CHAPTER 2

"I'm Just a Friend Now": Community Policing in Toronto Schools

Gita Rao Madan

2.1   Introduction

On June 15, 2017, the Toronto Police Services Board (TPSB) convened to discuss the future of the School Resource Officer program in Toronto, which has placed fully armed and uniformed police officers (SROs) in many of the city's public high schools on a full-time basis (CBC, 2009). This partnership program between the Toronto Police Service (TPS), the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), and the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB), was first implemented in 2008, primarily targeting schools in the city's designated "priority areas." It was created largely in response to escalated public concerns about school safety following the death of Jordan Manners, who, in 2007, was the first student to be killed on TDSB property (Brown & Rushowy, 2014). Following its inaugural school year, the SRO program expanded from 30 to 50 high schools across the city. Currently, 36 officers are shared between 75 schools (Gillis, 2017).

G. R. Madan (✉)
Toronto, ON, Canada
e-mail: gita.madan@mail.utoronto.ca

The SRO program first appeared on the TPSB agenda as a regular item for annual approval at a sparsely attended public meeting in May 2017. At this time, a small handful of community members from our grassroots organization Education Not Incarceration (ENI) registered as deputants to voice strong opposition to SRO policing (this was ENI's first public action of an organized and strategic campaign for the removal of the SRO program). Taken by surprise, the board nearly voted to suspend the program on the spot, but instead deferred their final decision until June.

At the June meeting, seventy-nine members of the public registered to present deputations. The room was, in fact, so full of people (and police officers) that many community members who registered to express their positions were barred from entering by a row of officers using bicycles to form a barricade. The majority of the first thirty deputants were strongly in favor of the program (TPSB, 2017). One after another, students, teachers, and administrators—largely from the TCDSB—spoke about the personal relationships they had developed with their SROs. They offered praise for the individual officers who had been placed in their schools, recalling events they had organized, sports teams they had coached, school trips they had attended, programs they had initiated, and so on. Several SROs told "feel good" stories in which they described the impacts they feel they have had on young people and the personal and career impacts that they themselves have experienced as officers through their exposure to "disadvantaged" youth in this setting.

The second half of the eight-hour meeting stood in sharp contrast to the first. Parents, youth, educators, lawyers, researchers, and representatives of community organizations recounted stories of abuse, harassment, and violence by SROs, and called for the immediate suspension of the program. They named the anti-Black racism that continues to plague both the policing and the education institutions, questioned the increasing concentration of policing services in particular areas of the city, and criticized the lack of public consultation on the program prior to its implementation. In the deputation I delivered, I spoke to the existing research, as reviewed during the course of my previous academic and community organizing work (Madan, 2016). For example, researchers have shown that there is little evidence to support the premise that policing actually makes schools safer (Campbell, 2009; Justice Policy Institute, 2012); that SRO policing disproportionately targets schools in low-income, racialized, and urban areas (Nolan, 2011); and that it

criminalizes Black, Indigenous, racialized, and undocumented students within their schools, fueling the school-to-prison pipeline (Advancement Project, 2013; Hirschfield, 2008; Madan, 2016; Petteruti, 2011). Further, I and others highlighted the ways in which the program violates policy measures meant to protect our most marginalized students, including the established Police-School Board Protocol, school board equity policies, the municipal sanctuary city policy, and the provincial educational policy of progressive discipline.

In the end, the TPSB refused to suspend the program, instead opting to proceed with another review (the third of its kind). In spite of the fact that the systemic injustices and barriers to education produced by the SRO program had been brought fully into view, the narrative emphasizing the "relationship-building" efforts of the police toward marginalized youth—an approach rooted in the model of community policing—was effectively used to uphold the program and silence the concerns of those most adversely affected by it.

This chapter is firmly situated in, and committed to, the ongoing struggle to remove the permanent presence of police from Toronto's schools. Specifically, it asks: In what ways has the discourse of relationship building been used to justify the existence of the SRO program while simultaneously obscuring the material reality of SRO policing on the ground? I argue that we must critically interrogate the idea that the relationship-building approach taken by the Toronto SRO program somehow renders it able to mitigate the harms inherent to it. To do this, I aim to discern the productive function of the discourses used to legitimize the SRO program—that is, to ask what these discourses *do*. A close examination reveals that the shift from an emphasis on "school safety" toward relationship building has effectively and insidiously advanced many of the institutional interests of the police while powerfully decontextualizing the program from the ongoing historical violence that racialized communities experience at their hands. The relationship-building discourse is self-serving for the TPS in various ways: It allows for the extension of their existing community policing model into school spaces; it boosts public relations by framing the program as a mutually beneficial community partnership; it allows for the humanization of individual officers, a process that detracts from systemic analyses of policing as an institution; it provides police with increased access to youth for intelligence-gathering purposes; and it masks the disciplinary and pedagogical functions of SRO policing.

This work of critically interrogating Toronto's SRO program is particularly important for a number of reasons, one of which is that the majority of existing scholarship discussing policing in schools has been produced in the American context. The dearth of scholarship in the Canadian context is significant because there are several key differences. In the USA, formal partnerships between police departments and school boards proliferated in the 1990s as part of a broader "zero-tolerance" approach to misconduct (Petteruti, 2011). This highly punitive approach mandates serious consequences for even minor violations of school rules, including acts with little potential for harm, and permits little room for consideration of mitigating circumstances or alternative disciplinary approaches. This transformed educational regime has predominantly taken the form of sweeping securitization and surveillance in many urban American public schools, including the installation of metal detectors, scanners, and surveillance cameras; random drug sweeps and controlled access to school grounds; and the permanent stationing of security guards and police officers (Nolan, 2011).

In Toronto, while SROs are armed and uniformed, they are not accompanied by the gamut of security strategies characterizing many American SRO programs. In fact, upon consideration of installing further security apparatus in schools, former TDSB Director of Education Donna Quan stated, "Metal detectors are not the answer. We don't want to create fortresses" (Doucette, 2014). In terms of policy, Ontario's Ministry of Education did enact zero-tolerance-based legislation (the *Safe Schools Act*) in 2001 but was forced to shift toward a more progressive disciplinary model in 2007 after the Ontario Human Rights Commission found that the policy was having discriminatory effects on students of color, particularly Black, Indigenous, Tamil, and Latinx students, as well as students with disabilities (OHRC, 2003). The SRO program was implemented in Toronto schools shortly after this time, despite the fact that the existing literature clearly refers to policing in schools as a direct manifestation of a zero-tolerance- and crime-control-based approach to education, not as a constructive alternative.

