

**Disrupting Colonial and Neoliberal Logics: Rethinking Inclusion for
Racialized Youth in Ontario's Youth Work Sector**

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Abstract

Guided by Foucauldian governmentality and critical race theory (CRT), this study undertakes a genealogical analysis of the knowledge frameworks and practices that govern the youth work sector in its efforts to include and support racialized youth. Youth work is often framed through progressive social justice commitments; this study argues that reliance on liberal social justice frameworks and expert scientific knowledges constrain these efforts within enduring settler colonial and neoliberal logics. The genealogy examines key youth policy and strategy texts in Ontario from 1992 to 2019, complemented by interviews with sector actors, to interrogate the systems of power, rationalities, and discourses that organize youth inclusion.

The findings demonstrate that Western liberalism's racialized underpinnings remain obscured yet operative within the youth work sector, authorizing forms of biopolitical governance over racialized youth despite claims of equity and inclusion. Drawing on Stoler's (2011) concept of colonial aphasia, this obfuscation is understood as a dissonant process through which colonial relations of power are displaced and rendered unintelligible through attachments to liberal social justice frameworks. Strategies related to space, public health, managerialism, youth development, and youth participation are shown to reproduce neoliberal subjectivities while simultaneously veiling Canada's ongoing colonial governance. At the same time, the study identifies emergent forms of counter-knowledge and critique that disrupt sanitized narratives of inclusion and gesture toward alternative possibilities.

Dedication

To my late dad, Philip Bernard, who shared his passion for knowledge and stood by me always. To my mother, whose strength remains an inspiration. To my children, Diya and Dhiran, whose kaleidoscope of light, laughter, and lessons continues to shape me, grounding me in love and possibility. To my life partner, Sujeether, whose unwavering support and love have helped me transform this dream into a reality.

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This thesis seeks to tell the histories and counter-stories present within the youth work sector, a space shaped by systemic inequalities and often marked by young people's struggle and pain, but also one where friendships, laughter, imagination, and resistance is fostered. I remain humbled and grateful for the experiences and knowledge that many young people shared with me over the years during my time working in sector; their voices have stayed with me and continue to shape this work in ways that extend beyond these pages. This genealogical mapping would also not have been possible without the trust of the sector members who participated in the interviews. I remain deeply grateful for your openness, vulnerability, and honesty in our dialogues, and I hope, with care and responsibility, that this work has honoured your voices.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Looking Beyond “Benevolent” Colonial Encounters

This research undertakes a Foucauldian genealogical exploration of the dominant knowledge frameworks and practices that govern and organize the youth work sector in its efforts to include and support youth, especially racialized youth. I argue that despite the good intentions of many hard-working individuals within the sector, the sector’s habits of leaning on progressive seeming liberal social justice frameworks and expert scientific knowledges bound its efforts within settler colonial and neoliberal goals. In conducting this research, I worked through the following questions: what systems of power and logic activate racialized youth inclusion within the youth work sector? How are neoliberal and colonial governmental logics informing youth inclusion knowledge and practices? What knowledges about racialized youth, such as the sector’s focus on Black youth, are produced through the youth work sector? How do social justice and inclusionary discourses influence and organize the youth sector? Are adult and youth subjects engaging in critique, such as through counter-conduct and parrhesiastic acts, to challenge the seemingly innocuous practices of racialized youth inclusion?

My research utilizes Foucauldian governmentality framework and critical race theory (CRT) to critique neoliberal and colonial logics within the youth work sector in Ontario. Through its examination of key youth policy and strategy related texts (1992-2019) complemented by interviews with key sector members, it argues that Western liberalism’s racist underpinnings remain concealed within Ontario’s youth work sector and authorize the biopolitical control of racialized youth, despite progressive claims of promoting social justice and inclusion. My research explores how strategies of space, public health, managerialism, youth development, and youth participation potentially contribute to the veiling of Canada’s colonial

governance and the entrenchment of Western neoliberal goals and subjectivities. In addition, the project explores the production of counter-knowledge that attempts to disrupt the sanitized notions of racialized youth inclusion.

Figure 1

Then Prince Charles, now King Charles, Spins the Turntables at Yonge Street Mission's Youth Program in a Visit to Toronto in 2012



Note. From Now to Love, 2012. <https://www.nowtolove.com.au/celebrity/royals/prince-charles-makes-his-debut-as-a-dj-1953/>

One of the research participants recollected the moment of encountering King Charles, then Prince Charles, in their U4Change youth program as part of a showcase of Toronto charitable organizations during his visit to Toronto in 2012. The participant urged me to look up this photo, and it feels like a suitable place to begin this story about capitalism, colonial encounters and racialized youth inclusion in Ontario. The photo op of Prince Charles learning to DJ with racialized young people at a youth program at Yonge Street Mission illustrates an ongoing narrative of the benevolent colonial encounters in Canada, that are actively present within the youth work sector in Ontario with its predominant focus on racialized youth.

The research participant, a racialized member of the youth work sector, a former youth participant in youth programming, shared the financial stress the U4Change program had been under and the hope that this high-profile visit would provide exposure and opportunities for it. Fresh funds did come from this exposure; however, they eventually ran out and the program shuttered soon after. In the interview, we reflected on this moment of excitement to get recognized through the presence of the heir to the UK throne, then future Canadian monarch, to bring light and value to a program in downtown Toronto targeting racialized marginalized youth, many of whom hailed from former colonies. The nature of such encounters involves the showcasing of youth subjectivity in safe and acceptable ways; it validates the work that occurs within youth spaces to gain recognition for various reasons including funding and hides the soft racial violence present in these moments. Violence here is understood through Foucault's (2003) notion of biopolitics, which focuses on the management of bodies and populations through indirect measures that focus on optimizing life, through normalization, surveillance and regulation; biopolitical goals of governing bodies in particular ways can have harmful impacts on all but also uniquely impact racialized and Other marginalized youth. In unpacking the complexities of racialized youth inclusion efforts within youth work in Ontario, I argue that an egregious amount of energy is invested in positioning youth work as being progressive and social justice-focused but shares a complicated history of managing Othered subjects through colonial and Western liberal logics that remain rooted in capitalist relations (Skott-Myhre, 2005; Chapman & Withers, 2019) and contribute to what Stoler (2016) deemed colonial aphasia.

My work is aligned with Brown's (1995) argument that progressive strategies appear to be well-intended but imprudently reinforce exclusionary logics. I unpack how liberalism's logics of equality, freedom, and justice inform the helping professions like youth work; however,

liberalism's logics have a history of positioning Whiteness as superior and Othering Black, Indigenous, and Other racialized subjects (Chapman & Withers, 2019; Mills 2021; Samson, 2020). As critical scholars note, it is important to recognize that helping professions such as social work and youth work are deeply rooted in colonial knowledges (Baldrige, 2020a, Chapman & Withers, 2019; O'Connell, 2010; Razack, 2002). The rise of liberal discourses of human rights and social justice discourses and their adoption within community-based youth work and social work has enabled the promotion of these professions as equitable and inclusive. For example, Chapman and Withers (2019) have argued that social workers tend to position themselves as critical, radical, and champions of the marginalized; unfortunately, such a "self-perception does something to hamper critiques of social work" (p. 26). Such narratives conceal the harms and violence that Indigenous and racialized groups have been subjected to in the name of 'helping' (Margolin, 1997). Kwon (2013) argued that these positive, or as she called it, affirmative, governmentality discourses of social justice, social inclusion, and human rights shroud the ongoing presence of modernist and racial logics present within the youth work sector.

My work strived to unsettle the taken for granted knowledge frameworks, such as inclusion and youth participation; this often left me feeling unsure and uncomfortable as they are key pillars of fields such as child and youth studies and youth work, within which I situate my own work. Macias (2022) urges for such unravelling of the dominant assumptions of our research fields and to "question the foundations of disciplines to which we already precariously belong, and to think, speak and write against the grain of established conventions, practices, politics and conception of ethics" (p.3). Similarly, Bogues (2014) argued for the need for Black intellectuals to challenge dominant knowledge frameworks using a multi-layered approach. I believe his words are relevant for all critical anti-racist intellectuals who seek to disturb the maintenance of

the status quo, especially that of racial and neoliberal rule. Bogue (2014) asserted first, that intellectuals must decode the discursive representations that make up a knowledge framework; second, they must change history by rewriting it; lastly, they must envision “different values for the practice of politics” (p. 175). Each of these layers of critical work are in and of themselves significant undertakings. To showcase the complexities of how these various aspects are also occurring within spaces such as the youth work sector with the various actors present; I sought to unpack the discursive frameworks present within youth work, understand and showcase how these complex and sometimes contradictory discourses come together to activate actions, influence youth and the community. I also wanted to highlight how racialized subjects resist and respond to these by rewriting and countering the discourses that seek to maintain unequal racial order and encourage the settler colonial youth subjectivity.

Situating Myself in this Research

This research was a deeply personal project that came with a sense of responsibility from almost ten years of experience working in youth organizations within marginalized communities in Toronto and also as a racialized youth who grew up in these very same communities. I identify as an immigrant settler of South Asian origin, a framing that I have slowly come to own and understand the implications and responsibilities of during my doctoral journey. I grew up in India till the age of ten, a space still recovering from the wounds of its colonial past but with hopes of carving out its own identity and future. Upon immigrating to Canada and struggling with the challenges of settlement and identity formation, I experienced dissonance between Canada’s multicultural narratives of tolerance and goodness while also experiencing poverty, racism and exclusions in everyday institutions. This feeling of dissonance and the distressing

feeling that there was an occlusion of knowledge at work persisted as I stumbled through my post-secondary education.

I entered community-based youth work in my mid-20s, through the relationships I was fortunate to have built during my master's studies with members of the Tamil community in Toronto. I worked in small to mid-size youth-driven non-profit organizations supporting Tamil youth and other marginalized youth for over seven years in many of the Toronto neighbourhoods I grew up in. My work revolved around non-profit management and community engagement, and as is the nature of the non-profit sector, I wore many hats and worked closely with young people, their families, community members, granting bodies, city and provincial bureaucrats and policy makers. These experiences shaped so many of my ideas around social justice, social change, and youth work and guided my research in an integral way.

The organizations I worked in tried to do things a little differently and strived to share power with young people and centre their voices and decision-making in the governing of the organization. Consequently, my work heavily invested in the promotion of youth engagement and participation discourses within the youth sector. Many key stakeholders saw the organizations I had worked for — the Canadian Tamil Youth Development Centre and For Youth Initiative— as strong examples of youth-led and youth-driven organizations who were able to create safe inviting spaces for many racialized marginalized youths. Numerous scholars have drawn attention to the UN's Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), especially article 12 which focuses on youth voice, as being critical to how young people have become a category to be considered and heard from (Camilleri-Cassar, 2014; Carpenter & Mojab, 2017; Gavrielides, 2014; Wood & Ergler, 2014). The uptake in Canada was rather slow, and it was primarily since the late 2000s that Ontario emphasized youth voice; however, many of my

racialized peers and I in the sector struggled with some of the tokenistic and celebratory practices of racialized youth participation within the youth sector despite all the good intentions that motivated these racial youth encounters. I felt and heard the concerns and criticism voiced by many of the racialized and especially Black youth and sector members about how inclusionary efforts such as programs, committees, forums, meetings etc. made them feel: they shared feelings of being uneasy and used at times and a deep-seated worry and disdain for promoting narrow and unfair expectations of desirability upon youth facing harsh forms of marginalization.

There were significant emotional and physical tolls experienced by racialized sector members who were navigating increased occurrences of racial encounters with historically White institutions within the youth work sector. Badwall (2015) highlights the challenges of racialized workers working within helping professions such as social work and the persistent strain of working within a profession that was designed with whiteness and colonial ideals in mind. Despite efforts to build solidarity to counter and provide alternatives to some of the normative goal driven efforts, I gradually and uneasily came to situate my own role in the youth sector and youth work within the broader settler colonial and neoliberal project and prompted the exploration undertaken here. Through the years of experience and the trust placed in me to have some of the difficult dialogues; I have attempted to share some of the complex positionalities through the dissection and investigation of the knowledges and frameworks influencing youth work efforts in Ontario and Toronto. I have sought to explore how racialized youth and the sector are governed through inclusive seeming rationalities of spatial and public health, asset development, accountability and participation. I do not offer grand conclusions but hope that in sharing this genealogical research on how certain frameworks are activated to govern the sector, the possibilities of doing otherwise can be augmented.

Research Goals: Decolonizing Epistemological Knowledge Within Youth Work

The overarching goal within this dissertation is disturbing the uncritical adoption of liberalism's concepts of social justice and social inclusion that remain rooted in colonial and racial foundations; subsequently, resulting in dissonance within the field of youth work, especially when supporting racialized youth in Ontario. For example, Baldrige (2020a) outlined the challenges associated with the denial of the exclusionary and racist foundations of liberalism that continue to exclude and harm Black youth in arenas such as education. In Ontario, there remains an ongoing moral panic around racialized youth violence, which governmental actors use as the impetus to intervene and regulate young, racialized lives; this is undertaken through the guise of race neutral logics such as spatial and public health governing, managerialism, youth development science, and participation.

I lean on Stoler's (2011) concept of colonial aphasia to unpack the obfuscation of liberalism's underpinnings in spaces such as youth work. Stoler identified the dissonance that occurs in the obscuring of colonial knowledges and the attachment to other concepts that results in colonial aphasia. Stoler outlined the three features of colonial aphasia, that of obstructing knowledge, the inability to speak and name things, and challenges in comprehending what already was expressed. As a member of the youth work sector, I reflect on my own prolonged experiences of colonial aphasia that resulted in confusion and speechlessness, with a persistent sense of abject revulsion to the progressive words spoken and the dire disconnect to the practices implemented in the governing of racialized and Black youth.

Mignolo (2009) argued that decolonial projects need to begin with the decolonizing of epistemological knowledge. As such, my research maps the various strategies employed to address racialized youth and the moral panic raised in relation to racialized youth violence in

Ontario and Toronto. Through this charting, I point to various forms of colonial aphasia (Stoler, 2016) that persist in these discourses and practices. Without unravelling the racist and colonial knowledges upon which youth work is rooted in, the ability to envision alternative subjectivities beyond the settler colonial and neoliberal project remains unviable.

Racialized Youth: Managing the Moral Panic Over the Stranger Within

Many scholars grapple with defining race and racism and there appears to be considerable uncertainty about its definition based on political and theoretical foundations (Macey, 2009). My consideration of race is informed by CRT, post-colonialism, and Foucauldian notions of race, biopolitics, power, and governmentality. This study recognizes race and racialization as a social construction constituted by a dynamic set of political, economic, and cultural relations. Race is understood both as an ideological force that results in the oppression of individual subjects as well as a broader method of ordering society's epistemological and ontological understandings (Goldberg, 2009). Dominant discourses and practices of colonial racial governance such as slavery, biological notions of race, and eugenics became firmly embedded in modern society prior to the 20th century. It is critical to explore notions of whiteness and white supremacy alongside race and racism. White supremacy organizes, orders and limits society's epistemological and ontological understandings (Goldberg, 2002; Weheliye, 2014). It also promotes narratives of white subjects being superior to non-white subjects and suggests non-white subjects as lacking or incomplete in some manner.

