



Views on Access to Justice in Quebec

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Aim/Purpose	Understanding how Black people view the justice system helps in identifying some areas of friction, and thereby provides critical insights into the measures needed to improve the working and management of the justice delivery process.
Background	Access to justice is a fundamental Canadian value. However, evidence shows that Black and racialized communities have been facing systemic racism and discrimination in all forms, and in all phases of the justice system. There is a need to study critical information regarding the inadequacies of the justice system, how they affect Black people, and what can be done to bridge the gap between Black communities and government policies in Quebec.
Methodology	Through systematic race-based data collection, this study examines the perception of racial discrimination law enforcement and courts among Black communities in Quebec. Using a total sample of ninety-three (N=93) Black respondents, the study sheds light on Black people perception to identify and respond to issues of social inequities, discrimination, and racism within Quebec society. Both Likert scale and open-ended questions were asked in order to measure perception of justice accessibility, respectful interaction with law enforcement, fair procedure and outcome, language and overall perception of the justice system.
Findings	The findings indicate that respondents with personal experience with police officers are less likely perceive access to justice positively. Regardless of their demographic characteristics, the results of this study confirmed that Black people continue to experience various forms of injustice, discrimination, and unfair treatment in Quebec.
Impact on Society	Racism affects Black Canadians at every step of the criminal justice system, from policing to pretrial detention to sentencing to prisons. To have a clearer picture of the extent and nature of anti-Black racism in the Canadian criminal justice system, the researchers adopted systematic race-based data collection. Studies similar to the current research are the key opportunity to address anti-Black racism in the justice system.
Keywords	Access to justice; perception; trust and confidence; race-based data collection

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AREAS OF CONTRIBUTION

Paper Category		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Research	<input type="checkbox"/> Position Paper	<input type="checkbox"/> Comparative
<input type="checkbox"/> Case Study	<input type="checkbox"/> Technical Briefs	<input type="checkbox"/> Opinion
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Type of Innovation and Study	Industry/Field	Discipline
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<input type="checkbox"/> Component/Modular	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-Profit	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discriminatory Bias	<input type="checkbox"/> Business/Professional Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Medicine / Healthcare
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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Diversity and Inclusion	<input type="checkbox"/> History
	<input type="checkbox"/> Education and Training	<input type="checkbox"/> Philosophy
	<input type="checkbox"/> Health Care	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Theology
	<input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing	<input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics
	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Physics
		<input type="checkbox"/> Digital Media
		<input type="checkbox"/> Astrology
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social Sciences
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Art and Culture
		<input type="checkbox"/> Psychology/Consciousness
		<input type="checkbox"/> Astronomy
		<input type="checkbox"/> Economics

Human Elements Addressed		
<input type="checkbox"/> Personality Traits	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mental Wellbeing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental	<input type="checkbox"/> Consciousness
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Equality and Equity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	<input type="checkbox"/> Physical Wellbeing

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Justice Canada considers access to justice to be a fundamental value of the Canadian justice system, flowing from Canada's respect for the Rule of Law. According to Roach et al. (2005) "Access to justice" can mean

- Having the financial ability to get legal assistance
- Being informed of individual's rights and responsibilities
- Having courts that can resolve problems on time
- Having confidence that the system will come to a just result.