I argue that the contradiction between the simultaneous rejection of metal detectors in schools, on the one hand, and the enthusiastic acceptance of a permanent police presence, on the other, can only be reconciled if SRO policing is constructed as fundamentally discontinuous with a zero-tolerance approach. This understanding—that SRO

policing in Toronto is, at its core, different from the zero-tolerance logic from which contemporary SRO programs have emerged—has been largely achieved through the dominant public and institutional narrative of relationship building. This has effectively led many teachers, administrators, parents, and students to uncritically accept the presence of school-based officers rather than to question the need for them in the first place. However, it is crucial for all educational stakeholders to fully examine what becomes obscured by the relationship-building logic; we must grapple with this question even though, and precisely because, it calls into question the very legitimacy of the program.

2.2   Theoretical Framework

My understanding of racial violence in the context of SRO policing extends beyond sensational acts of police brutality. I draw from the work of Ferreira da Silva (2010), who refers to police violence as the "most perverse and elusive form of race injustice" (p. 441). This is because the effects of racial power that manifest themselves in forms such as police brutality go far beyond easily documented instances of racial discrimination, exclusion, or prejudice. The hegemonic construction of race presumes that race must be invoked (explicitly or implicitly) in order to justify practices that produce exclusion. She argues that this view, still retained by many scholars, limits considerations to whether and how racism plays a role in specific social encounters, processes, and structures.[1] However, there are more slippery forms of racial injustice left uncaptured by this framework. For Ferreira da Silva, police terror is the most elusive instance of race injustice precisely because it operates fully and effectively *without* the invocation of race. Accordingly, in order for the effects of racial power to be fully grasped, the logic that race only becomes significant when it is invoked to justify practices of discrimination must be challenged. In doing so, it is possible to articulate claims of racial injustice that are otherwise rendered unheard or irrelevant on the grounds that they fail to invoke race.

Goldberg (2009) argues that in the modern imagination, race is assumed to be an obsolete notion, a vestige of the premodern past. Contemporary forces of racial order insist on formal equality under the law, producing state-mandated race neutrality that has effectively "saved" racism through the categorical abandonment of race. Goldberg refers to this redirection of the racial as born-again racism: "Racism without race, racism

gone private, racism without the categories to name it as such. It is racism shorn of the charge, a racism that cannot be named because nothing abounds with which to name it. It is a racism purged of historical roots, of its groundedness, a racism whose history is lost" (p. 23). Born-again racism is transparent and faceless, always operating in denial. A regime of racelessness, while appearing to extend openness and accessibility, ensures the covert and totalizing extension of the racial—a logic that now rests on discourses of security maintenance, crime control, and the like.

Menter's (1987) discursive analysis of the literature on police-school relationships in England identifies this erasure, revealing that police in schools are often framed by institutions in ways that obscure the central role of the police in the broader machinery of security and surveillance. He identifies in institutional documents a common pattern of carefully crafted and race-neutral language, including words such as "cooperation," "respect," "responsibility," and "cultural diversity." These policies are "carved very precisely, and with a very sharp edge, around the contours of race, ethnicity, and class; ironically in the name of public safety, educational accountability, and personal responsibility" (Fine & Ruglis, 2009, p. 22). Here, the glaring omission of race is not merely an effect of power; it is the very mechanism through which it operates.

In Toronto, the implementation of the SRO program has been accomplished in an institutional context that makes no mention of race or the historical relationship between police and racialized communities. Race is absent from all of the official communications related to the program, an omission that is also echoed in public discourse. In this chapter, I explore the ways in which the Toronto SRO program is fundamentally rooted in racial injustice, operating through racially coded discourses that allow it to persist while eliding the criterion of racial invocation. Further, I examine how the absence of an explicit or implicit invocation of race in dominant explanations for the existence of Toronto's SRO program actually works to obscure its most harmful functions—namely, the production and reproduction of social inequalities within school spaces.

2.3   Relationship Building and SROs

As an SRO, I am also an educator, an informal counselor, a mentor, a role model, and a friend.

In particular, he's well known for Star Wars breakfast, where he engages students while preparing Star Wars toast and waffles for students weekly at the school.
<div align="right">—TPSB deputations, June 2017</div>

Two of the primary goals of the Toronto SRO program are to "improve the perception of the police amongst youth in the community" and to "improve the relationship between students and police" (Public Safety Canada, 2013). What does the relationship-building approach actually look like in Toronto schools? "Officers don't just patrol the halls, they also develop a relationship with students," said police spokesperson Mark Pugash (Aulakh & Dobbs, 2009). SROs have actively integrated themselves into all aspects of school life, taking on roles such as coaching sports teams, running homework clubs, participating in talent shows, attending graduations, delivering anti-bullying presentations, attending field trips, running charity fundraising events, speaking to law and civics classes, DJing at pep rallies, and attending student council meetings (Gee, 2009; Kauri, 2012; Rushowy, 2009). They also actively foster relationships with other members of the school community by attending staff meetings, parent council meetings, and parent information sessions, and by making efforts to integrate themselves into school management teams. SROs report that the most successful strategies they have used to establish and strengthen relationships within schools include showing students respect and considering their needs, being approachable and non-authoritarian, being friendly and positive, fostering informal conversation, offering prize incentives (especially food), identifying popular students to promote and lead events, coaching or participating in sports, and being visible in the halls and at lunch (TPS, 2009, 2011).

Some SROs have developed elaborate programs involving large inputs of time, energy, and funding. One such initiative is the Cooking with Cops program, started at a high school in Toronto's west end several years ago by an SRO who was tired of seeing fast food takeout containers in the hallways of the school (Chu, 2014). "Eager to make a change," she started a program that would allow youth to learn recipes, cook food together for school events, serve meals at a seniors' center in the area, and visit local restaurants for kitchen tours and cooking classes (Rainford, 2014). Of the program, the SRO said, "I like the experience it gives the students, plus it teaches them about teamwork, hard work, dedication and commitment. I truly love it…They don't see me as a police officer half the time, I'm just a friend now" (Chu, 2014).