While racialized subjects were always present within Canada, the shifts in Canada's Immigration Act (1978) and the explicit removal of the colour-coded system resulted in a surge of settlement of non-White subjects, leading to greater close encounters with non-White strangers within the boundaries of a White colonial national project beyond. Thobani (2007)

argued that the construction of Canadian citizenship was formulated within the knowledges of “western scientific theories of White racial superiority” (p. 75); consequently, non-White citizens were categorized into positions of preferred races and non-preferred races. Goldberg (2008) has argued that those deemed as hailing from outside the desired national borders are considered to pollute the nation. Razack (2002) contends that those from outside the nation are often viewed as deviant, lazy, uncivil, and dangerous and therefore a threat to White nationality and the hardworking settler spirit. The stranger figure is often conceptualized as a subject that is not a wanderer or visitor but one that is within society in a spatial sense but is Othered socially (Ahmed, 2013; Hesse, 1996). This stranger within the nation has been granted permission to be present but is subject to surveillance and scrutiny for their strangeness and relegated to a second-class citizen role (Saberri, 2017). Thus, the stranger figure is translated into what Foucault (2013) deemed a biopolitical threat, as one that threatens the security of the nation. Various groups are often positioned as the stranger and the Other in Canada. For example, Black and Indigenous people in Canada, through the ongoing effects of slavery and the dispossession of Indigenous people from their land, have especially had to bear the weight and consequences of such positioning within the fabric of Canada’s settler colonial project (Morgensen, 2011). As Walcott (2018) shared:

By and large, in both the city and the nation, Black appeals for social justice remain unheard by those in authority, and this is largely due to the continuing ambivalent place of Black peoples in the national imagination. Do we belong or do we not belong? And if we belong, when does the nation begin to acknowledge Black arrivals — recently or going back to before Confederation? To paraphrase W. E. B. Du Bois, Blackness and Black people remain a “problem” in Canada.” (Kindle Location 192)

Walcott refers to Du Bois' (1903 original date/1994) infamous words from his *Souls of Black Folk*, that the problem of the colour-line is the greatest problem of the twentieth century. The Black citizen, from the period of slavery to present, has been painfully subject to various forms of anti-Black racism and exclusions. Maynard (2017) argued that this is a result of the long history of slavery and the continual systematic practice of Othering Blacks in Canada (Maynard, 2017).

I recognize racialized youth to be all those whose identities are subject to marginalization and differentiated treatment because of their race and have deep historical roots in colonialism. This understanding of racialized youth includes Black, Indigenous and other youth of colour such as Latinx, Arab, South Asian or East Asian; however, I do often specify the experiences of Black or Indigenous youth as a separate category to not flatten the specific historical experiences of these groups. As a result of my own work and research experience focused on racialized youth in Toronto, Black youth are specified at times. While Indigenous youth are an integral part of the Toronto and Ontario landscape, youth policy often differentiates this group as being governed under different policies negotiated between Indigenous leaders and the Federal government.

In mainstream discourses, the racialized youth subject is primarily regarded as a dangerous stranger threatening the apparent positive image of tolerant and diverse metropolitan spaces such as Toronto (Arvast, 2016; Saberi, 2017). Some community-driven advocacy efforts highlighted the marginalization of certain groups and helped gain support for various racialized youth on the policy agenda. However, the way these efforts get taken up and re-formed to meet neoliberal settler goals is of importance to this research.

The need to effectively govern the problem of youth who exist outside the acceptable boundaries has often been at the forefront of the Ontario provincial agenda. The need to control

and contain the spread of racial youth violence to the broader society is of paramount interest to neoliberal and settler governmental order. To support these goals, youth work is responsabilized to manage this problem through inclusionary means, alongside disciplinary mechanisms undertaken by the policing mechanisms. My work emphasizes that it is the general public's fears of youth violence rather than the actual threat to their safety that is identified as a recursive social problem. It is assuaging this fear that is of critical concern, rather than addressing the threat itself; subsequently, youth work is activated to manage the fears of the stranger within.

Forms of statistical knowledge circulate in the youth sector and inform the inclusionary and disciplinary measures undertaken to manage the population of racialized youth. For example, graduation rates, suspension rates, crime rates, homelessness etc. are shared in disaggregated form and specified along racial lines; subsequently, creating the narrative of specific groups being problematic to society. While these stats are circulated by official institutions as well as community members to bring attention to the institutions that generate such disparities, the gaze and responsibility is often placed back on the youth within Ontario.

There is then often a surge of documents and mechanisms that are subsequently activated after periods of violence that involved Black and other racialized youth. The *Ontario's Race Relations Report* (1992), City of Toronto's *Community Safety Strategy* (2004), Ontario's *Roots of Youth Violence* report (*Roots*) (McMurtry & Curling, 2008), *Ontario's Youth Action Plan* (2012), *Toronto Youth Equity Strategy* (2015) (Refer to Appendix A). The onset of many of the reports that were published in Ontario over the last 30 years on youth issues point to this threat of youth violence being intrinsically linked to the degradation of society and generating moral panic.

Youth Studies and Youth Policy: Shifting Conceptualizations of Youth

This study intends to contribute to the field of critical youth studies and works to complicate notions of racialized youth and strives to question and broaden the ways in which youth are understood within areas such as youth work. The earlier field of youth studies (YS) broadened the understanding to consider youth as a socially constructed concept that goes beyond being age-based or stage-based and frames it generally as an understanding of semi-dependencies, which differs based on the conditions and experiences present in various societies (Woodman, 2012). The post-war period of the 1950s and 1960s primarily saw the expansion of the category of youth in the West. Definitions used by scholars also vary depending on the theoretical framework they embrace, whether functionalism, structuralism, or post-structuralism (Furlong, 2013). The category of youth includes age ranges that begin with the late teens and end at 25 or even 35 in some cases (Ritchie, 2017). In Ontario, youth are defined as individuals aged 12 to 24, whereas federally the age of youth varies depending on programs and ministries. In line with several youth studies scholars (Côté & Allahar, 2005; Finn et al., 2010; Tyyskä & Côté, 2015), I understand youth as a social construction that includes heterogeneous experiences over time and space and is influenced by shifting socio-cultural and global politico-economic realities.

According to Furlong (2013), there has traditionally been a close relationship between youth policymaking and youth research and knowledge production in various parts of the world. Policy needs often dictated the forms of research conducted on youth issues. Subsequently, the growing interest in youth has resulted in the intensification of research, policy, and programming related to youth over the last two decades. Sukarieh and Tannock (2008) stated that around the turn of the 21st century, “youth have become, for the first time, a primary centre of concern for international development organizations: the often marginal social and economic conditions they

have long faced worldwide are suddenly a topic of the utmost urgency” (p. 302). Sukarieh & Tannock (2008) have pointed to the World Bank’s sudden interest in youth, especially young people’s entry into the workforce. This international eagerness to focus on youth, motivated by both neoliberal and human rights knowledges, has trickled down to national and local levels since the late 2000s and has functioned as a catalyst for a greater focus on youth.

There has been a dearth of Canadian youth studies research in comparison to other developed nations such as the US and UK, largely due to the historically weak interest in Canada in youth policymaking. This lack of interest was particularly evident at a national level as the youth portfolio has historically been relegated to junior ministers (Côté and Allahar, 2005). Consequently, the governance of youth has traditionally been the focus of the provinces and municipalities. However, there is greater interest in youth and youth policy making over the last twenty years at various layers of Canadian policy making. Wilson (2009) noted that the attention paid to youth in the mid- to late-2000s in the Ontario legislature almost doubled from the 80s; “youth” was mentioned 414 times in the mid- to late-2000s in the provincial legislature versus 239 times in the mid- to late-80s, highlighting the increased attention youth as a category has garnered in the last two decades.

Policymakers and mainstream society attention towards youth continues to frame the period of youth as a tumultuous transitional period of life before adulthood and associates it with age-based stages of development and is dominated by the psychological study of childhood and youth (Chen et al, 2017; McNamee, 2016). The challenge that arises with this perspective is that understanding and knowledge about young people’s lives is focused on the individual and not the socio-cultural context in which they live. This has been increasingly the case with the rise

of a risk-based society, with young people perceived to be elevated risk in a way that requires considerable control and regulation (Côté & Allahar, 2005).

These conflicting perspectives lead to viewing youth simultaneously as hopeful subjects and as deviant (Giroux, 2012). This has been exacerbated within our current neoliberal context: young people are treated as either commodities or consumers within the global market economy and if they are not able to comply with the rules of conduct, they are subjected to harsh disciplinary measures such as the youth crime-control complex (Giroux, 2012). Efforts to criminalize youth have increased and disproportionately affected those who are poor and from non-White backgrounds, especially Black youth (Rankin, 2010). Scholars have brought attention to these racist practices in various institutions and their effects on marginalized youth (Alexander, 2010; Maynard, 2017; Ward, 2012; Baldridge, 2014).

We have also witnessed a simultaneous increase in efforts to integrate young people into the neoliberal capitalist economy through more progressive inclusionary measures framed around discourses of social and racial justice. Scholars such as Dhillon (2017), Kwon (2013), Kennelly (2011) bring attention to the ways a range of interconnected sets of discourses of youth voice, civic engagement, empowerment, and participation interact to invite marginalized youth to the white neoliberal project. While keeping in mind the exclusionary forms of governing youth, this study focuses on the inclusionary efforts of governing youth using an anti-racist and Foucauldian framework of colonial and neoliberal governmentality.

The Function of Youth Work and Racialized Youth

The development of youth work in the west began in the Victorian era with the promotion of youth clubs and leisure activities for upper- and middle-class youth (France & Wiles, 1997). However, with the rise of the industrial age the shifts in population to city centres

required the successful inculcation of the industrial working-class youth into middle-class values. Subsequently, there was an institutional uptake in the field of youth work in the 1950s which was framed within the discourse of social inclusion. Social inclusion has come to be the primary means of understanding social justice among those on the centre-left of the political spectrum. Kelly (2006) noted that the social inclusion discourse arose from French political thought as a form of integrating workers into the workforce, and a growing number of young people who were facing exclusions from the workforce.

The rise of youth work after WWII focused on reintegrating young people into the social fabric to ensure smooth transitions to adulthood. Frances and Wiles (1997) noted that the understanding of “inclusion for the young was conditional upon fulfilling obligations, such as undertaking paid work, and accepting the norms and values of the nation state” (p. 62). This intrinsic connection of inclusion to work and citizenship remains a central tenet of youth work in its current form. Inclusion was and is understood as the adoption of the capitalist consumer subject, the primary goal of youth work efforts. Nonetheless, youth inclusion never garnered sufficient interest among political actors and was subject to failure in various places across the globe (Astley, 1987 as cited in France & Wiles, 1997). Consequently, youth work’s focus on relationships and other non-quantifiable modes of supporting young people has been relegated as superfluous service provision and has not warranted the same validity as other service professions (Skott-Myhre, 2005). However, as the interest in youth has ballooned over the last two decades, there is a gradual rise in youth work as a sector to support in the inclusion and governing of youth.

The youth work services sector in Ontario consists of diverse players that can be found within public institutions that manage education, youth justice, child welfare; it also consists of

youth-serving non-profits that engage in what is primarily known as youth work. For example, in Toronto, this includes large longstanding organizations (e.g., Boys and Girls Club, YMCA, YWCA); mid-size community-based youth organizations (CBYOs) (e.g., Youthlink, East Metro Youth Services), and smaller CBYOs that include racialized and ethno-specific groups (e.g., For Youth Initiative, Success Beyond Limits, Canadian Tamil Youth Development Centre; Careers Education Empowerment: Centre for Young Black Professionals; Somali Youth Association of Toronto; and Young Diplomats who support Eritrean and Ethiopian Canadian Youth). My research explores the various aspects of this complex sector, including governmental institutions such as the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS), the City of Toronto, and key funders such as the United Way of Greater Toronto (UWGT), and their role in the management of youth work. There are many well-intentioned youth workers and organizations striving daily to improve the lives of marginalized youth within their communities; having worked in this setting I acknowledge the critical lens, ethics, and dedication many bring to their work. I recognize that the work of supporting marginalized young people experiencing systemic barriers and crisis is deeply emotional and often personal. This research does not discount those efforts but believes that ongoing critical examinations on the frameworks and discourses that underpin this ongoing work is important and subsequent self-reflexivity on the efforts undertaken in practice is vital for critical youth worker practitioners.

Research Design

Operating within a governmentality framework, this project employs a genealogical approach and engages in a Foucauldian discourse analysis (FDA) of key racialized youth-focused documents from 1992–2019, including policy and strategy documents at various levels of government. The study also included fourteen semi-structured interviews with key sector

members, many of whom are racialized and played key roles in the organization of the sector over the last two decades. As a great deal of the settler gaze in youth policy is often focused on racialized youth, and especially Black youth, the voices and perspectives of Black sector members as well as other racialized members were vital to this research. I remain grateful for the trust placed in me by the sector members to have these dialogues and share these ideas through these research interviews.

The focus of this research remains on the policy frameworks and the practices of the youth work sector. I do not speak on the experiences of various communities but rather bring attention to how the dominant knowledges and discourses utilized in the sector continue to Other racialized youth and exclude them despite efforts that appear scientifically rooted and benevolent. Indigenous youth remain Othered in critical ways and subject to exclusions from their basic rights in Canada, and while references to settler colonialism's ongoing impact on Indigenous communities is discussed within certain chapters, due to the confines of this research, this dissertation cannot focus on the unique positionings of Indigenous youth within the youth sector discourses (see Dhillon, 2017; DeFinney et al, 2011; MacKenzie, 2020; Spencer & Sinclair, 2017). Some of the discussion focuses on the effects of these policies on individuals and communities, based on the input provided by the interviewees, and sheds light on the ways racialized subjects function within these systems and struggle and bravely act to tell new stories and offer new ways of being.

It is important to tell the story of counter-discourses and efforts made by the racialized sector workers who occupy a position of double consciousness and struggle to navigate and respond to these dominant discourses. I wanted to tell the story of how many racialized sector members experience personal turmoil and undertake great risks to respond and work towards a

different freedom within the confines of these systems. In addition, my research highlights how racialized community and sector members' own counter-discourses are critical to the direction and work that happens within the sector, although they remain vulnerable to co-option.

Therefore, the story of this research ends with a sharing of how racialized youth sector members continuously struggle but also engage in acts of counter-conduct to subvert and develop new ways of supporting racialized youth. I explore the concepts of counter-conduct and parrhesia as tactics used by racialized subjects and critical anti-racists within the sector to nurture alternative knowledges of youth and youth social justice. The theoretical tools I employed and empirical investigations I conducted can help strengthen the scholarship of youth work and racialized youth inclusion in Canada and beyond.

Organization of the Thesis

The study is situated within various fields of literature such as critical youth studies and critical youth work, which are explored in Chapter 2, which also shares some of the theoretical literature that this thesis is in conversation with and furthers. Chapter 3 defines and unpacks the theoretical concepts used in this study and outlines the methodological considerations of genealogy and my positionality as a researcher. The chapters that then follow share the data gleaned from my research process and demonstrate the operation of colonial aphasia in key youth sector policies and its relationship to events, knowledges, discourses, and practices. Chapter 4 provides the overall mapping of the overarching events, especially that of youth violence being a key catalyst, and the discursive shifts in the youth sector and the persistence of colonial aphasia through various time periods. The colonial aphasiastic function of spatial and public health discourses in organizing the youth work sector is examined in Chapter 5. The dominance of scientific evidence-based models such as youth development and its relationship to

managerialism is dissected in Chapter 6. The function of participation discourses and forms of counter-conduct are the basis of Chapter 7's exploration that unravels the complex and painful process of belonging within institutional spaces, envisioning counter knowledge, and acting otherwise to support youth.

