EXPLORING ONLINE NARRATIVES OF INEQUITABLE POLICING IN ONTARIO: AN ANALYSIS OF TWEETS AND INITIAL WEB-BASED NEWS ARTICLES IN 2020

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Abstract

Despite long standing narratives of policing as public protection in the colonial nation state of Canada, policing in this country constitutes an enduring and multifaceted health inequity for Indigenous, Black, and Mad populations. To create change it is vital to understand current conversations in our society around police interactions with the groups most harmed by these inequities and how these conversations inhibit or enable change. To this end, 2020 Ontario-based Tweets regarding interactions between these populations and police, and initial online news articles reporting on police use of lethal force against these population are analyzed. The articles are found to display baseline understandings of policing that reflect and promote the longstanding hegemonic narrative and, by minimizing harm done when police use lethal force, may inhibit change. The Tweets show counter-hegemonic understandings of policing as a source of injustice, but nonetheless are silent on racial issues when compared to Mad issues.

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Introduction

On May 25, 2020, Minneapolis police brutally killed George Floyd, flagrantly exercising their power over an unarmed Black American man (D'Amore, 2020). This spurred rapid action on what was already an inflamed issue—the pervasive role of discrimination in police brutality. In response to George Floyd's death, protests were mobilized across more than 60 countries in what has been described as a "reckoning for global mental health" (Weine et al., 2020) and was led in Canada by organizations such as Black Lives Matter, the Braided Warriors, the Black Legal Action Centre, and Aboriginal Legal Services. This problem is not new. The fact that law enforcement interactions have a substantial, direct, and demonstrably inequitable impact on health outcomes for Canadians has been clearly documented (Comack, 2018; Marcoux & Nicholson, 2017; Singh, 2020; Zinger, 2020). Indeed, it is the persistence rather than the appearance of inequitable harm in policing practices that calls for urgent change.

In the last 20 years, Indigenous people in the geopolitical nation state of Canada have been the victims of 16% of recorded instances of killings by police in Canada yet make up only 4.2% of the nation's population. Black Canadians make up 8.6% of the killings by police and only 2.9% of the population. More than two-thirds of those killed by police have been Mad individuals or had addiction issues (Singh, 2020). Additionally, these groups are disproportionately stopped by police and incarcerated (Comack, 2018; Warde, 2012). These statistics speak to only mortality rates; however, inequitable policing outcomes can be seen in these groups across a range of measures. These include indicators within state systems, such as incarceration rates, and impacts generated by the painful reality of living with such an inequitable risk (Cooper & Fullilove, 2016). Through these outcomes, police-based discrimination generates complex health risks for each of these groups that are both linked and

unique. Accordingly, the risks generated through policing inequities further compound at the intersections of these identities. Incredible risk and a great need for cross-movement solidarity can be seen in the ways these systems of oppression interact. For example, the way these inequities layer and interact can clearly be seen when considering that Black, Indigenous, and Mad individuals typically experience more negative contact with police and negative police encounters and the "anticipatory stress" (Alang et al., March 2021, p. 2) over such encounters can are associated with increased anxiety and depression. Further, Black and Latinx show sharper increases in depression when exposed to police brutality. Now consider that Black, Mad, and Indigenous individuals in Canada are overrepresented in our incarceration systems and that incarnation is associated with mental disorders and substance abuse (McNiel et al., 2005). Further, in the midst of these multifaceted potentials for harm, recent studies also show that instances of police brutality correlate with a higher rate of unmet need for medical care due to increased medical mistrust following these harmful interactions with the state (Alang et al., June 2021). Thus, it is clear that the abuse of police power has multi-dimensional and compounding health impacts that feed into a larger system of oppression for those living at these intersections. Yet, despite the known statistics, these inequities persist and have persisted for years.

Accordingly, while law enforcement interactions constitute a source of health inequity that must be addressed, creating change in policing practices in Canada has been slow and thus far altogether ineffective. One reason for this could be general public resistance borne of a lack of understanding of the risks that Black, Indigenous, and Mad individuals face, and of the complex ways that these "systems of oppression [are] connected to each other, intersec[t] and overla[p]" (Mingus, 2009) from those who benefit from policing. Accordingly, it is important to situate how such systems of oppression impact each group and go on to interact in a complex cycle of

discrimination and state abuse. As has been discussed, risks compound across the complex intersections and histories of "communities whose bodies have been owned, experimented on, institutionalized, hospitalized, medicalized, colonized, imprisoned, enslaved and controlled" where dominant views have dictated that "bodies are wrong, perverse, shameful, bad, and most importantly; that our bodies are not ours" (Mingus, 2009). This research takes seriously the realities of those who experience policing from within and across these intersectional communities and questions the lethargy of institutional change by asking what stories society tells about policing, and how those stories prevent or enable public protection. Specifically, I explore how the conversation around inequitable policing on Twitter differs from that in initial news coverage, examining to what extent each of these dialogues conform with or diverge from hegemonic understandings of policing.

In doing so, this comparison seeks to offer a sense of the conversation around policing inequities in two different areas of the public forum, one traditionally known for change, and the other traditionally known for a commitment to objectivity. As Twitter is known for supporting change and sharing personal opinions, and news coverage in Canada is known for a commitment to objectivity, it is clear that Twitter offers vastly different information sharing affordances for its users than news coverage offers to reporters. Twitter allows users to take to the internet to share opinions, as an individual or as a group, informally, with a wide audience. There is a long history of social justice movements being amplified through Twitter and this platform is known to be a productive tool for mobilizing action for Black rights (Lee, 2017). On the other hand, media coverage in Canada typically aims to offer objective reporting on world events. Such objectivity and neutrality in reporting have been questioned and criticized for ultimately promoting dominant views (Corteau & Hoynes, 2018). Of course, both dialogues, public as they

are, impact wider understandings of policing-based violence in Ontario. In reviewing the Twitter conversation throughout 2020, I hope to gain an understanding of how the general public understood policing during this time and, given the platform's history with social movements, a sense of where conversations on Twitter during this time most call for change. From the initial news articles, I hope to gain an understanding of how these initial articles handle instances of police killing as a matter of daily reporting. This emphasis on daily reporting seeks to understand the baseline narrative of routine reporting, when the focus is not explicitly on editorializing such inequities, but rather on recounting events as they happen. By contrasting the texts from each media source, we can gain an understanding of how the conversation has been taken up among the general public, what balance articles have managed to strike in terms of ideas of objectivity, and what implications the narratives that result from each medium may have on public understandings of and action against policing inequities.

Outline of Thesis

To unpack these questions, I first work to frame them within the reality of policing inequities, relevant frameworks for justice, and a larger history of state domination. Together, this review lays out an understanding of the issues. I suggest that the hegemonic view of policing is an obstacle for change and generates a commitment to approaching change from beyond this hegemonic experience, which is foundational to how I approach this research.

First, I lay out one of the most basic understandings that guides this thesis: policing practices in Canada constitute a source of health inequity for Indigenous, Mad, and Black populations. This fact may seem self-evident, as the data very much supports this claim. However, in a society where calls to defund the police have met such intense pushback (Powell, 2020) despite the data, these foundational understandings are clearly still needed. The

disproportional morality rates at the hands of police that have been seen in Canada with these populations is a key focus in this section, amongst other statistics such as incarceration rates. Across the board, Black and Indigenous deaths are disproportionally high in these mortality rates. In recent reviews, Mad individuals and those with substance issues have been shown to experience even higher rates of mortality at the hands of police (Singh, 2020). In my review, the number of Mad deaths is nearly proportional with the population size, despite a severe lack of data. While this does mark a slight decline compared the *Deadly Force* report quoted above, it should be acknowledged that it may be the sparse data available on these killings rather than a decline in Mad deaths that has led to this difference. As these statistics trace back to 2000, the mortality rates gesture at the breadth and persistence of the problem and support a renewed call for change.

Throughout, I argue that two frameworks would be best mobilized to support this change: Disability Justice and Transformative Justice. The tenets of each of these two frameworks are reviewed in relation to how they steer action against policing inequities. In this section, two different approaches to policing inequities are briefly explored through the lens of these frameworks, Crisis Intervention Training and defunding the police. Crisis Intervention Training is shown to be decidedly outside of each of these frameworks and fails to create change for those most at risk of harm from police practices. In contrast, defunding the police and the resulting expansion and improvement of community resources, represents a solution that comes from the communities most impacted by policing violence and which follows these frameworks. Yet, while these frameworks offer great solutions and the problem seems clear, change has been slow where it has been existent at all.

I then outline the hegemonic view of policing and present it as a possible obstacle to this change. The hegemonic view in a society is generated through manufactured consent that establishes a dominant sense of reality which the majority of those in society experience as a universal norm. As I will further unpack, as a white settler state, the hegemonic view of policing in Canada is one of so-called safety and order. Importantly, this view works to position the police as protectors who are in the right and those who stand against them as criminals who police have the right to persecute. In essence, this hegemonic view creates a binary through which policing is equated with protection, service, and goodness, while anyone positioned against the police are seen as criminal, dangerous, and bad. Ultimately, this reductivist way of thinking protects police and erases the realities of those who are inequitably harmed by police. Thus, where this narrative persists, the experiences of those harmed by police are silenced. This binary has been long in creation and a brief policing ethnography demonstrates how Black, Indigenous, and Mad lives have historically been relegated to the criminal end of this spectrum since the inception of modern policing. These histories show a pattern of intentional, deliberate, and explicit white and ableist domination over these groups for political and economic gain that defies any promise to serve and protect.

While the explicit discrimination of early forms of policing have been formally written out of police institutions, gross inequities persist. The hegemonic reality of policing is clearly not experienced by those inequitably harmed by this service, and this can serve to create different relationships with policing for those outside of the dominant group of society and those within. In Canada, a colonial, white, settler state, this view stems from wider societal patterns that are informed by Eurocentric, colonial thought and practice. Accordingly, the hegemonic view of policing can be seen as an expression of the ongoing narrative of white dominance in Canada.

One nefarious aspect of hegemonic culture is that without active critical reflection for those who experience the hegemonic norm it can be difficult to see how these norms shape one's views. It is this aspect of hegemonic policing which stands to create such a barrier to real change: those who experience the hegemonic norm continue to see police as the source of safety and that hegemonic policing narratives would have it remain as such. Thus, when faced with the prospect of divesting from the police, those invested in hegemonic understandings see a loss in protection, while those committed to counter-hegemonic understandings see a gain in safety.

Given the vast difference in understanding generated between narratives of hegemonic policing and narratives of counter-hegemonic policing, I then ask how hegemonic narratives of policing have impacted the outcomes in research on perspectives between police and Black, Indigenous, and Mad individuals in Canada and to what extent this research is attentive to the potential biases that come with dominant ideas of policing. To this end, I provide a brief review of seventeen peer-reviewed articles published on these perspectives in Canada. Overall, a clear pattern in these studies emerges. Those studies which feature police perspectives tend to lead to conclusions that follow a more hegemonic view of policing which then, when not properly contextualized, can shift blame, fully or partially, away from officers. In contrast, those studies which feature perspectives from members of these at-risk groups typically displayed more negative evaluations of police. This demonstrates counter-hegemonic understandings from at-risk groups, and by extension, in general population surveys, a more hegemonic understanding from the dominant population is used for comparison. The risks of presenting police perspectives without attention to subject positionality are also discussed.

Thus, it is clear that policing constitutes a source of injustice. It is also clear that frameworks which could help to address this injustice are available, but that their implementation

has been hindered by a history of public support for policing from dominant groups in society who benefit from inequitable policing practices. Further, it is acknowledged that this reality stems from a historical pattern of colonial domination. This manner of thought promotes dominant societal conceptualizations of policing as a service for protection and disregards the experiences of those unjustly persecuted by police. It is clear that such views promote the existence of police in a way that shelters them against change that would, in fact, enable public protection against policing inequities. With these foundations laid, I then turn to the question of how these patterns manifest in current narratives in the public forum, and how these narratives in turn continue to prevent or enable public protection.

Specifically, I take up two sets of data to examine patterns in commentary on police violence in Ontario in 2021. I first examine the conversation on Twitter, and then the reporting style from web-based news articles released within 2 calendar days of each killing. First, Tweets from Ontario regarding police interactions with Black, Mad, and Indigenous individuals in Canada were collected and analyzed. In total, 218 Tweets were identified and included in this analysis. A code was established and applied which categorizes Tweets based on the narrative patterns present in their content. Larger patterns in the distribution of these categories were then examined and compared across race and mental health status. Overall, these Tweets offer a snapshot of the conversation taking place among the Ontario public on Twitter in 2020. This conversation, originating from both individuals and groups, may also reflect patterns in wider public dialogue and thought on this issue. Then, web articles featuring text-based initial news coverage on instances of lethal use of force by police in Ontario were collected and analyzed. In total, 38 articles were identified and analyzed. Again, a system was devised to track the narrative trends in these articles, although rather than categorizing the full text, the code for the articles

was applied line by line. The trends were analyzed for general patterns as well as across information source type. Occurring within only two calendar dates of each respective killing, this coverage typically represents some of the first information on the killing to become available to the public. Accordingly, these articles were seen as vital in forming public perception and promoting and steering early conversation in the public sphere.

Once analyzed, the trends in both the Tweets and the articles were reviewed through the lens of hegemonic policing. This review sought to understand how hegemonic patterns manifest in the conversation on Twitter and in initial news coverage, and how these narratives could in turn be seen to either prevent or enable continued police violence. Through this lens, the conversation on Twitter is shown to be decidedly counter-hegemonic. While there are shortcomings in this conversation, the analysis shows that the collected Tweets typically understand police killings as a part of a larger and unacceptable pattern of systemic violence. Further, when those killed by police violence are discussed in these Tweets, they are typically positioned as victims of this systemic inequity. Specifically, they are presented as human victims rather than "perpetrators" or "criminals". Despite this counter-hegemonic narrative, the shortcomings in the Tweets are targeted, relevant, and should not be ignored. In particular, when compared to Tweets about policing as it impacts Mad individuals, there was very little conversation in these Tweets regarding policing as it interacts with Black and Indigenous individuals. This silence around race is particularly surprising given Twitter's history as a tool for Black community building and resistance (Lee, 2017). Perhaps this lack of critical attention to race is a matter of a collective resistance to acknowledging racism in so-called multicultural Canada. Regardless of the reason, such one-dimensional, white centric approaches must be addressed. Other justice movements offer a clear example of this when failing to consider race

and have shown results that do not eradicate the inequity, but simply shift it away from white bodies without improving the situation for racialized individuals. Beyond this, the Tweets do not display a strong tendency for action-driven dialogue that would be likely to prompt change. Indeed, the lack of resource sharing, resistance, and calls to action stand in the way of the types of critical and forward-thinking dialogue which may be most needed to combat inequitable policing.

In contrast, the initial news articles demonstrate and promote an understanding of killings by police as a natural result of the responsibilities that police must assume in due process of their duty to serve and protect. In these articles, police killings are spoken about in vague and casual terms that alleviate scrutiny from the responsible officers. Further, in all cases, those killed by police are discussed with criminal descriptions, even when it is a known that police were called to the scene by the deceased in a plea for assistance. Overall, these descriptions generate a baseline understanding of killings by police that follows the hegemonic binary that has been discussed. Through these articles, the police are typically positioned as "the hero," and those standing against them as "the criminal." As a close reading that examines Tweets and reporting that cover the same deaths helps to illustrate, these baseline assumptions in reporting have real human risks. Ultimately, by bringing hegemonic assumptions into these narrative styles, reporters can minimize the harm done by police, and in doing so, slow the sense of urgency in current calls for reform. Accordingly, this reporting style then further adds to power imbalances already in place against Black, Indigenous, and Mad individuals in our society.

These trends reveal valuable insights that can be leveraged towards supporting and maintaining societal safety that does not rely on discriminatory policing. Recommendations are made stemming from both sets of data analysis, as well as general observations made during the

initial literature review for this project. These recommendations lay out targeted suggestions for advocates and allies, reporters and journalists, policy makers and the Canadian government, and researchers and academics.

Author Positionality

I take on this work as a white settler who has directly benefited from, and continues to directly benefit from, the colonial culture that informs these policing inequities. A little over a year ago, I found myself confused and defensive for an institution that had always provided me safety, an institution that had nonetheless been failing openly, an institution that many were calling to be abolished. Even hearing of George Floyd being murdered by police, I still could not understand what was at stake. I thought that surely these institutions needed to change, but I could not get past what I knew about police. To me, they were a service for the people, for protection and for safety. It took me a long time to understand that this service protected me at the expense of others. It took me an even longer time to start seeing this defensiveness as a form of white oppression and white fragility, one programmed into the hegemonic narrative to ensure its survival.

Looking at the situation and making the decision to relinquish that safety and move into an understanding of police as a source of inequity, not protection, took far too much time. It took and still takes learning and unlearning and dealing with internalized stigma and white guilt. As a Mad white settler, it was the extreme violence from police towards people in crisis that first alerted me to my ignorance of the issue. It was this personal connection that called me outside of understandings of police as safety. The statistics I was hearing on police interactions with other Mad individuals, specifically those in crisis yet killed for asking for help, both broke my heart and drove me to question my understandings of police protection. It was in going outside of

those understandings that I became aware of my complacency in the racialized discrimination that police have conducted in the name of my "safety". I had overlooked these systems, these injustices, these harms, these deaths. What is more, I benefitted from and continue to benefit from the very system of oppressive dominance that I am now working against in this research.

Initially brought to this research through my relationships with Madness, yet unwilling to add to my own personal history of ignorance by doing this work only for white bodies amid rampant racial inequities, my work with inequitable policing began. Largely because of my previous ignorance of the issue, this work has been more than just an academic process of argument building for me. Instead, what was most difficult to unpack were the ways that this work necessitated and constituted continual acts of learning and unlearning. While, as a white settler, I cannot begin to understand the burden of living with these inequities as a Black or Indigenous individual, I can take responsibility and orient my energy towards supporting change.

The emotionality of this process of unlearning was integral in the understandings that I have taken away from this thesis, and as such, to honour this process I have included my fieldnotes throughout this work. Ranging from June 2020-June 2021, these fieldnotes constitute a record of my experiences throughout the process of doing this research. To exclude these reflections felt like a form of denying the human aspects of this process, aspects that have been so vital to my understanding. To deny such a process in research that examines an issue that stems from personal prejudice and must be resolved with intersectional understandings, seemed inexcusably contradictory. As Robin Wall Kimmerer so clearly explains:

> The tools of science that are so powerful because they are value free, right? – We set aside value in doing our science so that it's objective and rational, as if that was really possible – but the crises that we face together today are crises of values. They are the

> place where nature and culture meet together, right? They are issues of values, so we can't just use the tool that is value free. (NYGB, 2017)

Thus, in bringing these experiences, documented by way of adding fieldnotes directly into my thesis, I hope to bring key elements of my personal process of divesting from the hegemonic view of policing to the fore. In doing so and in understanding policing inequities as an issue of values, I hope to bring a wholeness of self to this research that deepens the work beyond academic speculation.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

This section outlines the theoretical and epistemological frameworks that are employed in this research. When reviewing the Tweets and news articles that have been produced in Ontario regarding policing inequities, it is essential to acknowledge the societal understandings that inform these cultural artefacts. Policing holds a dear place in the minds of many who were raised to see this institution as a force for their safety. However, when set against the reality of policing in Canada, this view is difficult to reconcile with the inequitable harm that is currently, and has historically been, enacted upon Black, Indigenous, and Mad individuals, and communities. Thus, as will be explored, the view of policing as safety can be considered the hegemonic view of policing. This chapter works to create a place of understanding outside of this dominant world view, one that values the experiences and perspectives of those most at risk of inequitable police violence. In so doing, the Tweets and news articles can then be understood in terms of whether they conform to or work against dominant world views, and the researcher can be more attentive to how the analysis works to perpetuate or dismantle this hegemony.