The SRO program has created an abundance of new opportunities for police to access and interact with young people. Interestingly, some SROs report that they have sometimes found it challenging to perform their duties in the school because other staff-led activities and programs

compete for student participation (TPS, 2011). Does the TPS-driven mandate of building relationships align with the best interests of students or with the educational mandates of the school boards in which SROs have been placed? Both curricular and extracurricular programming and pedagogy should arguably be fulfilled by professional educators and support staff who have devoted their careers to building skills, training, knowledge, and experience in the fields of education, schooling, and youth work. What is accomplished by the assumption of these responsibilities by *police officers*? Further, how does the seemingly benign relationship-building approach obscure the more insidious policing functions of the SRO?

2.4   What Is Concealed by the Relationship-Building Discourse?

You remember me? You arrested me in the summertime.
    —A Toronto student, upon meeting the SRO who was assigned to his high school. (Rushowy, 2009)

2.4.1   Race, Place, and Youth "at Risk"

The narrative of relationship building not only masks the naturalization of police presence but also enables and obscures the violence that accompanies it. Though the SRO program may at first seem innocuous, well intentioned, and mutually beneficial, it emerged from a broader community policing model that was applied in a targeted way to racialized and low-income areas of the city through the TPS' (recently disbanded) Toronto Anti-Violence Intervention Strategy (TAVIS) (Public Safety Canada, 2013; Vivanco, 2009). Under the guise of relationship building and becoming familiar faces in the community, TAVIS officers aggressively assaulted and drew guns on young people on the streets of their neighborhoods, performed strip searches in broad daylight, and arbitrarily stopped hundreds of racialized people without cause in public areas to question them and gather intelligence—a practice known as carding, which has been targeted primarily at Toronto's Black community (Winsa, 2013). One study of Toronto high-school students shows that Black students who are not involved in delinquent behavior are much more likely

to be stopped and treated as suspects by the police than white youth who actually *admit involvement* in illegal activity (Fine et al., 2003). The SRO program extends the TPS' community policing practices into the school spaces of these same youth, producing a continuity across institutional boundaries that denies them the possibility of escape. Indeed, one of the explicit goals of TAVIS was "normalized policing" (TPS, 2015).

Under the integrated TAVIS model, policing services converged on the bodies of youth who have been deemed "at risk" because they reside in neighborhoods designated as "priority areas" (since renamed as "neighbourhood improvement areas") (Public Safety Canada, 2013). The discursive association of lawlessness and other "problem" behaviors with residence in stigmatized urban neighborhoods in Toronto is discussed by James (2012), who argues that police intervention into the lives of youth is recurrently justified by pervasive discourses of at-riskness. "Risk," which serves as a euphemism for race/place and other interlocking constructs including class, gender, and immigration status, is not an abstract concept; it is a category used to identify racialized youth, to label them as in need of saving, and to justify mechanisms of social control. The at-risk designation is powerful in its ability to mask institutionally structured relations in ways that pin responsibility for circumstances and life opportunities back onto youth, their families, and their communities. The institutions that then mobilize this designation are absolved from responsibility, understood only as well intentioned in their provision of additional community "supports" such as extra police.

Chapman-Nyaho, James, and Kwan-Lafond (2012) have investigated another TPS program rooted in similar objectives and discourses as the SRO Program: The Youth in Policing Initiative (YIPI). Every summer since 2006, YIPI has offered 150 predominantly racialized (over 93%, with over half identifying as Black) youth from Toronto's designated priority neighborhoods six weeks of full-time employment in various police divisions. The purpose of the program is to provide work experience for youth who are deemed "at risk" and to improve the historically tense relationship between these youth and their communities, on the one hand, and the police, on the other. Both YIPI and the SRO program fall under the TPS' community mobilization strategy and both are listed under the *City of Toronto*'s broader strategy for addressing "youth who are at the greatest risk of marginalization" in Toronto (Brillinger, 2013, p. 1).

The racialized spatial nature of the at-risk designation is evident in the selection criteria for the YIPI program (Chapman-Nyaho et al., 2012). All youth accepted into the program must reside in priority neighborhoods. However, youth cannot have a criminal record to participate in the program, and very few who are selected have a history of encounters with law enforcement or trouble at school. Therefore, regardless of their individual circumstances and histories, all youth from priority areas are labeled as "at risk" and in need of guidance and attention solely based on geographic location. In other words, violence and criminality are always already understood as inherent to these racialized spaces and, by extension, to the bodies that move through them. When faced with the reality of the irrelevance of the at-risk designation that is applied to all the individual young people with whom they work, YIPI officers frame the intervention as preemptive: While the youth may not *seem* "bad," considering their environment and lack of opportunity, you "never know what would happen" without programs like this (p. 89).

James (2012) argues that initiatives such as YIPI and the SRO program—those that involve educational support, guidance, mentorship, and relationship building—are frequently the precise outcome of the mobilization of at-risk discourses. In other words, the very existence of these programs is dependent on this racialized construct. Specifically, when it comes to policing, this rhetoric is routinely used to justify interventions that extend beyond the law enforcement capacity of the police—this is the very premise upon which the model of community policing is based. However, it is critical to understand how these programs continue to produce and sustain racial hierarchies. Chapman-Nyaho et al. (2012) argue that they are actually "premised on a need to guide, govern, and surveil young people from priority areas, and, in the process, protect and advance the material, moral, and psychological interests of the police" (p. 84). The creation of the at-risk designation allows the police to declare racialized and low-income youth as in need of special intervention to fill the void of positive influence in their lives. When the police swoop in to help, they establish their moral authority through efforts to reach out to marginalized youth, a redemptive gesture that reflects positively on their public image. The mentorship of the police is said to provide valuable opportunities and experience that youth from these communities would otherwise be lost without, and only the guidance of the police can transform them into responsible adults and good citizens. The framing of these initiatives through a language of

opportunity has facilitated the widespread adoption of a paradigm that pathologizes and criminalizes young racialized people, garnering enthusiastic support from policymakers; authority figures in young people's lives, including teachers and school administrators; and many from the wider community. This framing of policing as benevolent effectively resolves any public anxieties that may have been induced by the idea that students are now being policed in their schools. The portrayal of YIPI and SRO officers as savior-like has been successful in pacifying criticism even from some of those who are critical of the harsh and aggressive tactics employed by Toronto police elsewhere.