Ultimately, it is about getting good justice for everyone, not perfect justice for a lucky few. It is a democratic issue, human rights issue and an economic issue (Iftene, 2019). In a democracy, discontent with the delivery of justice is linked to reduced trust and confidence in the judicial branch and system (Crandall & Lawlor, 2022). Academic literature often distinguishes between the concepts of 'trust' and 'confidence'. However, given the purpose of this study, which is to contribute to improvements in the justice system rather than to contribute to the theoretical debate, the two concepts are used in a general and pragmatic way. Considering the legitimizing effect that public trust has on the justice system, over the years, a number of studies were conducted across Canada to understand how people perceive the administration of justice and law enforcement (Roberts, 2007; Cao, 2011; Balfour, 2013; Hu et al., 2020; and David, 2021). These studies provide critical information regarding the inadequacies of the justice and law enforcement system, how they affect public trust and confidence, and what can be done to bridge the gap by frame policies that enable courts and police to meet the expectations of Canadians. However, in recent years, as part of a response to problems of social inequities, discrimination, and systemic racism within Canadian society there have been increasing demands for gathering data on marginalized communities (David & Mitchell, 2021; Samuels-Wortley, 2021; and Bennell et al, 2022). Although such detailed information and databases will not eliminate all the concerns that some Canadians might have with the justice system and policing, it will address some of their concerns on transparency and accountability. Grounded in Quebec context, the BCRC's legal project team "Vers une Justice Égale" conducted a race-based study to examine the Black perception of access to justice in Quebec. BCRC as the Secretariat of the Black Community Forum has been involved in many candid discussions with Black communities regarding experiences of racism, discrimination, and prejudice throughout their education, training, careers, and personal lives. Many of these experiences are mirrored stories that provide

evidence-based situations on how Black Quebecers have been treated by law enforcement and justice administration in Quebec. The study used access to justice as variables, and examined the barriers faced by the respondents within the justice system.

REVIEW OF PAST STUDIES

This section gives an overview of the literature regarding Black Canadians' perception of law enforcement and justice administration. Cao in 2021 pointed out that in Canada, members of visible minorities possessed lower levels of confidence in the police force. Conversely, Chan and Chunn (2014) attested how racial status affects an individual's confidence in the criminal justice system. As a result, in Canada members of racial majorities display higher confidence in the criminal justice system than minority members. Furthermore, there is evidence that lack of public confidence in law enforcement and justice administration or poor perception of their performance can have a number of negative impacts, including a reduction in the quality of services provided or a deterioration in the trust relationship between the administration (Jang et al., 2015; Balfour, 2013).

In the context of Black communities, the Canadian Legal Problems Survey (CLPS) stated in 2021 that Black Canadians experienced serious problems more frequently over the past three years with the justice system. They are also more likely to have encountered a serious problem or dispute related to discrimination. According to Owusu-Bempah et al., 2021, Black people are overrepresented at many different stages of the criminal justice system, ranging from proactive and discretionary policing practices such as stops, charges, or arrests, through to incarceration. The 2020 General Social Survey (GSS) on Social Identity included questions on levels of confidence in various Canadian institutions, including the police and the justice system and courts. The results of the survey showed that one in five Black people were not confident in their performance. Reuters's article (19 October 2017) indicated Black accused in Ontario are detained longer before trial and Black prisoners were consistently over-represented in charge categories (Mehler-Paperny, 2017). Recent studies found that encounters with police were associated with perceptions of police performance where younger Black Canadians were likely to have less positive perceptions of police (Ibrahim, 2020). These perceptions and attitudes can be based on a number of factors, including direct or personal experience, the influence of others, or the influence of media, both traditional and social. Cotter (2022) argued that Black people were more likely than other visible minority groups to have been discriminated against in an interaction with police,

which negatively affects their perceptions. Considering this context, it is critical to continue to examine differences in perceptions of the justice system and law enforcement, and potential barriers to justice among Black populations in Canada. However, little is known and studied about Black Quebecers' perception of the justice and policing system, especially since the language barrier has been attributed to slow societal integration for many. Therefore, the current study took a closer look on how Black Quebecers perceive their interactions with law enforcement and justice administration.

Current Study

In order to expand on the previously mentioned findings, this study was conducted using both quantitative and qualitative methodology with Black Quebecers residing in Montreal. They were asked about their experiences with law enforcement and the justice system. In particular, since legal issues are often embedded in a cluster of other problems that can affect many areas of life, including housing, employment, education and health. Thus, it is very important to address these problems as early as possible.

This study aimed to address inadequacies of the justice system, how they affect Black people, and what can be done to bridge the gap between Black communities and governmental policies in Quebec. The survey participants were asked about their perception of timely access to fair and effective information, resources, informal and formal service as well as barriers to accessing justice, as it relates to gender and gender identity, race, culture, language, and legal literacy.