This place of counter-hegemonic understanding will be established by reviewing current policing outcomes, exploring applicable justice frameworks that are necessarily counter-hegemonic, better defining hegemonic policing, unpacking the history of policing and policing narratives in Canada, and exploring the outcomes of past research. First, the current reality of inequitable policing will be reviewed. Then, Transformative Justice and Disability Justice are introduced as frameworks which can help to eliminate this policing violence. To help situate how these frameworks show up in real world practices, Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) and defunding the police are touched on as examples that fall respectively within and outside of the tenets of these approaches. Given the pervasiveness and colonial history of the issue of policing inequities I then argue that these frameworks are intrinsically incompatible with how dominant

society understands policing. This hegemonic view of policing is one which positions the police as the hero who unequivocally serves and protects, making anyone who stands against them criminal. Unpacking, understanding, and divesting from this understanding is seen as essential to generate change that will help those at risk, as the dominant view typically works to erase the experiences of those most vulnerable to policing violence. Epistemic disobedience is then outlined as a tool to assist in this process of relearning and bringing such erased experiences back into the narrative. Policing counter-ethnographies are then explored to enact epistemic disobedience and create a non-colonial foundation from which to generate knowledge about policing inequities. With this foundation and understanding of pervasive hegemonic policing in place, I outline current research to question how the dominant narrative is expressed by research subjects, and to what extent studies consider the potential bias that could arise from subjects who experience the hegemonic norm.

Policing Practices in Canada Constitute a Health Inequity

This thesis understands policing as a social determinant of health (Alang et al., June 2021) and differences in policing outcomes in Canada as a matter of health inequity, or a difference that is "unnecessary and avoidable but, in addition, [is] also considered unfair and unjust" (Whitehead, 1992). To situate this inequity, I provide an overview of policing outcomes in Canada over the last 20 years. The fact that Canadian police violence disproportionately causes harm to Black, Indigenous, and Mad individuals in a way that is unfair and unjust can be seen through the known statistics about lethal use of force and incarceration in Canada. Further, two comparisons are offered against the overall statistics on lethal use of force in Canada which demonstrate that this pattern of harm is not universal and thus that these outcomes are avoidable. These comparisons include both examples from within Canada and international examples that

situate the inequity of the general Canadian data within the reality of current alternates to this violence.

The extent of the inequality that Indigenous, Black and Mad individuals in Canada face at the hands of police can be seen through disproportionate mortality rates in instances of lethal use of force in Canada. While data on race and mental health status in these killings by police is not reliably and systematically tracked by policing institutions, reports such as the CBC's investigation on lethal force in Canada, *Deadly Force* (Singh, 2020) and daily news coverage can help to fill these gaps. First released in 2018 by Jaques Marcoux and Katie Nicholson, the *Deadly Force* database aims to keep a record of all those killed during police interventions since 2000, "[i]n the absence of a national accounting of such encounters between Canadian citizens and law enforcement." The report was updated by Inayat Singh in 2020 to include all killings up until June 22, 2020. The data on the 27 deaths by police which occurred in Canada between June 22, 2020 and March 16, 2021 were collected individually by the author from related news coverage. Throughout, the data shows a disproportionate rate of Black, Indigenous and Mad deaths.

> *"An ex-coworker frowns and shakes his head as we talk over lunch. 'Deadly Force? Yeah, I've read that report too. Lots of white people get killed too, it's just how it is. We are lucky to live in Canada, the problem here isn't about racism.' I explain the importance of context and outline details around disproportionate representation. Without pause, the tactic changes and someone who was once close to me goes on to defend those statistics with an onslaught mortifyingly racist explanations, backed with the science of a white man's personal observations of others. 'The problem here isn't about racism' says the racist." (Blyth, Fieldnotes, Oct. 16, 2020)*

The unequal outcomes that result from lethal use of force in Canada come to light through a review of the statistics on killings by police in relation to population size. Figure 1. has been compiled from Singh's 2020 *Deadly Force* database and the subsequent research that I have

undertaken to capture deaths since this database was complete and helps to illustrate this disproportionate trend. Such an analysis is required in a colonial settler state such as Canada, where the white population far outnumbers Black or Indigenous populations. Additionally, it is also useful to understand the rates of killings of Mad individuals in relation to the larger population. As Figure 1. demonstrates, the CBC reports that in the last 20 years, Indigenous people in the geopolitical nation state of Canada have been the victims of 16% of recorded instances of killings by police in Canada yet make up only 4.2% of the nation's population. Black Canadians who make up 8.6% of the killings by police constitute only 2.9% of the population. Further, while records show that only one-third of Canadians will be affected by mental illness in their lifetime (Government of Canada, 2020), more than two-thirds of those killed by police have been Mad individuals. Thus, based on population, Black, Indigenous and Mad individuals are greatly overrepresented in police killings. The comparatively lower rates of police killings of white Canadians who don't experience mental illness demonstrates this disproportionate inequity. In a society where Indigeneity, Blackness, and Madness were not a factor in rates of lethal force we would expect population percentages and the distribution of lethal force to be roughly equal.

Singh suggests that these trends have been steadily increasing since 2000 and available data on the killings which have occurred since the *Deadly Force* report partly confirms this. Figure 1. includes data collected since the June 22, 2020 final entry in the *Deadly Force* database's 2020 update. This additional data offers a point of comparison between the database and the activity of the last year. The most recent data was collected through a Google News search for "killed by police" on March 20, 2020. The first 200 entries were reviewed for relevance and in total 27 additional instances of lethal use of force were identified. The site

killercopscanada.wordpress.com was then used to cross-reference the data to try to ensure that all instances of lethal force were included. Not all entries from this site have been listed here as not all include instances of explicit lethal force. For example, tangential deaths such as death in custody or death following a car chase are not considered explicit use of force, though they may nonetheless represent police violence. Demographic data was collected based on available news coverage on each instance. For the measurements on race, percentages were calculated based on the total number of cases where racial identifiers were present (6 cases). For measurements on mental health status or substance issues, percentages were calculated based on the total number of cases (27 cases), taking cases without descriptions of mental distress as instances where the victim was not explicitly identified as a Mad individual.

As is clear in Figure 1., the trends around race have persisted into the past year, though the data does not support an increase in Mad involved deaths by police. The rate at which Black and Indigenous people in Canada are killed compared to population has continued to grow while in stark comparison, the rate at which white people in Canada are killed by police has dropped. These trends are not reflected in the data about mental health and substance use. However, it should be noted that unlike race, there was no base measurement for Madness which could be adjusted to ensure the distribution reflected the available data as (unlike explicit mentions of whiteness) explicit mentions of mental wellness don't come up in these reports. Thus, all instances where there is merely no explicit mention of mental health issues have been counted as deaths not involving Mad individuals, making it is possible that Madness is underrepresented in the data. It is also possible that more thorough journalistic measures used by the CBC in the creation of the *Deadly Force* database when compared to the review that I have since undertaken may have led to the CBC identifying Madness in more cases of lethal use of force, further

contributing to this discrepancy.

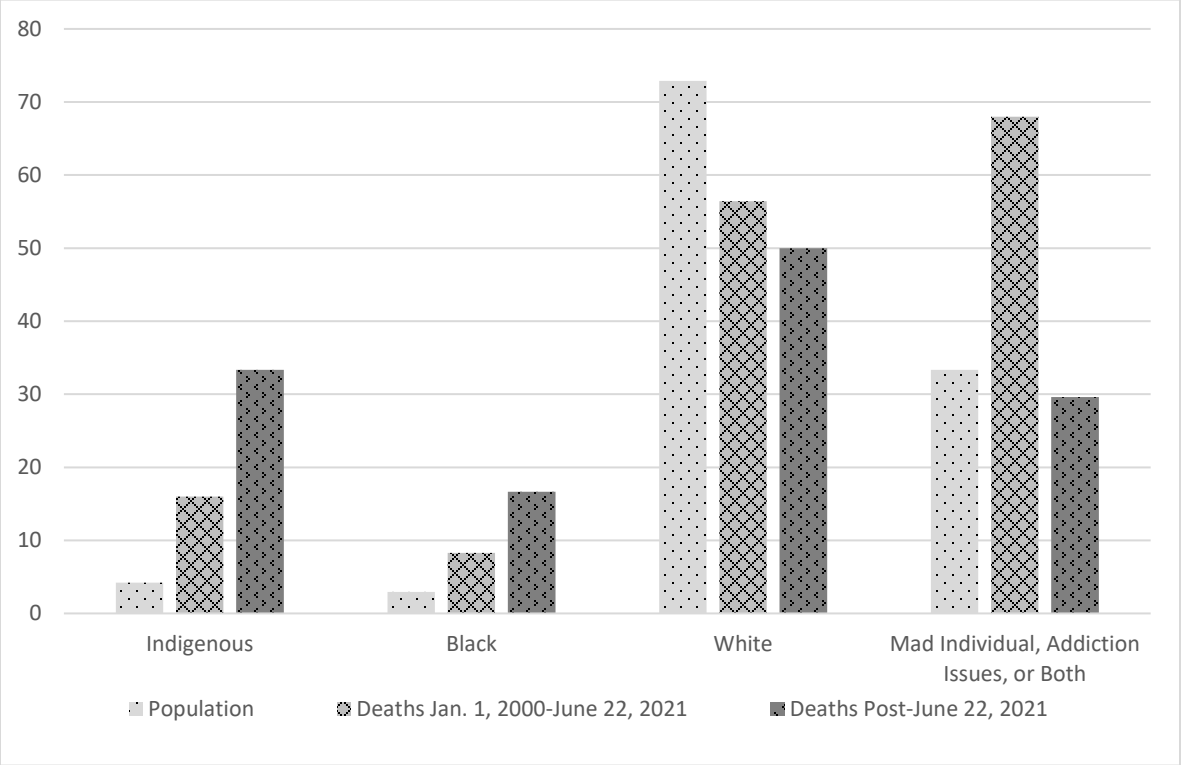


Figure 1: Percentage of Population vs. Percentage of Police Killings in Canada by Race & Mental Status.
Note: Ethnicity could be identified in 420/556 fatalities pre-June 23, 2021 and 6/27 fatalities post June 23, 2020. Instances where race could not be identified are not included in calculations on race percentages.

> *My grandfather waved through his window as I stood smiling at him in the rain. Father's Day 2020. The rest of my family moves in and out of the house while I remain wet and isolated, deeply aware of the risks that come with standing in solidarity as we painted 'Defund the Police' in front of police headquarters in the middle of a global pandemic. 'What a waste of time – that stuff only happens in the States – why protest here?' I blink and the 11 neon pink names of lives taken in Canada since March 1st that still burn the backs of my eyelids slowly fade as my cousin comes into focus through the downpour. (Blyth, Fieldnotes, June 21, 2020)*

Thus, there are clear differences in policing outcomes across race and mental status in Canada. The fact that these differences are demonstrably avoidable and unnecessary can be seen intrinsically within the data above, as well as through comparison beyond these statistics. Without looking to outside comparisons, the disproportionate nature of the data clearly

demonstrates a persistent and unjust treatment at the national level. It is clear that police can interact more peacefully with citizens through the lower rates of police killings for white populations in which mental illness is not experienced. Yet, by further comparing this generalized national data to specific demographics in Canada, we can see examples of police forces that push back against this trend. The Nishnawbe Aski Nation Police Service is one example which demonstrates this within Canada. It is the country's largest Indigenous police service and has reported no instances of lethal police shootings nor of officers killed on duty (Perkel, 2020). Comparisons at the international level also help to demonstrate how unnecessary these killings are, given their more peaceable outcomes. Two key examples include New Zealand and Norway who, despite their own flaws with policing outcomes, nonetheless show better overall results. New Zealand reports 2.1 killings by police per million people while Norway reports almost no deaths per million. Comparatively, Canada reports 9.8 killings per million and the United States report 33.5 killings per million (Cheatham & Maizland, 2020). These comparisons are not made in extremes, they all involve typical state systems of policing. Nonetheless the disparities persist and clearly support the claim that Canadian policing outcomes are avoidable and unnecessary.

It should not go without saying that despite the six months of investigation taken on by the initial 2018 *Deadly Force* report, the timely update from Singh, and the further research done for the purpose of this project, these methods only somewhat overcome the lack of clear national data tracking on instances of lethal police force. The fact that there is "no government database listing deaths at the hands of the police available to the public in Canada" (Singh, 2020) has ongoing repercussions. Regardless of the best efforts of journalists, the race and mental status of victims cannot always be reliably ascertained post-interaction. The CBC even reports that they

have been unable to confirm race in approximately one quarter of listed cases. Further, while the report includes insights on the involvement of mental health issues and addiction in instances of lethal force, the database itself is not delineated by mental health status. This leaves the limitations involved with collecting this data unclear. As already discussed, this same uncertainty was seen in the classification of the 27 cases that were collected for this research project. Of these cases, race could be identified, or at least tentatively identified, in only 6 of the cases. Mental health issues were identified, or tentatively identified, in 9.

To further complicate the issue of limited data, the CBC report "does not include in-custody deaths, self-inflicted wounds as a result of suicide or attempts to evade police, or accidental police-caused deaths (such as a traffic accident)" (Singh, 2020). This exclusive definition of lethal force can lead to further misrepresentations in the data through two main avenues. The first, by generally applying such a narrow view of lethal use of force this definition discounts the real harm done in the situations that they choose to exclude. The second, by privileging the institution's view of the death by relying on the reports of the Special Investigation Unit (SIU) to make these determinations. Problematically, the SIU has only laid criminal charges in 3.6 percent of cases of lethal use of force by police in the last two years, (Nasser, 2020) based on determinations which are not always supported by family and witnesses. Given this low conviction rate, the reliability of the SIU to make impartial judgements and act as the gatekeeper for the CBC's conclusions is suspect.

Take for example the highly controversial case of Regis Korchinski-Paquet, a Black and Indigenous woman who was killed after police entered her apartment during a mental health crisis on May 27, 2020. The Korchinski-Paquet family claims she was shoved from her balcony by police during a mental health related crisis. The SIU report however shows that this was a

death that occurred in pursuit. Thus, because of the above definition of lethal use of force, this case was not included in the *Deadly Force* database. This exclusion persists despite uncertainty around the circumstances of her death as regardless of whether she was shoved, Korchinski-Paquet was killed by police following "a situation that had apparently calmed down [but] when police arrived turned tragic" (Watchdog clears Toronto police in Korchinski-Paquet death, 2020). The fact that this case was excluded in the face of such uncertainty helps to illuminate the possibilities for misrepresentation that are endemic to a lack of clear and transparent reporting methods.

This level of uncertainty, lack of data keeping, and potential to focus only on certain kinds of lethal force is especially concerning when considering the repercussions for police accountability. As Scot Wortley who used similar reporting in 2019 to uncover racism in police street checks in Nova Scotia that subsequently led to the outlawing of these checks explains, "[w]hen we get broader statistical information that are documenting these patterns year after year after year, it's much more difficult for police officials and politicians to just turn their backs and say that these allegations are unfounded," (Wortley, as cited in Singh 2020). Despite the gaps, what the data that is available makes clear is that Black, Indigenous and Mad individuals are at a much higher risk of being killed by police in Canada.

While these statistics represent mortality, the health risks of inequitable policing extend beyond dying at the hands of police. These risks include, but are not limited to, physical injuries at the hands of police, traumatization through racist public reactions, economic and financial strain, community disempowerment, and the distinct psychological and emotional impacts for those living with the risk of inequitable policing and watching friends and family experience that same risk (Alang et al., 2017, p. 663). Incarceration rates stand as another example that can

illustrate the inequity as Indigenous, Black, and Mad individuals are all disproportionality criminalized into a system known to cause long-term health disparities (Kouyoumdjian et al., 2018). An incredibly comprehensive review of these trends comes from Owusu-Bempah and Wortley's, *Race Crime and Criminalization in Canada* which situates how these disparities extend to and go beyond incarcerations rates in Canadian prison systems:

> [T]he rate of Aboriginal correctional supervision is 6.2 times higher than the white rate, whereas the [B]lack rate is four times higher…. The data also suggest that both Aboriginal and [B]lack representation within federal prisons increased significantly between 2001 and 2011. By contrast, the representation of white inmates within federal prisons dropped from 71 percent to 61 percent during this period (see Figure 1). In other words, over the past decade, racial disparities within Canada's federal corrections system have become more pronounced. (p. 11-14)

These trends continue to persist and increase. The most recent *Annual Report* from the Office of the Correctional Investigator shows that in 2020 Indigenous inmates represented 30% of the total prison population and that number has nearly doubled since 2000 (Zinger, 2020). A report from August 2020 by the Ontario Human Rights Commissions shows that "Black people, particularly Black males, are even more likely to be proactively arrested, charged and subjected to uses of force in a wide range of police interactions" (p. 12). These trends are reflected for Mad individuals (Michalski, 2017, p. 3) who may be further negatively impacted by a lack of availability of treatment options while incarcerated where "the Canadian correctional system has not been able to respond sufficiently due to a lack of funding commensurate with the reality that far more inmates require mental health services than current capacity can accommodate" (p. 12). Thus, the discrimination is clear and what remains to be seen is how justice-oriented frameworks

can be applied to make grounded recommendations to start the healing process and eliminate this abuse.

Frameworks to Challenge Policing Inequities

Relying heavily on the tenets of Disability Justice and Transformative Justice, I consider health equity from an intersectional approach that seeks to center those most impacted by inequitable policing by highlighting and amplifying the experiences and voices of those at-risk. It is the persistence of this unjust persecution despite years of attention to the issue and internal efforts to correct policing practices that marks the failure of state solutions and calls for alternate approaches. As will be shown, Transformative and Disability Justice answer that call.

Transformative Justice is a "political framework and approach for responding to violence, harm and abuse" (Mingus, 2019), the tenets of which are applied to both the analysis undertaken in this research project and to the recommendations for change that are offered based on the findings herein. In sharp contrast to institutional policing's overt commitments to serve and protect communities, this framework "understands systems such as prisons, police and I.C.E. as sites where enormous amounts of violence take place and as systems that were created to be inherently violent in order to maintain social control" (Mingus, 2019). This epistemological change naturally impacts my analysis in this project through how policing inequities are positioned. It further impacts the appropriate response to these inequities through the repercussions that this positionality has on the form that possibilities for real change can take within this system.

In positioning violence as an innate feature of policing, and policing as a form of violent social control, Transformative Justice encourages a systemic analysis that approaches the issue not as an individual problem, but as an institutional one. This understanding of the institution as

a site of systemic oppression challenges "the dominant moral economy which prefers to blame the individual over the collective, the specific over the persistent" (Gready et al., 2010, p. 2). Such a structural approach is appropriate for a problem that has proven to be persistent beyond intervention at the individual level. By further stipulating that this oppression is the strategic function of the institution, Transformative Justice both draws our attention to the history of harm within policing and asserts that these health outcomes are not just coincidentally inequitable. Rather, that they are inequitable as a part of a long history of explicit and intentional oppression based on colonial and ableist ideals that have long shaped the values of our so-called justice institutions.

In response to this history of oppression Transformative Justice, an action-oriented framework, lays out clear guidelines for efforts to respond to this violence. Mia Mingus (2019) outlines three guiding features for this framework, whereby approaches:

> 1) do not rely on the state (e.g. police…); 2) do not reinforce or perpetuate violence such as oppressive norms or vigilantism; and most importantly, 3) actively cultivate the things we know prevent violence such as healing, accountability, resilience, and safety for all involved.

This marks Transformative Justice as an abolitionist framework that seeks to both address specific instances of violence and create long term safety by transforming community values and relying on community relations for support, rather than state intervention. A key distinction in this approach is the focus on socio-political and economic forces that are at the root of conflict. This focus aims to create effective, long-term and intergenerational change, a characteristic that aligns with common approaches to the social determinants of health, which makes this framework all the more appropriate for an analysis of health inequity. By focusing on the

underlying issues to target not just the crime, but the cause, "transformative justice strives to use the conflict as an opportunity to address larger socio-political injustices" (Nocella, 2011, p. 4). In this way, rather than relying on a system that is intentionally oppressive to regulate justice, Transformative Justice interventions focus on supporting survivors, ensuring the harmer takes accountability, and building community skills to support intervention, accountability, healing, and violence prevention (Mingus, 2019). The need for better intervention is clear in a country where inequitable police violence not only exists but is justified by claims of public safety despite rising inequities that exist alongside a Crime Severity Index rating that has been increasing steadily for the past five years in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2020), both of which mark the failure of the system to make real positive change.

In doing this work I seek not to improve police interactions, but to use these conflicts as an opportunity to create a better understanding of these interactions in order to make recommendations to promote real safety at a community level. To better understand the importance of this impact centered approach and to further define the things in Transformative Justice's call for 'things we know prevent violence', I turn to Disability Justice.