2.4.2   Who Benefits?

At the June 15 TPSB meeting, almost every school administrator, educator, and student who celebrated the success of the SRO program spoke predominantly of the extracurricular programming that their individual officer(s) had not only initiated and run in the school, but also funded (TPSB, 2017). It became very apparent that the perceived benefits brought by the program to the school community had far more to do with a lack of funding for full-time caring adults and supportive programming than a need for officers in particular. In the face of neoliberal cuts to public education, the SRO program—funded entirely through the police budget—represents additional adults in the school who may provide access to extracurricular programs that are desirable for students as part of their high-school experience. Further, because of the financial resources available to SROs, participation in some of their initiatives is incentivized with prizes for students such as free bicycles and even trips to Disneyland (Park, 2015). For this reason, it is true that some students in schools with SROs may gain some material and social benefits as a result of the program and come to see it as a valuable experience overall. When it comes to choosing between having an extracurricular activity or team run by a police officer or not having it at all, for many students, the choice is clear. For example, I asked one of my former students how he felt about his junior boys' baseball team being scheduled to play several games against a team of police officers. He said, "I'd rather just play against another school. I don't wanna shake their hands because they're the ones who are constantly looking at me every time I'm walking down the street." For him, being forced to interact with police officers in this way was the personal cost of being

able to play sports at school. Although a full examination of the prison industrial complex as it relates to SRO policing is beyond the scope of this chapter, it is critical to ask why the police are so *invested* in providing these opportunities, and why so many educational stakeholders are defending the redirection of public education funds into criminal justice security and surveillance, an investment that ultimately benefits private and carceral interests.

Does SRO policing foster mutual understanding and respect? The discourse of relationship building rests on an assumption that bringing "at-risk" youth and police together in a "get-to-know-you" setting will improve the historically problematic relationship between them. The TPS argues: "Young people get to see police officers in a different light, and police officers get to see young people in a different light—when the program works well, both sides can take away something positive" (TPS, 2011). However, the claim that this is a mutually beneficial exchange where understandings flow freely and equally between youth and the police is utterly false and serves to obscure the gross power differential between the two parties. Instead, the way that the YIPI and SRO programs are structured works primarily to advance the institutional interests of the police—they do so by using relationship building to bring the beliefs and practices of racialized youth in line with those of the policing institution. Importantly, this occurs while the police are able to carry on as usual without sacrificing any of their practices or assumptions, and without having to examine or confront the ongoing historical violence that racialized communities experience at the hands of the police. The relationship-building approach is powerfully effective at decontextualizing the SRO program from its social and historical reality, ignoring the ongoing struggles for justice by racialized communities in the city for whom police violence is a daily reality. It precludes a systemic analysis of policing that would first and foremost ask, why is the relationship between police and racialized youth in need of improvement in the first place? When police speak of the strained relationships that exist between them and marginalized communities, no responsibility is taken for the violence that has led to such mistrust—on the contrary, the violence is actively invisibilized by such discourses. Instead, inadequacy and disadvantage are located on the bodies of racialized youth as both blame and responsibility are deflected from the structural to the individual.

Further, the relationship-building approach encourages liberal understandings of policing in which some police officers are "good" and harmful police practices are ascribed to other individuals who strayed from protocol. Chapman-Nyaho et al. (2012) noted that over the course of the six-week YIPI program, there was a profound change in the way the youth conceptualized policing. Youth reported feeling highly influenced by the interpersonal relationships they developed with officers in the program, describing officers as being very relatable, having a great sense of humor, and going out of their way to make the youth comfortable. Regardless of their previous attitudes toward the police, by the end of the program almost every youth concluded that the police are good people: "Now I see how they are; they're human just like us. They're doing a job just like everybody else" (p. 90). This enthusiastic admiration for individual officers quickly translated, however, into an increased belief that the institution of policing as a whole is friendly, helpful, and just. The effect of this form of governance was thus a drastic shift in the beliefs and attitudes of youth into alignment with the interests and objectives of the police. This paradigmatic shift on the part of young people resulted in switched allegiances, with youth taking on an ambassadorial role for policing in their communities and defending police practices that are often criticized by others: "Now, when I see a cop car, I don't look to see who's in it, I look to see who's driving it" (p. 91).

A similarly profound realignment has been accomplished with respect to student attitudes toward SRO police:

> When he came to NACI [North Albion Collegiate Institute] as a school resource officer—one of 50 now in Toronto schools to maintain security and reach out to troubled kids—many saw him as the enemy. They turned away when he came down the hall, muttering among themselves or sucking their teeth in disdain. "No one would talk to me," recalls Constable Chhinzer, an athletic 27-year-old with a shaved head and an open manner. One day he saw some boys playing football in the gym. He put up a notice calling a football practice and, to his astonishment, 70 kids came out. As he put them through their paces in after-school drills that lasted three hours and more, they gradually learned to trust him and see the man behind the blue uniform and flak jacket. (Gee, 2009)

"If anything, I'd rather have him inside the school than outside," said Lovejeet, a Grade 12 student. "It changed the perception of police officers," she said. "My cousins don't like the cops and now they talk to him and stuff." (Rushowy, 2009)

The teens said they didn't always have this positive attitude towards police. "Honestly, I thought they were assholes," said Farooq. "I'd be chillin' with my friends and they'd harass me for no reason." "The cop in our school is normal, he's the complete opposite of that," he added. (Benitah, 2009)

The students no longer care that Chhinzer wears a uniform and carries a gun. To them, he's part counselor, mentor, ego-booster and founder and coach of a football team with no uniforms or equipment but enough enthusiasm that 60 boys come out on a regular basis—rain, shine, even hail—just to scrimmage. … He jokes with the students, and they with him; on the rare occasion he brings his patrol car to school, students put their hands on the hood as if under arrest. (Rushowy, 2009)