METHODOLOGY

PROCEDURE

Between September and November 2022, an online survey was published and distributed through various channels inviting BCRC's network to participate in the study. As mentioned earlier, the survey was race-based and was adapted from standards published in 2018 by the Government of Ontario's Anti-Racism Directorate (ARD). The aim of this survey was to support standardized collection of race-based data to inform anti-racism efforts in the education, and justice sectors. The everyday experiences and perceptions of Black people in Canada differ from other minority groups in Quebec. While conducting the legal project activities, the project team realized that there is an urgent need to collect race-based data to identify, monitor and address inequities that Black

people have been facing when dealing with the law enforcement and justice accessibility in Quebec. During the legal workshops, the Black participants highlighted some of these differences in terms lack of confidence in justice administration, perceptions of their interaction with police, and experiences of serious problems or disputes. BCRC in the capacity of the Secretariat of the Black Community Forum is in contact with different Black communities in Quebec. This relationship made it easy for the project team to share the survey with the other Black communities and invite their members to voluntarily participate in the study. The survey was structured and covered a total of 93 respondents. The questions focused on their perceptions, barriers to justice and if the interviewees had faced any legal issues. In addition, they were also asked about their level of confidence in fair treatment and effective results. The open-ended questions were optional and focused on their willingness to share their experience as well as the restrictions on access to justice in Quebec.

DATA ANALYSIS

As previously stated, the survey comprised of the Likert scale and two open-ended questions. Thus, both quantitative and qualitative analyses were employed to analyze the data. A descriptive analysis was computed to measure Likert scales such as level of confidence, fair procedure and outcome, and overall perception. In the first open-ended question, respondents were asked to provide examples of restrictions on access to justice in Quebec. In order to identify the main themes of their response, firstly their answers were independently reviewed and then collectively to determine the main theme and group them (since the majority of respondents had a similar list for the question on barriers to justice). As for the second open-ended question, respondents were asked to share if they have faced any barriers to access to justice or if they have heard or experienced difficulties with law enforcement and justice administration. All their answers will be quoted in the next section. The two open-ended questions were optional.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Table 1 presents the profile of the respondents in terms of their gender, age and educational level. The respondents were also asked about the language spoken at home. In order to obtain an equitable response, the race-based data collected in this study. Participants, individuals from Black communities, were asked to give responses that provided insight into their lived experiences.

Of the 93 (100%) respondents, 54% identified as female, 25% as male, 14% as non-binary and 6% as gender fluid. Eighty five percent of the respondents were between the ages of 18-60 years, with the remainder being 61 years and older. The educational level of the respondents varied; 56% were university graduates, 18% possessed a secondary school diploma or high school equivalency certificate, 6% had less than a high school diploma, while the remainder had CEGEP certificates. Respondents were also asked about the language spoken at home. According to Statistic Canada, language spoken at home refers to the language the person speaks most often at the time of data collection. About 20% of the respondents reported both English and French as “language spoken” since both languages were spoken equally often.

Table 1: Profile of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Woman	50	54%
	Man	23	25%
	Non-binary	14	15%
	Gender-fluid	6	6%
	Prefer not to answer	0	0%
Age	18 to 30 years old	47	51%
	41 to 50 years old	19	20%
	51 to 60 years old	13	14%
	61 to 70 years old	10	11%
	>71+ years old	4	4%
	Prefer not to answer	0	0%
Education level	No certificate, diploma or degree	6	6%
	Secondary (high) school diploma or a high school equivalency certificate	17	18%
	College, CEGEP or other non-university certificate	11	12%
	University certificate or diploma below the bachelor's level	7	8%
	Bachelor's degree	45	48%
	University graduate degree	7	8%

Language spoken at home			
	English	36	39%
	French	31	33%
	Mixed of English and French	19	20%
	Other	7	8%

Source: Survey 2022

PERCEPTIONS OF ACCESS TO JUSTICE

The previous studies suggest that the ability to trust justice administration and law enforcement affect the public's perception of access to justice. In the current study, the respondents were asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the idea that all Quebecers, regardless of their background and circumstances, have been equally treated with dignity and respect by justice administration and law enforcement. Table 2 presents the common concern emerging from the respondents' fair treatment. The results indicate that the respondents tend to be more positive in their perceptions of justice administration. Overall, 92% disagreed that the law enforcement treats people from diverse backgrounds with dignity and respect while 2% agreed (6% somewhat agreed). More than half of the respondents (54%) were more likely to agree that Justice systems (criminal courts, civil courts) treat people from diverse backgrounds with dignity and respect (Table 2).