Abolish the police. The hackles of white supremacy rise spreading across skin-
Skin that has never been a problem for state safety,
White fingers that wouldn't hesitate to call 911 safely.
Where ignorance is supporting control through the same means,
Time to lean and unlearn and realize that if I don't, I'm on the wrong team.
(Blyth, Fieldnotes, Jan. 1, 2021)

By centering the communities most at risk of police violence at all stages and through a commitment to the collective in those communities, I also approach the issues of inequitable policing through the lens of Disability Justice. Within this framework, differences in mental health and the experiences of racialized people must not be understood as something which

police should try to accommodate in their interactions, but as a valuable part of identity which the system has not been built to understand or appreciate. Patricia Berne et al. lay out *Ten Principles of Disability Justice* (2018) on behalf of Sins Invalid, "each offering new opportunities for movement builders" (p. 227), which will be discussed in relation to inequitable policing. The approaches which stem from these principles are radically inclusive and intersectional and take the role of those at risk seriously in cultivating a solution to the problem. They direct the recommendations in this thesis towards an idea of 'rights to', rather than 'rights from'. The distinction here is key in moving away from a simple rights-based system and towards justice. When the conversation is framed around how to protect citizens from instances of police violence, it is limited to a conversation about how create a right to safety from the state, a right which some citizens already inherit as a birthright. Thus, this conversation can only revolve around bringing those who experience inequitable harm to an equitable level of harm and does not speak at all to creating justice. When instead, the conversation is framed around how to rebuild and provide access to safety for all, the focus remains on creating a collective that practices "accessibility that moves us closer to justice, not just inclusion or diversity" (Mingus, 2011). The principles that Berne et al. define which are most applicable to the approach that I take in this project include intersectionality, leadership of those most impacted, cross-movement solidarity, recognizing wholeness, commitment to cross-disability solidary, interdependence, collective access, and collective liberation (p. 227-229). The first five will be explored in relation to how these principles guide analysis, the final three in regard to how these principles guide the recommendations herein.

As an attempt to generate conversation out of intersectional knowledge, this project takes into its scope Indigeneity, Blackness and Madness. It must not go without acknowledging that

the issue of inequitable police violence impacts groups beyond the three that the *Deadly Force* database marks as most impacted, including discrimination on the basis of immigration status, class, occupation, gender expression, and race more broadly. The hope of this preliminary analysis is that insights generated out of solidarity in Madness and race can be further applied and amplified across impacted communities and across community safety movements. These insights will be generated out of a commitment to centering those most impacted by policing violence. By seeking firsthand descriptions of, and reactions to, police violence, this research works against a colonial system that too often looks to so-called experts instead of looking to lived experiences. This analysis takes seriously the value in the experiences, feelings, insights and thoughts of those who have been directly impacted by police violence. In line with this commitment, it should be further acknowledged that the principles of Disability Justice and Transformative Justice themselves come from a long history of communities creating radical support despite the harm of state interventions before these terms were ever formalized. Following in this tradition, at each stage of analysis insights are further developed with guidance from leaders in impacted communities, amplifying the voices of those who continue this the front-line activist work to promote change. This includes leaders such as Desmond Cole, Caitlyn Kasper, Syrus Marcus Ware, Robyn Maynard, and Sylvia Wynter who do this work in academia and organizations such as Black Lives Matters and Aboriginal Legal Services.

The approach in this project further supports the principles of interdependence, collective access, and collective liberation through the ideals that guide the recommendations that stem from this research. Aligning with Transformative Justice in this respect, Disability Justice would suggest that solutions should be formed around a renewed sense of community interdependence, in which access to safety is a right, and there is no achieving liberation unless it is collective.

While Transformative Justice goes one step further in fully rejecting state intervention, Disability Justice holds that accommodating a flawed system in order to kill less people does not constitute justice. Instead, the approaches that come out of these principles hold that accommodations built within a system which is foundationally unsafe only speak to the (questionable) right to protection *from* police violence and do not speak to the right *to* safe communities. For this reason, these accommodations do not constitute the right kind of collective access and instead the system itself must be changed, formed not out of colonial ideals, but by a diversity of people and abilities. Otherwise, as Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha states, "if they [make accommodations], without changing their internal worlds …we won't come where we're not loved, needed, and understood as leaders, not just people they must begrudgingly provide services for" (2018, p. 33). Accordingly, liberation means not only freedom from police violence, but also radically inclusive access to other forms of safety for all.

> *'The CBC analysis reveals that more than 70 per cent of victims suffer from mental health and substance abuse problems' (Marcoux & Nicholson, 2017). My thesis was still hazy, loosely centered around AI chatbot syntax for mental health support. I wasn't looking for police accountability, but now it's as if the lens has shifted. It's late in March 2020 and I can't walk away from this figure, from this article, this harm, this statistic that I see myself so clearly in, this community that I call home. May 25, 2020 – George Floyd is Brutally murdered while in police custody (D'Amore, 2020), and the lens shifts again. I can't walk away, nor can I ethically take this on as a white settler without doing the work with and for BIPOC communities.*
> *(Blyth, Fieldnotes, Aug. 1, 2020)*

The values of both of these frameworks are notably echoed in the calls to defund the police which have been put forth by groups such as Black Lives Matter Canada (2021) in response to growing policing inequities. This framework and these activist organizations have both been created by and for the communities most impacted by systemic oppression. The teachings of Disability Justice and Transformative Justice and calls to defund the police are not

novel and align with long histories of resistance to state intervention, and even longer histories of sovereign governance upheld without colonial police. As Caitlyn Kasper of the Aboriginal Legal Services explained in an interview with the Toronto Star:

> For me, the idea of defunding the police means going back to traditional models of how we protect our communities, how we protect our people, how we serve our people — and for me, that means getting back to that idea of community policing but not in the sense policing means in our society today… what we need to think about when we say defund the police is going back to those traditional models and going back to those traditional ways of being. (as cited in Rankin, 2020)

Thus, it is important to remember that the ideas behind these frameworks existed long before their formalization. Further, we know that ongoing community efforts to enact a reality without police violence very much follow the values of these frameworks without necessarily being categorized as such. For example, it does not require an academic stance to understand that policing creates safety for some in a community and harm for others, and so some choose not to call the police for one's own safety needs. Take for example a 2020 petition put out by 18 Million Rising (18MR), an Asian American activist group from the United States, titled *Asians for Black Lives Means: Do Not Call the Police.* The call to action for this petition states:

> As Asian Americans, many of us already know the police will not protect us by the way our immigrant families are ripped apart by ICE or how mosques are surveilled by the FBI. We know we make our neighborhoods safer, not the police. So, it's time to stop calling the cops.

In other words, in solidarity with the community members who cannot call the police out of fear for their own safety, no one in the community calls the police. Instead, people choose safety that is accessible and supports collective liberation; they rely on each other for support. This resistance has led to great multinational movements such as dontcallthepolice.com (2021), an online directory of local policing alternatives which was developed around this idea in 2020. Thus, by looking to leadership within communities most impacted by police violence, we can already see examples of how movements enact the principles of Transformative and Disability Justice work to actively create accessible safety. It is by aligning this project with this lived knowledge and with the principles set forth by and for those impacted within Transformative and Disability Justice that I aim to amplify healing in an area with so much potential for harm.

One key example that helps illustrates the potential harm that can result from approaches that neglect the tenets of Transformative and Disability Justice is that of Crisis Intervention Training (CIT). CIT is an approach to rectifying violent policing outcomes, especially with Mad citizens, by providing mental health intervention training to police officers. CIT has been in development since 1987 (Rogers et al., 2019, p. 415) and has been one of the dominant state responses (when there has been one) to instances of police violence with Mad individuals (p. 414). As a state-based solution led by police and the medical industrial complex to make changes within the institution of policing, CIT is an approach that is decidedly outside of these Disability Justice and Transformative Justice frameworks. Based on what Transformative Justice suggests about state institutions perpetuating violence and the things that promote healing (accountability, resilience, and safety for all involved) and based on what Disability Justice frameworks suggest about radical access lead by those most impacted, it is unsurprising that over thirty years later this internal state strategy has proven to be less than effective in reducing inequities. While CIT

may be quoted as effective, the proven benefits have been primarily at the officer level and include impacts such as reducing sense of stigma, improving job satisfaction, and enhancing officers' sense of job preparedness (p. 417). There is also proof that CIT results in more Mad individuals being diverted into state psychiatric institutions rather than state prisons once criminalized (p. 418), which shifts the potential for policing-based state violence through an alternate potential for medical-industrial-based state violence. In terms of any benefit regarding reducing rates of officer use of force, citizen injury, officer injury, or of arrest however, there is little evidence that suggests that CIT objectively supports these measures (p. 419). Accordingly, there is no decisive proof that this solution does anything to rectify the inequity that it set out to solve. As a result, CIT shows improvements for those same groups who already benefit from this system of inequities while stagnating change for those who need it most under the pretense of an initiative that works for collective improvement. By failing to center those most impacted and consider the potential for perpetuating violence, CIT upholds systemic state oppression in a response that would not be imaginable within the tenets of Transformative Justice and Disability Justice. Thus, this example highlights the importance of implementing these two frameworks in any response the inequities we see in policing outcomes.

Hegemonic Policing and Epistemic Disobedience

In this section I argue that applying Transformative Justice and Disability Justice frameworks to the issue of inequitable policing necessarily involves rejecting the hegemonic view of policing, and to do so I explore one tool to start this relearning. In order to divest from this dominant view and enact the tenets of these frameworks, a counter-ethnography of policing institutions is employed in an act of what Walter Mignolo describes as "epistemic disobedience"

(2015, p. 106). The resulting narrative frames policing through the reality of those who are left out of the dominant narrative—those who are most oppressed by the police.

In order to understand why it is necessary to divest from hegemonic policing to apply these frameworks, what is meant by the hegemonic view of policing must be understood. Hegemony is a term that defines "the dominant group in society" (Leitch et al., 2001, p. 1137) that was introduced by Antonio Gramsci and holds that "dominance is secure only if a majority voluntarily complies with the law." Beyond ideas of coercion that may typically be associated with ruling power, hegemony holds that the ruling group also relies on consent from the people to assert power. This consent is continually contested and, for the dominant to retain power, "force will be needed against some recalcitrant citizens" (p. 1138). Thus, hegemony is the "manufactured consent" (p. 1138) that is generated among citizens. The narrative of this hegemony typically represents the interests of those in society who currently hold power and tends to serve the majority. As a result, the narrative frequently leaves out experiences of minority or non-dominant groups. Further, it is essential that members of society continue to consent to and uphold such understandings for the dominant norms and persons in power to remain in place. Thus, manufacturing this consent and maintaining the hegemonic experience is a key prerogative of the hegemonic drive. This drive must influence both dominant and subaltern groups in society to create cohesive societal agreement. Raymond Williams goes on to explain how, for those members of society for whom this manufactured consent has not broken down, hegemony further constitutes lived experience, producing "a sense of reality for most people in the society, a sense of absolute" (1977, p. 110). Essentially, for those in society who continue to consent to dominant ideologies, the norms of this hegemony are experienced as universal. This dominant sense of reality can be considered the hegemonic view of reality. Under the Canadian

white settler state, the hegemonic view of policing is one of "safety" and "order". This world view is often engrained early through other societal institutions which have been created in white ableist privilege. In Ontario for example, the provincial curriculum mandates that police officers enter schools as a symbol of safety at the very first opportunity, in kindergarten (ServiceOntario, 2016). However, given what we know about policing statistics and the experiences from those harmed by police, it is evident that this hegemonic view does not align with the lived reality of all non-dominant groups. Instead, this dominant narrative is erasing the lived reality of fear and discrimination that many experience at the hands of police in preference for the story of those who benefit from policing. This protects the status quo and reinforces inequity by positioning the police as an unquestionable hero and anyone who stands against them as justifiably punishable. As a result of this positioning and the total erasure of discrimination in the hegemonic view, those harmed by policing live without safety and those who live within the dominant ideology remain so removed from the issue that calls to defund the police are rendered as an inexplicable affront to their world view.

Shifting away from this view seems necessary in a world where we see calls for change, such as to defund the police, meeting enthusiastic public push back despite well documented patterns of discriminatory police practices resulting in measurable inequitable death. Given that this hegemonic view is demonstrably outside of the Transformative and Disability Justice frameworks, it is specifically necessary to divest from the dominant narrative in this project which employs both frameworks. This narrative is particularly irreconcilable with the commitments to interdependence, collective access, and collective liberation of the later, and the commitments to responses without state involvement which do not perpetuate violence of the former.

The good vs. bad, criminal vs. police view perpetuated in the hegemonic view of policing stands against a commitment to seek solutions in the community, both by instead deferring that responsibility fully to the state and by marking those opposed to police as deserving of a fully punitive response, rather than seeking a solution driven by community support for all. Interdependence on the other hand can be understood as a way to "meet each other's needs as we build toward liberation, without always reaching for state solutions which can readily extend its control further over our lives" (Berne et al., 2018, p. 228). In terms of collective access, hegemonic policing erases the stories of access needs, such as intervention during mental health crises, that could otherwise be "articulated within a community and met privately or met through a collective" (p. 228). Instead, these experiences are replaced with tales of rightful criminalization. Further, the persistence of this police affirming narrative in the face of the known discriminatory inequities that result from policing is incongruous with commitments to collective liberation, a concept that envisions a world where "every body and mind is known to be beautiful" (p. 229).

The disconnects between Transformative Justice and the hegemonic narrative of policing are somewhat more self-explanatory. For a system that rejects state solutions based on the belief that "[s]tate responses to violence reproduce violence and often traumatize those who are exposed to them, especially oppressed communities who are already targeted by the state" (Mingus, 2019), a hegemonic narrative that equates state policing with protection and safety is deeply contradictory. The tenets of Transformative Justice would further not only reject the story of hegemonic policing but reject the very telling of this story as a form of violence in and of itself through the commitment "not [to] reinforce or perpetuate violence such as oppressive norms" (Mingus, 2019).

Thus, this narrative simply cannot be supported within these frameworks. Accordingly, an act of epistemic disobedience is employed through policing counter-ethnographies to divest from this narrative at its inception such that further insights may be built out of a recollection of history that does not conform to this oppressive hegemony.

Know your audience. Tailor your information. Explain well but don't over explain. As if your audience is of one mind.
Overexplain.
Some of you will know this all too well. Know this far more than I. Some of you will have lived this.
Underexplain.
But some of you need to relearn before you're ready to hear this. The hegemonic story will fight in you at my words because when questioned, it calls on your tooth and claw to stay alive.
(Blyth, Fieldnotes, Feb. 5, 2021)

A note on terminology before speaking further about epistemic disobedience. Walter Mignolo identifies a kind of epistemic disobedience that will be further explored below (2015). Mignolo characterizes this act as "decolonial" (p. 107). However, my perspective aligns with Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang's definition that "decolonization in the settler colonial context must involve the repatriation of land simultaneous to the recognition of how land and relations to land have always already been differently understood and enacted" (2012, p. 7). As this act is not directly involved in repatriation, this act will instead be termed by a subsequent description from Mignolo, as an act of "epistemic disobedience" (2015, p. 107). Additionally, the ideas that Juanita Sundberg puts forward in her 2018 article *Decolonizing Posthumanist Geographies* guide the concept of Eurocentrism in this paper. Sundberg defines Eurocentrism as "a conceptual apparatus that frames Europe as the primary architect of world history" (p. 2). This outlook, which stems from Europe, is still relevant in Anglo-European Canada. This country remains as an "English-speaking white supremacist settler societ[y]" where hegemonic norms of white rationality are "bearers of these Eurocentric imaginaries" that serve to position Blackness,

Madness, and Indigeneity as other and into "the world of natural animality" (p. 2). Sundberg further explains that the divisive results of Eurocentrism "tend to reproduce colonial ways of knowing and being…further subordinating other ontologies" (p. 1).

As this narrow view of policing is a part of a more general hegemonic narrative which stems from a dominant system of colonial, ableist and Eurocentric values, we can look to theorists who are working to reimagine a non-colonial future to support moving past this hampering way of knowing. As Mignolo describes, "[f]ollowing in the steps of Frantz Fanon, Humberto Maturana, and Francisco Varela, Sylvia Wynter's works have been pursuing a cognitive shift" that helps to combat "how particular epistemologies are unthinkable and/or unarticulated within hegemonic Western categories of knowledge and philosophy of knowing" (2015, p. 106). This shift moves the narrative away from these hegemonic norms and towards a foundation from which ways of understanding can be generated free of the influence of said norms. This shift can be considered a type of epistemic disobedience that is integral to promoting non-colonial ways of understanding. Such a shift facilitates a "delink[ing] from the accepted truth produced by Eurocentric evolutionary science: that organic and human life proceed in linear, hierarchical and increasingly complex fashion through hereditary processes." This delinking, coupled with Wynter's above critique on Eurocentric knowledge, "allow for a counter-mode of coming to know that troubles the racialized premises of this knowledge" (Erasmus, 2020, p. 6-7). Essentially, if we do not take the time to reestablish the historicity of the way we see the world, then the chapters that we write now will continue to be influenced by the assumptions that follow from the colonialism of Eurocentric history. However, by restarting this story from the beginning and redefining how we understand this history, we can instead create new foundational chapters to work from which do not hold such assumptions. In doing so, we

can cast aside the molds set in those first oppressive chapters in order to establish collective understandings that are not based on the oppressive ideals of linear colonial progress.

Following in this example, a brief counter-ethnography of policing is employed as a "delinking of oneself from the knowledge systems we take for granted (and can profit from) and practicing epistemic disobedience" (Mignolo, 2015, p. 107). These counter-ethnographies focus primarily on these institutions in the early history of Canada as a matter of the impact that policing has had on Black people, Indigenous people, and Mad people over time. This weaving together of impact across at-risk groups and across time allows for understandings about policing institutions that are truly intersectional. Given the reality of histories of policing harms, these understandings refuse to see policing through a history of progress and improvement over time. By turning away from ideas of progress, such a view rejects ideas of policing systems as a mature institution developing into an increasingly sophisticated and therefore increasingly effective solution to violence and source of community safety. In doing so, the counter-ethnographies "powerfully [bring] the backstage of policing to the front of the stage," (Bacon, Lofus & Rowe, 2020, p. 2) and support a foundational understanding of policing where the idea of progress is replaced by experiences of discrimination. In doing so, this act stands as a commitment to solidarity as a refusal to work out of a knowledge system of partiality and oppression.

These histories are complex and far too involved to take on in detail in this paper, however, a brief review of the institutionalization of the police as it affects Indigenous people, Black people, and Mad People will be offered. This review shows how police involvement with each of these three populations has been targeted in order to promote Eurocentric settler and ableist values. Beyond this, early forms of policing were explicitly created for the purpose of

serving, protecting, and generating wealth for the white settler by disenfranchising those who they deemed "other." These histories are at once similar and distinct across these groups, and include experiences of land appropriation, forced removal, enslavement and forced wage labour which were enforced with armed struggle and upheld through early forms of policing. The explicit and targeted violence against these populations that can be seen in early forms of policing stands in opposition of the hegemonic narrative of policing. In doing so it questions the validity of the dominant view by demonstrating a politically, economically and societally motivated commitment to subjugation that is incommensurate with any modern promises to serve and protect all people and not just the resources and lives of white bodies.

This story begins with the first non-Indigenous settlers of pre-confederacy Canada, then known as New France. "In New France, the buying and selling of Black men, women and children and the non-consensual unpaid labour extracted from approximately four thousand Indigenous and Black enslaved people helped build infrastructure and wealth for white settlers during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries" (Maynard, 2017, p. 20). This for-profit violence was also replicated in seventeenth century policing in British Colonies and only grew when the British overtook France in 1763 and began bringing over larger influxes of enslaved Black peoples (p. 22-23). With this history of forced enslavement, a pervasive pattern of policing Black and Indigenous lives in Canada began. "Seeking freedom, indeed, is one of the first crimes publicly associated with Blackness" and led to "fugitive advertisements" (p. 40). These posters, outlining the details of an escaped enslaved people in hopes of their recapture, stood as an early form of white surveillance over Black lives. They further stood as an early tool for policing Black lives through offering cash rewards in exchange for Black persons seeking freedom from forced enslavement who were often "caught and re-enslaved" (p. 21) by Watchmen, the first

form of police in Canada. This community style policing started first out of commoditization through chattel regulations in Canada and was later both fueled by and fed into a growing practice of "publicly associating Black life and Black independence with crime and danger [which] has an enduring legacy that continues to impact Black mobility" (p. 40).

