodied learning and decolonization* (pp.199-228). Edmonton, AB: AU Press.
- Okun, (2021). *White Supremacy Culture – Still Here*. Dismantling Racism. [https://www.dismantlingracism.org/uploads/4/3/5/7/43579015/white\\_supremacy\\_culture\\_-\\_still\\_here.pdf](https://www.dismantlingracism.org/uploads/4/3/5/7/43579015/white_supremacy_culture_-_still_here.pdf)
- Omi, M. & Winant, H. (2014). Racial Formations. In Omi, M. & Winant, H. (Second Edition). *Racial formation in the United States*, pp. 3-13. Routledge: New York.
- O'neill, T. (2010). *Report on the University System in Nova Scotia*. Nova Scotia Department of Education. [https://novascotia.ca/lae/HigherEducation/documents/Highlights\\_from\\_the\\_Report\\_on\\_the\\_University\\_System\\_in\\_Nova\\_Scotia\\_September\\_2010.pdf](https://novascotia.ca/lae/HigherEducation/documents/Highlights_from_the_Report_on_the_University_System_in_Nova_Scotia_September_2010.pdf)
- Parasram, A., Gateman, M., & Kazmi, A. (2023). An East Coast Racial Reckoning International Students and the Politics of Race at Dalhousie University in Kim, A., Buckner, E., & Montsion, J.M. (Eds). *International Students from Asia in Canadian Universities*. Routledge.
- Park, H. (2018). Violence against International Students on North American University and College Campuses: An Intersectional, Structural and Global Analysis. *Canadian Women Studies*, 32 (1-2), 29-34. Retrieved from <https://www.questia.com/library/journal/1G1-551496020/violence-against-international-students-on-north-american>
- Pomeroy, S. (2004). An international comparison of housing need indicators. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). [https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2011/schl-cmhc/nh18-1/NH18-1-235-2004-eng.pdf](https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2011/schl-cmhc/nh18-1/NH18-1-235-2004-eng.pdf)
- Poyrazli, S. (2015). Psychological Symptoms and Concerns Experienced by International

- Students: Outreach Implications for Counseling Centers. *Journal of International Students*, 5(3). 306-312. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1060046.pdf>
- Pradella & Cillo. (2015) as cited in Vickers (2021). *Imperialism and Immigration*. The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Imperialism and Anti-Imperialism (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). [https://irep.ntu.ac.uk/id/eprint/35636/1/13067\\_Vickers.pdf](https://irep.ntu.ac.uk/id/eprint/35636/1/13067_Vickers.pdf)
- Raghuram, P. (2012). Theorising the Spaces of Student Migration. *Population, Space, and Place*. 1-17. doi: 10.1002/psp.1747
- Razack, S. (2002). When Place Becomes Race. In Razack, S. (Ed.), *Race, space and the law: Unmapping a White settler society* (pp. 1-20). Toronto: Between the Lines.
- “Renting to international students,” 2015  
[https://www.reddit.com/r/Landlord/comments/3ctq0j/renting\\_to\\_international\\_students/](https://www.reddit.com/r/Landlord/comments/3ctq0j/renting_to_international_students/)
- Rienties, B., Beusaert, S., Grohnert, T., Niemantsverdriet, S., & Kommers, P. (2012). Understanding academic performance of international students: the role of ethnicity, academic and social integration. *Journal of Higher Education*, 63(6), 685-700. Retrieved from <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10734-011-9468-1>
- Sandoval, C. (1991). U.S. Third world feminism: The theory and method of oppositional consciousness in the postmodern world. *Genders*, 10.  
<http://www.dialogoglobal.com/barcelona/texts/sandoval/Sandoval%20US%20Third%20World%20Feminism.pdf>
- Seguin, N. (2022, September 7) There's a fine built into Nova Scotia's Residential Tenancies Act. It has never been used. *CBC*. Retrieved from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/fine-nova-scotia-tenancies-act-use-1.6573345#:~:text=Section%2023%20includes%20a%20fine%20of%20up%20to%20%241%2C000%20for%20violating%20the%20act&text=A%20summary%20conviction%20and%20fine%20that%20is%20built%20into%20Nova,Department%20of%20Justice's%20records%20go.>
- Smith, A., R. & Khawaja, G., N. (2011). A review of the acculturation experiences of international students. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 35, 699-713. doi:101016/jijintrel.2011.08.004
- Smith, L., T. (2012). *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (2nd Edition). London: Zed Books Ltd.
- Smith, N. A., Voisin, D. R., Yang, J. P., & Tung, E. L. (2019). Keeping Your Guard Up: Hypervigilance Among Urban Residents Affected by Community and Police