Table 2: Notions of dignity and respect regardless of background

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Law enforcement (police) treat people from diverse backgrounds with dignity and respect.	29 (31%)	57(61%)	5 (6%)	1 (1%)	1(1%)
Justice systems (criminal courts, civil courts) treat people from diverse backgrounds with dignity and respect.	12(13%)	19(20%)	12 (13%)	42(45%)	8 (9%)

Source: Survey 2022

Another way of exploring confidence in law enforcement and justice administration is to compare public perceptions of different professions including judges, police officers and lawyers. Table 3 provides some context for levels of trust in criminal justice professionals among black people in Quebec. This

table confirms once again the pattern of previous results of which Black Quebecers have more trust in the justice administration (judges, 55% and police officers, 19%). In addition, the percentage of the Black people with a high level of trust in the lawyers was relatively high (66%). Table 3 illustrates the fact that in light of the current landscape, it is probably unrealistic to expect confidence or trust ratings for police officers to be as high as those associated with the justice system.

Table 3: Perceptions of different professions

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Judges are honest in their work.	12 (13%)	6 (6%)	24 (26%)	31 (33%)	20 (22%)
Police officers are honest in their work.	23 (25%)	37 (40%)	15 (16%)	14 (15%)	4 (4%)
Lawyers are honest in their work.	4 (4%)	20 (21%)	8 (9%)	41 (44%)	20 (22%)

Source: Survey 2022

The survey also included questions on levels of confidence in the police and the justice system (Table 4). Respondents were asked how much confidence they had in being treated fairly by the legal system. A majority have no confidence (77%) that police officers would treat them fairly. Delving into the issue of fairness and integrity more deeply, the results showed rather modest levels of confidence in the justice system (29%). Important links exist between confidence level and perception of access to justice. Confidence presumably reflects positive perception towards the system. If Black people hold the view that the police and courts discriminate against them, then confidence in both law enforcement and the justice system will surely decline (Cotter, 2022; Iftene, 2019).

Table 4: Fair treatment by justice administration and Law enforcement

Statement	Not confident at all	Not confident	Somewhat confident	Confident	Very confident
How confident are you that Black people receive fair outcomes when they deal with courts?	13 (14%)	22(24%)	31(33%)	27 (29%)	0 (0%)
Police officers are honest in their work.	38(41%)	33(36%)	11 (12%)	10 (11%)	0 (0%)

Source: Survey 2022

It is expected that access to justice should be possible in both official languages across Canada. However, the nature of the linguistic duality is that there is an

English-speaking official language minority in Quebec and Bill 96 has made it virtually impossible to demand for judicial and legal services in English in Quebec. Although, August 12, 2022, the Superior Court of Quebec suspended two provisions of Bill 96 regarding the usage of French in court documents and a provision requiring English court documents to be translated into French, still many English-speaking Quebecers believe Bill 96 puts Anglophones at a disadvantage. To address this issue, the respondents were asked the following questions as presented in Table 5. The majority of respondents (75%) stated that they believed the French language could be a barrier in defending and protecting their rights. Continuing the theme of language issues, a total of 93 respondents (100%) strongly believed that language and legal terminology could be a barrier in understanding individual rights and responsibilities. This finding is in accordance with a study conducted by Sangiuliano (2022) that being unaware of or unfamiliar with Canadian law and of individual's rights in Canada caused manipulation, mistreatment and unlimitedly more serious legal problems for vulnerable populations.