Entering the nineteenth century, the colonial logics seen in these policing practices become increasingly formalized to help Canada's progress towards nationhood. The penal systems in Canada, "justice and security apparatuses such as the police, courts, and penitentiaries emerged during the period of early settlement (1763-1867) and nation building (1867-1910)" (Chartrand, 2019, p.72). This institutionalization included a string of corporations which stood as Canada's first federal policing agencies and would later become what is still known today as the RCMP: The Dominion Police (1866), the North West Mounted Police (1873) and the Royal North-West Mounted Police (1904). So too were the first mental asylums planned in New Brunswick in this time, dating back to 1836 (Chaimowitz, 2011, p. 1). These asylums brought with them a history of sanist persecution and maltreatment. They stood as "places to warehouse people with mental illness" (p. 1) in an effort to forcibly remove from society those whose mental processes were not deemed productive and subject them instead to realities of overcrowding and neglect in the name of the cheapest cost of "care". The Royal Northwestern Mounted Police "was created explicitly to deal with unrest in the Northwest Territories" (Gordon, 2005, p. 58), a euphemism that can be better expressed as an economically and socially motivated need to dominate and subjugate Indigenous people and still any efforts of resistance to colonization. Even with the official abolition of slavery by the British Empire in 1834 slowing the influx of enslaved Black individuals, "Black people's lives would continue to be devalued and their movements subject to surveillance and containment" (p. 31) by state apparatuses.

Through these histories we see the coming together of a multi-institutional system that ultimately enforces Eurocentric ideals. These include ideals of eugenics, rationality, race, and ability that work together to define a binary between the ideal citizen and those who have traditionally been labeled as inferior. In these histories too, we see that it is the ideal citizen that policing was historically created to protect, and that these same ideals serve justify the persecution of the other through the assertions of essential difference stemming from Eurocentric logics of eugenics, racism, ableism, and sanism. As the story approaches contemporary policing, these histories of discrimination do not end with a simple name change to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). No, these discriminatory structures have persisted into the RCMP and other modern forms of policing where foundational power relations have lasting and inequitable implications (Rodríguez, 2010). Indeed, the RCMP, which still holds great power in this country, has been the institution responsible for implementing colonial restrictions in efforts such as the forcible removal of Indigenous people into government designated reserves and of children from their family into residential schools, as well as the pass system on Indigenous reserves (Morin, 2020). The policing of Black lives continues to be prefaced around the racialization of crime as the view spread through fugitive advertisements has continued today:

> [T]he associations between Blackness and crime served important political, social, economic and cultural functions in maintaining the racial order, and the ongoing surveillance and policing of Blackness – and the corresponding wildly disproportionate arrest and incarceration rates – were quintessential in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Canada. (Maynard, 2017, p. 85)

Similarly, while the explicit inhumane treatment in early asylums has been phased out, this has happened in exchange for the implicit criminalization of mental illness. Here, despite

government commitments to improve the situation for Mad individuals in Canada through the "deinstitutionalization and community integration of individuals with mental illness" (Cotton, 2004, p. 134), the promised community integrations "either did not materialize, materialized and then evaporated or were just insufficient (Chaimowitz, 2011, p. 2). And so, institutionalization-based control was merely replaced with control through criminalization of Madness which stands as "the tendency to involve individuals with mental illness in the legal/criminal justice system, under circumstances in which other non-mentally ill individuals would not be involved" (Cotton, 2004, p. 134).

Through this epistemic disobedience, the tales of domination take the foreground in the history of policing. In this reframing we find shared histories of oppression, enforced by white, able-bodied ways of understanding that relegate Black, Indigenous and Mad bodies as less than human. We can also start to understand how police have worked alone and alongside other state mechanisms to enforce the oppressive ideals of enslavement, colonialism, eugenics and sanism. While the consequences of this history of oppression are felt differently now, the foundations of this oppression in Canada have shared origins that emphasize the interconnected nature of the movement that we find ourselves in today. Indeed, without consideration for the rhetoric put forth by these institutions, reverence for their political aims, nor adherence to the propaganda which this oppressive episteme emulates towards Indigenous people, Black people and Mad people, the reality of discrimination for the sake of power and profit that guides the history of policing is stark.

By refusing to acknowledge the institutional history of the police as a matter of progress in public safety, these counter-ethnographies work to dismantle the hegemonic narrative of policing as a force for public protection. This reminds us of the systemic nature of police

brutality and creates space for the lived experiences of those harmed by policing throughout history. By seeking the issue at the foundation of this institution and tracking those impacts to current day, resituating policing as a form of oppression towards social control helps to question not just the accessibility of safe policing, but the culture which first "makes this inaccessibility even possible" (Mingus, 2011). Through this shift, the question is also framed within Disability Justice and Transformative Justice. The ensuing intersectional understanding seeks not to bring all people up to the safety that the privileged experience, but to radically redefine safety, question the very narrative of state protection, and expose institutional inequities in order to "dismantle those ranks and the systems that maintain them" (Mingus, 2011). As Mignolo explains, "Wynter is not proposing to contribute to and comfortably participate in a system of knowledge that left her out of humanity (as a [B]lack/Caribbean woman), but rather delink herself from this very system of knowledge in order to engage in epistemic disobedience" (2015, p. 106). Through the resulting attention that this delinking brings to the explicit commitments to domination in early forms of policing, the inequities that continue to follow this same patterning today are demystified and can be better understood as a continued but implicit form of this same "institutional violence" (Grover, 2019, p. 3). Further knowledge can then be generated from an understanding of inherent violence and the story of public safety can begin to fade.

Previous Scholarly Articles on Police Interactions with These Populations

As has been discussed, the movement around changing inequitable policing has a long history and has been gaining traction in Canada. Academics, historians, activists, and other experts have long been laying an essential foundation of literature that traces histories of oppression and resistance and helps to dismantle to myth of so-called equitable, multi-cultural Canada. Some key works that have made significant contributions to the field include *Racial*

Profiling in Canada (Tator & Henry, 2006), *Policing Black Lives* (Maynard, 2017), *Excessive Force* (Mukhārjī, 2018), and *The Skin We're In* (Cole, 2021). Indeed, given the enduring nature of police inequities and resistance therein, key thinkers have laid the foundations for the theoretical frameworks of this research over many decades. These essential works have had an enduring impact in my research. *Racial Profiling in Canada* offers a roadmap in understanding hegemonic policing narratives by unpacking the dominant and oppositional discourses around racial profiling in Toronto. *Policing Black Lives* unpacks the complex history of state violence in Canada that I have argued is so essential to understanding the oppressive history of policing in this country. *Excessive Force* is a powerful reminder of the history of harm done by and resistance to policing inequities. It stands as an example of work that aims to understand policing inequities from an intersectional view – as they impact racialized, Indigenous and Mad communities – with attention to the historic, political, and economic forces influencing policing in Toronto and across Canada. Further, *The Skin We're* in helps to powerfully bring the present reality of Black resistance and power into the fore with Cole's detailed and intimate exploration of the movement for Black rights from his perspective as a Black Canadian author and activist.

These foundational accounts demonstrate how a counter-hegemonic lens can lead to essential understandings of the reality of policing inequities in Canada. However, as the counter-hegemonic lens requires that manufactured consent in the dominant view of policing has broken down, I question how the hegemonic narrative impacts scholarly research that examines perspectives from each of these groups on police, and from police on each of these groups. Essentially, while papers from police perspectives no doubt offer important insights on how police view the situation, given the possibility that readers are accessing these studies through the dominant lens themselves, it would be important to clearly spell out potential biases

stemming from the dominant view lest police perspectives be taken as universal conclusions. Accordingly, where studies take police perspectives as their data, I question to what extent this potential for bias is explicitly named in the studies.

To this end, a brief literature review was conducted on the subject as it has been taken up in the literature in Canada. In total, seventeen studies were identified and reviewed. The scope for this review was as follows. I sought out peer reviewed journal articles, in English, that took police perspectives of Black, Indigenous or Mad individuals, or which took Black, Indigenous, and or Mad perspectives of police as their data. This literature review was conducted primarily using York's Omni advanced search system and is current as of March 2021. Overall, three studies were identified that consider Indigenous perspectives, two that consider Black perspectives, and seven that consider Mad perspectives of police. Five studies were identified which consider police perspectives, two regarding Indigenous civilians and three regarding Mad civilians. The studies that consider the perspectives of those most at risk of harm from police were distinct but nonetheless displayed key similarities across groups.

All three studies that took Indigenous perspectives under consideration involved population level comparisons and found less positive associations with police where comparisons were made to the general population. The first found that Indigenous respondents have a lower confidence in police (Cao, 2014). The second that Indigenous respondents displayed a lower rate of trust and higher rate of reports of unwanted interactions with police (Alberton et al., 2019). The final, an older study, nonetheless suggests that Indigenous people had less positive views of police than white respondents and were overall more ambivalent towards them (Skoog & Boldt, 1980).

The studies regarding Mad individuals followed a similar patterning and all involved population level comparisons. It should be noted that five of these studies were found to derive from an associated research team with all five finding that Mad individuals hold a less positive view of the police than the general population (Brink et al., 2011; Livingston 2011; Livingston et al., 2014a; Livingston et al., 2014b; Desmarais et al, 2014). Another study considered both the perspectives of Mad individuals and the perspectives of those living in "crime hotspots" (p. 651) and found that in both of these groups there was a higher rate of fear and mistrust of the police than that found in the general population (Goldberg, White, & Weisburd, 2019). The final study reviewed the experiences that youth accessing mental health services reported with police, finding what the authors describe as potential for criminalization of children with one in six reporting police involvement in their lives (Liegghio, 2017).

Of the two studies identified from Black perspectives, one of which involved a population level comparison while the other examined perceptions that Black immigrants in Edmonton hold on lethal use of force. The first study suggested that perceptions of criminal injustice are highest among well-educated Black men. It further found that media coverage of police handling a major homicide reduced the sense of injustice among highly educated Black men but not among less educated Black men. The second study suggested that among the immigrant population in question, "respondents perceived racism, police brutality, [B]lack criminality, gun violence and police perception of [B]lack people as 'violent' as the causal factors in deadly encounters" (Ayoyo, 2018, p. 1).

Among these studies from the perspectives of members of at-risk populations, the trend is clear and the insights that are generated stand as important scholarly contributions that bring the experiences of those most at harm into the academic conversation. The current research shows

that these groups self-report more interactions with and various lower opinions of the police, be that through overall perception, trust/confidence, unwanted interactions, fear, or perceived racism, brutality, criminal injustice or stigma. These low opinions would suggest that the respondents from at-risk groups in these studies live outside of the hegemonic view of policing as a form of safety. Further, in the cases where the studies described comparisons between these groups and general populations, by extension the overall decrease in satisfaction among at-risk groups suggests a comparatively more hegemonic understanding among the general population.

In terms of studies that take police perspectives under consideration, again distinct patterns can be found in the descriptions that these five articles detail from police sources despite the differences in methodology and demographics in these studies. Two studies considered police perspectives regarding Indigenous peoples. The first examined and made comparisons between opinions of officers working in more- and less-isolated Indigenous communities. While the comparison itself offers important findings, as the study did not include comparisons to opinions from officers working outside of Indigenous communities or otherwise speak to any baseline to compare these findings to, it is difficult assess how these perspectives differ from the general population. However, it is very clear that this study is nonetheless self-reflexive about the potential for bias from dominant narratives, citing the potential for long standing organizational culture in institutes such as the RCMP to impact these results by influencing officer opinions (Lithopoulos & Ruddell, 2011). The second study examined how officer opinions of policing in Indigenous communities have changed over time, demonstrating a decrease in interest in community policing that is most concentrated among non-Indigenous and RCMP officers (Jones 2019). This study too was careful to situate these police opinions as a result of policing culture that has been shown to have a negative impact on relations with the

community by citing the inverse impact of these opinions of community policing. In doing so, the researchers make clear that among the communities in question, this "dislike" of community policing leads increasingly feelings that police only control and monitor without becoming a part of the community. As these studies take positionality into account in their interpretation, they too offer integral scholarly contributions to the further academic discussion by helping to uncover the police perspectives on their interactions with at risk populations and perception (or lack thereof) of the issue of policing inequities in Canada.

The three studies that considered police perspectives on Mad individuals were also reviewed with consideration for the resulting research outcomes and positionality therein. Two of these studies did display some counter-hegemonic tendencies in police perspectives, whereby police were cognizant of the overrepresentation of Madness in policing. Nonetheless, the first discovered hegemonic patterns of seeking protection for police by pointing away from the criminal justice system and towards a lack of resources for Mad people in the health care sector/the community as the only reason for this overrepresentation (Holley & Arboleda-Florez, 1988). This article is not as immediately critical of the potential biases in police perspectives, and instead speaks to the importance of the police role in distinguishing between Mad individuals and those using substances, which given the history of policing and mental health could be a problematic gatekeeping. The second study collected SSO data on police decision making and also displayed a similar mix of counter-hegemonic and hegemonic understandings from police. Counter-hegemonic understandings could be seen in the clear understanding of "a disjuncture between policy and police culture" (Schulenberg, 2016, p. 1) (i.e., stigma) as one of the reasons for the overrepresentation. Nonetheless, informed by daily police practices, this article also quickly defers much of the responsibility to situational constraints and limited health

care resources. As this was an observational study, there was little comment on police bias in responses, however it should also be noted that there was no conversation on the ways that having an observer present may have influenced the actions of the police nor the ways that the author may be influenced by police opinions of sufficient/insufficient resources in their decision making processes. A final study displayed more strictly hegemonic understandings from officers, where, despite the known statistics, self-reported attitudes from police did not suggest negative perceptions of Madness whatsoever (Cotton, 2004). Further, Cotton's study does not consider that the self-reported attitudes from police towards Mad individuals may be influenced by a self-view restricted by hegemonic understandings. Instead, the study seems to take the findings as universal and finite and going so far as to suggest that "one might conclude that the police are actually more positive toward the mentally ill than society at large" (2004, p. 143). As a result of this, the study has been quoted in promoting "a positive outlook on police officers' attitudes, a lack of prejudice, and a show of responsibility and benevolence toward a potentially disadvantaged group." (Barnes, 2005). As can be seen, while these studies, like the studies on police perspectives of Indigenous individuals outlined above, do offer essential insights on police perspectives, because the data analyzed both only features police perspectives/responses and further the analysis does not take this positionality into account, the conclusions that are drawn are made in an objective manner that exceeds what can be known given the scope of the data.

While each article reviewed displays key differences in scope and methodology, the major trend shows that current studies on police perspectives around this topic in Canada tend to display more hegemonic findings, while studies from the perspectives of those from at-risk groups display more counter-hegemonic findings. Studies from each of these perspectives can offer essential understandings of the perceptions and realities experienced by each of these

groups—in order to create enduring change, it is both essential to amplify the voices of those who are most at risk of harm and who have traditionally been silenced by hegemonic narratives as well as important to understand the perspectives of those who currently uphold this inequity. However, given the possibility for readers to bring a hegemonic lens to the work, it is essential that the potential for bias that is introduced in these perspectives be properly situated for these important perspectives to be understood for what they are, as subjective understandings. Overall, of the studies reviewed that considered police perspectives, those that took up police perspectives on Indigenous issues were attentive to the possibility of such bias where the studies taking up police perspectives on Mad issues were not. While the insights that these articles generate on the perspectives that police hold are vitally important to understand how to generate change, the risks of taking up such analysis without situating biases and positionality is discussed in relation to one study in particular, which was seen to promote these vital subjective conclusions as questionable objective facts. As discussed, as Cotton 2004 took up police perspectives on Mad individuals without situating them in the dominant discourse, the resulting analysis was shown to promote universal rather than subjective conclusions that minimize prejudice in a way that does not align with the known statistics about police interactions with these communities. Where studies analyze and convey police opinions without such critical attention, there is a risk of portraying police opinions as finite truths despite the potential for bias that hegemonic understandings bring to police responses. As this results in perpetuating views of the police that do not account for the reality of police violence, this further stands against the commitment of Transformative Justice "not [to] reinforce or perpetuate violence such as oppressive norms" (Mingus, 2019), as has already been discussed. Given the pervasiveness of discriminatory policing and the potential for the dominant narrative to silence alternate experiences of policing

inequities, it is important for academics to understand the positionality of their research subjects and situate the voices that constitute the data for their research.

Chapter Two: Data & Analysis

Methodology

To explore people living in Ontario's first-person experiences of, and reactions to, inequitable policing in Canada in 2020, Ontario-based Tweets regarding Canadian police killings of Indigenous, Black, and Mad people were collected and analyzed using discourse analysis. While these Tweets display both counter-hegemonic and hegemonic narratives of policing, with 96.7% of Tweets acknowledging the inequity and/or speaking to a desire for change, the vast majority can be categorized by trends that reflect counter-hegemonic views. Despite this resistance and the fact almost 20% of Tweets stem from users forwarding and commenting on news coverage of these killings, a review of online text-based initial news reports from this time displays vastly different patterns. For initial news coverage, while some counter-hegemonic trends emerge which could help inform more balanced reporting, a review of forty-four articles shows that these reports far more often feature trends which reflect, and ultimately disseminate, a hegemonic view of policing.

In both datasets, the focus remains on online Ontario sources. Ontario stands as a place of particular interest as home of the city whose municipal police force has the highest number of killings on record (Singh, 2020). The only policing service with a higher number of encounters that that of the Toronto Police Service in Canada is the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, which operates at a national, rather than municipal scale. Online sources were selected both due to the proliferation of discussion and opinion forming that takes place online in highly mediated societies and due to the limitations involved with safely collecting data during the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Ontario Tweets Regarding Canadian Killings by Police in 2020

Scope for Tweets

This analysis considers all Tweets originating from Ontario in 2020 which explicitly address the topic of policing as it relates to Black persons, Indigenous persons, and/or Mad persons in Canada. Tweets were analyzed on an individual basis. In order to achieve a broad view, where 1-person-threads (instances where someone replies to their own Tweet to continue their thought) were identified, only the first Tweet in each thread was included. However, in cases where the Tweet in the thread was specifically identified as a reply to itself by the reply search algorithm, and that Tweet was directly relevant to the research question, the Tweet was included regardless of thread order. Twitter was seen as the most appropriate place to find online, text-based, descriptions of, and reactions to, these interactions due to its prominence as a platform intended to share text-based personal experiences and opinions. At the time of the data collection for this study, Twitter stood as a media giant boasting an active 192 million daily active users and an average of 500 million Tweets sent per day (Lin, 2021).

Initially, I had intended to focus only on first-person experiences, rather than reactions. Accordingly, in the first round of data collection replies were not considered within the scope of this project as they were seen as less likely to contain original, personal, first person-experiences. However, given the possibility of retraumatization that this narrow and extractive scope offered, I could not accept the unintended and unacceptable risks associated with this decision and worked to course-correct by introducing into the analysis reactions as well as experiences. Further, in the process of the data collection, it became clear that personal reactions were also valuable cultural artefacts that too could help shed light on the current dialogue on inequitable policing in Ontario. Accordingly, the logic of limiting the analysis to first person-experiences

and original Tweets over reactions and replies was rejected. As such, the scope was widened to include any reaction to police involvement with Mad, Black, and Indigenous people, including Tweets sent as replies. As will be seen in the data collection, this resulted in two searches per location key word search, where the initial excluded replies and the second only included replies. Despite the need for these additional searches, this step was nonetheless vital to ensure a non-extractive view of the data in which some Tweets were not arbitrarily valued over others.

Tweets from organizations were collected due to the important work that community groups can do in generating and amplifying information around policing inequities. However, Tweets from media outlets (minimal as they were, accounting for only 10 Tweets in all searches below) were not included as these were seen not as first-person experiences nor personal reactions, but rather as artefacts produced under the constraints that have already been discussed around objectivity in reporting.