A student that I work with closely wanted nothing to do with a police officer, didn't want to speak to him. He had questions surrounding an issue that I thought this officer could possibly help with. Didn't want anything to do with it. So I said, "Ok well can you tell me why?" And he said, "I don't want to talk to any cops ever. Never." Eventually he came to understand through some of his peers that the officer in question at our school wasn't a negative influence. Yeah, he's not gonna sit with him right now either, but he's lightened that opinion slightly and my hope is to just eventually build on that and maybe he can see our officer as a person and not just "that cop." (TPSB deputation, June 2017)

These improved perceptions of police among youth are considered one of the greatest successes of the SRO program (TPS, 2009, 2011). Though framed largely as an opportunity for youth—an opportunity to attend a school that is "safe," an opportunity to build closer relationships with the police, an opportunity to access sports and other extracurriculars that may otherwise not be offered at the school—the opportunities provided to the TPS by the SRO program far outweigh any benefits proffered to students. Through the relationship-building initiatives of the program, the exposure of police to youth in a non-conflictual setting has allowed for the humanization of individual officers, allowing them to be seen as regular people who can relate to the struggles of youth.

In other words, it has enabled youth to divorce the personalities of individual SROs from their fundamental role as representatives of the police. In this way, the interests of the institution are not only protected but entrenched through programs such as these.

2.4.3   Student Surveillance

If you are going through something, talk to me.
—Toronto SRO to high school student (Rushowy, 2009)

The SRO program is a critical tool for increased government surveillance of the youth population at large. The TPS' community policing projects are intelligence-led; information collected about individuals from racially targeted street stops is retained in a burgeoning database that can be accessed by any security force in Canada, as well as the FBI and US Homeland Security (Saczkowski, 2015). If intelligence gathering was not already taking place informally, in 2011, the responsibilities of Toronto SROs were officially expanded to explicitly include this practice (TPS, 2012). According to the TPS, every SRO is now a member of a police Tactical Intelligence Strategy team that meets weekly to share information specifically about youth. Other members of this team have included frontline enforcement, intelligence, TAVIS street policing teams, and the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA). SROs play a critical role on this team because they are uniquely positioned to collect sensitive information about young people, and they actively encourage students to disclose information to them and to see them as confidants and allies (Benitah, 2009). This "get-to-know-you" approach serves to conceal the intelligence-gathering mandate of SROs, allowing them to develop intimate and familiar relationships with students, who may share personal information with officers while remaining wholly unaware of the potentially grave consequences of doing so.

The SRO's intelligence mandate is particularly threatening for the thousands of students (and their families) in Toronto who have precarious immigration status.[2] In May 2007, under pressure from school groups and community organizations, the TDSB adopted a "Students Without Legal Immigration Status" (or "Don't Ask, Don't Tell") policy (P.061 SCH) stating that all children are welcome at school regardless of status and that status-related information would not be shared with immigration officials (No One Is Illegal, 2010; TDSB, 2007; Villegas, Chapter 8). Under this policy, schools are instructed not to require information about

immigration status for student enrollment and, if it becomes known, not to provide this information to immigration authorities. Further, the policy is supported by a directive that denies immigration authorities access to TDSB property. However, through the SRO program, the CBSA is effectively able to access personal information about students and their families that could lead to apprehension, detention, and deportation. The collusion between SROs and CBSA is a clear violation of the board's commitment to the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. Even if the policy was enforced for SROs, it would conflict not only with the SRO mandate but also with current policing practices under subsection 5 of Ontario Regulation 265/98 (Government of Ontario, 2005). Although this regulation states that it is legally within the discretion of police to report any personal information gathered in their investigations to federal agencies for "bona fide" reasons, it has been found that the TPS reports individuals to CBSA on a high-volume basis (Moffette & Gardner, 2015). In other words, the routinized flow of information from the police to CBSA means that the only way to address the dangers posed by the SRO program to students who are undocumented or have precarious status is to remove officers from schools altogether.

2.4.4   SRO Disciplinary Practices

I've seen officers pick up students who were skipping first period.
        —A Toronto high school teacher, TPSB deputation, June 2017

This is a case of a Black child, railroaded by the Toronto District School Board and the Toronto Police, whose negligence damaged his life. This case points to why Black students are 3 times more likely to be suspended, 3.5 times more likely to be carded, 4 times more likely to be charged.
                    —Parent, TPSB deputation, June 2017

Nolan (2011) describes the series of events typical of most school-based arrests she observed in high schools in New York City: These confrontations begin with the violation of a school rule that has little or no impact on school safety, such as the dress code or taking too long to get to class. Students are criminalized for these behaviors, and in responding to the provocation they often end up getting arrested for insubordination or disorderly conduct. The presence of police in the school creates an excessive reliance on law enforcement, meaning that minor incidents previously dealt with by the school administration escalate into criminal justice matters.

The relationship-building discourse of the Toronto SRO program is extremely effective at detracting attention from the disciplinary and enforcement functions of SROs. The polished public image of Toronto SROs seems to stand in contradiction to the harsh and aggressive tactics characterizing SRO programs in many American schools; it has been shown that SROs in Toronto prefer to see themselves as relationship builders rather than enforcers (Rushowy, 2009; TPS, 2009, 2011). However, reports of police intimidation, harassment, arrests, and assault of students by Toronto SROs were confirmed by the organization Educators for Peace and Justice as far back as 2009 (Jennie, 2009). They claimed that SROs create a climate of fear and repression in schools and that while the media prefers to focus on students who may benefit from the presence of police officers, many marginalized students feel further alienated by this program.