Through the genealogical retelling of the story of racialized youth inclusion in the Ontario youth sector, this project intends to provide alternative narratives of youth, social justice, and inclusion. I did not aim for finality or closure in the understanding of youth inclusion and the governing of racial subjects but rather remain open to perpetual discomfort, to be ethical and open to new ways of understanding. I also hope that in exploring counter-conduct and parrhesia within critical youth studies, the research can be beneficial for engaging in ethical responsibility as critical practitioners and academics; and further, that the genealogical investigation and attention to counter-knowledge production creates opportunities for new relations where insurrectionary and local knowledges can be ignited and made knowable again (Foucault, 2003; Janzen, et al., 2015).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This study contributes to research on racialized youth inclusion in the youth work sector and includes discussions on youth policy. It remains an area that is under-researched, especially in Canada, and requires greater focus, particularly given the heightened attention from all layers of government on youth, youth policy and youth work over the last decade. I situate this research within the academic field of critical youth studies (CYS).¹ The broader field of childhood and youth studies remains relevant to my own work. I recognize the value of the sociological perspectives found within childhood and youth studies, especially the contributions of the new social paradigm, as being especially valuable in troubling the dominant social construction of childhood and youth (McNamee, 2016). Scholars such as Tyyskä & Côté (2015) also situate childhood and youth studies research as being primarily rooted in Eurocentric frameworks and require explorations from other epistemological perspectives. CYS research leans on various critical theoretical frameworks, such as feminist, critical race, Foucauldian, queer, disability and sanism and others. Utilizing these frameworks, it attempts to focus on youth social inequalities, structures of power, knowledge and the conduct of youth (Kelly & Kamp, 2014), which is a major focus of my research. My study's use of a Foucauldian governmental approach aligns with the principles of CYS (Kelly & Kamp, 2014) that asks us to question the foundations of what we consider to be youth studies and the institutions that concern themselves with youth such as youth work.

¹ I recognize that childhood and youth studies is often abbreviated as CYS as well. I try to maintain a distinction here between the broader childhood and youth studies and critical youth studies. Therefore, I utilize CYS to mean critical youth studies.

Overview

The interdisciplinary field of CYS is a relatively recent field of study that branches out from the interdisciplinary field of youth studies (YS). CYS seeks to respond to the pressing concerns that surround young people in the 21st century and asks different questions on youth research and invites a range of critical theoretical and empirical tools to the dialogue (Kelly & Kamp, 2014). To understand CYS's contributions and focus, I briefly discuss the YS literature and the response of CYS scholars to YS research. YS literature is extensive and ranges in topics, theoretical foundations, and purpose. I begin by examining the YS and CYS literature and the topics of youth inclusion, youth work, and youth policy in relation to racialized youth. I am not attempting to undertake an extensive review of the numerous key areas in YS such as crime, sexuality, education, employment, identity, family, citizenship, culture, etc., although some of these topics, such as youth criminalization and education, are touched upon as part of my broader discussion. The discussion focuses on the need for greater theorization of critical youth work and suggests ways in which explorations of racial liberalism, settler colonialism, and Foucauldian explorations of power would be useful additions to this dialogue. This is followed by a discussion of Canadian YS and CYS and the situation of my own research within the existing body of work on racialized youth inclusion and youth work and social policy.

Due to the interdisciplinary nature of YS and its offshoot, CYS, the banner under which a particular researcher or research falls is often unclear. Many scholars have found themselves transitioning from an understanding of YS to more of a CYS perspective as they use new theoretical tools that ask different questions about the category of youth. I do not attempt to decipher where the boundary between the two is or where any study can be situated. Rather, I engage in a discussion about the questions that have been posed over time in research on youth. I

then examine how the more recent CYS approach poses a different set of questions about youth than YS did, which provokes a different kind of research on youth in the 21st century (Kelly and Kamp, 2014).

My overview of the literature includes material from around the globe but primarily engages with European and North American scholarship. YS and CYS has grown over the last ten years in Canada, and I have attempted to include scholarship of Canadian contexts where possible but mostly engage in a broader discussion. In the literature review, I excluded YS research that focused on biological and psychological models of youth development. However, the influence of these studies is discussed and critiqued broadly, for they remain an influential part in the understandings of youth.

Youth Studies: Interdisciplinary Influences

The field of YS has deep roots in psychological and sociological research of youth; over the decades, it has also been influenced by tenets of functionalism, structuralism, and post-structuralism (Furlong, 2013). Talburt & Lesko (2014) pointed to three critical historical moments that influenced youth discourses and research: firstly, the mental and physical hygiene programs of the 19th century that focused on governing youth, especially their sexual behaviour; secondly, the growth of psychological and sociological studies of youth in the 1950s and 1960s that highlighted their deviance from adult normative behaviour; lastly, the influence of cultural studies that focused on youth subculture as resistance. Along with these influences, changes in child labour laws in the early 19th century and the post-WWII boom in the 1950s gave rise to the category of the youth consumer (France & Wiles, 1997; Sukarieh & Tannock, 2015). Young people were increasingly governed through institutions such as family, school, social work, and

youth work in the 1940s and 1950s (France & Wiles, 1997; Kennelly, 2011; Talburt & Lesko, 2012; Tyyskä, 2013).

Over the decades, YS research has increasingly addressed the policy needs of governing this category of youth (Furlong, 2013). The work of psychologist Stanley Hall has been credited with describing adolescence as a period of storm and stress (Cieslik & Simpson, 2013). Such theories of stages of psychological development became increasingly popular and marketable in mainstream media (Finn et al., 2010; Talburt & Lesko, 2014). This theory led to the belief that young people cannot be held responsible for some of their impulsive and non-conforming behaviour and therefore required greater regulation (Tyyskä, 2001). Consequently, the need for regulation resulted in policy frameworks that control and correct youth behaviour to fit preferred societal norms. On the other hand, Côté & Allahar (2005) argue that the biological rationale has also let policymakers off the hook as they felt all they had to do was wait for the period of instability to pass. This perhaps can be witnessed in Ontario's focus on early years policy and program development, with little focus on youth policy, at least up until 2012. This research also questions why youth have been brought into focus over the last decade and what are the goals of such heightened attention.

During the 1980s and 1990s a Marxist political economy perspective flourished and formed the initial basis of a critical examination in YS research. Its focus on social justice and material inequality continue to influence my research. As an example, Canadian scholars Côté and Allahar (2005) highlighted the influence of the storm and stress discourse that extends the age of dependence of young people, incorporating a greater focus on education and the need for youth to have time to explore their identities. They argue that this age of dependence weakens young people's importance in society, as they are kept from the full wage-earning capacity of

adults. While these concerns are valid and important, such research remain couched within the transition of a youth-to-adult knowledge production system (Talbert & Lesko, 2014). CYS scholars who are informed by post-structural theories contest the limitations and challenges of the transition discourse in the understanding of youth.

The cultural shift in the field of YS, spearheaded by scholars such as Hall & Jefferson (2006), allowed for the shift from a purely psychological understanding of youth development to one that saw young people as active agents in shaping their own cultures. Due to this shift in focus in cultural studies, there is a significant body of research on youth subculture that frames it as resistance to dominant forms of adult cultures (Hirji, 2010; O'Brien, 2013; Simpson, 2011). Minority youth's, especially diasporic and racialized youth's, entanglement with cultural identity formation has traction in YS, especially considering increasing migration brought on by globalization (Dlamini et al, 2015; Hirji, 2010).

For example, Hirji (2010) explored how South Asian Canadian youth engaged with popular culture narratives present in Bollywood and mainstream Canadian culture. She argued that messy interactions create hybrid forms of belonging and open spaces of opposition to the narrow identities imposed on diasporic youth. The focus on subcultures and cultural entanglements of youth offers alternative perspectives on young people's subject formation. However, culturally focused studies are critiqued by CYS scholars for having a weaker focus on the structural challenges that surround young people, such as gender, class, race, and sexuality (Ibrahim, 2014). In addition, a celebration of youth subculture as resistance tends to further demarcate the boundaries between youth and adult behaviour, spaces, and culture.

The fact that youth research is being conducted within the parameters of youth-to-adulthood or from a youth subculture perspective requires further dialogue on the foundations of

youth as a category. It is potentially influenced by taken-for-granted frameworks of youth development and youth policy needs and does not always address the complexities faced by this population (Talbert & Lesko, 2015). A complex and intersectional research framework that includes culture, class, race, and youth development is required. CYS is a prime space to take up these challenges around youth development, youth social justice, and youth subjectivity.

The Value of Critical Youth Studies

Critical youth scholars, informed by post-structural theories, have come together in recent years to investigate and respond to the existing knowledge production around youth found in YS. Similar to YS, CYS is interdisciplinary, incorporating sociology, political economy, youth work, and education. Post-structuralist and Foucauldian branches of CYS push the examination of youth beyond the youth/adult binary with its narrow concern for successful youth transitions. Instead, they question the broader epistemological foundations of youth, youth policy, and YS's knowledge production (Ibrahim, 2014; Tilleczek, 2014). The complex dialogues around CYS can be found in Kelly and Kamp's edited book *Critical Youth Studies for the 21st Century* (2015). The studies included in this volume are self-reflective of YS's trajectory and the challenges that underline the forms of the knowledge that has been produced on youth for more than half a century. CYS scholars' work to unsettle the narrow, taken-for-granted knowledges to create more flexible understandings of youth subjectivities and their challenges in our current society.

Understanding Youth as a Product of Power

Understandings of the intersectional forms of power is not as evident in YS literature (Kelly & Kamp, 2015; Ibrahim, 2014), while CYS understands youth as a social construction produced by complex knowledge systems developed over time and space. In addition, the

conduct of youth is understood as being governed by numerous institutions, such as the family, school, the economy, the judiciary and needs to be comprehended across class, gender, culture, race, and sexuality (Giroux, 2012; Lesko & Talburt, 2015). CYS scholars tend to point to the competing and contradictory discourses that influence the management of youth subjects, such as globalization, statistical knowledge, neoliberal values of responsabilization, criminalization, and pathologization (Finn et al., 2010; Giroux, 2012; Muncie, 2005). The influence of these competing and contradictory discourses is evident in a wide range of areas such as youth participation, education, justice, and social work (Muncie, 2005; Van de Walle et al, 2011; Dhillon, 2017; Kennelly, 2011). My research seeks to unsettle the various knowledge frameworks that inform current discourses of youth inclusion, while simultaneously engaging in new and ongoing exclusions.

To examine the contradictory and overlapping discourses such as those of mobilization and marginalization, an intersectional and historical perspective is insisted on by CYS scholars. In doing so, a CYS approach moves away from some of the oversimplification of YS (Ibrahim, 2014; Kelly & Kamp, 2015). Some scholars consider YS as being trapped in the present, promoting discourses of youth without looking back into history (Goodwin & O'Connor, 2015; Lesko & Talburt, 2014). CYS scholars urge for greater self-reflection and historicization of youth as a concept, their ontological experiences, as well as YS as a field to create a more critical understanding.

For example, CYS challenges the narrative of the golden years of youth transitions in the 1950s and 60s when school-to-work transitions were assumed to have been simpler than they are in the present. Goodwin and O'Connor (2015) interrogated the assumption that the pre-1980 experiences of youth were simpler when contrasted to the woes of young people within the dark

ages of our neoliberal present. The hopeful, successful youth subject is often associated with normative White youth (Kennelly, 2011). Employing a historical and intersectional approach, they examined the complex transitions experienced by diverse types of youth in the past and questioned the belief held in YS of a simpler time.

Disturbing idealized historical narratives and taking an intersectional approach can help highlight the experiences of marginalized youth. For example, the transitions experienced by racialized youth in the 1950s and 60s in the segregated US or European colonial empires cannot be deemed as simple transitions. CYS's interest in historicizing YS research needs to also focus on various forms of oppression and the knowledge produced about Othered youth over time and space. For instance, traditional psychological transitions research, which focused especially on successful individual transitions to adulthood, contributed to racialized youth subjects, especially Black boys, being framed in negative ways, such as being labelled lazy, delinquent, dangerous, and underachieving (Baldrige, 2014; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002; James, 2011). There are also other intersections such as class, gender, sanism, and disability onto which negative discursive representations are projected.

The significant focus on individual transitions, along with historical and intersectional blind spots in YS research, has influenced mainstream society's classification of racialized and other marginalized youth as inadequate or unproductive due to their own choices and inabilities. CYS attempts to dislodge such blind spots and engage in research that re-examines past notions of youth. For example, scholar such as Adams-Wiggins & Taylor- García (2020) argue for a decolonial approach within child developmental studies and points out that it has historically taken the white universal man as its ideal in the child-adult trajectory. Historicizing dominant knowledges and acknowledging the complex notions of power and discourse using critical

theoretical tools, builds an understanding of the distinct ways youth conduct has been governed in the past and present and the ongoing dynamic nature of youth (Lesko & Talburt, 2015).

Youth Work Literature

Youth work literature offers critique of existing policies, practices, and offers strategies to strengthen the support of young people (Cooper, 2012; Coussée et al., 2009). My focus is on critical youth work literature and praxis, which does place value in supporting youth but also lays bare the relations of power and asks for critical inspection between policy discourses and practice (Davies, 2012; Lavie-Ajai & Krumer-Nevo, 2013). Youth work has been caught amid contradictions of support for social change and conformity, individual emphasis and collective concerns (Davies & Taylor, 2019). Research concerns also explore the function of the youth workers and the state of the profession amid varied economic and theoretical frameworks rapidly influencing the field.

Critical youth work scholars point that youth work often supports the fixing of potentially deviant youth to generate productive citizens and tend to align with neoliberal and settler colonial goals (Dhillon, 2017; Ahmed & Carpenter, 2017; Skott-Myhre, 2005). Youth work practice and literature remains influenced by scientific and biological knowledge of the category of youth. Sociological influences that emphasize youth as agentic beings over the past ten years, has allowed for more strengths and asset-based understanding of youth in youth work (Quinn, 2012). There remains tensions between the psychological development focused and sociological understandings of youth in youth work; this influences youth work practices, resulting in the need to control and transition the immature and deviant youth into an orderly adult subject and allow for youth to have voice and be active agents of their lives. Quinn (2012) asks for more clarity in youth work's understanding of youth and how it plays out in practice. I agree with

scholars like Fusco (2012), who urge for the unpacking of concepts underpinning youth work to further the field as an academic discipline.

Critical youth work literature from various countries is also greatly concerned with the neoliberal focus on individualization, responsabilization, efficiency, professionalization, accountability, and measurement (Cooper, 2012; Fusco, 2013; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002; Skott-Myhre, 2005). Scholars also point to the dramatic effects of the shift from social welfare policies to neoliberal managerialism within youth work (Bowler, 2013; Jeffs & Smith, 2010). New neoliberal tools and practices such as risk assessment, performance measures, and the gathering of population-level data have been ushered in to buttress evidence-based decision-making that supports cost-effectiveness within youth work (de St Croix, 2018). These changes have had a significant impact on how youth subjects are governed within institutions serving youth. There has been a greater emphasis on youth outcomes and tracking goals with less focus on the critical consciousness development of youth.