Tweet-Based Data Collection

Data was retroactively collected in April 2021. All relevant posts from 2020 were identified on Twitter by using the advanced search feature. The following four search strings were used to identify relevant Tweets:

- police Canada (Mad OR Mental Health OR mental illness OR Indigenous OR Black) until:2020-12-31 since:2020-01-01 -filter:replies
- Ontario police (Mad OR Mental Health OR mental illness OR Black OR Indigenous) until:2020-12-31 since:2020-01-01 filter:replies
- police Canada (Mad OR Mental Health OR mental illness OR Indigenous OR Black) until:2020-12-31 since:2020-01-01 -filter:replies
- Ontario police (Mad OR Mental Health OR mental illness OR Black OR Indigenous) until:2020-12-31 since:2020-01-01 filter:replies

Data about the Tweet and the Tweeter was collected, along with the full Tweet text. Tweeter information was collected based on Twitter profiles. Location was identified through a

combination of name, bio, and location details from Twitter profiles. Race was listed only when explicitly referred to in Tweeter name or bio, for example identifiers such as Black, Indigenous, white, settler, or country flag in combination with these identifiers were used to identify race. Each profile was reviewed critically and these terms were not used as identifiers when they occurred in phrases which could have meaning other than racial identification. For example, "Black" was not used as an identifier when it occurred in phrases such as "Black Lives Matter". Likewise, Tweeter mental health status was only identified when explicitly mentioned in user bio or name. Based on these fields, mental health status was recorded on a spectrum including mental health professional, confirmed Mad, and possibly Mad. To best capture the conversation in Ontario, Tweets were then filtered by Tweeters whose location was listed within the province. In total, the four searches produced a combined 218 unique and relevant Tweets from sources other than news outlets. 65 of these originated from Ontario and were selected for analysis. For each of these 65 Tweets, Tweet text was then transcribed for further analysis.

One limitation of this search emerged from the restricted, location-based search features on Twitter, by which Tweets could not simply be filtered by Ontario origin. For this reason, "Canada" and "Ontario" were included in the search terms, allowing users from this area who were speaking about Canadian issues to be explicitly identified as such. It is acknowledged that Ontario residents may share reactions and experiences to Canadian- or Ontario-based trends in policing without explicitly including the words "Canada" or "Ontario" in the message. For example, were a user to live in Ontario and say, "where I live, police inequitably kill Black people", this would not have been returned by the search. For that matter, it is further acknowledged that people can share these details in relevant Tweets that do not explicitly mention race or mental status. For example, a Black, Indigenous, or Mad individual sharing a

Tweet expressing "police are killing us inequitably," would not be included in this search. Nonetheless, these search terms were seen as sufficient to build a representative set of data that can be explicitly and demonstrably identified within the scope of this research.

Tweet-Based Data Coding

The 65 Tweets were reviewed multiple times by the researcher, establishing a qualitative sense of general trends in order to create a descriptive data coding system. In total, the following nine categories were established:

A. Fact sharing on policing inequities and violence in Canada.
B. A reminder/correction that Canada is no better off than the states/still has racism.
C. Supporting police/current police efforts (positive view to how things are).
D. Speaking to police reform or the failure of police in current form.
E. Supporting police divesting/are not qualified to deal with mental health issues (It is situational issue rather than an issue to do with addressing mental illness, but not an issue with policing as a whole).
F. Supporting defunding (views on abolition NA).
G. Resistance resource sharing/call to act.
H. Sharing news/updates.
I. Sharing personal experience.

Due to the character limit imposed by Twitter, Tweets are short and typically specific. As such, Tweets were assigned categories wholistically. In cases where more than one category was represented in a single Tweet, it was assigned multiple categories. Categories that explicitly support abolition, suggest these issues do not occur in Canada, or support police dominance were not used as no Tweets represented such views. Despite their absence in this analysis, it is not the opinion of the researcher that this suggests these views do not exist nor that they do not exist on Twitter. The distribution of categories across all Tweets was recorded and highlights can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1: Data Collected on Tweets by Category													
Tweet #	**Tweet in Question Mentions Madness/ Mental Health/ Illness**	**Tweet Race in Question**	**Tweeter Race**	**Tweeter Mental Health Status**	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**	**F**	**G**	**H**	**I**
T1	Y	N/A	White (settler)	Possibly Mad	y								
T10	Y	Black, Indigenous, racialized	Unknown	Unknown				y			y		
T11	Y	Black, Indigenous, racialized	Unknown	Unknown				y				y	
T12	Y	Black, Indigenous, racialized	Unknown	Unknown				y				y	
T13	Y	N/A	Racialized	Unknown	y			y					
T14	Y	Indigenous	Unknown	Unknown	y					y			
T15	Y	Black	Unknown	Unknown	y						y		
T16	Y	Black, Indigenous	White	Unknown	y					y			
T17	Y	Black	Indigenous	Unknown								y	
T18	Y	Black	Unknown	Unknown								y	
T19	Y	N/A	Unknown	Professional			y						
T2	Y	Black	Unknown	Unknown	y	y							
T20	Y	Black	Unknown	Unknown	y						y		
T21	N	Black, Indigenous	Black (Nigeria/Cameroon)	Unknown	y								
T22	Y	Black	Black (Jamaican-Canadian)	Unknown	y								
T23	Y	Black, Indigenous	Unknown	Unknown	y	y							
T24	Y	Not explicit thought mentions racism	Unknown	Unknown	y								
T25	Y	Indigenous, Black	Black (Africa)	Unknown	y	y							
T26	Y	N/A	Unknown	Unknown	y								
T27	Y	Black	Unknown	Unknown									y
T28	Y	Black, Indigenous	Unknown	Unknown	y			y					
T29	Y	Black	Unknown	Unknown	y	y							
T3	Y	Black	Unknown	Unknown	y								
T30	Y	N/A	Unknown	Possibly Mad	y					y			
T31	Y	Indigenous	Unknown	Unknown	y	y			y				
T32	Y	Indigenous	Unknown	Unknown	y				y				
T33	Y	Black, Indigenous	Unknown	Unknown	y	y		y					
T34	Y	Black, Indigenous	Unknown	Unknown	y				y				
T35	Y	Black, Indigenous	Unknown	Unknown	y								
T36	Y	Black, Indigenous	Black	Unknown	y						y		
T37	Y	Black	Unknown	Unknown			y	y					
T38	Y	Indigenous	Unknown	Yes (anxiety)	y				y	y			
T39	Y	Black	Unknown	Unknown	y					y			
T4	Y	Black	Unknown	Unknown							y		
T40	Y	N/A	Unknown	Unknown	y								
T41	Y	Black, Indigenous	Unknown	Possibly Mad	y					y	y		
T42	Y	N/A	Unknown	Unknown									y
T43	Y	People of colour	Unknown	Unknown	y				y				
T44	Y	Black, Indigenous, people of colour	Unknown	Unknown					y				y
T45	Y	Black, Indigenous	Unknown	Unknown	y					y			
T46	Y	N/A	Unknown	Unknown					y				

T47	Y	Not explicit thought mentions racism	Unknown	Yes (mental health)							y		
T48	Y	Black, Indigenous	Unknown	Unknown	y							y	
T49	Y	Black, Indigenous, other minorities	Unknown	Unknown			y						
T5	Y	Black	Unknown	Unknown	y				y				
T50	Y	Black, Indigenous	Unknown	Unknown	y								
T51	Y	Indigenous	Unknown	Unknown				y					y
T52	Y	Black	Unknown	Unknown	y			y					
T53	Y	Black	Unknown	Unknown						y	y		
T54	Y	N/A	Unknown	Unknown	y							y	
T55	Y	N/A	Unknown	Unknown	y							y	
T56	Y	Black, Indigenous	Unknown	Unknown	y							y	
T57	Y	N/A	Unknown	Possibly Mad	y			y				y	
T58	Y	N/A	Unknown	Unknown	y	y							
T59	Y	N/A	Unknown	Unknown		y				y			
T6	Y	Black	Unknown	Unknown	y			y					
T60	Y	Black	Unknown	Unknown	y	y			y				
T61	Y	Black, Indigenous	Unknown	Unknown	y					y			
T62	Y	Black	Unknown	Unknown							y		
T63	Y	N/A	Unknown	Unknown					y				
T64	Y	Indigenous	Unknown	Unknown	y	y							
T65	Y	Black	Black (Ghana)	Unknown		y							y
T7	Y	Black, Indigenous	Unknown	Unknown	y								
T8	Y	Black	Unknown	Unknown	y				y			y	
T9	Y	Black, Indigenous, People of Colour	Unknown	Unknown				y	y			y	

Tweet-Based Data Analysis

Based on the distribution established in Table 1, Tweets were analyzed to understand patterns across the data. Overall, the Tweets display a commitment to understanding elements of policing in Canada as inequitable that helps generate insights into the ways that this topic is taken up by individuals on Twitter in 2020. Distinct trends emerged across the categories which generate interesting insights and understandings

Category A, fact sharing on policing inequities and violence in Canada, was by far the most common, occurring in 67.6% of Tweets. Tweets which displayed category B, a reminder/correction that Canada is no better off than the United States and/or still has racism, and H, sharing news/updates, also represent instances of educating the public on the issue of inequitable policing and each occurred in 16.9 percent of Tweets. Looking at unique Tweets, in

total these three categories, which all involve educating the public on this issue, account for the vast majority of Tweets at 75.4%.

Categories D-G represent instances where policing is openly criticized and/or the need for change is identified or promoted. D, supporting police reform or acknowledging the failure of police in current form, occurs in 18.5% of all Tweets, as does E, supporting police divesting from and asserting they are not qualified to deal with mental health issues. At 15.4%, slightly fewer Tweets display category F and explicitly support defunding the police. Category G, Tweets that include resistance, resource sharing and/or a call to act, are even less common at 13.8%. Calculating these categories in terms of unique Tweets, 58.5% of all Tweets at least mildly support change in current policing practices.

With this, two trends remain which were telling not in their proliferation in the data, but in their silence. In total, only 3 Tweets (T19, T37, T49), making up 4.5% of the total, explicitly engaged category C and spoke positively towards police or police efforts in any way. Of these, one (T37) spoke to the possibility of excellent, existing, strong, Black, police leaders to create change in the system. Thus, despite the praise, the Tweet was nonetheless critical of inequitable policing practices. The critical tone in this Tweet can be further confirmed by the hashtags the user included: “#systemicracism” and “#blm”. Thus, only two Tweets offered praise for police without criticism of inequitable policing, accounting for a mere 3.1%. In addition, only 7.7% of Tweets included category I, personal experiences, including any instance where a Tweeter spoke their own actions or their experiences with police/policing inequities. Only one of these five Tweets had identifying information on the Tweeter, where T65 was self-identified as Black. No Tweets concerning personal experiences from users who self-identified as Mad were available.

In terms of demographic information more generally, little confirmed self-identified information was found. Nonetheless, insights within this limited information suggest important trends for future research and advocacy. In terms of disclosing mental health status, as with the issues already explored in identifying Mad victims of police killings, this status relies on explicit mention of Madness in a Twitter bio, and so is likely is not representative of all Mad users in this dataset. This is because Tweeters in the dataset who experience mental health issues and did not share that information in their bio were likely present and unidentified in the dataset. Nonetheless, 9.3% of Tweets were from users who were identified as Mad, possibly Mad, or a mental health professional, with only 3.1% of users who explicitly self-identified as Mad.

Of this 9.3%, 57.1% did not include descriptions of policing as a racialized issue, while only 26.6% explicitly mention Black and/or Indigenous persons, and 14.3% in this category more broadly mention racism. While this data is not fulsome enough to make generalizations, it nonetheless stands as a fact that the only Tweet from someone self-identified as a mental health professional is also one of only two Tweets in the full dataset that explicitly and uncritically supports current policing, and further does so without any mention of race. Of the remaining Tweets, the two explicitly Mad users were as follows: T38 displayed categories A, E, & F while T47 displayed category G. The distribution of the 4 possibly Mad users Tweets was similarly non-standard where T1 displayed category A, T30 displayed A & F, T41 displayed A, F & G, and T57 displayed trends A, D, & H. Again, the data is far too limited to be universally conclusive, however this distribution of trends among users makes clear that a large majority of Mad identified users (85.6%) took to Twitter to share information on policing inequities or violence in this study, none have shared personal experiences or corrected others on Canada's racist reality, and only the mental health professional has expressed views that support police.

Similarly, race was explicitly self-identified in only 9 of the Tweets analyzed. Again, this is not to suggest that the other users do not have a race, however self-identifying by race on Twitter was not common. Of the cases where race was identified, 11.1% identified as Indigenous, 55.6 identified as Black, 11.1% identified as racialized, and 22.2% identified as white or white settler. In contrast to the data on users who self-identify as Mad, only one of these users (T21), representing 11%, shared a post that focused on racial inequities without addressing the mental health aspect of policing inequities. There was only one case in which a Twitter user self-identified both their race and a possible Mad status in this data (T1). As this Tweeter is a white settler, and the information is far too limited with only one piece of data, insights on intersectional identity were not be generated.

Further, these same patterns in Tweet focus on race vs focus on mental health persisted across the data, beyond cases where Tweeter race and mental health status could be identified. The conversation around mental health and policing inequities on Twitter is very active with 98.5%, or all but one Tweet, explicitly mentioning Madness as it interacts with inequitable policing. Yet, race is not mentioned in 21.5% of cases with an additional 3.1% that do not explicitly speak to racial inequities in policing but do nonetheless mention racism.

Thus, compared to the 98.5% for Madness, only 75.4% of Tweets explicitly speak to policing inequities as they interact with race, and even then, of these, Indigeneity and Blackness are not always specifically discussed. In total, 64.6% of Tweets explicitly speak to Blackness and policing and 43.1% explicitly speak to Indigeneity and policing. Of the tweets that discuss race, 24.5% of Tweets mention Black and Indigenous inequities and 9% mention Black, Indigenous, and other racial descriptors (people of colour, racialized people, other minorities). Tweets that refer to only one racial identifier were also included, with 9.2% that speak specifically to

Indigenous inequities, and 1.5% that speak to people of colour. A far larger 30.7% of tweets that refer to race speak only to Black inequities, marking Tweets that address only Black inequities as the largest single category of Tweets focusing on race in this data. Yet, of the tweets that mention race explicitly, only 2% do not also speak to the relationship between Madness and policing. Thus, across the data there is a clear pattern for focusing on the impacts of policing with mental health and leaving out the reality of racial inequities.

Initial Media Coverage of Killings by Police

> *Canadians were patting ourselves on the backs. Police violence doesn't live here – leave that for our southern neighbours.*
> *Meanwhile our police really did just shoot and kill a baby.*
> *(Blyth, Fieldnotes, November 26, 2020)*

Scope for News Coverage

A preliminary review was done to collect instances of online text-based initial news coverage that took as their subject instances where police killed a civilian in the line of duty, in Ontario, in 2020. All articles which fell within this scope and were discovered under two separate search parameters, which will be explained under data collection, were included. Initial news coverage was defined as stories released by media outlets within the 2 calendar days following a victim's death, as will be explained in the next section. Text-based coverage was selected to facilitate better conversation between the two datasets, given that while other media can be shared on Twitter, it is commonly known as a text-based platform.

News-Based Data Collection

Articles in this section were identified using a combination of the data that I have collected on police killings following the *Deadly Force*, the *Deadly Force* database, and Google News search. In order to identify initial news reports, "killed by police" was searched with the publication date filter on Google set to a custom range spanning two calendar days following the

day of the killing. For example, for D'Andre Campbell, who was killed on April 6, 2020, the search covered a range from April 6-April 8, inclusive. With Google's "relevance" sorting setting applied, all articles returned by the search results for each death were reviewed for applicability.

All online text-based web articles that reported on the death within two days of the killing which were identified through this search from any media outlet were included. The articles produced during the days following the killing were selected as this is a time when information is particularly sparse, and the killings are being addressed as a matter of daily news. Because of this, the reports represent a time when there is little detail available and articles are written through the lens of daily news reporting, rather than through the lens of intentional criticism and attention to policing as a source of inequity. This lens offers important insights on daily reporting trends for coverage of police killings, where reporters may be most likely not to be intentionally critical of inequities and to rely on dominant reporting styles and understandings in their coverage. Further, public impressions are being formed in this time of limited information. Because of this, the role of reporters in either unpacking or being explicit about the bias included in their sources, seeking diverse opinions and experiences, and properly contextualizing these events within larger societal patterns would be all the more important at this time. Through this role, reporters act as vital gatekeepers in how these stories are portrayed in the public forum. For this reason, this is strictly an analysis of media coverage in initial web-based news reporting on killings by police. It should be noted and emphasized that journalists at major news outlets produce work outside of these constraints that does not follow the hegemonic baseline trends in initial reports which will be discussed below. Take for example the two iterations of the *Deadly Force* database which are intentionally critical and offer essential counter-hegemonic

understandings by decidedly positioning many who are killed by police as victims and policing practices as inequitable. Both iterations of this database were researched, compiled, and reported by journalists at the CBC, and stand as decidedly counter-hegemonic interpretations of police killings that have led to important exposure for this issue in Canada. Indeed, the understandings from those reports guide this research in many ways. Thus, such journalistic efforts and editorials are vitally important and decidedly counter-hegemonic according to the definitions in this thesis but are not the focus of this work which seeks to understand how initial web-based news articles on police killings interpret and portray information as a matter of daily news coverage.

To this end, initial web-based articles were found in thirteen different sources including, *The Toronto Sun, iHeart Radio, Global News, The CBC, The Star, CP24, CTV News, The Globe & Mail, The National Post, City News, Kawartha Now, Blackburn News,* and *The Barrie 360*. While these outlets serve different communities at vastly different scales, all articles that were found to represent textual, web-based news reports were included. Through this search method, initial news reporting was identified for each of the fourteen killings by police that occurred in Ontario in 2020, with a total of thirty-eight articles identified. Basic demographic information from the *Deadly Force* database and the additional data I collected following this database was associated with the text collected from each article. The text from each article was then recorded for further analysis. Text selected included headings and subheadings, but excluded titles, photo captions, and in-text advertisements, where applicable.

Then, the analysis revealed that the language around police killings is typically not as direct as the key terms that were originally used in the search. Accordingly, the search term was out of line with common reporting styles and as such, this was seen as a potential area to introduce bias into the research by only including articles that could be found when searched for

using such direct language. Accordingly, a secondary scope was conducted. This search employed a less direct search term that was more commonly used in reporting, "police involved killing." Again, all search results were reviewed. In total, an additional five articles were identified using this search term, bringing the total articles identified to forty-four. Each new article was recorded with the data previously discovered. While this second search was seen as an essential step to reduce bias, this review is nonetheless still considered a preliminary, broad review and only aims to account for a representative sample, rather than an exhaustive list, of all articles discoverable under all imaginable search terms.

News-Based Data Coding

The articles were reviewed in full multiple times by the researcher, again establishing a qualitative sense of general trends in order to create a descriptive data coding system. In total, fifteen trends were identified as follows:

A. Quotes/paraphrases police/police spokesperson.
B. Quotes/paraphrases SIU/Agency spokesperson/incident release.
C. Quotes/paraphrases family/friend.
D. Quotes/paraphrases community member.
E. Quotes otherwise unrelated witness (a person who does not have specific expertise nor personal connection upon witnessing an event).
F. Quotes/paraphrases community expert.
G. Distancing the dead from the conversation (through omission/clinical, or indirect language).
H. Incriminating description/rhetoric surrounding the victim.
I. Positive or humanizing description of victim.
J. Critical description of police/officer in question.
K. Positive description of police/officer in question.
L. Agency for death/actions directly attributed to police office in question.
M. Agency for death deferred (through passive voice used in description of killing/officer in question or otherwise deferring agency of death/killing).
N. Distancing rhetoric (vague, clinical, detached, otherwise indirect).
O. Reference to inequitable police use of force, killing or the over criminalization of marginalized groups.