One cell phone video of an incident in a Toronto school went viral after it was posted to YouTube: the arrest of a sixteen-year-old Black male in the stairway of his high school in October 2009. The video, called "Student Arrested at Northern Secondary School for No Reason," begins following a confrontation that was reportedly initiated when the SRO asked the student for identification (even though he was wearing an ID lanyard around his neck) and the student responded using the word "bacon" (Friesen & Appleby, 2009; MajorKraze, 2009). As the situation escalates, the officer repeatedly demands that the student put his hands behind his back. The student responds with, "I've done nothing wrong to get arrested," and, "Don't you have to let me know what I've done first?" The student's friends also demand that the officer let the student go. With no justification given, the officer handcuffs the student and proceeds to violently push him through a packed hallway of the school, making a public spectacle of the incident for all the other students to see. The student was subsequently charged for assaulting an officer and resisting arrest, and then suspended (TPAC, 2009).

What message is sent to students who are under tight and constant scrutiny, repeatedly being asked to identify themselves in their own schools, the very places where they are supposed to be? Discipline is powerfully pedagogical. Noguera (1995) asserts that the disciplining event itself functions to reactivate power, both by demonstrating where it lies and also by perpetuating its authority. Quoting Foucault, he writes that the "ceremony of punishment ... is to make everyone

aware, through the body of the criminal, of the unrestrained presence of the sovereign" (p. 49). In this sort of altercation between students and SROs, there is a reactivation of power that takes place that is imprinted on the bodies of students. Racial hierarchies in the school are reinscribed through the encounter: The targeted youth is produced as a criminalized subject, as a threat that must be contained and removed from the school, while the groups of white students (and staff) bearing witness to this performance in the hallway are able to affirm that they are *not* him, and are therefore deserving of protection *from* him at any cost. Lipman (2011) writes that repeated police encounters serve as a "powerful signifier that youth of colour are dangerous and need to be locked up or removed from public space" (p. 85). Spectacles of this sort serve to confirm the perception that there is indeed a need for the SRO in the school. The rest of the school community can be assured that although the vast majority of the time the presence of an SRO is unnecessary, rare incidents do arise that only the police can handle.

This racial boundary is enforced even when SROs are not engaged in disciplinary action. Until now, throughout all SRO activities, there has been a strong emphasis on the visibility of officers. Former Police Chief Bill Blair insisted that officers be in uniform at all times and that they maintain an active and visible presence in the school (Blatchford, 2009). When SROs are engaged in other activities or even just standing around, their uniformed presence still ensures a constant visual reminder not only of the power they wield as police officers but also of a constant threat of criminality that lurks in school spaces. The result is a culture of control that constantly codes the bodies of racialized students in particular ways, teaching students about themselves and their place within the hierarchy of the school. It also sends a clear message to the broader school community about the students who attend the school. For example, at one school located on a major street, the SRO often insists on parking his police car directly in front of the school instead of in his assigned spot in the parking lot behind the building. This move has resulted in passersby frequently asking what just happened at the school. In the few instances when SROs perform their duties in civilian clothes, this decision is made very strategically. For instance, an SRO who visited a school to make a special presentation explained, "I do the same job as Candy [the school's SRO]. I purposely didn't dress up like a cop today because I wanted you to see Candy as a cop in a uniform and me as a cop not in a uniform. We're both just people. And we're both here to help" (Mills, 2012).

2.5   Born-Again Racism

The race-based discrimination characterizing Ontario's former zero-tolerance disciplinary policy has in many ways been "born again" through the SRO policing program in Toronto schools. The characteristically neo-liberal purging of race from the public sphere in the name of racelessness does not make it disappear; instead, it unhinges race from the domain of state delimitation, allowing it to circulate freely under discourses of individual merit, effort, ability, and choice. Because the relationship-building strategy relies on these discourses, it is a particularly insidious example of how racism continues to operate without race invocation—in this case, under a veneer of opportunity and mutual benefit. In fact, racial power is manifestly secured in the *absence* of this invocation, as the central organizing logic of race becomes hidden by race-absent institutional discourses of safety, risk, opportunity, and relationship building. Goldberg (2009) writes, "As race evaporates from the socio-conceptual landscape, racisms (in their plurality) are pushed further and further out of sight, out of "existence," unmentionable because the terms by which to recognize and reference them recede, fade from view and memory" (p. 360). Racial power assumes new strategies and modes of management in order to ensure its continuity; this is evident in the discursive evolution of the SRO program from safety and security to relationship building, each subsequent strategy more thoroughly raceless and thus farther away from the explanatory grasp of dominant conceptions of racism.

2.6   Conclusion

In this chapter, I have challenged the assumption that the injustice inherent to SRO policing can be addressed by reframing it through the discourse and practice of relationship building. The TPS has invested large sums of time, money, and energy into implementing and defending the program, creating and mobilizing discourses of safety, at-riskness, and opportunity in order to present the project as beneficial for the youth targeted by SRO policing. However, a close examination of this discursive framing reveals that it in fact works to produce and reproduce racial hierarchies in a myriad of ways. In this context, one of the greatest "accomplishments" of this approach has been its relative success at engulfing critique and suppressing resistance. Since its inception, the SRO program has quickly become normalized within the schooling

fabric of the city and, until very recently, has managed to fly largely under the radar both in conversations about education and about policing. Here, I have aimed to articulate what is suppressed by official discourses in order to more fully grasp what is at stake in the continued existence and expansion of the program.

On May 4, 2016, the TPS unveiled the newest development in police-school partnerships in Toronto: "May the Police 4th Be with You"—a day of fun, games, and relationship building between TPS officers and elementary school students from 22 schools in Scarborough, a largely racialized suburb of Toronto (CTV Toronto, 2016). News coverage of the event depicts children as young as nine years old participating in a "Mock Police Academy," which included being coached by officers to hit mats with batons while yelling, "Get down!" as well as learning how to place each other into handcuffs. Speaking at the event, Chief of Police Mark Saunders said, "Instead of seeing us in the uniform, they see us as human beings. We're interacting in a social environment and having a good time together."