Table 5: Role of language in access to justice

Statement	Yes	No
Do you believe that the French language can be a barrier in defending/protecting your rights?	70 (75%)	23 (25%)
Do you believe that language and legal terminology can be a barrier in understanding your rights and responsibilities?	93 (100%)	0 (0%)

Source: Survey 2022

The respondents were asked about their interaction with law enforcement and justice administration while facing conflict of legal issues (Table 6). More than half of the respondents (63%) reported that they were less likely to request help from a police officer if they faced conflict or dispute. This finding indicates that regardless of the type of contact, whether the interaction with police is seen as positive or negative can have an impact on overall perceptions of and confidence in police. On the other hand, 66% of the respondents expressed their willingness to settle disputes through the court system.

Table 6: Interaction with police and justice system

Statement	Yes	No
When faced with a conflict/dispute, are you likely to request the help of a police officer?	34(37%)	59 (63%)
When faced with a legal issue, do you think the court system is the best way to settle disputes?	61(66%)	32(34%)

Source: Survey 2022

It was notable that while overall perceptions on access to justice were similar, there were significant differences in how police and courts (judges) were seen by the respondents of the study. Table 7 shows that it is evident that respondents' opinions are mainly based on perception than real experiences interacting with the system.

Table 7: Previous experience with police and court

Statement	Yes	No	Prefer not to answer
Did you have any interaction with a police officer or courts in Quebec?	24 (26%)	52 (56%)	17(18%)

Source: Survey 2022

As may be expected, when the respondents were asked about the accessibility of law enforcement and the legal system for Black individuals (Table 8), the majority of respondents (63%) did not agree with the statement. Taking into account several factors, such as language, current North American landscape in relation to the justice system, and previous contact with police, that Black people were more likely to report low confidence in their access to justice.

Table 8: Access to justice for Black in Quebec

Statement	Yes	No
Do you think law enforcement and legal systems in Quebec are easily accessible for Black individuals?	30(32%)	63 (68%)

Source: Survey 2022

DESCRIPTION OF THE TYPES OF RESTRICTIONS ON ACCESS TO JUSTICE IN QUEBEC FACED BY BLACK PEOPLE

This question was open-ended and optional as regards response; however all the 93 respondents answered it. The respondents reported the restriction in the following six domains: 1) racial profiling, 2) Lack of awareness about individual's rights, 3) lack of affordable lawyers, 4) lack of bilingualism, 5) Bill 96 and Bill 21 and 6) lengthy follow-up and time-consuming process. The most frequent types of problems were racial profiling, closely followed by unfamiliarity with the rights of an individual and lack of access to affordable legal representation (Figure 1). In fourth position were restrictions related to implementation of judicial bilingualism followed by frustration and concern over Quebec's Bill 96 , Bill 21 and the lengthy process obtaining assistance and response from judicial bodies.