As these articles were longer and more substantial than the Tweet character limits allow, it was not as informative to wholistically categorize each article. Instead, the trends were identified within each article line-by-line. To help quantify the phenomenon despite the intricacies in the way these patterns overlapped, the trends were calculated based on what percentage of paragraphs, or unique lines, they occurred in per article. For the purposes of this analysis, paragraphs were defined by the line breaks as they appeared in the original articles and headings and sub-headings were counted as individual paragraphs. To preserve information on the way that these trends interacted within the source of the information, the trends which represented quotes/paraphrasing were then further analyzed in terms of their interaction with the other trends. The distribution of across articles can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2: Occurrences of Trends in 2020 Initial Reporting of Killings by Police in Ontario by % of Paragraphs

Article #	Race	MHS	T.1	T.2	T.3	T.4	T.5	T.6	T.7	T.8	T.9	T. 1 0	T. 11	T. 12	T. 13	T. 14	T. 15
V1-A1	Black	NA	70.0	10.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	40.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	10.0	0.0
V1-A2	Black	NA	16.7	5.6	0.0	0.0	38.9	0.0	16.7	0.0	5.6	0.0	0.0	11.1	0.0	11.1	0.0
V1-A3	Black	NA	0.0	5.6	0.0	0.0	38.9	0.0	16.7	11.1	5.6	0.0	0.0	11.1	0.0	11.1	0.0
V2-A1	White	NA	12.5	50.0	0.0	0.0	12.5	0.0	12.5	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.5	12.5	37.5	0.0
V3-A1	Black	Mad	0.0	10.0	35.0	0.0	5.0	0.0	5.0	10.0	25.0	20.0	0.0	15.0	10.0	5.0	0.0
V3-A2	Black	Mad	0.0	46.2	46.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.7	38.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	23.1	15.4	0.0
V3-A3	Black	Mad	5.0	15.0	35.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0	0.0	50.0	10.0	0.0	5.0	5.0	10.0	0.0
V3-A4	Black	Mad	0.0	5.3	31.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.3	36.8	10.5	10.5	15.8	0.0	0.0	10.5
V4-A1	Unkn	NA	16.7	16.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.7	33.3	16.7	0.0
V5-A1	Unkn	NA	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	23.5	0.0	0.0	35.3	35.3	0.0	5.9	11.8	5.9	11.8	0.0
V5-A2	Unkn	NA	37.5	50.0	0.0	0.0	12.5	0.0	0.0	12.5	12.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	12.5	0.0
V5-A3	Unkn	NA	12.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.5	0.0	12.5	12.5	12.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	37.5	25.0	0.0
V6-A1	Unkn	Mad	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.5	25.0	0.0
V6-A2	Unkn	Mad	45.5	0.0	9.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	18.2	9.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	18.2	18.2	0.0
V6-A3	Unkn	Mad	16.7	83.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	66.7	33.3	0.0
V6-A4	Unkn	Mad	14.3	21.4	0.0	28.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.3	21.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	28.6	0.0	0.0
V7-A1	South Asian	Mad	3.8	9.4	50.9	0.0	0.0	9.4	0.0	20.8	30.2	24.5	0.0	5.7	5.7	5.7	11.3
V7-A2	South Asian	Mad	16.7	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.3	25.0	20.8	16.7	0.0	4.2	20.8	4.2	0.0
V7-A3	South Asian	Mad	8.8	11.8	35.3	5.9	0.0	10.3	0.0	10.3	33.8	4.4	0.0	5.9	2.9	2.9	13.2
V8-A1	Pres. White	NA	11.1	55.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	44.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	11.1	33.3	0.0
V8-A2	Pres. White	NA	10.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	40.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	20.0	20.0	0.0
V8-A3	Pres. White	NA	9.1	45.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	27.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	27.3	18.2	0.0
V9-A1	Unkn	NA	37.5	6.3	0.0	6.3	12.5	6.3	0.0	37.5	6.3	0.0	6.3	0.0	18.8	6.3	0.0
V9-A2	Unkn	NA	23.3	20.0	0.0	0.0	30.0	0.0	3.3	16.7	6.7	0.0	3.3	0.0	0.0	10.0	0.0
V9-A3	Unkn	NA	26.1	34.8	0.0	0.0	21.7	0.0	0.0	26.1	4.3	0.0	4.3	8.7	0.0	8.7	0.0
V9-A4	Unkn	NA	35.3	29.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	17.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	17.6	17.6	0.0
V9-A5	Unkn	NA	5.3	15.8	0.0	26.3	10.5	0.0	0.0	31.6	31.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.5	10.5	26.3
V9-A6	Unkn	NA	20.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	30.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	40.0	10.0	0.0
V10-A1	Unkn	NA	0.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	60.0	20.0	0.0

V10-A2	Unkn	NA	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	37.5	0.0	0.0
V10-A3	Unkn	NA	18.2	36.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.1	9.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	18.2	9.1	18.2	0.0
V10-A4	Unkn	NA	7.1	28.6	0.0	28.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.1	7.1	0.0	0.0	14.3	0.0	7.1	0.0
V11-A1	Unkn	NA	12.5	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.5	12.5	0.0	25.0	0.0	0.0
V11-A2	Unkn	NA	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
V11-A3	Unkn	NA	0.0	57.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
V12-A1	Pres. White	PSI	12.5	31.3	0.0	0.0	6.3	18.8	12.5	12.5	0.0	0.0	18.8	0.0	25.0	18.8	0.0
V12-A2	Pres. White	PSI	0.0	0.0	0.0	47.1	0.0	17.6	0.0	5.9	0.0	0.0	35.3	0.0	17.6	5.9	0.0
V12-A3	Pres. White	PSI	0.0	0.0	0.0	47.1	0.0	17.6	0.0	5.9	0.0	0.0	35.3	0.0	5.9	5.9	0.0
V13-A1	Unkn	No	7.1	42.9	0.0	14.3	0.0	7.1	0.0	21.4	35.7	0.0	0.0	7.1	21.4	14.3	0.0
V13-A2	Unkn	No	0.0	39.1	0.0	26.1	0.0	0.0	4.3	8.7	21.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.0	8.7	0.0
V13-A3	Unkn	No	0.0	70.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	40.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	40.0	10.0	0.0
V14-A1	Unkn	NA	6.7	20.0	0.0	6.7	0.0	0.0	6.7	20.0	13.3	0.0	0.0	6.7	26.7	13.3	0.0
V14-A2	Unkn	NA	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	33.3	16.7	0.0	0.0	33.3	16.7	0.0	0.0
V14-A3	Unkn	NA	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.7	0.0	0.0	13.3	40.0	13.3	0.0	0.0	6.7	26.7	6.7	0.0
		Avg% of para/ article	**14**	**24.7**	**5.5**	**5.5**	**6.1**	**1.98**	**4.5**	**19**	**11.2**	**2.24**	**3**	**6.72**	**18.1**	**11.8**	**1.4**

The codes are in, what was once an endless scroll of hard swallows is now a rainbow of colours, numbers – statistics.
Events have become data – statistics. The lump in my throat swells more slowly as the words fade and the code takes over.
In a moment – mental relief. In a moment – a surge of shame.
(Blyth, Fieldnotes, May 12, 2021)

News-Based Data Analysis

Articles were analyzed based on the distribution established in Table 2. Overall, the articles work to inform the public of instances of police lethal use of force as narrated events, but do not display a sufficiently critical lens towards inequitable policing in Canada when considering what the statistics tell us about the pervasiveness of this issue. This stands in direct contrast to the dialogue that takes place on Twitter and supports the view that media institutions are more likely to promote dominant views that represent policing as a force for public safety due to the baseline style of reporting that results from efforts to provide objective coverage in these initial reports. First, the narrative trends, 7-15, are reviewed as they exist across all articles

and all paragraphs. Then, the interaction between these narrative elements with quote sources (trends 1-6) are reviewed which offers an understanding of the ways that bias may be introduced into reports based on source positioning.

Narrative Trends

Through an analysis of trends 7-15, I sought an understanding of the narrative patterns that exist in reporting styles as they pertain to the data. Trends 7-9 deal with descriptions of the victim. 7 distances the victim which leads to the erasure of the victim's experience and trend 8, incriminating the victim, supports the police/criminal dichotomy. In contrast, 9 works against this narrative through a humanizing or positive description of the victim. Trend 10 and 11 deal with descriptions of the officer(s) involved, with 10 working against the dominant narrative and providing direct criticism against police and 11 working to towards it with positive descriptions of police. Trend 14 covers any other indirect language that otherwise contributes to the dominant narrative by minimizing the reality of the killing in question. Finally, trend 15 counters such erasure and stands against the hegemonic view through resistance and reminders of systemic policing inequities.

When describing the victims and deaths, these reports include more of the hegemonic trends. While distancing language (trend 7) occurs in 34.1% of articles and an average of 4.4% of paragraphs, incriminating language dominates 86.6% of articles and an average of 18.8% of paragraphs. In contrast, positive or humanizing language of the victim (trend 9) was seen in 54.5% of articles and an average of 11.2% of paragraphs. Likewise attributing the killing to the killer (trend 12) occurred in 52.3% of articles and on average of 6.7% of paragraphs while removing agency from the police (trend 13) occurred in 81.8% of articles and 18.1% of paragraphs.

Descriptions of the police were overall less prominent, a silence which itself reflects on the protection that officers are offered in these articles. Critical descriptions of the police (trend 10) occurred in just 15.9% of articles and 2.2% of paragraphs. Positive descriptions of police (trend 11) occurred in 20.5% of articles, and 3% of paragraphs. Thus, more instances were recorded of positive descriptions of police than of critical descriptions, despite the fact that the connecting theme of these articles was police killing people.

Beyond this, other distancing language (trend 14) occurred in 70.3% of the articles and in 11.8% of paragraphs. Further, and in largest direct contrast to the conversation happening on Twitter in this same year, information sharing and resistance to policing inequities and violence occurred in only 9.1% of articles and only 1.4% of paragraphs.

Clearly, the initial news reporting on these killings in Ontario in 2020 followed very different patterns when compared to the Tweets from Ontario in the same year. This analysis indicates that while some counter-hegemonic trends do occur in initial reporting, the current reporting style tends towards hegemonic narratives of policing. As can be seen, these narratives commonly work to position the victim as a criminal, remove scrutiny from the police and seldom question police or address systemic police inequities.

What Sources Tell What Story

Patterns in the distribution of trends across source type were analyzed to better understand what types of dialogue most frequently arose from which sources. To measure this, where source trends (trends 1-6) were identified in a paragraph, a break-down of all other trends which occurred in that same paragraph was recorded. The results are summarized below.

In total, 100 instances of the other trends were discovered in the same paragraphs as information attributed to police. 14% of these involved deferring agency (trend 13), 39%

involved criminalizing language (trend 8), 10% involved distancing the victim (trend 7), 13% involved otherwise indirect language (trend 14), 10% involved humanizing the victim (trend 9), 7% involved positive descriptions of police (trend 11), and only 3% involved descriptions that directly attribute the killing to the police (trend 12). The remaining trends involved how these sources interacted with each other, with 3% occurring with quotes from witnesses (trend 5), and 1% occurring in the same paragraph as a community member statement (trend 4) or statement from the SIU (trend 2). No instances of overlap with the other trends were recorded.

In terms of information originating from the SIU, 113 instances of the other trends were discovered in the same paragraphs. 26.5% of these involved deferring agency (trend 13), 24.8% involved criminalizing language (trend 8), 7.1% involved distancing the victim (trend 7), 21.2% involved otherwise indirect language (trend 14), 7.1% involved humanizing the victim (trend 9), and 11.5% involved descriptions that directly attribute the killing to the police (trend 12). Overlap with police and witness statements (trend 2) were each seen in 0.9% of instances. No instances of overlap with the other trends were recorded.

In contrast, quotes and statements from family and friends followed a noticeably different patterning in the 90 instances that they appeared in the same paragraph as other trends. In this case, only 1.1% of these involved deferring agency (trend 13), 4.4% involved criminalizing language and a slightly higher 7.8% of these instances directly attribute the killing to the police (trend 12). In addition, 56.7% of these instances involved humanizing language of the victim (trend 9), 27.7% involved critical descriptions of officers or officers' actions (trend 10), and 3.3% of these instances actually involved direct and explicit information sharing that stood in opposition to the hegemonic view of policing to acknowledge policing inequities or resistance efforts therein (trend 15). No instances of overlap with the other trends were recorded.

Quotes and statements from the community and from experts were far less prominent. For community members, only 26 instances of in-paragraph overlap with other trends were recorded. Of these, both instances of criminalizing language (trend 8) and of otherwise distancing language (trend 14) occur most frequently, each with 30.79% of the total instances of overlap. This is followed by a 15.4% overlap with police quotes and statements (trend 1), 11.5% of humanizing language (trend 9), 3.8% deferring agency (trend 13). Directly attributing agency (trend 12), and statements from the SIU (trend 2) each overlap with community member testimony in 3.8% of instances.

For community experts (trend 6), only 9 instances of overlap were identified. Criticisms of police (trend 10) and sharing information on inequities and/or resistance to police violence (trend 15) occurred in 33.3% of instances of overlap. In addition, both police (trend 11) and victims (trend 9) were each positively described in 1.1% of instances of overlap. No instances of overlap with the other trends were recorded.

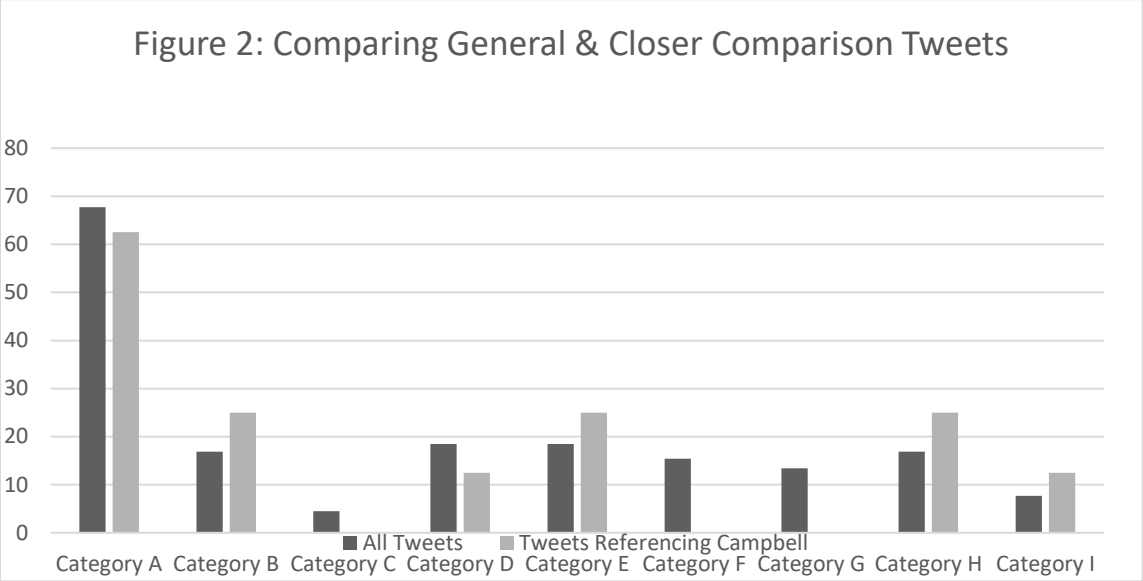
Within this, the hegemonic tendencies of SIU and police sources in comparison to friend and family and other community experts seems stark. At no point do criticisms of police or police actions (trend 10) or any dialogue around reform or policing inequities (trend 15) occur in the same lines as police or SIU sources. This fact persists regardless of context and despite the SIU's role as "police watchdog". Yet, where other experts in the community were quoted, it is exactly these counter-hegemonic views that constitute the most common area of overlap. Further, friends and family play an important role in bringing forward criticisms for police and a humanizing view of the victim. These insights help to distinguish the ways that information source can influence the narrative, offering an actionable insight into a way that such narratives could be better balanced.

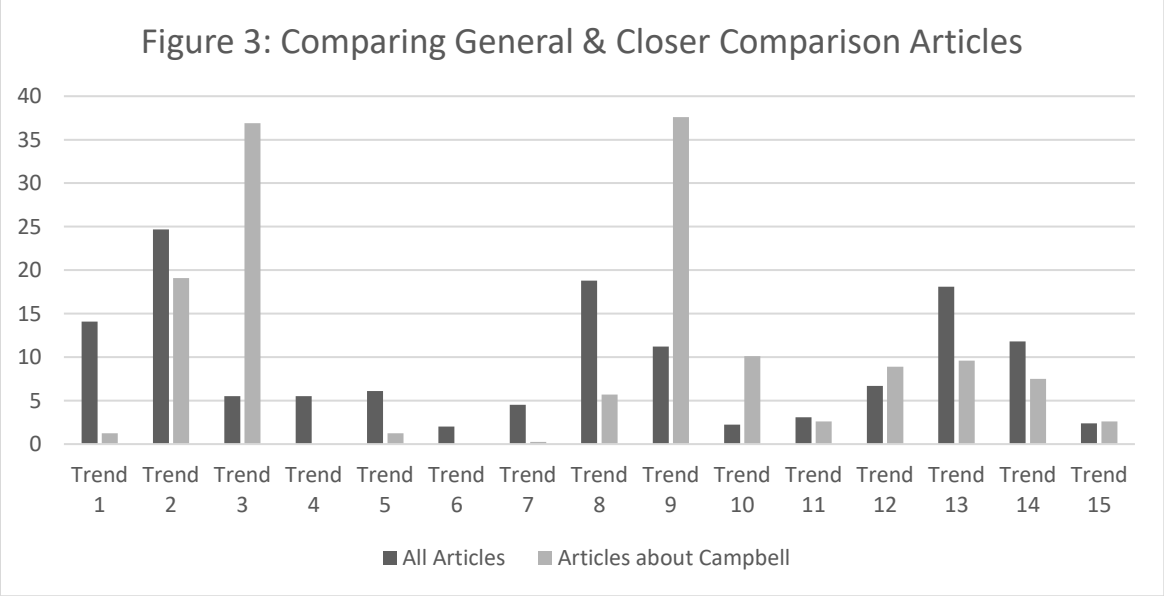
While the overall trends are telling and information on source-based narrative trends hold great importance to help facilitate balanced reporting, these insights are still incredibly broad. As all instances of killings by police were collected without discrimination, these cases exist across a variety of contexts. These deaths vary from cases of police accidentally hitting pedestrians at night, to homicide investigations, to cases of police who are called to help and end up harming. While the role of the media should not be to justify police killing of criminals without a trial, it would be a great oversight to go without acknowledging the potential impact of the context of these cases in this analysis. Thus, a closer comparison was employed to explore the extent to which these trends persist when comparing the conversation on Twitter to news reports, where both media referenced the same death.

Different Media – Same Death: Comparing Tweets & News Coverage on the Same Killing

It quickly becomes clear that while the hegemonic narrative trends in reporting that have been discussed are not as prevalent in the news coverage on D'Andre Campbell's death, the conversation on Twitter surrounding police murdering D'Andre Campbell nonetheless continued to be far more counter-hegemonic than the narrative in the news articles. While some trends that clearly marked the general news reports as hegemonic lessened or were not present in the news reports on Campbell's death, by no means do these articles fully reject the dominant reporting style and engage in a counter-hegemonic tone that could be considered comparable to what is seen on Twitter. Campbell's case was chosen for this closer comparison due to his status as in the *Deadly Force* database as a Black and Mad individual. According to the *Deadly Force* database, he was the only person killed by police in 2020 who was explicitly identified within more than one of the three groups in question in this thesis. Tweets were filtered to include only those which made direct reference to Campbell or were tweeted in response to a story about

Campbell. Articles were filtered by those which represented initial news coverage of Campbell's death. In total, eight Tweets and four articles were identified.





Figures 2 and 3 show how trends change when looking specifically at media regarding Campbell. As can be seen in Figure 2, the Tweets show a strong interest in sharing information about the victim and about his death as a matter of larger policing inequities in Canada. Reminders of inequity (B) and updates/new sharing (H) increase, while there is a slight decrease

in more general fact sharing (A). While there are fewer instances where defunding the police is explicitly (F) mentioned or general support for reform (D) is voiced, criticisms of current practices remain, with an increase in calls to divest from policing in cases of mental health issues (E). In addition, any positive mention of or support for officers (C) is erased in these Tweets. Thus, a strong counter-hegemonic view continues to set the tone throughout the Tweets that reference Campbell.

In contrast, while the data on articles about Campbell demonstrate a decrease in the prevalence of some of the trends most responsible for perpetuating the hegemonic view in reporting, those trends nonetheless persist and continue to impact the narrative. As can be seen in Figure 3., this includes continued instances of criminalizing Campbell (8), more instances of deferred agency from police (13) for the killing than direct attribution (12), continued positive descriptions of police efforts (11), and a general silence around the systemic nature of these issues (15). In terms of the source trends, while family and friends (3) allow for a far more humanizing framing of Campbell that works against the criminal/hero dichotomy of the hegemonic narrative, two trends stand out which still seem to protect police. In this case, where the police (1) are likely to receive scrutiny, they are left unquestioned and source only 1.25% of paragraphs (a decrease from an average of 14.1%). Further, there are no instances where other community authorities or experts add further scrutiny to this discussion (6), leaving the role of unpacking the appropriateness of police actions to the SIU, family, and friends.