As the expansion of TPS' school-based policing strategy continues, youth, parents, educators, community members, and community organizations including Education Not Incarceration, Jane and Finch Action Against Poverty, Black Lives Matter—Toronto, Educators for Peace and Justice, and the Latinx Afro-Latin-America Abya Yala Education Network, are organizing in resistance. In the past few months, these organizations have mounted a mainstream media and public education campaign; lobbied officials at the TPS, the school boards, and elected political representatives; and collected over 1000 signatures for a petition to end the SRO program. In the coming months, as the fate of the program is decided, it is the responsibility of educators, administrators, school boards, policymakers, parents, community members, and all those invested in an equitable and just education system to center the experiences of those most harmed by its historical and ongoing racial violence. I conclude with the eloquent observations of Toronto high-school student Rayon:

> The feelings among most of the students at Weston C.I. is that they do not want a cop in their school and they feel threatened by the presence of an armed police officer in the school for numerous reasons. The students cannot identify with an individual who wears a massive bullet proof vest and carries a loaded gun and taser, which is quite intimidating particularly for people coming from T.O.'s "priority neighbourhoods"—let's be honest,

ghettoes—who witness and experience police activity in a whole differ-ent light than youth from more affluent areas. On a day-to-day basis, the police harass, bully, and brutalize people from our communities and get away without being held to account for their actions. How can we accept having police in our schools to "build relations" with us if they are get-ting away with daily brutality and sometimes murder in our communities? (Rayon, 2009)

2.7   Addendum

This chapter was written at a particular political moment, within the depths of a collective community-based struggle for the removal of the SRO program. Shortly after the time of writing, we redirected our cam-paign strategy away from the TPSB and toward the two school boards. As a result, on November 22, 2017, students and communities in Toronto won a historic victory: the permanent removal of the SRO pro-gram from the TDSB (the largest school board in Canada). The program still operates in TCDSB schools.

Notes

1. Ferreira da Silva's (2010) analytics of raciality theory, which is beyond the scope of this chapter, traces the racial as a strategy of power in the produc-tion of modernity itself.
2. There are approximately 200,000 non-status migrants currently living in the Greater Toronto Area (Keung, 2013).

References

Advancement Project. (2013). *Police in Schools Are Not the Answer to the Newtown Shooting.* http://b.3cdn.net/advancement/a24bfe0e82e0a37d66_lzm6bkclv.pdf.

Aulakh, R., & Dobbs, K. (2009, October 24). Officer Attacked at High School Hailed as Hero. *The Toronto Star.* https://www.thestar.com/news/crime/2009/10/24/officer_attacked_at_high_school_hailed_as_hero.html.

Benitah, S. (2009, October 24). Police School Program: Hit-and-Miss with Teens. *CTV Toronto News.* http://toronto.ctvnews.ca/police-school-program-hit-and-miss-with-teens-1.446653.

Blatchford, C. (2009, September 9). Cops in Schools: Sometimes Needed, If Not Always Trusted. *The Globe and Mail.* http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/cops-in-schools/article4285256/.

Brillinger, C. (2013). Review of City Service Levels Supporting Toronto's at Risk Youth. *City of Toronto*. http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2013/cd/bgrd/backgroundfile-61255.pdf.

Brown, L., & Rushowy, K. (2014, September 23). School Stabbing Revives Trauma of Jordan Manners Shooting. *The Toronto Star*. https://www.thestar.com/yourtoronto/education/2014/09/23/toronto_school_stabbing_death_deja_vu_seven_years_later.html.

Campbell, J. (2009, April 16). Numerous Studies Show Cops in Schools Make Matters Worse. *Basics News*. http://basicsnews.ca/numerous-studies-show-cops-in-schools-make-matters-worse/.

CBC. (2009, June 29). 50 Toronto High Schools to Have Police Presence. *CBC News*. http://www.cbc.ca/news/Canada/toronto/50-toronto-high-schools-to-have-police-presence-1.785021.

Chapman-Nyaho, S., James, C. E., & Kwan-Lafond, D. (2012). "We Expect Much of You": Enlisting Youth in the Policing of Marginalized Communities. *Canadian Ethnic Studies, 43–44*(3–1), 81–98.

Chu, N. (2014, June 25). Cooking with Cops Brings Police Officer and Students Together in the Kitchen. *Bloor West Villager*. http://www.insidetoronto.com/news-story/4597428-cooking-with-cops-brings-police-officer-and-students-together-in-the-kitchen/.

CTV Toronto. (2016, May 4). *Mock Police Academy for Students* [video file]. http://toronto.ctvnews.ca/video?clipId=862989&playlistId=1.2888308&binId=1.815892&playlistPageNum=1&binPageNum=1.

Doucette, C. (2014, September 24). Metal Detectors 'Not the Answer' to School Safety Concerns: Donna Quan. *Toronto Sun*. http://www.torontosun.com/2014/09/24/metal-detectors-not-the-answer-to-school-safety-concerns-donna-quan.

Ferreira Da Silva, D. (2010). Towards a Critique of the Socio-Logos of Justice: The Analytics of Raciality and the Production of Universality. *Social Identities, 7*(3), 421–454.

Fine, M., Freudenberg, N., Payne, Y., Perkins, T., Smith, K., & Wanzer, K. (2003). "Anything Can Happen with Police Around": Urban Youth Evaluate Strategies of Surveillance in Public Places. *Journal of Social Issues, 59*(1), 141–158.

Fine, M., & Ruglis, J. (2009). Circuits and Consequences of Dispossession: The Racialized Realignment of the Public Sphere for U.S. Youth. *Transforming Anthropology, 17*(1), 20–33.

Friesen, J., & Appleby, T. (2009). Teen's Arrest in High School Hallway Sparks Debate About Police Program. *The Globe and Mail*. https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/toronto/teens-arrest-in-high-school-hallway-sparks-debate-about-police-program/article4288376/.

Gee, M. (2009, October 7). A Police Drama with a Happy Ending. *The Globe and Mail*. http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/toronto/a-police-drama-with-a-happy-ending/article791109/.

Gillis, W. (2017). Toronto Police Board to Consider Suspending School Resource Officer Program. *The Toronto Star*. https://www.thestar.com/news/crime/2017/05/23/toronto-police-board-to-consider-suspending-school-officer-program.html.

Goldberg, D. (2009). *The Threat of Race: Reflections on Racial Neoliberalism*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Government of Ontario. (2005). *O. Reg. 265/98: Disclosure of Personal Information*. http://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/980265.

Hirschfield, P. (2008). Preparing for Prison? The Criminalization of School Discipline in the USA. *Theoretical Criminology, 12*(1), 79–101.