Furthermore, while positive youth relationships are being promoted, the simultaneous decrease of funding for youth work has resulted in pandering to funders by propping up an intrinsically deficit-based framework of youth. Jeffs and Smith (2010) sharply criticized youth work for being Janus-faced: young people are portrayed to funders as deviant and criminal while simultaneously the language of empowerment, voice, and addressing social change is promulgated to youth. Consequently, youth work has engaged in a kind of symbolic violence, as defined by Bourdieu, in its legitimization of the oppressive conditions of society and facilitation of marginalized youth's conformity to dominant frameworks (Cooper, 2012). Further research is required to highlight this challenge and disturb discourses of youth work's positive impacts, especially in relation to racialized youth within a Canadian context.

There is also considerable contention and dialogue on the issue of professionalizing youth work. The struggle to gain legitimacy for youth work at the cost of potentially losing youth work's flexibility and individualistic approach in working with youth is a deep concern to its researchers and practitioners (Fusco, 2013). Davies (2016) argues that the professional turn in youth work is not as reflective of the deep relationships that are built between youth worker and youth but rather more embodies community and differs from the more transactional relationships of client and professional found in other settings.

Theorizing Power Within Critical Youth Work Studies

Some of the critical youth work literature laments the loss of the radical potential of youth work and the influence of neoliberal policies in the erasure of its criticality (Cooper, 2012; Skott-Myhre, 2005; Thomas, 2007). These scholars have pointed to the shift from anti-racism activities to more social cohesion forms of youth work. They attribute some of these changes to the increasingly professionalized version of youth work that features individual case management, which encourages self-surveillance, empowerment, engagement, and social cohesion. Youth work practice is often supported by state-funded institutions, which brings into question whether these institutional non-profit and charitable organizations, such as child and youth welfare residential programs, ever worked from a radical approach. I find it difficult to believe this could have ever been a widespread practice, especially given many of the helping professions' roots in Christian charitable work and the strong welfare state management of youth work. I believe that there exists a degree of nostalgia among youth workers for the welfare state and its practices in the context of the current neoliberal state. Future critical youth work research could benefit from a greater historicization of its discourses and practices.

I believe there also needs to be an investigation of the diverse forms of youth work. The claim that critical or radical youth work has been lost makes me speculate that perhaps the types or categories of youth work have been conflated. For example, there is a need to delineate between the youth work practices of youth welfare agencies, large organizations such as the YMCA, and smaller community groups and grassroots youth groups. I believe that the notion of radical youth work may relate more to some of the work performed in the smaller grassroots community driven efforts and initiatives. However, the literature appears to speak more broadly about youth work in general as having a radical past.² I believe there is value in works that highlight these differences and engage in a nuanced ethnographic study of forms of youth work and the types of youth served.

Van de Walle (2011) examined the different types of youth services within the Dutch youth work sector. He pointed to politicized social youth movements primarily consisting of middle-class White youth, while the professional state-funded youth social work provided individualized interventions to disadvantaged youth. He argued that middle-class, progressive-minded youth fail to include marginalized youth and either speak for them or fail to address their challenges. On the other hand, subjects experiencing marginalization who would benefit from critical consciousness-building and political action are limited to services because they focus on case work and capacity-building. Cruikshank (1999) has pointed out that poor people are governed through similar methods such as parenting classes and employment training. Similarly, marginalized bodies are managed through self-improvement programs rather than given tools to

² However, even the smaller groups have been increasingly brought into the public funding and non-profit managerial streams, resulting in the dwindling of their potential for radical youth work.

address inequality. Developing a nuanced understanding of who is being served, how, and by whom can highlight significant concerns for critical youth work theory and practice.

Critical youth work scholars argue that youth workers who subscribe to critical youth work principles are often caught amid the pressures of the institutions. They perform their prescribed roles often as reluctant actors within neoliberal governmental practices (Finn et al., 2010; France, 1997; Krueger, 2005; Skott-Myhre, 2005). Many youth workers have been influenced by the discourses of radical youth work and harbour a naïve radicalism that hankers for broad systemic change in how young people are supported. However, they feel trapped within the institutional borders as they often have not afforded the time to decipher the complex workings of power that they are entangled in (Bamber & Murphy, 1999; Finn et al., 2010). The contradictory and overlapping inclusionary/exclusionary discourses are not as clear when embroiled in the messiness of everyday youth work practice. Therefore, there is a need to bridge the personal and the political and foster critical consciousness and solidarity among youth workers (Bamber & Murphy, 1999; Finn et al., 2010).

However, scholars have suggested that critical youth work practice is weakly theorized and further work is needed (Bamber & Murphy, 1999; Lavie-Ajayi & Krumer-Nevo, 2013). More recently, scholars such as de St Croix (2018) have brought attention to the ways in which discourses of accountability, evaluation, and measurement have overpowered the youth work sector, resulting in investments in time and effort being redirected from supporting youth in meaningful ways. Other work such as MacKenzie's (2020) examination of youth care pedagogy calls into question the underlying assumptions of youth care and situates it within settler colonial notions of care and the promotion of a White ideal child and youth.

Disturbing such power relations from a CRT perspective and/or a Foucauldian governmentality lens would be valuable to critical youth work studies. Scholars such as Baldrige (2019), Voronka (2013), Aubrecht (2010) and Barnhart (2018) have engaged in such forms of theoretical exploration of youth work. Baldrige (2019) utilized a CRT approach to highlight the ways Black youth are subject to the very same exclusionary mechanisms within leisure and community-based youth work as they experience in spaces such as education. Voronka's (2013) and Aubrecht's (2010) works highlighted the manner in which youth policy and documents such as the *Roots of Youth Violence Report* (McMurtry & Curling, 2008) that focus on racialized youth violence and situating risk and trauma within a medicalized model can lead to the over- pathologizing of racialized youth.³ Barnhart (2018) undertook a genealogical exploration of the label 'oppositional deficient disorder (ODD) youth' and the management of these youth within youth work; her work highlighted the construction of a scientific biopolitical knowledge system to control non-conforming youth under the psy-discourse of madness. I believe furthering a critical multilayered perspective of power will strengthen the theorization of youth work and holds exciting opportunities for understanding the management of youth and current practices of inclusion within youth work.

The use of racial biopolitics and neoliberal governmentality to examine the management of youth populations and their participation, which I draw on in my dissertation, is less explored by scholars of childhood and youth studies (Wells, 2011) and youth work as well. Foucauldian

³ The pathologization of particular groups' mental health or the experiences of Indigenous youth as demonstrated by Chrisjohn et al. (2017).

concepts such as counter-conduct and parrhesia provide different and encouraging ways of understanding and responding to the role of youth workers who are part of the state apparatus. I explored these concepts in my research by engaging in dialogue on their use in my interviews with youth workers and youth. I hope that through my study, concepts such as counter-conduct and parrhesia can become incorporated into youth work's critical toolbox for responding to the pressing needs of youth amid the pressures felt within organizations and the sector more widely.

New concepts such as assets, engagement, and participation shift the rhetorical discourses circulating within youth work. However, the deeply rooted deficit knowledges of youth as dangerous, lazy, or risky continue to play an underlying role in the ongoing management of youth subjectivities (Savelsberg & Martin-Giles, 2008). These veiled deficit orientations often influence racialized youth disproportionately and remain deeply embedded within youth discourses of race and class (Kirshner, 2015). It is of utmost importance that the inclusionary discourses are subject to the same degree of scrutiny as exclusionary ones, for they are part of the same logic of racial neoliberal governmentality.

If intersectional and historical CYS research is to move forward, it will need to explore methodologies that consider time, space, and individual experiences. YS research has placed a great deal of focus on capturing the uniqueness of youth experiences, stories, and biographies, and while important to engage in, it has not always drawn the connections to generational forces and broader societal concerns (Nico, 2015). CYS cautions against research that overuses the narrative approach with its focus on youth biographies and neglects the analysis of how the experiences are part of structural societal influences.

On the other hand, Skott-Myhre (2005) urged that more attention should be paid to the experience of youth and youth workers and that it is in fact missing from the story of youth. I do

agree that further critical ethnographic work that highlights the subjectivities of youth and youth work with an understanding of time and space is required. However, I do not ask for the inclusion of these voices as a means of suggesting that simply hearing or including these voices would address the marginalization faced by these groups. As suggested earlier, the inclusion of voices continues to be a non-performative speech act (Ahmed, 2012). Rather, I value their voices because they can fill in the gaping holes of the subjugated knowledge of youth experiences within the dominant regimes of knowledge. The knowledge obtained from youth would serve as counter-knowledge to the statistical knowledges that govern youth lives at present. Of course, this also does not posit that youth and youth sector members are outside of the systems of power and oppression, but rather it is important to highlight the messiness present within these meaning-making spaces.

As standardizations and outcome measurements become more formalized within the youth service sector, the experiences of marginalized youth risk being silenced, for professional youth work policies often consider middle-class pathways to adulthood to be the norm (Davies & Merton, 2009 as cited in Van de Walle et al, 2011). Greater attention needs to be given to the experiences of the most marginalized youth to counter the statistical norms of conduct that dictate middle-class norms as acceptable notions of youth subjectivities.

There is a need for both historical analysis as well as the incorporation of individual narratives to provide greater context for how particular knowledges of youth are constituted and how technologies operate on subjects. More recent work addresses this particular challenge by including the voices of young people along with situating their experiences historically amid discourses of race, inclusion, and discipline (Baldrige, 2019; Dolson, 2015; Mikola & Mansouri, 2015). However, the challenge remains in CYS research to not exploit, fetishize, and

commodify marginalized youth voices as native informants. During my community engagement and youth participation efforts within the sector, I witnessed the tiredness of many marginalized young people feeling burnt out from being over consulted and asked to share stories of trauma and pain. CYS research needs to ensure that research on marginalized and racialized youth voices does not engage in colonial practices of harnessing othered knowledge. In addition, CYS has to find a means of breaking through the power imbalances present within the youth/adult relationship. These methodological challenges remain to be considered in my own research as I draw on scholars such as Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) who suggest decolonizing research methodologies and finding other ways of telling stories and talking back to dominant research methods through Indigenous forms of responding. In my dissertation project, I determined that the resources and time required to care for and support youth voices may not be fully available. Therefore, I sought to capture the reflections of past racialized youth participants who, now as adult sector members, can situate their voices within broader historical and current discourses, in the hopes of producing counter-knowledge.

Canadian Youth Research

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, the category of youth was historically a weaker area of interest in Canada. As youth studies research has been historically tied to youth policy-making, Canada has had a smaller body of research on youth in comparison to the US, Europe, and Australia (Côté & Allahar; 2006; Furlong, 2013; Ibrahim, 2014; Tyyskä, 2014). Youth research was historically situated within developmental psychology, education, and history (Chen et al., 2017). Many of the studies tended to focus on disadvantaged youth, deviant behaviour, and non-normative youth experiences and offered various policies and practical interventions to ensure their smooth transition to adulthood. Over the last 30 years, an increased

focus on the sociological study of childhood and youth has developed but more research in this field is required (Chen et al., 2017, p.3).

Studies that employ a sociological focus on youth research strive to understand the social construction of youth, how to engage in research with youth, children, and youth rights and unpack marginalization experienced by youth (Chen et al., 2017). The sociological study of youth aligns with the goals of this research, especially those studies that bring attention to the structural inequalities and marginalization experienced by racialized youth in Canada. Existing research areas include marginalized youth experience with education and employment, child welfare, and the inequalities faced within these systems (Briggs, 2018; Gaetz, 2004; James, 2012; James & Parekh, 2021; McBean, 2018); engaging in broader conversations that include factors such as poverty, racism, and other social exclusions when discussing youth engaging in deviant behaviour such as substance abuse (Woodgate & Busolo, 2015) and youth crime (Butters, et al., 2011; Dlamini et al., 2015; Ezeonu, 2014; Silcox, 2022); and issues around youth subcultures, belonging, and identity (Beiser et al., 2015; Dei et al, 1997; Dlamini et al., 2010; Hirji, 2010; Mccready & Pereira, 2017; Pratt, 2010). These studies address a wide array of youth, social, and policy-related issues from a sociological perspective and are valuable additions to the key issues that youth in Canada are facing.

Many of these research studies adopt a critical lens that brings into question intersectional forms of oppression such as racism, classism, and patriarchy in various institutions that youth interact with (Aubrecht, 2010; Dlamini et al, 2015; James, 2012; Silcox, 2022; Shahjahan, 2011). A growing body of literature is disturbing how Canada as a settler colonial state promotes particular forms of youth identities and highlighting the intersections with racial capitalism and neoliberalism (Dei, 2008; Dhillon, 2017; Sibblis, 2014; Shahjahan, 2011; Pon et al., 2011). My

own research leans on and builds upon the work of these scholars who have highlighted the thorny position of Canada as a settler colonial state and its discriminatory treatment of the Indigenous people of this land and have unsettled the complexities that lie behind the settler colonial project's relationship with an increasing number of racialized immigrants, who often are subjects of former colonies themselves and often hold marginalized positions.

There is growing research in Canada that shows promise in exploring the positive frameworks and inclusionary measures promoted through liberalism's frameworks of social inclusion and social justice. Scholars such as Tuck and Yang (2011) have problematized theories of youth resistance to unsettle and expand our understanding of social justice and change. Dhillon (2017) highlighted how invitations for Indigenous youth to participate within the non-profit space have limited notions of participation as a form of recognition, which as Coulthard (2014) argued reinforces settler colonial subjectivity. Frameworks such as positive youth development (PYD) that promote skills such as civic engagement and participation as assets need to be problematized in constituting the subjectivity of good youth citizens and situated within the dominant framework of racial liberalism and settler colonial rule (see Ahmed & Carpenter, 2017; Bernard, 2016; Chapman et al., 2011; Kennelly, 2011). Although not specific to youth issues but relevant to this research, Almeida (2022) explored how the way the concept of diversity is utilized in the City of Toronto's bureaucratic efforts reinforces pre-existing stereotypes and racial exclusions remains helpful to this conversation. The focus of ongoing research in Canada needs to be expanded to include how these positive inclusionary discourses seek to govern marginalized racialized youth. This study seeks to disturb positive inclusionary discourses situated within youth work and aligns with critical scholars who urge for the importance of not only deconstructing negative framings of youth but also the positive ones

(Bragg, 2007; Kwon, 2013; Sukarieh & Tannock, 2011). These strategies are examined utilizing a CRT and Foucauldian theoretical framework and are discussed in further detail in the next chapter.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Toolkit and Methodological Considerations

While working in the field of youth work, it was difficult at times to call out or name the experiences of exclusions that persist within apparent practices of inclusion and social change. Stoler's (2011) work had allowed me to name that persistent experience as a form of colonial aphasia, where words are not made available or are disconnected from their meaning in certain actions. Over the last decade, through various advocacy efforts, especially due to Black Lives Matter (BLM) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), gargantuan discursive shifts have occurred in our understanding of racialized lives and ongoing injustices in Canada and beyond. The efforts of those advocates have made many subjugated discourses knowable, and they have played a critical role in the coming together of this research's theoretical framework. Uniting Foucauldian governmentality and CRT allows me to complicate the often well-intended but limiting, exclusionary, and harmful forms of racialized youth inclusion in Ontario's youth work sector. This project identifies youth inclusion in Ontario as part of a broad set of power relations that include discursive and non-discursive effects on society and as governed by particular knowledge frameworks that remain rooted in liberal notions of social inclusion such as spatial, public health, youth development, managerial sciences, and participation. Counter-discourses that arise from racialized youth's and other community members' voices and efforts also influence the Ontario youth work sector.