A closer reading of the positive descriptions of police efforts and information sharing on police inequities included in news reports on Campbell's death helps to further unpack these trends and make the contrast between the information that is included in Tweets clearer. When looking at the specific occurrences of trend 15, there are two lines in article V3-A4 that call for

more police training around mental health. As an example of text that acknowledges that this death was not a one-off issue and calls for change, this is a robust criticism compared to other articles. Nonetheless, these occurrences leave out any direct information sharing about the systemic nature of these trends, completely overlook race, and do not speak to police or policing culture as the issue, but only the lack of training. In contrast, the 62.5% of Tweets that reference Campbell actively work against the hegemonic narrative and explicitly mention racism as a root issue of the problem or speak to the "scary pattern" of police involved deaths with Indigenous, Black, and Mad individuals.

Thus, while the hegemonic narrative trends in news reporting are not *as prevalent* in the articles about Campbell, hegemonic tendencies nonetheless persist in a way that is not seen in the conversation on Twitter. In the case of D'Andre Campbell, while there is still a myriad of descriptions from friends and family, which have proven to be so vital in generating counter-hegemonic dialogue, the trends which support the hegemonic narrative still seep into these stories. At times, the inclusion of such narratives seems blatantly inappropriate. For example, there is a clear discord in quoting a police officer saying, "[o]ur officers are constantly getting training on different mental illnesses, and what the best way is for our officers to interact with individuals who are in crisis," (Tong, 2020) in an article about a 26-year-old man who was killed by officers after personally calling police for mental health support. Moreover, as the general trends in reporting show, the hegemonic narrative is the baseline. This is problematic as this hegemonic baseline persists and directs trends all the more when counter-hegemonic information is sparse. This creates a real risk for media outlets to amplify unfounded understandings that work to justify police killings.

Take for instance the case of V1, Jamal Derek Francique Jr., a 28-year-old Black man killed by police. Francique was killed by police and his murder is described in articles V1-A1 through V1-A3. Unlike Campbell, neither friends, family, members of the community, nor experts were included as sources in any of these three initial reports. The information is sparse, so sparse that all articles and even the *Deadly Force* database overlook that this is another example of a Mad person who was killed in crisis, whose death was both mourned and protested by family and the community. Without this vital information, which I only discovered in the process of my Tweet exploration, what is left at the baseline are articles that cast a view of criminality and erase the injustice of this death. In these articles, witnesses speak only of how sad it is to see "these things" (Freeman, 2020) in their nice neighbourhood. Nothing is said of policing inequities. No indication is made that perhaps, police should not have murdered this young man. The only potentially redeeming fact across all three articles is a mildly positive description of the victim in articles V1-A1 and V1-A2 where it is made clear that the victim did not return fire at police at any point. Even then, with no criticism or question about police actions following these descriptions of the victim's lack of violent response, the counter-hegemonic narrative that could be extracted from this fact is left for readers to interpret. This lack of critical engagement serves to demonstrate the risks of holding a hegemonic view of policing as the baseline, where news reports can easily add the power imbalance that is already seen against these marginalized communities by silencing the reality of victims of police violence and in doing so, justifying the actions of police.

> *I review the data again and again.*
> *In this work, one mistake feels like more than just a discrepancy. It feels like a dishonor. Who have I missed? So many unknown names. So much meaning in what is said and left unsaid. How do you end a paper when you know the work*

is not over?
(Blyth, Fieldnotes, June 1, 2021)

Chapter 3: Results: Taking in and Taking Away

Overall, clear trends in the discourse can be seen both on Twitter and across online news coverage of these killings by police. While there are significant limitations in the Tweet content, which will be explored, the conversation on Twitter typically addresses police killings as a matter of injustice against the public. In contrast, news reports show a dangerous baseline understanding of police killing as a matter of public protection. When comparing news and Twitter coverage of the same killings, news reports continue to fall short of addressing police killings as a matter of inequity or injustice. Thus, Twitter coverage shows an understanding of these events that counters the dominant narrative of policing and in doing so, resists against the systems of oppression; whereas news coverage is much more likely to display hegemonic understandings of police killings that overlook well documented inequities.

The Conversation on Twitter

Twitter conversation around police killings in 2020 demonstrates that this platform is a clear site of resistance against policing inequities. Despite this, there are distinct gaps in the conversation that must be addressed.

The commitment to understanding police killings as acts of violence in these Tweets is clear. To summarize the analysis, a decisive 95.4% of all Tweets could be considered counter-hegemonic. 93.8% of these Tweets demonstrate categories A, B, D, F & G while an additional 1.5% (T42) come from outside of these categories. All of these Tweets work to share contextualizing information on inequitable policing and/or resistance therein and/or support police accountability and/or call for change in Canada. Of the 6.2% of Tweets remaining, only 1.5%, or one Tweet, was explicitly positive towards police and the remaining 4.6% were neutral – neither clearly hegemonic nor counter-hegemonic. Thus, at 95.4%, it is clear that the overall

narrative in these Tweets understands killings by police as unjust and unacceptable. This narrative is composed by individuals and groups who are dedicated to educating the public on this issue (75.4%) and calling for change to policing practices (58.5%). By framing killing by police as unjust or inequitable, this narrative constitutes a source of resistance to the status quo and works to bring the experiences of those most harmed by policing into the public forum.

In doing so, these Tweets display some familiar patterns, highlighting experiences of those most impacted by the inequity and generating accountability. Still, despite the resistance that is seen in these trends, other shortcomings are revealed in the data. In particular, two areas where these Tweets remain silent stand out. Firstly, in the lack of attention to race despite the highly racialized nature of this inequity, and secondly in the lack of concrete conversation around impactful solutions. These shortcomings help to demonstrate a way forward to promote intersectional, community-led resistance on Twitter that is aligned with strategies for generating lasting and positive change.

Despite the prevalence of police violence toward Black and Indigenous peoples, across all categories there were significantly fewer Tweets that address race when compared to those that address Madness. At 98.5% of all Tweets, virtually all posts identified on Twitter mention mental health or mental illness. In contrast, a significantly lower 75.6% of all Tweets explicitly speak to race, with only 64.6% that specifically referenced Blackness and only 43.1% that specifically referenced Indigeneity. Thus, in general, posts about policing inequities on Twitter in this time were significantly more likely to address mental health than race. These trends persisted across Tweeter demographic and across an intersectional analysis of the Tweets. In terms of demographics, self-identified Mad individuals overlook race in 57.1% of Tweets, while posts from self-identified racialized people overlook mental health in just 11%. Tweets that

explicitly mention race are also more likely to be intersectional regardless of Tweeter demographics. Out of all Tweets that mention race, only 2% do so without also referring to mental health. Yet, of the Tweets that refer to mental health, 21.9% do not refer to race or racism in any way. In sum, across the data the focus on how policing inequities interact with mental health is significantly more prominent than the focus on how they interact with race. This deprioritization of race in conversations around policing inequities is an issue that is not new for social justice movements and stands as an essential area for action that will be unpacked in the next section.

The ways that the conversation on Twitter falls short of calling for impactful change also follow, and go beyond, this racialized trend. Despite the disproportionate violence that police conduct against Black and Indigenous people, the criticisms against police behaviours and calls for change in these Tweets are just as likely to address the institution as a whole as they are to call for changes only to how police interact with Mad communities and individuals. The capacity that such a narrow approach has for generating real change is limited, as will be further explored. Further, in terms of working towards change more generally, Tweets relating to resistance or creating change stands as another area to be developed. Only 13.8% of Tweets included resistance, resources, or a call to action and of these, none speak to abolishing the police or imagining radical reform. These shortcomings stand as concrete paths forward for improvement and better online advocacy that will be explored in the next section.

The Conversation in Online News Coverage

The online initial coverage from news outlets including, *The Toronto Sun, iHeart Radio, Global News, The CBC, The Star, CP24, CTV News, The Globe & Mail, The National Post, City News, Kawartha Now, Blackburn News,* and *The Barrie 360,* was far more likely to address these

killings as one-time events and position police as a force for public safety. Given this, with a few exceptions stemming from source trends which will be explored in the recommendations section, the majority of text remains securely within the hegemonic narrative. Overall, these trends reflect articles whose narratives support the dichotomy between good police and bad criminals. Police actions are protected in these stories, their decision to kill is rarely questioned and in this silence, other narrative elements work to sustain this baseline dichotomy.

The descriptions in these articles cast aside the wrongdoing of the police by positioning the victim as criminal and not citizen. As has been seen, descriptions of the victims' criminality are far more common (88.6%) than humanizing language (54.5%). Further, vague and detached language is pervasive in these articles, for example describing deaths as "interactions," and minimizing the violence that has been enacted upon the deceased (70.3%). These narrative elements work to position the victim as a criminal and to bring attention away from the fact that a person has been killed by someone who is trained to "serve and protect". This serves to justify police actions and erase victims' experiences in the reports that cover their death.

The descriptions of police in the articles further enforce this dichotomy and offer officers a level of protection against public scrutiny. What accountability can be generated when public opinion is to be formed by descriptions of police killing citizens with more instances where police actions or abilities are described in a positive light (20%) than instances where they are questioned (15%)? Where police agency is more often removed in descriptions when they murder (81.8%) than it is directly attributed (52.3%)? Where these killings are typically treated as a single event instead of contextualized within a larger system of oppression or history of resistance (9.1%)? Even with only 9.1% of articles

displaying information sharing on police use of force/killings and resistance efforts therein, only one article explicitly contextualized the killing by police within the pattern of systemic policing inequities. By ignoring the larger context, these articles promote the view that police killing citizens is a matter of routine actions in the course of duty rather than promoting the reality of systemic state lead violence.

At times, a combination of these patterns can lead to descriptions that ultimately undermine the severity of instances of lethal police force, such as, "[t]he first officer had an interaction with a man. Other officers then arrived and helped make an arrest. The agency says the man's vital signs were absent at that time." ("Watchdog Investigating", 2020). When understood line-by-line, without euphemism, we have an officer shooting a civilian, officers making an arrest of a dead body, and confirmation of a victims' death. Indeed, this highly euphemistic riddle is, in reality, the description of how a 35-year-old father of two was killed in his own home during a mental health episode. As can be seen, these descriptions can work to hide the dire reality of the situation.

In sum, the stories in these articles frequently serve to help the reader to ignore both the police role in the killing and the very fact that a citizen is dead as a result of police violence. These trends are not individual, they appear across the data and can be seen as a reflection of the systems of power that serve to uphold the status quo. By continuing to uphold these trends, articles follow and promote a baseline understanding of killings by police that privilege officers at the expense of the potentially innocent. As was seen in the closer comparison in the last chapter that compared reactions to D'Andre Campbell's death on Twitter to the initial news reports, the hegemonic narrative persists regardless of context and criminality. As this comparison shows, the trends in reporting persisted in a case where

there was no criminal activity leading up to the death and Campbell was the one who called for help. Even in this case, these trends were shown to introduce a baseline assumption of criminality and protect the officers at fault. Further, when considering the case of Jamal Derek Francique Jr. it is revealed how, without the diverse sources that bring humanity into articles on Campbell, this baseline understanding can serve to further erase the story of the victim and write these murders off as a routine matter of course for policing. In doing so, these articles add to a system of injustice and by upholding the hegemonic view of policing.

> *I am trying to remember when I stopped feeling relief when the numbers helped prove the discrimination and where the hegemonic narrative was so clear. At first, the emotions were complex. I would find the data I needed and feel relieved and then guilty, as this relief came from a confirmation of harm. At some point, as the reality of police violence reformed around me, those feelings receded, replaced by a dull expectation of unshakable disgust.*
> *(Blyth, Fieldnotes, June 10, 2021)*

Returning to Transformative Justice, Disability Justice: Aligning with Advocacy Leaders

With the trends properly understood, they must be contextualized within the larger dialogue that is and has been working towards a future without inequitable police violence. As mentioned, there are some familiar patterns in the counter-hegemonic trends as well as the hegemonic ones across both Tweets and news coverage. Those trends which most push against the hegemonic view and create space for understandings of policing violence include centering the experience of those most impacted by the inequity and generating accountability. The first is a clear tenet of Disability Justice while the second is one of Transformative Justice. The hegemonic trends on the other hand, represent shortcomings when looking at the data through the lens of Transformative and Disability Justice. On Twitter, the lack of attention to race and lack of concrete conversation around creating change both stand out as areas for improvement. In

the news articles, a lack of police accountability and insufficient contextualization lead to articles that support and promote current power imbalances.

The way that the conversation on Twitter privileges mental health issues over racial issues in the conversation around inequitable policing is a distinct warning sign for this movement. Such inequal emphasis works in direct violation of many of the principles of Disability Justice and against the recommendations of advocates who work to create change around police violence. In minimizing the racial aspects of police inequities, these Tweets overlook the principle of intersectionality (Berne et al., 227). With this, the added risk for Mad and Black or Indigenous individuals goes unacknowledged. Yet advocates have specifically drawn our attention to this intersectional risk in particular. Robyn Maynard writes that "the use of force against Black persons suffering from mental instability or mental illness is of particular concern" (2017, p. 105) and draws our attention to the fact that it is just this intersectional issue that many Black activist organizations are working to address and bring attention to.

Beyond the possibilities for intersectional understanding, the comparative silence surrounding race on Twitter has cross-movement implications. Taking up issues without racialized understandings is not new for social justice movements. For example, feminist (Tyler, 2005) and disability (Berne, 2015) movements have both been criticized for similarly focusing on white experiences without considering or including racialized people in the process. This racist trend in advocacy is a large part of the formal inception of the Disability Justice movement (Berne, 2015) and has stood in the way of inclusive, intersectional movements far too long to be ignored as it persists into the current conversation. Disability Justice envisions radical change and holds principles of cross-movement solidarity, commitment to cross-disability solidarity, and collective liberation (Berne et al., p. 228-229), principles that if applied, would combat this issue.

These principles are echoed in current calls from activists and community members who emphasize the importance of interdependent and inclusive approaches. Robyn Maynard suggests that to get to the root of the issue we must "center Black leadership and Black realities, even as it links with non-Black communities and address many forms of oppression" (2017, p. 232). She also reminds us of the risk that comes when approaching issues without envisioning radical access for all through an example of women's prisons in Canada, where the dehumanization of Indigenous and Black people resulted in reforms primarily having impact on white inmates (231-232). In fact, since these reforms, the overrepresentation of Indigenous women in the prison system has grown beyond that of men to 42% of the inmate population in Canada. While Indigenous people are generally overrepresented in the prison system, making up for 30% of the population across genders, the rates for women are even more disproportionate with Indigenous women making up for 42% of all women inmate populations in Canada (Zinger, 2020). Syrus Marcus Ware asserts that ending police involvement in efforts to support for Mad people "is part of a larger fight against policing in our society – exposing this institution for what it is: a racist force that regularly targets and kills Black and Indigenous, racialized, and often poor Mad, Deaf and disabled people" (2020).

Starting from this place of radical and inclusive change, Transformative and Disability Justice frameworks and advocates call for concrete change in a way that the Tweets simply do not. The silence on creating change in these Tweets stands as problematic where "the governing power of racism…is unlikely to be transformed in the absence of creation – that is, the simultaneous building of new and more just institutions" (Maynard, 2017, p. 233). Sharing the issue without sharing solutions in these Tweets adds to a sense that there is no way to address this problem. Instead, advocates and allies should be attentive to and amplify the urgent call for

radical, inclusive change that we see emerging within as well as outside of communities most affected by inequitable policing.

One key action that relies on such interdependence and which advocates continue to promote is the call to defund the police. Calls to defund the police are popularly supported by many advocates and advocate groups, in fact, in Robyn Maynard's assembled toolkit, *Building the World we Want: A Roadmap to Police Free Futures in Canada*¸ there are 17 full pages devoted to ongoing efforts and support for defunding the police in Canada (2020, p. 38-55). Further, as has already been discussed, calls to defund align with Transformative and Disability Justice frameworks. These calls speak to defunding and divesting as a first step towards community-based solutions and away from violent, punitive state measures. Black Lives Matters Toronto and Indigenous advocacy group Idle No More have both put forth calls to defund the police while the Canadian Mental Health Association has called for more funding for community mental health services and urged governments to "acknowledge the role of colonialism and racism, particularly anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism, in our systemic failure to deal safely with mental health crises" (CMHA National, 2020). Yet, despite the popularity of this solution as a launching point for change, only 16.6% of Tweets reference defunding the police.

Beyond the trends on Twitter, the lack of accountability that is generated from silence in the news articles stands as a major barrier to the tenets of Disability and Transformative Justice and to creating change. Because these narratives do not contextualize police violence within current inequities, the baseline understanding of these events provides protection from criticism and limits accountability. As Caitlyn Kasper explains, "it is impossible for us to truly understand where we're going to go and how we are going to work out of this problem if we don't understand the context from which it all comes" (Myseum of Toronto, 2020). In their silence,

these articles work against the tenets of Transformative Justice, they reinforce and perpetuate violent oppressive norms and prevent accountability for the police.

While reporters cannot impact accountability by laying charges, they can impact the public forum, where violence is already in motion against minorities. As Maynard explains "[w]ithout a change of what Alexander calls the 'public consensus' on how Black persons are perceived and treated, short-term reforms are unlikely to end the devaluation of Black lives that is embedded within state practices." (2017, p. 232). Beyond this, the fact is that it is not the role of the media to justify police killings in a society where the checks and balances in place against police violence are already flawed. Those who do have the ability to lay charges (the SIU) are also impacted by corruption and hegemonic understandings, and advocates today are mobilizing for accountability by standing against the SIU. In the current system, "[t]he SIU has come under criticism for lack of independence and for employing ex-police officers to investigate current police officers…Allegations of police impunity are substantiated with hard facts." (Maynard, 103). This push back against the impunity caused by the failures of the SIU and calls for the SIU to be dismantled have been echoed by activists such as Desmond Cole (2020) and advocacy groups such as Black Lives Matters London (Sattler, 2020).

Recommendations

The recommendations that are to follow flow not only from the Tweets and articles analyzed in this thesis, but also from the contextualizing research that has grounded this study within current understandings of policing inequities and resistance efforts. Overall, the direction of current community and advocacy work factors into all of these recommendations. More specifically, for advocates, allies, and reporters, the trends in Tweets and news articles generate specific paths forward to help promote dialogue more conducive to resistance and change. For

policy makers and academics, the literature review and frameworks in this thesis are more relevant to the recommendations that follow.

Recommendations for Advocates & Allies

The shortcomings in the Tweets that have been discussed stand as the primary basis of these recommendations. Advocates and allies who hope to be a part of generating real change must take a cross-movement approach to policing inequities that is centered around and grounded in action. As has been discussed, leaving race out of the conversation in the way that this study demonstrates creates a real risk of a symptomatic rather than systematic approach to policing inequities. Such an approach both allows for racist outcomes to persist within so-called solutions, and further does not address the real root cause of the issues. Advocates are calling for a cross-movement, intersectional approach to address policing inequities and allies must respond. The conversation about race and policing inequities must be taken up with equal vigor on Twitter as the conversation around Madness. In understanding that Blackness and Indigeneity are hugely overrepresented in state violence, those who are calling only for changes to how police conduct themselves around Mad communities must realize that their demands simultaneously overlook and sanction violence against non-Mad Black and Indigenous people. This changes the conversation from one of human rights to one of Mad rights, and it is this tenor which must be adjusted by those advocating against police violence in order to generate and promote cross-movement understandings of this systemic and pervasive police violence.

Beyond this, the resources that are being shared by activists and allies must be more action oriented and should fall more in line with the general principles of Transformative and Disability Justice frameworks. While these Tweets do well by not perpetuating oppressive norms, there is much left unsaid in the current conversation on Twitter about how to bring about

real change. Afterall, “if powerful technologies of Black oppression date back centuries, so does the Black radical tradition” (Maynard, 2017, p. 230). Calling out these inequities is important, but it is only one form of resistance and if done in isolation can condemn state violence against some while continuing to promote it against others. Advocates and allies can combat this by following, amplifying, and learning from a diversity of leaders advocating in the defund and abolition movements. By doing so, solutions that prevent state violence can be promoted through knowledge generation that recognizes the wholeness and importance of intersectional leadership of those most impacted. This includes following leaders at all intersections of policing inequities and across various movements against inequitable, colonial state violence.