James, C. (2012). Students at "Risk": Stereotypes and the Schooling of Black Boys. *Urban Education, 47*(2), 464–494.

Jennie. (2009, June 9). Letter to the TDSB Regarding Police in Schools. *Educators for Peace and Justice*. http://epjweb.org/campaigns/sanctuary-schools/letter-to-the-tdsb-regarding-police-in-schools/.

Justice Policy Institute. (2012). Measured Responses: Why Increasing Law Enforcement in Schools Is Not an Effective Public Safety Response to the Newtown Tragedy. *Justice Policy Institute*. http://www.justicepolicy.org/uploads/justicepolicy/documents/schoolsafetyfactsheet.pdf.

Kauri, V. (2012, November 13). Trustees, Principals Fear Loss of Officer Program. *The Globe and Mail*. http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/toronto/trustees-principals-fear-loss-of-officer-program/article5266272/.

Keung, N. (2013, February 22). Toronto Declared 'Sanctuary City' to Non-Status Migrants. *The Toronto Star*. https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2013/02/21/cisanctuarycity21.html.

Lipman, P. (2011). Cracking Down: Chicago School Policy and the Regulation of Black and Latino Youth. In K. J. Saltman & D. A. Gabbard (Eds.), *Education as Enforcement: The Militarization and Corporatization of Schools* (pp. 73–91). New York: Routledge.

Madan, G. R. (2016). *Policing in Toronto Schools: Race-ing the Conversation* (Masters thesis). OISE, University of Toronto, Toronto.

MajorKraze. (2009, October 2). *Student Arrested at Northern Secondary School for No Reason* [video file]. http://youtu.be/rhfh8P0FomI.

Menter, I. (1987). The Long Arm of Education: A Review of Recent Documents on Police/School Liaison. *Critical Social Policy, 7*(21), 68–77.

Mills, S. (2012). *"Coolest Cop in Canada" School Cop Candy @PCGraham9655 Bishop Marrocco Social Media Success & Safety* [video file]. https://youtu.be/dLZdKJIML6o.

Moffette, D., & Gardner, K. (2015). *Often Asking, Always Telling: The Toronto Police Service and the Sanctuary City Policy*. Toronto: No One Is Illegal.

Noguera, P. A. (1995). Preventing and Producing Violence: A Critical Analysis of Responses to School Violence. *Harvard Educational Review, 65*(2), 189–212.

Nolan, K. (2011). *Police in the Hallways: Discipline in an Urban High School*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

No One Is Illegal. (2010, September 3). Toronto Schools a Little More Welcoming for Undocumented Students. *No One Is Illegal*. http://toronto.nooneisillegal.org/node/497.

Ontario Human Rights Commission [OHRC]. (2003, July 8). *The Ontario Safe Schools Act: School Discipline and Discrimination*. http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/ontario-safe-schools-act-school-discipline-and-discrimination.

Park, R. [zeebraCop]. (2015). Retrieved from https://twitter.com/zeebraCop.

Petteruti, A. (2011). Education Under Arrest: The Case Against Police in Schools. *Justice Policy Institute*. http://www.justicepolicy.org/uploads/justicepolicy/documents/educationunderarrest_fullreport.pdf.

Public Safety Canada. (2013). *School Resource Officer Program (Details)*. https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/cntrng-crm/plcng/cnmcs-plcng/ndx/dtls-en.aspx?n=71.

Rainford, L. (2014, October 20). Students and Seniors Bond Through Bishop Marrocco's Intergenerational Program. *Bloor West Villager*. http://www.insidetoronto.com/news-story/4923670-students-and-seniors-bond-through-bishop-marrocco-s-intergenerational-program/.

Rayon. (2009, April 16). 'They Don't Belong': The Solution Is Not the Cops. *Basics News*. http://basicsnews.ca/%E2%80%98they-don%E2%80%99t-belong%E2%80%99-the-solution-is-not-cops/.

Rushowy, K. (2009, January 11). The Kids Are All Right, Says Cop. *The Toronto Star*. http://www.thestar.com/life/parent/2009/01/11/the_kids_are_all_right_says_cop.html.

Saczkowski, T. (2015, August 31). Carding and Toronto Police Practices Called into Question. *Rabble News*. http://rabble.ca/news/2015/08/carding-and-toronto-police-practices-spotlight.

Toronto District School Board [TDSB]. (2007). *Policy P.061 SCH: Students Without Legal Immigration Status*. http://www2.tdsb.on.ca/ppf/uploads/files/live/98/1555.pdf.

Toronto Police Accountability Coalition [TPAC]. (2009). *Toronto Police Accountability Coalition, Bulletin #50*. http://www.tpac.ca/show_bulletin.cfm?id=139.

Toronto Police Service [TPS]. (2009). School Resource Officer Program: 2008/2009 Evaluation. *Toronto Police Service*. https://www.torontopolice.on.ca/publications/files/reports/2008,2009-sro_evaluation_program.pdf.

Toronto Police Service [TPS]. (2011, December). School Resource Officer Program: 2011 Follow-Up Evaluation. *Toronto Police Service*. http://www.torontopolice.on.ca/publications/files/reports/2008,2009-sro_program_follow-up_evaluation.pdf.

Toronto Police Service [TPS]. (2012). 2011 Service Performance Year End Report. *Toronto Police Service*. http://www.torontopolice.on.ca/publications/files/reports/2011performancereport.pdf.

Toronto Police Service [TPS]. (2015). TAVIS. *Toronto Police Service*. http://www.torontopolice.on.ca/tavis/.

Toronto Police Services Board [TPSB]. (2017, June 15). *Toronto Police Services Board Livestream Thursday June 15th 1 pm* [video file]. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J6lVDtmlATk.

Vivanco, P. A. (2009). *'Safe' Schools: Safe for Who?: Latinas, Thugs, and Other Deviant Bodies* (Masters thesis). OISE, University of Toronto, Toronto.

Winsa, P. (2013, September 27). TAVIS Police Unit in Eye of the Storm. *The Toronto Star*. http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/knowntopolice2013/2013/09/27/tavis_police_unit_in_eye_of_the_storm.html.