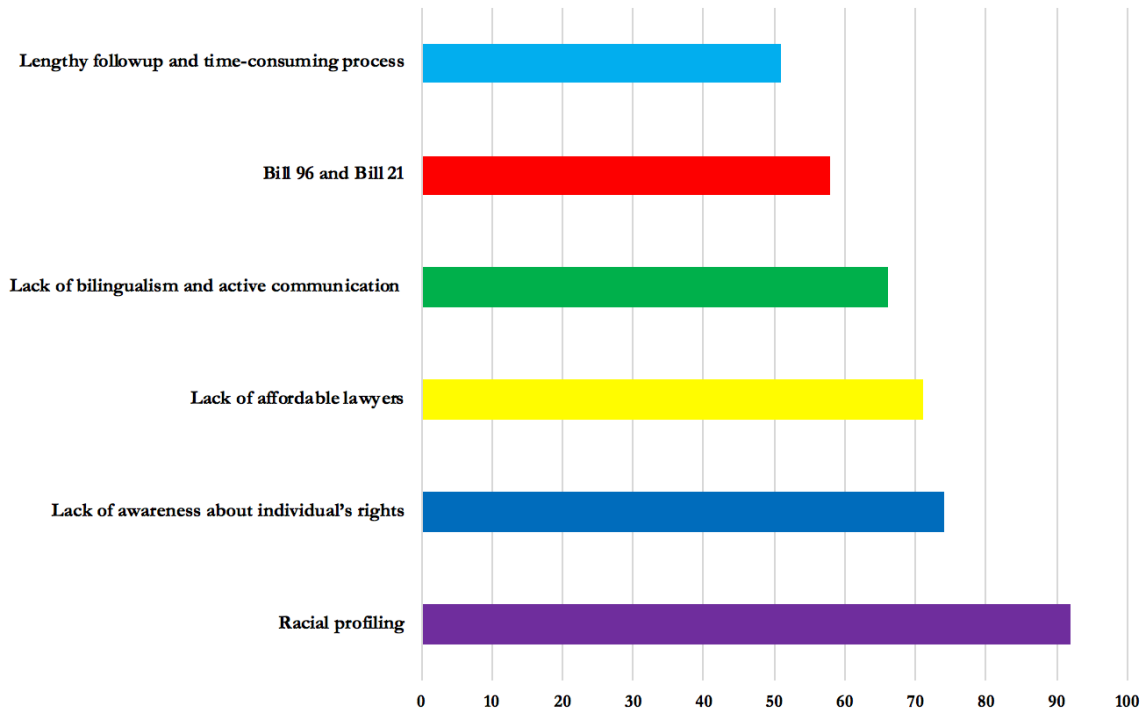


Figure 1: Restrictions reported by respondents

Note. Please note that respondents could describe more than one type of restriction.

Racial profiling

Some respondents argued that public confidence in the criminal justice system and law enforcement is a cornerstone to democracy in the society. However, racial profiling seriously erodes public confidence in these institutions. Recently, concerns about marginalized communities and racial profiling especially in police interaction have increased. As a result, there has been an increase in personal or community mistrust of law enforcement officials and the criminal justice system. The respondents explained incidents such as personal experiences, witnessing an incident of racial profiling and knowing someone who has experienced racial profiling engendered their mistrust and created restriction on access to justice. Some respondents also reported the lack of racial diversity within the police departments and justice system also compound their mistrust of law enforcement and their access to justice. Ninety-two (92) of the respondents mentioned racial profiling (only one respondent did not talk about it).

Lack of awareness about individual's rights

The second common factor reported as contributing negatively to access to justice was being unaware of or unfamiliar with Canada/Quebec laws and of their rights and responsibilities as a citizen. Many of the respondents stated that unfamiliarity with an individual's rights and responsibilities has made

Black people more vulnerable to manipulation and mistreatment. Some of the respondents explained that in order to have a healthy balance in a society, it is absolutely essential for every Black person to know their rights and responsibilities and act upon them. It will avoid abuse from the powerful potentates and from the people they govern.

Lack of affordable lawyers

Continuing the theme of lack of access to legal information, creating affordable options for those who do not qualify for legal aid was the third factor reported by the respondents. Some mentioned knowing that help is available and where they can access further information and assistance when they need, will make justice more accessible to them. They reported having a little knowledge could be a dangerous thing, and Googling could be dangerous too as there is also too much *mis*information. Some suggested community organizations such as BCRC could be an option to provide affordable professional legal services for Black people. To them, lack of availability of accessible and affordable help from lawyers was equal to lack of access to justice.

Lack of bilingualism and active communication

The decision to proceed with the legal process in French is another factor of most concern. Some believed that lack of bilingual services caused delays with resultant impact on their decision as to whether to proceed in French. On the other hand, some of the respondents believed that in Quebec deciding to proceed in English would have an influence on the judgment in the case, or even on the chance of an appeal. Some respondents also reported that legal problems were aggravated by the lack of or inefficient communication from the government/government agencies (e.g., using French language to communicate important subject matters such as tax and health). They demanded services in both official languages needed to be made easily accessible throughout the entire province. Some also suggested an active policy needs to be developed and implemented, measures needed to be taken to ensure that judicial personnel were able to serve the individuals in the both official languages.