Recommendations for Reporters & Journalists

The hegemonic baseline tone of the articles stands as the primary basis of these recommendations. Police accountability stands as a key point of concern for activists and within Transformative Justice. As discussed, activists called for our attention and action to the urgency of creating police accountability in a landscape where police have the right to kill with near-total impunity. Any narrative building by the media that further removes agency from the police or humanity from those killed only adds to existing power imbalances and limits discussions of accountability in the public forum. Accordingly, reporters must be more attentive to what remains unsaid in their writing, whose voice remains unheard, and who that serves to protect. These trends are engrained into long standing systems of hegemonic world views and so can easily go unquestioned; however, this study makes clear that there are real human risks in allowing such structurally informed patterns to go unchecked.

Fortunately, this study also reveals trends that offer a suggestion to help shift this narrative through correlations between source and story. Despite the role that the SIU is

intended to play in police oversight, both police and SIU source information were more likely to remove agency for killing from police and to criminalize victims than to directly attribute killings to police or humanize the victim. Beyond this, neither of these sources were associated with any criticism against the police for killing civilians. As has been discussed, many advocates do not see the SIU as a reliably impartial source of information, and reporters would do well to balance the conversation. The trends from other sources mark family, friends, and other experts as possible solutions for reporters to seek out for such a balance. The narrative trends associated with information sourced from family and friends showed a complete inverse to the distribution seen in SIU and police described above, where there was more humanization of victims and police were more often directly implicated when they killed. Family, friends and other experts in the community also stand as a reliable source for criticism against police violence, the former two being particularly important to bring personal experiences that humanize the victim, the later to knowledgably contextualize these events within the larger structures and histories. Thus, within these articles, we can quickly see how balancing information sources in these articles could stand as one way for reporters to adjust the baseline reporting styles seen in this research.

Indeed, when looking outside of initial coverage there are also many promising examples of essential and counter-hegemonic Canadian news coverage on policing inequities that support the possibility that coverage could change if these issues were properly addressed. Despite the hegemonic narrative seen in the articles in this report, to promote discussion in the public forum the Canadian Press has stood and must stand as a vital source for discussions around policing inequities. Both iterations of the *Deadly Force*

reports and database stand as just one example of the resistance that can be generated when journalists set out to take on the issue of inequitable policing in Canada. Given this, it seems promising that, with anti-racism and anti-sanism education in schools of media, communications, and journalism, as well as in media institutions themselves, the baseline reporting seen here in initial news coverage could become more attuned to the issues of oppression that underlie policing inequities. Importantly, such training would align with one of the recommendations in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's 94 calls to action. The 89th call to action in this document "call[s] upon Canadian journalism programs and media schools to require education for all students on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations." (p. 10, 2015). Accordingly, we can more responsibly promote inclusive reporting by ensuring that these histories of oppression are understood by those who are in a position to frame the way we report on inequities today.

Recommendations for Policy Makers & the Canadian Government

All parties in all levels of government in Canada must come to accept the reality that policing inequities in this country constitute a public health inequity which can be classified as a social determinant of health. As such, lest the government wish to commit social murder, this inequity must be addressed. To address it, I implore that they make policy, join and promote discussion, but do not make having discussions the only policy. As the Ontario NDP have stated in their recent moratorium on police violence:

> For decades Black, Indigenous and racialized communities have poured their time, experience and hope into government studies, deputations, task forces and reports on addressing systemic racism. We do not need further studies or reviews to tell us that more work must be done. We can and must act now and implement the recommendations made in decades of reports collecting dust in the Premier's office. (2020)

There is no logic in supporting policies and governments that create avenues for leaders to claim that taskforces and knowledge generation are their chosen action while they simultaneously prevent transparent data collection on policing inequities. Recommendations are flowing from impacted communities where advocates have devoted their lives to generating expertise on these issues. The call right now is for solidarity, defunding, divesting and radical reimagining. As policy makers continue to be tied to the capitalist dominance of police that we see promoted through hegemonic policing narratives, change in governmental understanding and handling of police violence is currently altogether too slow and uninformed.

While this change takes hold, oversight and accountability must be increased. We have seen advocates point to the low rates of conviction and potential conflicts of interest in the SIU that actively work to prevent justice and so this system must be heartily dismantled and replaced. Robust and publicly available record keeping within our justice institutions must also be taken up across institutions. Reliable information on the demographics of police violence and killings by police, and detailed, up-to-date information on statistics across arrests and incarceration are essential for tracking progress made in efforts to build equity in our justice systems. Calls for better record keeping are

also a part of settler Canada's overall path to reconciliation with Indigenous people. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action are echoed again in this sentiment, "call[ing] upon federal, provincial, and territorial governments to commit to eliminating the overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in custody over the next decade, and issue detailed annual reports that monitor and evaluate progress in doing so" (2015, p. 3). While there are reports, the information is still far too limited. As has been seen in this study, there is no database that provides information of those killed by police before being taken into police custody, offering one major point of oversight in carceral statistics. Beyond this, while the Office of the Correctional Investigator releases annual reports that create opportunities for accountability, these reports are not sufficient to address the problem. While the most recent report does track disproportionate Indigenous incarceration rates and poor correctional outcomes (Zinger, 2020, p. 20), there is no such proportional data on Black or Mad populations. Beyond that, while this report does acknowledge the "over-involvement of Indigenous offenders in use of force incidents" (p. 21), the report looks towards improving services along the "Indigenous Continuum of Care" (p. 87) which could decrease rates of Indigenous inmates' readmission to custody, the data only represents what happens with those who are already admitted to prisons. To ensure police accountability, we need a national body of data on police interactions and use of force, killings by police, and complaints against police outside of the known statistics within incarcerated realities.

Yet, while radical change may need to start within current systems and could be expected to take time, even the most urgent calls from advocates and community continue to be dismissed. Throughout 2020, calls to defund and divest the police from specific

services have been thunderous and stand as a key example of this. Yet, the 2021 budget for the Toronto police was not decreased and was simply held at the $1.076 billion that had been allocated the year previous. This is a clear example of policy makers refuting the advice of activists and communities across the country. The problems with policing inequities are not caused by growth in police control, as the current power is already unsustainable for Black, Indigenous, and Mad lives. Accordingly, the police institutions must be defunded, not stagnated in their current form.

Recommendations for Researchers & Academics

While this recommendation is not novel it still stands, we must take informed and grounded action—learn, unlearn, act. I acknowledge the self-contradiction in including a quote above saying that no more studies regarding policing inequities are needed in a study that focuses on policing inequities. The fact remains that within academia it is clear that more can be done to support this movement and that researchers must remain oriented towards the kind of radical and essential change that I have outlined in this chapter. In the literature review of this thesis, I discussed both the foundational works in the field that have been essential to bringing light to policing inequities in Canada and narratives in current scholarly work focusing on police perspectives of these three populations, and of these populations on police. A pattern is seen among these articles that suggests more counter-hegemonic views arise in at-risk populations than from the general population or police perspectives. Given this and in light of the statistical reality of policing inequities, there is all the more reason to suggest at-risk communities as a more productive locus for future research collaboration. Further, given the pervasiveness of this issue and the immense need for change, the seventeen articles discovered nonetheless seem too few.

More research is certainly needed to save lives in the face of these policing inequities. Further, as has been demonstrated, if collecting police opinions about this issue, it will be important to situate these findings within dominant ideologies to avoid promoting views that minimize the harmful reality of policing inequities.

The time for radical change in policing practices has long come and researchers must, like reporters, be diligent to check against the hegemony of the understanding they promote. As Natalie Loveless reminds us, "*the crafting of a research question is the crafting of a story that is also the crafting of an ethics*" (2019, p. 24-25). As the longer editorials on these inequities in news coverage help demonstrate, with concentrated attention, there is essential work to be done in this area. Further, researchers should turn their attention to the general lack of data in this area as a potential symptom of this hegemony that must be remedied. In this, I echo Alang et al., that "the fact that best data to date come from newspapers…is humbling" (2017, p. 664). As research around policing inequities expands, if it is to do more than capitalize on the issue and instead be decisively for human rights, it must be situated not only in the right epistemological and ontological frameworks, it must also be coupled with action. This includes generating actionable recommendations but should go beyond into ethically co-creating community action and knowledge mobilization. By orienting research as resistance, the understandings that are gained can be translated into energy for the community most impacted. In this way, I believe that research can be an effective tool for personal learning and unlearning that is reciprocal and emergent in so far as it inextricably oriented towards aligning with and improving conditions for those most impacted.

Postscript: Reflection

It is hard to believe that it has been only a little over a year and now I find myself so decidedly critical of an institution that had always provided me safety. May 25th, 2021 has passed, marking one year since George Floyd was murdered. This year, instead of sitting ignorantly bewildered by calls to abolish police institutions, I now stand as an ally. The thing that I find most bewildering now is how long it took me understand this issue outside of colonial thought. Despite what I know from this research, it is hard to accept the ways that I too consented to this dominant way of living and knowing and how I too was completely taken in by the hegemonic narrative of policing as protection. I wonder why I, as a person who generally sees herself as kind, just, and compassionate, previously explained away policing inequities as non-existent or as something I simply was not in the position to change, and so was not responsible for. With so many ways to contribute, learn, and grow, this barrier now seems flimsy at best.

A lot has happened between the version of myself that was confused and the version of myself that is disgusted. The world in 2020 was on fire. Indeed, it really was as Australia and California both went up in smoke due to out of control wildfires. As the pandemic spread, it isolated and killed too many people, exposing the deeply disturbing inequitable social murder in our society and our governments. So many people were publicly executed by police, with George Floyd's murder exacerbating longstanding racial tensions in the United States and igniting a string of violence that would lead to the white supremacist insurrection that violently descended on capitol hill (Borger, 2021). Meanwhile in Canada, our government showed that it is still a colonial white supremacist machine by ignoring constitutional rights from coast to coast—from allowing the violent persecution of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq despite their right to livelihood; to ignoring the title rights of the Wet'suwet'en by violently taking land and futures with the

GasLink pipelines in British Columbia. In the last two weeks of May 2021 alone, reminders of the nation's living history of colonialism and white supremacy have come to the fore. On May 27th, the discovery of the remains of 215 Indigenous children killed in Canada's horrific residential school system was announced by Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation (Dawson, 2021). Then, only ten days later, a Canadian white supremacist terrorist targeted and struck down a Muslim family in an act of hate, killing four family members across three generations and leaving one child to grapple with the trauma (Riess & Lemos, 2021). Further, throughout this year so many concerned citizens mobilized and came out to resist in protest, only to be ruthlessly dragged across concrete by police who have the training to know better and yet, one could surmise, still just don't care. To speak lightly, this past year has been a real obstacle course for faith in humanity and in maintaining positive mental health.

For me, 2020 was already becoming a hard year when in March, the reality of mental health crises took personal form. I awoke to a phone call that sent me and my partner driving through Toronto back streets and onto the highway at 2am. I very nearly lost someone in my family to suicide that night. Yet, I knew that we were still fortunate, that my world of privilege carried me and my loved one through, nonetheless. I had just started to hear the reality of how calls from people experiencing a mental health crisis—especially those who have been struggling with substance abuse—don't always end so well when the police are called. What I came to better understand through this thesis was that being able to remain safe as a person in a mental health crisis is not a given, but it is a privilege that is more likely to be experienced by those who are white. I also came to understand that by choosing to be ignorant of the injustices of colonial white supremacy, I could also choose to remain relatively safe in my privilege and benefit from

this injustice. It became clear that if I was to act against policing inequities, I had to be willing, at least to some extent, to erode some personal safety in order to address my white privilege.

This process is ongoing and is a part of my larger commitment to resistance; my commitment to ensuring that the shame and guilt of my inaction and complacency in my white settler, middle class, invisible illness privilege do not deter me from doing the work that needs to be done. This process came before, throughout, and will continue after this academic research and scholarly narrative that constitutes a thesis. Yet to pretend that impersonal research, data analysis and writing are enough to achieve justice would be to deny the human side of this process. Such an orderly onslaught of data could also dangerously position this work as a matter of statistics rather than human lives, and me as a "one of the good ones" in the fallacy of white exceptionalism (Saad, 2020, p. 68). Much the opposite, the reality of living in this white-supremist society means that any authentically anti-racist work accomplished in this project had to start within. My fieldnotes remind me of the emotional reality of doing this work. Through them, I see and hope to share the living process that this work has taken me through, a journey that others may need to follow to combat the complacency generated through hegemonic policing narratives. This is a process of divesting, learning, and unlearning – both academically and internally – as a white settler.

Through this research, I have experienced the process of collecting data on heartbreaking discriminatory practices as a white settler who feels relatively safe from police violence. In 2020, the term *doomscrolling* rose in popularity during the COVID-19 pandemic (Watts, 2020). In essence, in order to do this work, I was doomscrolling through the topic of inequitable policing on Twitter and in news articles. The findings were not surprising in white colonial Canada, but the topic is emotionally burdensome, nonetheless. The intolerable patterns in policing practices

and in hegemonic thought and expression around policing have already become frustrating for me, and I have not lived with the tragic personal outcomes of this experience. The patterns uncovered in this work are important, relevant, and must be actioned lest we be complacent in police violence against Mad, Indigenous, and Black peoples. Nonetheless, it is not groundbreaking, and throughout this data has, with remorse and with frustration, been a process of confirmation and not one of discovery. In this work, I have tried to put to the page some of these unsurprising truths. I hope that formalizing these insights will serve as a foundation for more action-oriented work and resistance in my future. At the very least, I have certainly reoriented my life and efforts to ensure that I am in a position to support Black, Indigenous, and Mad communities through the immense healing and transformation that is to come as we continue to work towards dismantling policing inequities.

When I review what has been confirmed in this study and the process that I see reflected in my notes, I feel all the more motivated for change. These articles are hampered by a hegemonic view and the baseline reporting style that has been outlined is absolutely biased towards police sympathies. Further the narrative on Twitter can be dangerously one-dimensional and exposes another area where white supremacy threatens to disembowel the movement against police inequities before it has rightly taken hold. Still, as I examine my fieldnotes, I watch myself move out of hegemonic understandings, to one-dimensional resistance, and into a commitment for intersectional change, and I feel hope for others moving along this process or understanding.

Even within the data, there are instances of resistance to these hegemonic patterns that also generate hope. Despite the commonplace nature of police hegemony, it is still astounding to me that only one news article (Hayes & Seucharan) did the work of positioning these killings

within patterns of inequitable policing, especially given how relevant and mainstream this issue has been in the last year. Of course, it must be acknowledged that this research only looks at reporting in the time immediately following a killing-by-police and so, due to limited information in these early moments, it may be more likely for reporters to be uncritical of the information on the killings that they receive and report, regardless of the potential biases of the information source(s) and regardless of patterns in current events. Still, even in these early days, it is clear that there is an alternative to completely overlooking patterns in inequitable policing in efforts to be objective. Hayes and Seucharan offer an anchor on what reporting could look like if articles on killings by police were contextualized with the reality of inequitable policing patterns. I can't help wondering about these authors who openly spoke to the inequities in police killings. Did it feel commonplace to include information on trends in police killings in an article on a killing by police, or did the authors realize how much their narrative would diverge from the baseline norm? Were there conversations with editors, ramifications, and difficult but just decisions behind this anomaly? I can't help but wonder if this act of resistance was radical or accidental, and wonder how more concrete expectations for journalists beyond hegemonic understandings impact their work. I wonder if these concrete expectations are stopping others from doing the work of contextualizing these killings when writing about them, or if contextualizing these killings could really be as easy as this single article makes it seem.

Further, while the conversation on Twitter is less likely to focus on Blackness or Indigeneity than on Madness in policing inequities, there is nonetheless explicit conversation around racism to be found. The term racism is explicitly used 15 times throughout these Tweets, displaying a critique of this issue that is direct and targeted. These Tweets are specific and speak to systemic racism, anti-Black racism, and racism in Canada. I hope that in identifying the need

to expand dialogue on race now, what stands as an issue in this data could actually be leveraged as part of the solution. This thesis has helped to demonstrate some of the most slippery aspects of hegemonic policing narratives and has spoken to how this way of thinking embeds itself when not critically examined. It is clear in these Tweets that critical examination is happening, though that in many cases, by leaving out race, the criticisms are decidedly not going far enough. Still, if critical examination can remedy this hegemonic view, bringing the conversation into the public forum may be a first step in supporting more fulsome understandings of the issue that are critical of the role that systemic racism plays in these inequities. What seems urgently vital now is that citizens and activists do the work to actively translate these understandings into multi-dimensional, cross-movement solidarity.

This solidarity is so needed as national events continue to demonstrate the multi-institutional nature of the wider colonial hegemony from which hegemonic policing narratives are born. As an example, let us return to the recent discovery of the remains of 215 Indigenous children in unmarked graves on the site of a former residential school in Kamloops, B.C. This issue is one that calls us to examine our governments, our religious institutions, our education systems, indeed our very our identity as Canadians. Canada is seen globally as this great nation of peace, prosperity, and equity, but these young bodies are proof of the fallacy behind this myth. As the conversation on Twitter rails against the myth of *meanwhile in Canada,* so too does this burial site force us to confront the reality of colonial violence. This discovery matters for questions of policing in Canada, as well as questions about statewide violence.

As has been discussed, the RCMP has played a major role in enforcing colonial practice throughout Canada's history. We know that Indigenous families were torn apart by residential schools like the one in Kamloops and we know that it was armed RCMP officers who enforced

this destruction and stole Indigenous children from their families. The RCMP has, for too long, acted as the front line for Canadian injustices against Indigenous individuals. Yet, when I look at the RCMP website, and even at the Kamloops RCMP Twitter account, I see no accountability in the days following the tragic announcement of the remains found. Indeed, there is no comment on the renewed grief that this discovery has torn across our nation. My heart rages as I read one of the most recent news posts on the RCMP website. The post, titled *April 2020 – A Tragedy that Shook the Country,* opens, "[a] year ago, Canada went through one of its darkest moments" (RCMP, 2021). It goes on to describe this "darkest moment" as the tragic mass shooting of 22 civilians by a gunman in Nova Scotia. This is tragic. But I pause at the description as this event one of our darkest moments as a nation. I pause all the more critically at this description as it exists in the silo of silence regarding the discovery in Kamloops. Surely if 22 civilians shot by a gunman is a dark chapter, 215 murdered Indigenous children, representing the crimes committed at only one of 130 schools, and representing only those who met the most tragic end of these crimes, where the RCMP also stole thousands of other children who would become residential school survivors, must be darker.

What's more, we know that residential schools have merely been replaced with other forms of state violence that continue to disproportionately target Indigenous youth. This research helps make clear how a change made for the wrong reasons or through the discretion of the wrong bodies can remain embedded in hegemonic practice and replicate the same harms or simply distribute those harms over different bodies. Thus, along with scrutiny for those implicated directly in the history of residential schools such as the government and the church, we must also follow this history into our social and foster care systems, where these inequities continue to echo as they too echo through current inequitable policing practices.

Still, when I look at my own thesis, I do feel the weight of insignificance and think of the work yet to be done. There is so much left unsaid. So much work that is being done, can be done and must be done. Some of this work I have not spoken to yet. There remains so many levels of injustice and so many groups persecuted by police violence. In particular, I think of sex workers, immigrants, and people without housing, who have not been accounted for in my research. There is also so much conversation taking place beyond these two very restrictive data sets—as there needs to be, creating a widespread, multi-platform mobilization for change. I am committed to carrying on with this learning and carrying forward the insights generated from this analysis. My stance has changed through this process from complacent to combative. I have no interest in going back to a life of comfort and the delusion tuehat I am beyond making change. As this research has shown, there are clear and addressable patterns in the dialogue around policing inequities that limit perspectives, and in so doing, prevent change. We have seen that it is not possible to create intersectional change in inequitable policing practices while remaining firmly rooted in the hegemonic view of policing. Tearing down the boundaries that come with ideas of hegemonic policing and Eurocentric thought is an essential first step to creating a foundation for intersectional, cross-movement improvements to policing inequities. As we tear down these notions, we must look to those who experience the counter-hegemonic norm, as there we will find years of experience-informed-leadership on what to build in their place.

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