Various key concepts are explored in this chapter, such as Foucault's governmentality as well as neoliberal and colonial logics. The function of biopolitics in the governing of racial Others is also examined. Stoler's (2016) concept of colonial aphasia remains central as it provides a critical analytical tool to understand some of the convoluted ways that governmental powers can narrowly frame inclusionary efforts such that they continue to uphold colonial goals

by curtailing the parameters of knowledge and stifling understanding and critique. This chapter also discusses Foucault's work on counter-conduct and parrhesia and the ability of these strategies to break the hold of practices of colonial aphasia and create alternatives. In addition, I have drawn on the works of critical race and post-colonial scholars such as Ahmed (2012), hooks (2015), and Spivak (1999) who speak to the colonial encounter between racial subjects and Eurocentric sites. Walcott (2021) and Mills (2021) have both offered different perspectives on the need to create alternatives that include epistemologies outside of Western liberal frameworks, such as supporting the development of a radical Black imagination; while they speak specific to the Black community, their words offer insight to those attempting to bring about social change in other aspects of society as well.

I utilize Foucauldian genealogy as my methodological approach, which remains integrally connected to Foucault's theoretical perspectives of critique and disrupting taken for granted knowledges (Dean, 2010). The details of the research design are shared, and FDA is explored as it is method of analyzing the data gathered. I then situate myself as the researcher and reflections of this research journey are also shared in this chapter.

Foucauldian Governmentality: Neoliberal and Colonial Logics

Governmentality concerns the broad range of practices that influence the conduct of the population by encouraging freedom and utilizes tactics and strategies with the aim of achieving certain results that align with dominant logics, such as neoliberal and colonial rationalities (Foucault, 2007).⁴ Lemke (2002) described governmentality as "more or less systematized,

⁴ Foucault's conceptualization of power is important to this discussion: he argues that power is present everywhere and it is the relations between the technologies of the self and technologies of domination that result in empowerment or responsibilization.

regulated and reflected modes of power (a ‘technology’) that go beyond the spontaneous exercise of power over others, following a specific form of reasoning (a ‘rationality’) which defines the telos of action or the adequate means to achieve it” (p. 53). Burchell (1991) stated that the art of government intentionally aligns the various conditions of freedom to enable acceptable choices: the rationale for self-regulating forms of government remains that overt power and constraints may lead the population to engage in resistance. Understandably, inclusionary, rather than explicit exclusionary technologies, function as a potent strategy of power under neoliberal governmental rule for they stimulate social cohesion and complacency.

Despite their oppositional definitions, within a Foucauldian framework inclusionary technologies and exclusionary technologies of power remain in a symbiotic relationship. These technologies of power are part of the same logic of governing and are employed to ensure the ongoing government of political, productive, and entrepreneurial subjects. This Janus-faced technology of power can theoretically be better understood as an inclusionary/exclusionary technology; when placed together, we are able to see past the positive narratives associated with inclusionary discourses. We are more likely to understand that neoliberal governmental power works simultaneously through both invitations to participate and through discipline, such as criminalization. Inclusionary/exclusionary technologies facilitate the movement of the abject from the parameters of the abnormal and then shape the abnormal subject by using various apparatuses into a productive member of society (Besley, 2010). They work together to invite and exclude, enable and limit subjects from constructing alternative subjectivities.

Foucault (2003) argues that “institutions were merely the instruments of domination, which was still a domination of the warlike kind, like an invasion” (p. 225). Institutions such as the economy and education, social work, and health work to uphold and legitimize biopolitical

logics and inclusionary/exclusionary technologies. Therefore, I argue that there is significant value in examining institutions and the knowledges they produce on race, youth, and participation. Consequently, attention is given within my own research to the broader public institutions within the youth serving sector, their knowledge frameworks, discourses, practices and effects. I also focus on the specific practices of youth inclusion within community organizations and youth work itself. I believe that identifying the tug of war transpires between discourses of inclusionary/exclusionary technologies is critical to understanding how youth are governed within current neoliberal logics.

Relations of Colonialism, Neoliberalism, and Governmentality

This project understands the current governmental order to be dominated by colonial and neoliberal logics. Colonial governmentality refers to the set of ideas and administrative practices that managed colonized populations, making it appear logical and even necessary (Scott, 1995; Stoler, 2016). Colonial governmentality, along with its imperial and racial logics, is often considered as being part of past histories that have been overcome by the liberal principles of Enlightenment values and modernism (Melamed, 2011; Scott, 1995). However, Scott (1995) has asserted that colonialism and European liberal Enlightenment logics are part of the same systems of power, together they validated the dominance of the Western universal rationale man over all Others. Recent scholarship by Indigenous and anti-racist scholars argue that present day neoliberal logics remain inextricably tied to ongoing colonial systems of power (Coulthard, 2014; Dhillon, 2017; Leibel, 2018; Melamed, 2011; Tuck & Yang, 2012).

Neoliberalism became progressively institutionalized during the 1970s and 80s, and its principle of the free and rational individual resulted in the increased privatization of the welfare state's responsibilities (Goldberg, 2008). Neoliberalism has transformed the goals of the state to

divesting itself of social welfare institutions; instead, it promotes and protects capitalist free market goals and facilitates the individualization and responsabilization of entrepreneurial citizens (Gane, 2012). A complex network of state, health, political, and educational institutions are responsible for implementing these fundamental shifts in the ordering of the population and individuals.

Foucault identified neoliberal governmentality as promoting an entrepreneurial and rational individual in support of the expansion of Western liberalism and capitalist goals (Burchell, 1991; Gane, 2012; Lemke, 2011). Neoliberalism governs subjects through a heightened form of liberalism, promoting self-governance, economization, and normalization (Lemke, 2002). The expansion of participation apparatuses supports governing through freedom and choice within neoliberal governmental rule (Burchell, 1991; Goldberg, 2008). Groups that are often targeted tend to be those from marginalized communities such as those from lower income populations and racialized youth.

The concept of racial neoliberalism allows us to draw attention to the role of the neoliberal economy in the management of race and difference. Goldberg (2009) argues that the interests of capital thrive when there is mixture of people and practices. This desire to mix is evident in the profusion of inclusionary technologies of power. Nonetheless, there are established controls that remain in place as racial bodies are included as part of the existing logic of the white capitalist order. Under this new political economic landscape that focuses on individual merit, racial inequalities are often managed under the cultural logic of racelessness, diversity, tolerance and inclusion. Over the last ten years, there has been an increase in discourses of systemic racism and settler colonialism within the public sphere. While major movements and

advocacy efforts made these discourses more accessible, the way they continue to interact with racial neoliberalism to maintain the status quo is an area of interest in my own research.

Biopolitics

Foucault used the concept of biopolitics to reframe notions of modern power through the defining of normative conduct in the governing of populations in the interest of the security of society. Foucault expanded on his concepts of biopolitics and governmentality in his lectures “Security, Territory and Population” (2007) and “Society Must Be Defended” (2003). Foucault (2013) stated that biopolitics as a form of governing is not so much concerned with the individual body but rather is focused on employing broad tools to regulate populations to maintain order (p.67). The governing of the population, rather than individual subjects, is of importance to my examination of how racialized youth have been governed through various knowledges and within the youth work sector.

From the period of Enlightenment, in connection with colonial desires of governing the Other, the rise of scientific discourses allowed for the governing of subjects using generalized scientific data about the population (Foucault, 2003, p. 39; Stoler, 2009).⁵ Biopolitics is driven by statistical and actuarial data: it provides freedom of choice and acceptable deviations from standards based on particular normative calculations. The knowledge gleaned and gathered facilitates the knowing and governing of the subject and for the subjects to govern themselves according to the calculated standardized norms. This is evidenced in relation to the rise of youth development as a key knowledge framework within the youth work sector, as it provides specific

⁵ However, the development of population-driven data has not been consistent around the globe. Foucault’s understanding is primarily focused on Western European bourgeois society and the centralization of capitalism as a governing logic.

population-level indicators that youth are measured against. I argue that this can trigger considerable stress for marginalized youth who are prescribed the goals of achieving these normative targets despite the barriers they experience.

Racial Biopolitics

Biopolitics functions as a technology of security and holds paramount the safety of the general population (Bröckling et al., 2011). The focus on the safety of society remains linked to notions of the purity of the race and the interests of capital. Foucault (2003) argued that underneath the ongoing battle between war and peace lies an unrelenting divisionary racial war. While war used to be focused on an external enemy, under biopolitical rule, state efforts revolve around defending biological purity and the survival of society. War becomes an internal focus on the management of the population. Consequently, any form of abnormality or weakness that threatens the purity of the normative race, including that of gender and disease, is subject to intervention and needs to be controlled (Lemke, 2011; Taylor, 2011). Therefore, the racial biopolitical management of populations seeks to cleanse and homogenize society under various governmental logics to maintain the success of the dominant population (Lemke, 2011b; Rasmussen, 2011; Weheliye, 2014). Foucault (2003) referred to racism as a normalizing technology that legitimizes the need to kill; however, for Foucault ‘killing’ is broadly defined as putting people at risk of death, political death, rejection, and/or exclusion. Rasmussen (2011) pointed to how biopolitical knowledge and the governing of populations are intrinsically linked to capital and racial biopolitics. Although, under the logic of neoliberal governmentality, this mixture is the desired technology of power (Goldberg, 2008). Consequently, we have seen the rise of inclusionary technologies that promote mixture, albeit a bounded one that is mimetic of dominant White power.

Agamben (1998) contributed to an influential reworking of Foucault's biopolitics by introducing the concept of the homo sacer and the state of exception in modern political life. Agamben's concept of the homo sacer points to the subject within society whose position is reduced to bare life and who has no real political and legal rights. The killing of the homo sacer is accorded immunity from the standard legal consequences in a society (Lemke, 2011b). The homo sacer stands outside the normal rule of law and triggers an emergency or breakdown in normal order. Agamben (1998) argued that the state of exception is increasingly becoming the norm and used Nazi death camps as an example. Guantanamo Bay and the use of torture there are considered modern day examples of states of exception (Shenhav, 2012). States of exceptions are currently evidenced in racialized, Black and Indigenous people's experiences of police carding, overcriminalization, the high rate of children and youth seized as wards of the Crown, school expulsions, and the impoverished living conditions brought on by poverty (Flacks, 2020; Coulthard, 2014; Giroux, 2012; Sibblis, 2014).

Discussions on states of exception are often focused on the explicitly exclusionary strategies of governing marginalized subjects; Ong (2006) attested that states of exceptions can be exclusionary and inclusionary within neoliberal governmentality. This dissertation argues that inclusionary efforts such as the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy (City of Toronto, 2005) that carved out the 13 priority neighbourhoods activated them as states of exception and subject to both additional funding and surveillance (Walcott, 2018; Ahmed & Carpenter, 2017). These spaces were subject to additional surveillance and place pressure on marginalized youth to meet white middle-class goals. This project explores strategies of inclusion, such as asset development and participation, and investigates if inclusionary efforts contribute to the preservation of modern states of exception.

Agamben's discussion of states of exception is of value in understanding biopolitics and how certain groups are subject to the position of homo sacer, especially racialized ones. However, Lemke (2011b) argues that Agamben's state of exception is narrowly focused on the state and a sovereign's ability to remove rights and does not consider forces beyond the state. The complexities of power/knowledge networks expand beyond the realm of the state and require an intersectional understanding of oppression such as that offered by CRT and Indigenous scholars (Coulthard, 2014; Weheliye, 2014; Walcott, 2019; Byrd, 2019). Therefore, I continue to understand racial management as part of the ongoing process of inclusion and exclusion, rather than racism being conceived as a state of exception.

Limitations of Foucauldian Governmentality Frameworks

It is important to recognize the limitations and gaps in a theoretical framework as offered by a particular philosopher situated in a particular moment in time. Governmentality scholars' examinations tend to focus primarily on the techniques of government and its practice in various forms of liberalism, and there is less focus on the interactions of actors with power and domination (Jessop, 2011, p.60). According to Bröckling et al. (2011) there is an abundance of empirical works that focus on examples of the various technologies of government and make it appear as if the technologies of government are logical and ideal. Bröckling et al. (2011) further argued that these studies can result in a sort of repetitiveness in their analysis and do not contribute to the development of new forms of knowledge. There does appear to be gaps in the current empirical and theoretical research in paying attention to the failures and fissures that are present in the struggle to implement governmental technologies (Bröckling et al., 2011). In including the perspectives of the interviewees, I sought to map the layered and complex ways governmental programs come to be and the various events, actors and discourses that work to

continuously influence, shift and disrupt its goals, placing ongoing pressures on neoliberal and colonial governmental projects.

McKee (2009) states that the possibilities of change and transformation are minimal in studies of governmentality or else mentions of it are included as a minor addition in the conclusion. This is an area of research that requires further examination; this dissertation explores not only the discursive frameworks, knowledges, and logics that formulate youth inclusion within the youth work sector in Ontario, but it also explores the practices, effects, and counter-conduct that result from governmental programs. It explores the counter-conduct efforts that attempt to produce different knowledges on participation, notions of social justice, and racialized youth subjects.

Mitchell Dean (1999) asserts that Foucault did not offer a rigid methodology to be followed; however, it has been taken up as such and influences much of the empirical work that has stemmed within governmental studies. However, some scholars argue that Foucault's own work does not provide strong enough theoretical considerations for differences such as gender, race and other differences (Saar, 2011; McKee, 2009). This is a limitation due to Foucault's primarily western epistemological lens, as he does not perhaps fully consider how power affects actors differently based on their diverse social positioning. However, Saar (2011) mentions the work of scholars such as Cruikshank (1999) address some of these theoretical gaps in Foucault's governmentality. In addition, McKee (2009) suggests that the ongoing usage of governmentality framework by feminists, post-colonial and anti-racialized scholars, suggests that Foucault's governmentality framework has theoretical benefits to these areas of study and its limitations can be overcome through the addition of other theories to support its gaps, such as CRT and decolonial epistemological perspectives. In looking at the sites of contestation in the local spaces of

government around youth work in Toronto for my own research, I would need to consider critical race and anti-colonial scholars, such as Fanon (1952/2008), Mignolo (2000), Spivak (2004), and Thobani (2007); including these scholars theoretical considerations around how racialized bodies function in these spaces of government would help me understand how racialized subjects utilize their varied epistemological knowledges to critique and redefine governmental programs.

Critical Race Theory

Many scholars, including myself, grapple with defining race and racism and there appears to be considerable uncertainty about its definition based on political and theoretical foundations (Macey, 2009). Dominant discourses and practices of colonial racial governance such as slavery, biological notions of race, and eugenics became firmly embedded in modern society prior to the 20th century. My consideration of race is informed by CRT, post-colonialism, and Foucauldian notions of race, biopolitics, power, and governmentality. As mentioned in Chapter 1, this study recognizes race and racialization as a social construction constituted by a dynamic set of political, economic, and cultural relations. Race is understood both as an ideological force that results in the oppression of individual subjects as well as a broader method of ordering society's epistemological and ontological understandings (Goldberg, 2008).