Bill 96 and Bill 21

There were concerns from the respondents about how Quebec's Bill 96 and Bill 21 will affect access to justice. Some respondents showed serious concerns that the Bills would threaten the protection of rights and equality before the law, regardless of a person's language, skills and financial situation. Some explained the existence of Bill 96 and Bill 21 questioned a fundamental right of the heart of a free and democratic society. Some of the respondents suggested

that the measures should be put in place to ensure the new provisions of Bill 96 do not limit access to justice. For example, the use of the language of choice (either French or English) needs to be standard practice in the legal system and courts.

Lengthy follow-up and time-consuming process

Some of the respondents reported that with today's technology and communications tools, there are many ways to improve and expedite the lengthy process. Fundamentally, access to fair and timely justice is a right for all. To some of the respondents, lengthy periods to assert an individual's right can serve to perpetuate or exacerbate existing inequalities. They suggested the justice system needed to provide guidelines to deliver judgements within a reasonable time as in their opinion the time taken to adjudicate cases was not realistic.

DESCRIPTION OF LIVED EXPERIENCE IN ACCESSING JUSTICE

In this open-ended question, respondents were asked to share their experience or that of others impacted by racism and inequality. As mentioned earlier, this question like the previous one was optional. However, BCRC's Project Team believed that having the readership involved in the direct experience of others would lead to more powerful solutions. Ultimately, these testimonials can motivate the readers to take the opportunity to be part of efforts towards eliminating racism in the context of law enforcement and justice. In the quotes that follow, some of the respondents voluntarily recalled their lived experience(s) or that of others. A common concern in many of these quotations is the societal effects of mistreatment by law enforcement and justice administration which includes confirmation of feelings of racism, fear and financial costs.

Being unjustly pulled over many times and spoken to in an aggressive and bullying fashion.

I am a victim of hate crimes and then been treated as a perpetrator, simply because I am a man, and my assailants have been women, and the law uses radical feminist ideology in place of fact and evidence.

Black men face disproportionately harsh incarceration experiences with lengthy parole decisions as compared with prisoners of other races.

On many occasions, I witnessed discrimination, lack of empathy and tendency to be judgemental of Black men. To me, the lack of diverse representation among police and other authority figures in the criminal justice system leads to these behaviors.

Obvious racial discrimination at the workplace and the HR and my manager see my issues as being exaggerated. I am looking for an affordable lawyer now.

I have always experienced racial bias in pain assessment. I hate to hear black women feel less pain.

As a law student, I have already figured out that Black accused in criminal courts are overrepresented and face disproportionate outcomes.

Growing up I aspired to become a policeman. After coming to Canada at the age of 11, I became more and more wary of the police following numerous unfortunate experiences. I am a teacher now and always concerned about my adolescent students' interaction with the cops especially the Black ones.

It gets to a point when leaving my house, I would make sure I would check all my IDs, if all my lights are working, if my license is there and everything is OK, because I know that somewhere down the line I am going to get pulled over.

SPVM police officers have been refusing to act on legitimate criminal complaints arising out of thefts of my property (at least 4 times), assaults on me, public mischief committed by Montreal Unitarians making false reports to the police in unethical, and indeed criminal. Misguided efforts to suppress my peaceful public protest against Unitarian Universalist clergy abuse etc. outside the Unitarian "Church" of Montreal.

I used to tell my children that they should acknowledge police officers because they are their friends. I can't confidently say that now anymore after seeing way too many cases of racial profiling.

As a medical doctor I am now faced with the stark reality of statistical facts. There is substantial under-representation of Black individuals in Quebec health care leadership.

I am always worried for my teenage son. Because my friends with Black children have already had their own teenaged sons stopped and checked by police officers. I know my young son will soon experience the same treatment.

It is so unfortunate that people are afraid to talk to the police in the Black community.

I always have the urge to warn young persons in my family to be careful around the police.

Faced delays mostly in finding someone to help with some simple legal problems.

I faced difficulty finding a lawyer for a discrimination case.

I do not know a lot about the law, but thankfully, at school there is legal aid. But after I graduate from university, I will not know where to get legal aid for an affordable price.

Being falsely accused of crimes by Montreal Unitarians, and having legal aid refused to me for an appeal, thus delaying my ability to successfully appeal an unjust conviction for breach of conditions.