- Violence. *Health affairs (Project Hope)*, 38(10), 1662–1669.  
<https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2019.00560>
- Statistics Canada. (2015). *International students in Canadian Universities, 2004-2005 to 2013-2014*. Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/81-599-x/81-599-x2016011-eng.htm>
- Statistics Canada. (2016). *International students in Canadian Universities, 2004-2005 to 2013-2014*. Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/81-599-x/81-599-x2016011-eng.htm>
- Statistics Canada. (2021). *Core Housing Need. Dictionary, Census of Population, 2021*. Retrieved from <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/ref/dict/az/Definition-eng.cfm?ID=households-menage037>
- Statistics Canada, (2022). *Canadian and international tuition fees by level of study (current dollars)*. Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3710004501&cubeTimeFrame.startYear=2014+%2F+2015&cubeTimeFrame.endYear=2021+%2F+2022&referencePeriods=20140101%2C20210101>
- Statistics Canada. (2023). Annual demographic estimates, census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations. Retrieved from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/71-607-x/71-607-x2020003-eng.htm>
- Su, M. & Harrison, L. M. (2016). Being Wholesaled: An Investigation of Chinese International Students. Higher Education Experiences. *Journal of International Studies*. 6(4), 905-919. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1125552.pdf>
- Tao, J.D. (2022). *Brief to the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration Re: Study of Recruitment and Acceptance Rates of Foreign Students in Quebec and Canada, Including Francophone Students from Africa*. Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration.  
<https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/441/CIMM/Brief/BR11539112/br-external/TaoWill-2022-01-31-e.pdf>
- Tastsoglou, E., Cottrell, B., & Peruvemba, J. (2015). Women, immigration and violence: Focusing on Atlantic Canada. In Tastsoglou, E. & Peruvemba, J. (Eds.), *The warmth of the welcome: Is Atlantic Canada a home away from home for immigrants?* (pp. 106-135). Sydney, CA: Cape Breton University Press. Print.
- Thobani, S. (2007). *Exalted subjects: Studies in the making of race and nation in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.



- Trilokekar, R. & Masri, A. (2019). "International Students Are...Golden": Canada's Changing Policy Contexts, Approaches, and National Peculiarities in Attracting International Students as Future Immigrants. In A. Kim & M. Kwak (Eds.), *Outward and Upward Mobilities: International Students in Canada, Their Families, and Structuring Institutions* (pp. 25-55). Toronto; Buffalo; London: University of Toronto Press.
- Tolman, S. 2017. The Effects of a Roommate-Pairing Program on International Student Satisfaction and Academic Success. *Journal of International Students*, 7(3), 522-541. doi:10.5281/zenodo.570013
- Ungar, M. (2019). Designing resilience research: Using multiple methods to investigate risk exposure, promotive and protective processes, and contextually relevant outcomes for children and youth. *Child abuse & neglect*, 96, 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2019.104098>.
- Ungar, M. (2021). Modeling multisystemic resilience: Connecting biological, psychological, social, and ecological adaptation in contexts of adversity. In Ungar, M. (Ed.) *Multisystemic resilience* (pp. 6-31). Oxford University Press. doi: 10.1093/oso/9780190095888.003.0002
- Ungar, M., Theron, L., Murphy, K., & Jefferies, P. (2021). Researching multisystemic resilience: A sample methodology. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11, 1-18. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2020.607994
- Vasilopoulos, G. (2016). A Critical Review of International Students: Adjustment Research from a Deleuzian Perspective. *Journal of International Students*, 6(1), 283-307.
- Woodford, Z. (2021, August 11). Halifax landlords 'skirt the law' by making month-to-month leases more expensive. *Halifax Examiner*. Retrieved from <https://www.halifaxexaminer.ca/province-house/halifax-landlords-skirt-the-law-by-making-month-to-month-leases-more-expensive>
- Woodford, Z. (2021, October 28). Nova Scotia rent cap would continue under proposed PC legislation, but loopholes remain. *Halifax Examiner*. Retrieved from <https://www.halifaxexaminer.ca/province-house/nova-scotia-rent-cap-would-continue-under-proposed-pc-legislation-but-loopholes-remain/>
- WOWA. 2023. *Canadian housing market data for July 2023*. Canadian Housing Market News. <https://wowa.ca/reports/canada-housing-market>
- Xu, M. (2017, August 4). A controversial Halifax landlord who rents apartments to international students is facing an assault charge. *David McKie*. Retrieved from <http://www.davidmckie.com/a-controversial-halifax-landlord-who-rents-apartments-to-international-students-is-facing-an-assault-charge/>

- Xu, M. (2016, December 2). Tips for international student tenants in Halifax. *The Signal*. Retrieved from <https://signalhfx.ca/tips-for-international-student-tenants-in-halifax/>
- Yang, P., R. & Noels, A. K. (2013). The possible selves of international students and their cross-cultural adjustment in Canada. *International Journal of Psychology*, 48(3), 316–323. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00207594.2012.660161>
- Yax-Fraser, M. & Cottrell, B. (2015). Home, housing and homelessness: Can migrant women call Halifax “home” if they don’t have a dwelling place? In Tastsoglou, E. & Peruvemba, J. (Eds.), *The warmth of the welcome: Is Atlantic Canada a home away from home for immigrants?* (pp. 80-105). Sydney, CA: Cape Breton University Press. Print.
- Zahid, (2022). Differential treatment in recruitment and acceptance rates of foreign students in Quebec and in the rest of Canada: Report of the standing committee on citizenship and immigration. House of Commons. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/441/CIMM/Reports/RP11800727/cimmrp08/cimmrp08-e.pdf>
- Zahid, (2022). Promoting fairness in Canadian immigration decisions: Report of the standing committee on citizenship and immigration. House of Commons. <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/44-1/CIMM/report-12/>
- Zhou, C., Japaridze, I., & Zhao, C. (2021). *New Rental Data to Assess Housing Needs*. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). <https://assets.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/sites/cmhc/professional/housing-markets-data-and-research/housing-research/research-reports/housing-needs/research-insights/2021/research-insight-new-rental-data-assess-housing-needs-69780-en.pdf?rev=1f10e73d-a7f7-43bc-befd-64dd68b6af82>
- Zhou, G. & Zhang, Z. (2014). A Study of the First Year International Students at a Canadian University: Challenges and Experiences with Social Integration. *Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 43(2). Retrieved from <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/cie-eci/vol43/iss2/7>