CRT utilizes an intersectional approach that considers race, class, gender, sexuality, and disability in its examination of the systems of power that disadvantage people of colour (Crenshaw, 2011; Delgado et al, 2017). Critical race, Indigenous, and governmentality scholars argue that colonialism, European liberalism, and modernist rationalities are inextricably part of the same logics that promoted the rights of the universal man (Coulthard, 2014; Melamed, 2011;

Razack, 2002; Tuck & Yang, 2011), while simultaneously relegating Blackness and Indigeneity to the category of non-human or sub-human (Coulthard, 2014; Jackson, 2020; Mills, 2021; Walcott, 2021). The neoliberal shift of the state from imperial to capitalist and self-regulatory logics inextricably remains tied to ongoing colonial power.

Said's (1978) seminal work, *Orientalism*, disturbed such assembled knowledges of the Orient by the West. The Orient is deemed uncivil and dangerous through the supposed scientific technologies of research and evidence, and in turn, this enables the binary definition of the West as a civilized and safe place. The influence of this discourse remains prominent in the ongoing colonial and neoliberal epistemes and continues to produce notions of Whiteness while simultaneously prohibiting, limiting, excluding, and denying certain forms of knowledges and subjectivities (West, 2001, p. 109). Whiteness functions as the transcendental norm and goes unseen in dominant spaces.

Anti-racist scholars strive to disturb the normative discourses and unveil the Whiteness present within various spaces (Yancy, 2012). Disturbing Whiteness and its normative knowledges within youth work spaces is a critical goal of my own research. Resistance to these normative racist knowledges and practices are evident in the civil rights movement in the US and anti-colonial movements across the world. These rights-based movements upset certain components of the regimes of racial governance (Essed & Goldberg, 2002) and pressed for recognition through equal rights, as well as redistribution of resources for racially exploited and oppressed groups. These gains have been celebrated over the decades and have become implanted within the historical discourses of the US, Canada, and colonial Europe.

However, new technologies of power, such as inclusionary techniques of participation, continue to reproduce the hierarchization of racial knowledges and subjects. Inclusion is often

treated as unproblematic and considered to be a blanket solution for many social exclusions. In his seminal text *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon (1952/2008) spoke of being included in French society and the doubling experience of Black subjects who are encouraged to embrace White subjectivities. Fanon (1952/2008) pointed to how certain racial subjects struggled with their inclusions in colonial France. He began by quoting a doctor with whom he had had a conversation:

He would like the white man to suddenly say to him: 'Dirty N----R.' Then he would have that unique occasion—to 'show them.' But usually there is nothing, nothing but indifference or paternalistic curiosity. The former slave wants his humanity to be challenged; he is looking for a fight; he wants a brawl. But too late: the black Frenchman is doomed to hold his tongue and bare his teeth. (p. 196)

The included Black subject is unable to break the docile codes of colonial subjectivity and challenge the superficial inclusive discourses that continue to harbour underlying racially oppressive knowledges. The anger arises from the dejected realization that at the surface level, there is nothing to do, nothing to fight against. I argue that similar struggles and frustrations remain indicative of how racialized subjects experience current practices of inclusion. For example, I intend to use the works of Fanon (1952/2008), Spivak (1999), and Tuhiwai Smith (2012) to further understand how racialized Othered subjects speak and respond within dominant spaces of inclusion, where forms of quiet exclusions persist.

Inclusionary measures have manifested themselves in the form of basic rights and entry into spaces that were originally closed to participation (Young, 2000). In addition, discourses of diversity have become desirable within the global corporate realm (Goldberg, 2008). Such focus on diversity, inclusion, and participation has propelled the inclusion of Othered subjects into

spaces they were not previously included in through various equity policy measures in the private, public, and non-profit realms. Social justice movements often consider these inclusions to be the triumphs of decades of advocacy; nonetheless, scholars have urged that these inclusions need to be problematized and examined for their quality, purpose, and function (Ahmed, 2012; Munck, 2005). They argue that diversity and multiculturalism have been embraced by institutions so that they appear to be addressing racism and other forms of exclusion (Ahmed, 2012; Ward & Rivera, 2014); discourses of diversity are considered safe forms of addressing exclusion because they do not require substantial structural change (Ahmed, 2006; Puwar, 2004).

Ahmed (2012) pointed to these policies as being rhetorical in nature and functioning in a non-performative manner: they do not necessarily result in action, but their presence has come to imply change. She notes that institutions resist change and prefer to allow the rhetoric of the policies themselves to stand for action. For example, she highlights the considerable effort that is placed in the drafting of the equity policy documents, such that the document comes to imply the change itself. Celebrating difference and including those deemed different have become acceptable responses to appease claims of ongoing systemic racism within society.

The Consumption of the Othered Subject

Inclusionary practices of racialized youth can still function as a form of commodification and fetishization of racial difference by inviting marginalized subjects to function as the native informant to share cultural knowledge of their communities (Hughey, 2007). The concept of the native informant has been utilized primarily in ethnographic studies, where researchers have been critiqued for harvesting cultural information from Indigenous and colonial subjects (Khan, 2005). The term has been problematized by postcolonial scholars such as Spivak (1999) who argues that the native informant is both Othered and reduced to a bare life in contrast to the

civilized White man. I wish to extend this criticism to the consumptive process that occurs in the youth sector in its participation practices. Adult stakeholders in the sector function similarly to researchers and harvest information about marginalized neighbourhoods and racialized spaces from youth, who function as native informants. Having youth bring previously unknown Othered knowledges to the consultative table can be understood as a consumptive process engaged in by a primarily adult audience. The abnormality and the dangers that surround the native informant's life are juxtaposed to the success, structure, and productivity of the dominant normative society. The native informant's information justifies the efforts made by stakeholders to help these youth.

Young people's oral performances, dance, and art often gets incorporated into dominant youth work spaces. Learning from and partaking in such cultural displays are celebrated and consumed by White anti-racists who feel they are cultivating their position as anti-racist youth workers and social workers. It supports the liberation from past histories of colonial subjugation, ensuring that they do not recognize the ongoing presence of such histories (Hughey, 2007). The focus on consuming Blackness and other racialized youth culture obscures the presence of Whiteness within these spaces. Whiteness goes unnamed and continues to be the transcendental norm (Yancy, 2012). The promotion of such inclusions reaffirms the benevolence of dominant White power (Goldberg, 2008).

Helping professions such as social work, and youth work as explored in this dissertation, have been operating under the mantle of anti-racism and inclusion, coinciding with other narratives of goodness and helpfulness, and are primarily detached from their colonial roots. The entrenchment of anti-racism, equity, anti-oppression, and diversity policies relieves institutions from having to negotiate new relations of power and instead allows them to continue with their disenfranchising practices (Badwall, 2015; Chapman-Nyaho et al., 2011).

Dovidio and Gaertner (2011) have pointed out that danger lies in liberal egalitarian subjects who are unable to recognize their own practices of racism. White anti-racist actors often engage in aversive racism, where they find even the implication that they perpetuate racist practices to be repulsive and refute it vehemently. Todd (2011) argued that White liberal community workers tend to even recognize “themselves as being heroic in the struggle against racism” (p. 118). She argued that this heroic stance attempts to place White subjects outside of the historical relations of racism. Studies such as those by Jeffery and Nelson (2011) and Todd (2011) bring critical attention to how White social workers position themselves as social justice advocates. They suggest that social workers navigate scripts of Whiteness entrenched within social work while simultaneously attempting to grapple with discourses of anti-racism that are also endorsed within critical social work. There often exists blind spots in community workers’ practices that continue to perpetuate racial knowledges in the support of racialized service users.

From another perspective, Badwall (2015) illustrated how the inclusion of racialized workers within dominant institutions helps reinforce notions of the goodness of social work. However, racialized workers are expected to not disrupt these dominant codes of Whiteness or draw attention to their ongoing racialization within institutions. Furthermore, racialized social workers are expected to follow social work’s White scripts and can also be complicit in reinforcing harmful practices. Their success as social workers is entwined with their ability to perform the White social worker role. Badwall’s observation is especially indicative of the position youth workers find themselves in, many of whom are racialized and from marginalized

communities themselves.⁶ Almeida (2022) also highlights the ways that inclusion and diversity discourses work to limit, exclude, and reinstate racial belonging in spaces such as the City of Toronto. These critical studies disturb the White scripts of goodness and benevolence within social work and reveal the reproduction of modern, liberal, colonial, and racial knowledge.

Youth work sector leaders and public bureaucrats within the youth sector often identify themselves as having egalitarian principles and consider themselves to be advocates of racialized and disadvantaged youth. The mantra of anti-racism, anti-oppression, and youth participation rings throughout the sector's daily discourses and practices. However, many of the sector's players remain in tension between consuming the Other and struggle with the racial and neoliberal oriented knowledges that underpin the youth work sector's practices.

Colonial Aphasia and the Circuits of Whiteness

Unveiling how racial knowledges with the youth sector are constituted and reproduced requires a thorough investigation into who is included, how, and the conditions and constraints of their inclusion. This unveiling requires the disturbance of normative Whiteness, and the colonial roots of youth work practice. The commodification and consumption of Othered youth cultures also need attention. This dissertation leans on Stoler's (2011, 2016) powerful concept of colonial aphasia, which she identified as forms of dissonance, enacted through the obstruction of colonial knowledges and the connection to other concepts. Stoler argued:

The term 'colonial aphasia' is invoked to supplant the notions of 'amnesia' or 'forgetting,' to focus rather on three features: an occlusion of knowledge, a difficulty generating a

⁶ Youth workers are further disenfranchised for they also often occupy the category of "youth" within organizations; this is explored in Chapter 7.

vocabulary that associates appropriate words and concepts with appropriate things, and a difficulty comprehending the enduring relevancy of what has already been spoken. (2011, p. 125)

Colonial aphasia functions as an important tool in the maintenance of circuits of Whiteness that stifle the remembering and comprehending of a colonial past and present; it also contributes to the obstruction and co-option of subjugated knowledges inserted during sparks of unrest, violence, and resistance.

The concept of circuits of Whiteness denotes how discourses communicate between paths and travel in a circular and closed system of knowledge and understanding. Whiteness here refers to the social and political construction of a White racialized ideal connected to the buttressing of colonial rationalities (Hunter, et al., 2010; Hunter & van der Westhuizen, 2021). My findings show five main features of the youth policy circuit: 1) moral panic around racialized resistance and violence; 2) reports / investigations in relation to such disruptions; 3) new program directives and temporary funding; 4) erasures often through electoral change; and 5) the setting in of colonial aphasia. The research argues that the occlusion of Western liberalism's colonial and racial foundations often results in the uncritical adoption of rights- and freedom-based discourses in society (Samson, 2020; Sokhi-Bulley, 2016), resulting in substantial dissonance within youth policymaking and the field of youth work.

Contesting Inclusionary/Exclusionary Discourses

In response to liberalism's dominance, Walcott (2021) and Mills (2021) have both pointed to the value of promoting the Black radical imagination for envisioning alternative worlds beyond the limits of liberal Whiteness. Despite ongoing struggles to propel new forms of living and being, there are persistent efforts to stifle marginalized communities imagination such

as Black, Indigenous and other racialized groups. The push to create alternatives and to protect sites for developing these new imaginations requires urgent attention.

The capacity of governmental power to disallow subjects from even supposing that alternatives are possible is a critical strength of neoliberal and settler dominance: it is a tactic used to ensure complicity in its subjects. The dangers of such limitations on the imagination, especially that of the racialized subject's imagination (Mills, 2021; Walcott, 2021), are explored in Chapter 7 on participation and counter-conduct. Critically conscious subjects within youth service institutions continue to struggle painfully with the normative subjectivities and narrow parameters imposed on them. These continuous negotiations of power by subjects to re-affirm, respond, and redefine discourses, policies and practices, and fissures do arise between governmental project's ideals and their manifestations. Foucault (2008) considered this as the art of not being governed quite so much. The widening of the gap between a governmental program's ideal and reality is a vital space for critique and resistance. These moments allow for the possibility of different and perhaps more ethical and empowering movements. The manner in which these inclusionary/exclusionary technologies are contested and countered are also of critical interest to my own research.

Counter-Conduct and Parrhesia

This project makes space to understand the production of counter-knowledge within the sector and explores the concepts of counter-conduct and parrhesia within inclusionary strategies and practices. Subjects continuously negotiate with power to re-affirm, respond to, and redefine governmental programs and spaces (Davidson, 2011; Folkers, 2016; Jessop, 2011). Fissures tend to arise between governmental ideals and their manifestations; this offers a vital space for critique and counter-conduct. Counter-conduct is understood as the desire to be governed

differently; it allows for the inclusion of different and ethically empowering possibilities. (Davidson, 2011; Lorenzini, 2016). While Foucault focused on the notion of conduct, he did not elaborate on his understanding of counter-conduct to the same degree; however, the concept has garnered more attention in more recent years:

A counter-conduct always implies, on the one side, a governmental mechanism of power trying to impose on a group of individuals a specific form of conduct (which is the target of resistance, of struggles) and, on the other side, a refusal expressed by the individuals who can no longer accept being conducted like that and want to conduct themselves differently. (Lorenzini, 2016, p. 11)

This possibility of envisioning something different holds some hope for broadening youth subjectivities beyond their neoliberal confines.

I argue that introducing counter-conduct to the study of racialized youth inclusion and inclusionary/exclusionary technologies of power allows for a more complex examination of change. Foucault does not offer such a finality to resistance or power; rather as Lorenzini (2016) stated, power is always at work alongside its refusal, and this tension never ceases to exist. I explore whether critical subjects within the youth service sector utilize counter-conduct to refuse, reimagine, and respond critically to their prescribed role of producing entrepreneurial youth subjects.

One mechanism of counter-conduct that has the potential to bring into question inclusionary/exclusionary technologies of power is parrhesia. Foucault (2010) defined parrhesia as a particular type of truth-telling and as an act that involves a degree of risk to the truth-teller, a risk that the truth-teller is acutely aware of and yet binds themselves to (p. 54). According to Foucault (2007), the parrhesiastic act does not accord the speaker power but rather is a form of

direct persuasion: it is different from rhetoric and engages those in opposition or in power in dialogue (p. 105). The parrhesiastic speaker is not a detached impartial player but one who is part of the political game and considered to be rational, respected, and trustworthy (Dyrberg, 2014). The risky speech act has the potential to give voice to a controversial and dangerous truth, and the speaker's courage may resonate with those in power and potentially bring about positive change (Walters, 2014). While parrhesiastic speakers may not necessarily be granted the opportunity to make change by those in power, engaging in such truthful speech hold the potential to jolt an institution's accepted truths, resulting in ontological anxiety (Puwar, 2004). Sokhi-Bully (2015) provided an example of this in her recent study of the protests in Ferguson against the death of racialized Black youth as instances of parrhesia on the part of individual protestors.

The role of the parrhesiastic truth-teller was held by lay subjects in antiquity, but over time truth-telling was relegated to pastoral and state power. Foucault (2011) urged for the regaining of the parrhesiastic function by those not in power. Pyykkönen stated that Foucault called for the "intellectual to search for counter-memory through genealogical criticism and hence reveal forgotten or muzzled forms of being and acting" (2015, p.29). I believe that counter-conduct and parrhesia can be instrumental for engaging in ethical practice in social work and academia. Academics are uniquely positioned to be parrhesiastic speakers; however, there is a growing silence and retreat from truth-telling, as academics increasingly find themselves in precarious situations within the university's audit culture and managerial systems (Tamboukou, 2012). Those in the helping professions, such as social workers and youth workers, also find themselves in precarious positions, especially racialized workers within dominant institutions (Badwall, 2015). My research explores this ethical responsibility to speak risky truths and listen

to strategies of those engaging in parrhesiastic acts within youth services spaces. My work sought to understand the production of new counter-knowledge and contrive new ways of being.