The lived experiences clearly described how Black people have been facing limitations in access to justice and how these unfortunate events affected individuals, families, communities, and Quebec society. They demonstrate why restriction on access to justice is a harmful practice and further illustrating the need for strong measures to make justice accessible for Black people in Quebec.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The objective of this study was to learn more about Black people's perceptions of access to justice in Quebec. The results of this study confirmed that Black people continue to experience various forms of injustice, discrimination, and unfair treatment in Quebec. Ultimately, the conclusion drawn from the quantitative results of this study is consistent with other findings and research, which suggests that perceptions of access to justice were negative among Black people (Crandall & Lawlor, 2022; Hu et al., 2022; Iftene, 2019; Balfour, 2013; Cao, 2011). However, they were likely to have more positive perception towards the justice system rather than law enforcement. It was notable that while overall perceptions on access to justice were similar, there were significant differences in how the police and justice system were seen by the respondents. Overall, nearly 80% of the respondents had little or no confidence in police.

One potential reason for the lack of confidence is experiences of discrimination or other negative interactions, which can influence overall views of police. Furthermore, when discrimination or unfair treatment targets a Black individual, the negative impacts are felt by others who are part of the Black and other visible minority communities. This is beyond the individuals who are directly impacted. However, the respondents' negative perceptions covered all forms of access to justice and did not target the police. Majority of respondents indicated that a number of encounters had led them to lose trust in the justice system and decide not to report the dispute or legal problems because they did not trust the system. The qualitative results of the current study also highlighted the economic and social consequences brought about by the limitations of Black people in accessing justice. In terms of the economic impact, at times respondents did not pursue legal action because of the anticipated costs, which were mostly financial, but also costs in terms of time. The social consequences included having lost faith and trust in the law enforcement and justice system,

and lack of interaction with the police or justice system due to fear of racial profiling. The sense of injustice and lack of trust that developed among the respondents reinforces their concern that racism does exist. This perpetual state of crisis due to the effects of racism was echoed in their responses. The respondents specifically stressed that racial profiling is having an overwhelming impact on the individuals and their community.

As borne out in by previous studies, there are numerous reasons why confidence in the justice system is seen as an essential to the effective functioning of law enforcement and justice administration (Samuels-Wortley, 2021; Taylor & Clark, 2017; Roberts, 2007). Firstly, most crimes come to the attention of the police because of a report from the victim or a witness. If members of the public have little confidence in the police response, they are unlikely to report crimes. Secondly, if this mistrust is heightened by unwillingness on the part of the institutions, the justice system will fail to be seen as legitimate in the eyes of the public. Therefore, the law enforcement and justice administrations should acknowledge the concerns of the public and engage in a constructive process to address these concerns. Conclusively, the perceptions of Black people tend to align more with other visible minority groups over Bill 96 and Bill 21. Many respondents described discontent and fear for the future including the Bills produced hatred and divisions by limiting their freedom of choice and liberty of expression. Overall, the results of this study demonstrate the importance of ensuring that Black people in Quebec have access to justice in resolving their legal issues. One important strategy for achieving this involves the increasing of legal literacy in Black communities, and provision of more legal information pertaining to their rights and responsibilities. Ideally, the details concerning elements of justice, finance and healthcare should be provided and delivered in both official languages. Additionally, before the likely facing of any legal issue, it is important for not only Black people but also members of other visible minority communities to know of the availability and affordability of legal aid in case the need arises.

The federal and provincial government have launched initiatives geared at improving public confidence in enforcement of law) and administration of justice especially among Black, Indigenous and other visible minority groups. Canadian Heritage along with the Ministry of Immigration, Francisation and Integration in Quebec have supported BCRC and other community organizations in disseminating legal knowledge and awareness among youth from diverse back-

grounds. Improving and correcting the justice system have appeared to be a higher priority at present at every level of government in Canada.

The findings from this study suggest enhancing public input by holding formal and informal discussion at which key stakeholders are present will help build trust and confidence in the justice system through citizen involvement. It will also attract community leaders and organizations to identify and discuss justice problems and priorities, as well as to recommend solutions.

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