Research Methodology: Genealogy and Foucauldian Discourse Analysis

Operating from a governmentality framework, this project employs a genealogical approach and conducts an FDA and semi-structured interviews. Genealogical analysis does not consist of a systematic method but is broadly guided by Foucault's notions of power, knowledge, and discourse (Carabine, 2001; Tamboukou, 1999). He associated discourses with power systems that influence knowledges and have material effects on the meso, macro, and micro relations of society, as well as modes of subjectification (Carabine, 2001; Diaz-Bone et al., 2008; Livholts & Tamboukou, 2015). By examining society's enactment of power from multiple and different planes, such as through "knowledge, strategies of power, and technologies of the self" (Lemke, 2002, p.54), we are more inclined to see the potential for the diverse interplay of activities among its actors in each of these spaces.

Genealogy urges us to exercise skepticism towards the historical present and its theories (Gutting, 1990). A genealogical approach aims to unravel the conditions of how particular narratives came into being, counter institutionalized knowledges, and surface subjugated knowledges (Foucault, 2003). It is "concerned with describing the procedures, practices, apparatuses and institutions involved in the production of discourses and knowledges, and their power effects" (Carabine, 2001, p. 276). Genealogy does not engage in a linear exploration of history, rather focuses on the discontinuities and disruptions; furthermore, it examines the taken for granted assumptions in society and unsettles them (Dean, 2010). A genealogical analysis identifies a problem and then requires a local micro-level mapping of the minor activities by the

institutions and actors involved, remaining focused on the surface and not the unearthing of hidden or unifying truths (Gutting, 1990; Tamboukou, 1999).

This project mapped out the dispositif of racialized youth inclusion strategies in the youth sector. The examination centered on the technologies that institutionalize youth inclusion, the strategic goals enabled through their activation, and the biopolitical shaping effects on racialized youth subjects. The mapping tracked the ways in which ideas about racialized youth moved through various key documents over the last three decades that allowed for the recognition of the circuits of whiteness and colonial aphasia present within them. This study sought to disturb the taken for granted knowledge frameworks, rooted in western liberal logics, that youth inclusionary policy and practices are built upon. Concepts such as at-risk youth, deficits are explored along with positive seeming concepts such as assets, strengths, resilience, youth voice and participation. The messy mapping traced the influence of spatial and public health frameworks, youth development and managerial discourses, and social justice and participation frameworks. Through the tracing, the genealogical method allows for the recovery of subjugated knowledges and makes the possibilities of counter-memory and knowing possible (Dean, 2010). These ideas are explored in Chapter 7 as I explore how notions of social justice are framed primarily around western liberal rationalities of racial justice and outlines the possibilities of envisioning alternatives.

Research Design and Methods

The first stage of my study engaged in an FDA of racialized youth inclusion discourses from 1992–2019 in Toronto and Ontario of youth policy, strategies and other key documents. The study examined documents, institutional frameworks, and administrative mechanisms and their effects on funding, programs, services, and youth subjects. The analysis traced the ways in

which certain knowledges about youth and youth participation have been institutionalized, while others have been excluded, at present and over time, to promote specific ways to govern youth.

The second stage of my study included semi-structured interviews with key informants. The focus of the interviews was on how racialized youth, especially Black youth, are included within the youth work sector, what knowledge governs them, and the material effects on the sector and the youth. In addition, it teased out the efforts of counter-knowledge production to include and govern racialized youth differently. The interviews were conducted in English, in an individual setting, lasting an hour and a half to two hours; at times they did go longer, with some lasting three hours. As is characteristic of in-depth interviews, there was room for tangents and open discussion. Data from the FDA and interviews inform the overall genealogical findings of how the field of racialized youth inclusion has been constructed in Ontario's youth work sector.

Data Sources and Sampling

The study used a criterion sampling method (Patton, 2002) to identify texts for the FDA. I chose texts from 1992 based on their influence in producing expert knowledge on youth and participation practices within Ontario. The 30-year timeframe coincides with the adoption of the UNCRC (1989) and sociological shifts in childhood and youth studies. The documents examined included those from the federal, municipal, and provincial governments, such as policies and strategic frameworks, news releases, resource manuals, special reports, and other key community and non-profit texts within Ontario and Toronto (see Appendix A).

Central documents included the MCYS's resource manual *Stepping Stones* (2012b) and their youth strategy *Stepping Up* (2013). These documents continue to guide a substantial amount of funding, programming, and service delivery goals; they also influence the municipalities in their youth policy procedures. The FDA also examined major reports, such as

Lewis' *Race Relations in Ontario* (1992) report and the *Roots of Youth Violence Report* (2008), which were key texts in the management of race and racialized subjects in Ontario. In addition, policy announcements such as the BYAP (2017) are part of the emergent discourses that were investigated.

Snowball and purposeful sampling strategies were used for the semi-structured interviews to gain access to a specific set of informants with valuable information on the topic (Patton, 2002). The sample included 14 key informants from the youth sector who are active in the production and enactment of youth policy discourses and projects. This sample ranged in age, race, gender, and class and varied in social and cultural capital. Efforts were made to include key racialized sector members; nine of the 14 members interviewed identified as Black. There were also two racialized members from different communities, I am not specifying the racialized community that they are from; due to the small nature of the youth sector, I am being careful not to put their anonymity at risk. There were also three White sector members who were part of the interviewees.

The sample intentionally did not include youth participants. While this was a difficult decision, it was informed by my years in the sector, where many racialized youth painfully expressed feeling used and experiencing burnout from repeated invitations to share their perspectives with little meaningful impact. These experiences are reflected in the literature on youth participation, which documents both the persistence of tokenistic engagement and the emotional strain associated with ongoing, often extractive forms of participation (Raby, 2014; UNICEF, 2023). Given the aims of this genealogical mapping, centering youth voices was not fundamental to this particular project. Future research, with greater resources that focuses on the

counter-conduct of the oppressed could more fully incorporate young people's perspectives on these issues.

However, in order to account for some of the experiences around youth participation itself, a subset of the overall sample, five interviewees included those individuals who were youth participants 10–15 years ago and are currently working within the youth sector. This subset consisted of four racialized Black subjects and another racialized subject. The perspective of this set of key informants complimented the genealogical approach of the study. Their perspectives help to provide a longer history of racialized youth participation and illustrate the shifts and overlaps they have experienced over time.

Research Methods

Prior to beginning my research proposal, I engaged in a handful of conversations with racialized sector members and young people involved in the sector on what they felt were key areas to explore and gaps in knowledge in relation to themes of social inclusion and social justice and racialized youth that the sector was invested in. These conversations were reflected upon in the designing of this research project. An FDA was useful in identifying and disassembling the various technologies that are active within the dispositif of youth participation. While traditional discourse analysis tends to focus more on the technical and rhetorical components of language (Anaïs, 2012), an FDA tends to follow “the ‘order of their discourse,’ comparing and juxtaposing them, tracing their repetition, recurrence or even disappearance in relation to the era, the philosophical school or even the historical personalities they were adopted” (Tamboukou, 1999, p. 214). FDA usually examines a large body of statements from a dispositif and is not so concerned with how language is utilized but rather how discourses are produced and brought together in the first place.

Employing an FDA method, the project questioned what logics enabled the production of youth participation discourses: who authorized them, and what were the key objectives carried out under the auspices of these discourses (Diaz-Bone et al., 2008; Foucault, 1980)? Furthermore, it questioned how neoliberal and colonial governmentality logics are entrenched within these discourses: in what ways are inclusion and social justice envisioned within these documents; what goals do these documents justify in relation to funding and program delivery within the sector; in what ways are racialized subjects imagined and governed through these texts? I did not seek to unearth hidden truths within the discourses or arrive at some unified sense of knowledge on youth participation. Rather, my analysis considered how the logics of neoliberalism and colonialism, the sociological knowledge of youth, and liberal notions of social inclusion and justice play out within the statements and the practices.

After conducting the FDA analysis of the texts, I engaged in semi-structured interviews to obtain a multi-layered understanding of the relations and effects of youth participation. While the interviews do support triangulating the data (Fine, et al., 2000), the study steers away from methodological positivism (Clough, 2010) and its goals of validity or objectivity, as these are contradictory to the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of this study. Interviews were traditionally celebrated as a dialogue and an opportunity to give voice to marginalized perspectives; however, more critical perspectives consider them to mainly serve the interests of the researcher (Kvale, 2006). I recognize that the participant's responses, albeit informative, are to be considered as construction of the systems of power active within the youth sector (Hammersley, 2008). I also recognize my own limits as someone who was actively part of the youth work sector and influenced by the discourses made available to me; I understand that despite the critical tools available to me in this PhD journey, I can still have blind spots in my

critical understandings of these complex systems.

I aimed to address some of these challenges by creating an empathetic and collaborative space for meaning making. One way I intended to create this space was by sharing the FDA analysis with the informants prior to the interviews. This functioned as the starting point of the discussion. Statements from the texts and the FDA analysis were discussed and countered with the informant's knowledge; efforts were made to work towards a shared understanding. Kvale (2006) identified this as resembling a platonic dialogue, where the researcher and informant attempt to understand the other by focusing on the topic and its statements. However, I recognize the various power imbalances and diverse interests that exist within the interviewee and researcher relationship; therefore, I left room for disagreement and conflict within the interviews.

The interviews each began with some of the same questions that I asked of the texts when conducting the genealogical examination. The questions explored what logics are dominant in the youth sector; how social justice for youth is envisioned; and how youth participation is activated and implemented within the sector. To dive deeper into the mechanisms and material effects, I asked participants to share how youth participation discourses influence funding streams and organizational structures; how racialized and Black youth subjects are viewed and included; what role inclusion of past racialized youth participants, now adults, plays within the sector; whether there are tensions that arise in their work of promoting youth participation; and if there are counter-knowledges created to support other forms of youth subjectivities and inclusion.

The semi-structured interviews were transcribed verbatim using a transcription service, and the principles of FDA were used to analyze the interview content. I accept that the transcriptions process itself is not straightforward but rather an interpretive meaning-making

process (Lapadat, 2000). Efforts were made to account for bodily expressions and to contextualize the breaks, silences, and incoherent statements.

Institutional Ethics

Since this research involved human participants, I obtained ethics approval from the York University Office of Research Ethics. Interviewees' participation was voluntary and was appraised as posing minimal risk to them. However, the study recognized that participants could experience discomfort when answering questions pertaining to political views or opinions about documents that they or their institution may have been responsible for producing. I attempted to keep all names and institutions confidential but acknowledge that due to the rather tight knit nature of the youth non-profit sector, confidentiality may not always be guaranteed. I remained open about this challenge with the participants.

The interviews were audio recorded. Participants who agreed to be recorded were asked to provide their consent prior to the start of the interview. Participants who did not wish to be audio recorded but were still interested in participating were allowed to do so and were accommodated. Efforts were made to remove any identity-revealing points within the analysis and the written dissertation. All data are stored in a confidential manner and in a password protected file; written notes are also locked and kept private. Participants were allowed to indicate if they wished to withdraw from the study and erase any audio recordings and notes made during their interview for up to 60 days after the interview was conducted. If requested, the usage of direct quotes and the context they were used in within the dissertation drafts were also shared with the participants.

Striving Towards an Ethical Encounter

I strived to engage in ethically reflexive practice and accountability by situating my position both personally and politically in relation to my analysis and the respondents (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998; Razack, 1988). I came to this project with almost 10 years of experience managing small to mid-size CBYOs in Toronto's marginalized communities and remain engaged in some capacity as an academic, often to share back knowledge with youth workers and community members and continue to learn from them. I brought to this research discomforting questions as well as difficult memories of racialized youth inclusion in my role as a youth and as an adult ally in my community engagement roles. Growing up in what are known as priority neighbourhoods, throughout my childhood, youth, and young adult life, I identify closely with the racialized and marginalized communities I worked in.⁷ However, Badwall's (2022) cautionary point to not assume similarity to racialized groups or participants due to one's own racial or economic identity is noted. Angod (2022) points to the tensions and complexities of colonial geographies needing to be considered. I recognize the challenges but also the privilege of being an economic settler-migrant to Canada from India, which was able to gain its independence in 1947. South Asians have traditionally been deemed a model minority group, albeit brown immigrants in Canada are experiencing increased hate and racism at present. I recognize that the choices and sovereignty available to Indigenous East Indians since gaining independence from their colonizers, is not available to many others impacted by colonial rule, including Indigenous communities and Black communities impacted by the transatlantic slave

⁷ The City of Toronto determined 13 priority neighbourhoods (2005–2008) as being lower income neighbourhoods with fewer resources, which were identified for additional supports and funding. The term was changed to Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIAs) in 2011 to reduce the stigma that became associated with these neighbourhoods (Sunshine, 2014).

trade. I hold this in mind and recognize there is a great degree of differences in how colonial and neoliberal systems impact various racialized groups' experiences.

In my work, I recognized that my educational capital and professional roles I held in the organizations, at times set me apart from being a community member. I was often considered an institutional figure rather than a member of the community and it is understandable given I often had to balance multiple factors and make decisions in my organizational leadership role that hurt and felt unfair to young people and community. By being critically reflexive I had taken care to be vulnerable, negotiate power, and build trust with community members. I was able to build trust and solidarity with many community members and members of the sector over time, though these were never easy as the competitive nature of the sector and the scarcity logics of neoliberal and colonial systems of power often pit groups and individuals against each other. It is only due to the trust and relationships fostered that I was able to engage community advocates and sector members in my role as researcher and was able to have deep and difficult conversations in the interviews.

As a brown woman subject to ongoing exclusions and harms and having worked within the youth work sector and now an emerging scholar, I do bring my own differentiated painful experiences to this conversation on examining the workings of settler colonial and neoliberal power and forms of inclusion in the youth work sector. In respect to and in recognition of the trust and tensions that persist within the diverse marginalized communities, I do not claim to speak from an insider position or to possess expert knowledge of the experiences of the various racialized and marginalized groups targeted by youth inclusion strategies, especially Black youth who are often the target of interventions.

Part of being ethical in research requires the researcher to remain in a state of discomfort and work against seeking closure or providing prescriptive solutions (Smith, 2012): the meaning-making occurs through emergent listening, openness, and consideration to various sources and silences (Davies, 2016). I recognize that this project is a way of giving an account of my past and present actions within this sector. However, I do not intend to engage in a confessional telling or apology of my own acts within this sector (Skeggs, 2002). I acknowledge that I may not be able to always strike the right balance in my conversation and I accept responsibility and will continue to learn and strive towards an ethical encounter within my work. I do not aim to absolve myself through this reflexive process but rather to take responsibility and act differently (Butler, 2005).

My reflective sharing is not intended to recenter myself as an expert of the material shared but rather to situate myself as being open and part of a collective conversation (Macias, 2022). My efforts to engage in dialogue and keep this research flexible and responsive to my participants insights eventually did lead me to expand the parameters of this research beyond only exploring youth participation as a key knowledge framework. Participants stressed the need to understand the spatial organization of the sector and its responses, alongside the ushering in of the youth development and managerial frameworks. These insights broadened my examination and despite the challenges of wrestling with the complexities of each of these areas, I attempted to bring them into conversation; I believe that I was able to tell a story that reflects the sharings entrusted to me by my research participants.

I believe that there are many within the sector who want to engage in ongoing dialogue on the ethical dilemmas of working within these institutional settings that were built to maintain the status quo. This research allowed for the carving of some temporary space for in-depth

conversations that were noted by many of the research participants as being a cathartic healing process. The emotional nature of these encounters between myself and the research participants was surprising to both researcher and participant as it resembled moments of sharing, repairing, and healing. These were moments of unpacking one's role in the sector and one's past as a youth in the sector's inclusionary efforts: the exploitation that is embedded within both these subject positions became apparent only as we moved deeper into the hours. It is important to note that participants often began the interviews, especially those in their institutional settings, offices or meeting rooms, with responses to questions in sector speak. They were sharing information that resembled official discourses, and it took some time to move past the layers of sector speak and engage with the questions from the position of an ethical self. This is indicative of how colonial aphasia functions and its strength in veiling itself in the voices of institutional subjects, even racialized subjects. The need to make space for more conversations on such reflections and unpacking of inclusionary practices proves necessary.

Many within the sector do function in parrhesiastic risky truth telling behaviour and envision forms of counter conduct but often find themselves doing this in solitary form not in solidarity. My goal in investigating the knowledge frameworks, discourses, practices within the sector is to explore what taking ethical responsibility towards young people in marginalized communities does and can look like, share these strategies to foster more dialogue and strengthen youth inclusion practices.

Chapter 4: Governing Through Inclusion

This chapter maps how inclusive discourses aimed at addressing systemic racism and anti-Black racism circulate and operate within youth social policy in Ontario, Canada. The chapter outlines the various strategic and policy movements in the youth work sector between 1992–2019 that directly and indirectly governed racialized youth, especially Black youth. Numerous reports and programmes attempt to understand systemic racism and propose new approaches to youth work in addressing youth violence, underemployment, underachievement, etc. This chapter demonstrates how efforts to counter state violence and systemic racism are pulled into the economic and political framework of racial neoliberal and colonial standards.

The discussion specifically focuses on the intertwined relationship between youth work and moral panics over racial youth violence. Hesse (1996) urged for the need to problematize this apparent threat of racial violence that is often inscribed within society and to map the knowledges and effects that surround such moments. The need to respond to the general public's panic around racial violence in Toronto's streets, alongside community outcry over the ongoing structural violence often provides the motivation for harried discursive production and action. A performative loop of crisis, outcry, and actions by way of discursive production and investments is traced throughout this chapter. I argue that colonial aphasia is at work as major influences in the youth work sector including the rise of neoliberalism and managerialism, the expansion of youth development sciences, and the augmentation of youth rights frameworks are often activated through the rationality of protecting society from the threat of the racial other.

Major Events in Ontario's Youth Work Sector

This section traces the cyclical and dual process of naming and un-naming racism in anti-Black racism efforts in Ontario from 1992–2019 and the maintenance of circuits of Whiteness through ongoing erasures and colonial aphasia. As stated earlier, colonial aphasia actively dismembers concepts from their objects and meaning and breaks the semiotic relationship of the signifier and signified by affixing things to vacuous ideas, making it challenging to name that thing which is being spoken (Stoler, 2011, p.14). The discussion begins with a critical circuit surrounding the events of the Yonge Street demonstration (May 4, 1992), which commenced as a peaceful demonstration organised by advocacy groups such as the Black Action Defense Committee (BADC) in response to the police beating of Rodney King in the US and the shooting death of a young Black man, Raymond Lawrence, by Toronto Police just days before the protest (Braganza, 2016).

As one of its participants stated in a news article, “‘The event was a political catharsis,’ Farrell says. ‘A logjam broke – a logjam of denial by the authorities, a logjam of delusion by the political establishment’” (Black, 2017). The presence of organized Black bodies on Toronto's major artery making claims of racism and injustice, with bursts of anger and violence, became a critical moment in Ontario's anti-Black racism history. This jarring event compelled Ontario's NDP government to examine the state of race relations in Ontario. It commissioned Stephen Lewis, a prominent political figure and past leader of Ontario's NDP party, to provide a report with recommendations on how to address the upheaval. The *Ontario Race Relations* report was released June 9, 1992, within 40 days of the Yonge Street event. The rushed nature of the response was noted by the report's key players such as community leader Pamela Campbell, who described it "as a ‘three-month process crunched into one’" (Braganza, 2016). This urgency to

respond after a trigger event is evidenced in many other such moments of racial and violent upheaval.

Lewis' seminal report Ontario Race Relations was released June 9, 1992; the report provided recommendations on police accountability, employment equity, education, an anti-racism directorate (1993–1995) and community development. The report's opening pages stated:

First, what we are dealing with, at root, is anti-Black racism. While it is obviously true that every visible minority community experiences the indignities and wounds of systematic discrimination throughout Southern Ontario, it is the Black community which is the focus. It is the Blacks who are being shot, it is the Black youth that is unemployed in excessive numbers. It is the Black students who are being inappropriately streamed in schools, it is the Black kids who are disproportionately dropping out, it is housing communities with large concentrations of Black residents where the sense of vulnerability and discontent is most acute, it is Black employees, professional and non-professional, on whom the doors of upward equity slam shut. Just as the soothing balm of multiculturalism cannot mask racism, so racism cannot mask its primary target. (1992, p. 2)

This statement is still considered a pivotal point in the naming of anti-Black racism in Ontario.

However, Interviewee #6 a Black government bureaucrat, called this naming of anti-Black racism the 'Christopher Columbus' moment, for a White settler male utterance made Black suffering real and knowable within the mainstream discursive formation, while community advocates' struggles to name anti-Black racism for decades earlier remained unknowable. While the report named anti-Black racism, the language to name the settler colonial state's ongoing violence was not available to Lewis or the community members that were consulted during this time; therefore, anti-Black racism and systemic racism remained vaguely understood and moved

through the report devoid of an actor. Hunter and van der Westhuizen (2021) note that Whiteness upholds its respectability, oscillating between binaries of innocence and guilt, which “relies on the same possessive, narcissistic mastery logic of coloniality” (2). The ability to name anti-Black racism and yet maintain white goodness and benevolence is revealing of colonial aphasia.

The *Ontario Race Relations Report* (Lewis, 1992) dove into recommendations that included the criminal justice system, especially around the police task force, police complaints procedures, police training, and use of force. The report expressed astonishment that police training programs did not have race relations material and provided recommendations to include it in future training. A critical recommendation in the report revolved around the public's lack of confidence in the police complaints process, which consisted of ex-police investigating the complaints. The shifting of the governance of the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) from the Attorney General to the Solicitor General was one of the key recommendations from the report that was implemented soon after and remains a longstanding systemic change to the policing system. However, the accountability measures of the SIU remain an ongoing issue of contention even at present, such as the Conservative Ford government's budgetary cuts and ongoing efforts to narrow the scope of the SIU's mandate (Gillis, 2019; Jones, 2019).

The Lewis report mentioned youth towards the end of the report, and as usual, did so in relation to employment. In his report, Lewis mentioned youth:

I heard a lot about jobs, especially of course, from young people. They'll be delighted at the plans announced by Zanana last Friday... at one of the youth meetings, the discussion got round to some type of Provincial Advisory Youth Council... This entire rumbling, ill-defined question of dispossessed and alienated youth has to be addressed. I hope that some

of my recommendations are useful in that regard, but obviously it's becoming a major concern for government. (1992, p. 35)

Lewis stated that there was a 'major' problem of alienated youth for the Ontario government, specifically Black youth (1992, p. 35). This problematization of Black youth as alienated and disengaged became part of the dominant discourse in managing Black youth in Ontario in subsequent circuits of crisis and settler governmental response. Youth in poverty and those who were criminalized, were problematized into society's moral panics and provided governments the necessary impetus to act through policy development and investments (Wilson, 2009). While the Yonge Street riot was intended to bring about greater focus on addressing policing concerns and systemic racism, it intensified the gaze on racialized youth and their subject formation.

The management of youth through employment became a key intervention during this period. For example, as part of the Jobs Ontario Youth (1991–1994), a key programme known as Fresh Arts (1992–1994) engaged youth deemed high-risk in various projects during the summer months, including fine arts, music, and film (Sawchuk and Taylor, 2010). The funding was directed through the Toronto Arts Council (TAC) and their Culture Force fund that sought to provide funds to culturally diverse art groups and was overseen by prominent Black artist Lillian Allen. Fresh Arts was positioned as a program for high-risk youth and situated within the discourse of diversity and inclusion (Marsh, 2020). According to the TAC's AGM report, the program was funded \$29,500 by TAC in 1992 and \$35, 000 in 1993 (TAC, 1993). The program paid youth to engage in various projects during the summer months and included fine arts, music, and film (Sawchuk & Taylor, 2010).

The program supported the development of internationally renowned artists like Kardinal Offishal, Jully Black and Saukrates, and the Baby Blue Soundcrew (Black, 2011). Jully Black

talks about her collaborative hit song “Money Jane,” with Kardinal Offishal and Sean Paul, “It was a historic song, and it should definitely be noted that our relationships came out of Fresh Arts: literally, government intervention into the music scene” (Mistry, 2016). Despite its initiation as a jobs production program, Fresh Arts played a critical role in Canada's urban music industry as well as the paltry youth work sector that had seen very minimal funding up until then (Black, 2011; Marsh et al., 2020). Fresh Arts was remembered with some reverence by many of the interviewees, especially the racialized members of the sector who had witnessed its outcomes as young people. Interviewee #7, a community advocate and youth worker, passionately shared that:

Fresh Arts would be people like Jully Black, Kardi [Kardinal Offishal], Motion. And so, they were in the arts sector, but they were activists. They use their arts and platforms to empower, engage, and educate young people. And to also start to show positivity coming out of particular spaces, and the ability to succeed as a program, and that was led through Lillian Allen. But a ton of other folks, who were in the then government, were able to support internally that thing happening. And then that thing pulling together those young leaders, and then their influence through their craft broadened and set a new stage for the emergence of not just an arts sector, but an emerging Black youth consciousness that — and those are kind of some of the things that — because it wasn't social service sector, people don't always measure the influence and impact—

Interviewee #7 also acknowledged that “it was a bit of the stereotyping and profiling, which, in some elements, is true. Arts was an incredible tool to engage disenfranchised young people who were struggling to find an identity within a society that was still quite homogenous.” Interviewee #3 also recognized the seminal role of Fresh Arts but acknowledged the limitations of these

inclusionary efforts. Interviewee #7 reflected that these were based on the knowledge that was available at that moment in time. The dominance of liberal human rights discourses of social inclusion can be said to have influenced what could be imagined in this iteration of Black uprising.

The artists used their arts and platforms to empower, engage, and educate young people, their craft broadened and set a new stage for the emergence of not just an arts sector, but an emerging Black youth consciousness. The space for Black creativity that was accorded through the Fresh Arts programme is an indispensable outcome of the moments of inclusion. Walcott (2021) asserts that Black creativity is an important aspect of Black freedom, as the colonial practices of slavery denied and dismissed Black innovation and imagination. Furthermore, Blackness remains under perpetual surveillance under the white gaze and remains challenging to create space for the Black imagination within a settler colonial landscape (Walcott, 2021).

Years of advocacy efforts by groups such as BADC along with the Lewis report and Ontario's New Democratic Party's leadership allowed for space to dialogue on anti-Black racism and systemic racism that impacts the Black community. The report provides recommendations on employment equity, education, the establishment of the Ontario Anti-Racism Secretariat, the Cabinet Committee on Race Relations and community development. The recommendation around the establishment of an Anti-Racism Directorate alluded to a cabinet committee on race relations that existed in the 1980s but "it eventually just dissipated" (Lewis, 1992, p. 32). The mention of previous failed iterations is indicative of what the future held in store for the Directorate and cabinet committees that were established.

The momentum generated from the 1992 Yonge Street event ran a course of barely three years before swift erasures by the two-term Conservative government (1995–2003) that brought

harsh social policy measures, known as the “common sense revolution.” There was a 22% cut to social assistance, the reduction of principals’ and teachers’ right to strike alongside the amalgamation of school boards lent itself to ongoing protests, walkouts, and strikes (Rodricks et al., 2018). The provincial Conservative’s Harris (1995–2002) and Eves (2002–2003) governments held a long tenure of silencing anti-racism, specifically anti-Black racism and calls for equality and justice by the Black community. Walcott and Abdillahi (2019) reflect on the Yonge Street riot and the early nineties as a period where Black cultural presence and the circulation of anti-Black racism discourse burgeoned and add that the Ontario Progressive Conservative party’s leadership “signalled the beginning of the end of Black possibilities in a number of ways” (p.12). For example, the Anti-racism Directorate and its cabinet committees, settlement house, and the Jobs Ontario Youth programme were closed or defunded. Consequentially, valuable youth programmes like Fresh Arts no longer received funding and eventually closed, endangering the opportunities for Black creativity; in addition, official spaces for dialogue on anti-racism and anti-Black racism no longer existed.

The small burgeoning youth sector in Ontario and Toronto suffered as a result of this erasure as well and was relegated to piecemeal projects focused on sports, arts, and employment targeting the overall youth population. Funding cuts that especially hinder marginalised community progress function as a form of white rage (Anderson, 2017), which points to the bureaucratic measures that seek the destruction of racial justice through hard to identify mechanisms built within the walls of institutions. Marginalised communities are denied supports and rights, which results in negative youth outcomes: they become problematized and again require government ‘action’ in the name of reports and investigations.

Through the unnamable measures of White rage, anti-Black racism was subject once again to what Mills (2012) calls White ignorance, or others such as Hesse (1996) have called White amnesia, wherein racial advancement and the violence that Whiteness exercise are erased from both White and racialized memory. As mentioned earlier, Stoler's (2016) concept of colonial aphasia captures the active dissociation that is occurring, which makes it difficult to remember the events that had occurred and to find the language for the violence endured. In this circuit of Whiteness, efforts to name anti-Black racism and the history of Black resistance and organising remains fleeting and subject to colonial aphasia as an active dissociation occurs from the language of anti-Black racism and Black creativity. Notably, anti-Black racism is erased in public discourse and practice for almost another twenty-five years until BLM takes to the streets in 2014.

The Authorization of Racial Spatialization Strategies in the Governance of Youth

The Harris regime came to an end in 2002 and the Liberal party's reign (2003–2018) introduced the era that primarily leaned on liberal and affirmative forms of governing, which is the key focus of this study. Discourses around space, poverty and health were in greater circulation in the early 2000s, leading to the initiation of the priority neighbourhood focus for community development work in especially Toronto. This was in alignment with place-based theories and strategies that were already in circulation in the UK and US; the borrowing of such strategies from imperial centres and modern empires remains a dominant practice in Ontario and Canada. Key partners of the provincial government, such as the UWGT along with the City of Toronto led the charge in mobilizing a place-based approach. PBPC (MacDonnell, 2004) paved the way for a conjoined initiative that resulted in the *Strong Neighbourhood Task Force: A Call-to-Action* report (UWGT & City of Toronto, 2005) and the *Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods*

Strategy (2005). Many of the interviewees expressed that the acknowledgement that racialized poverty was concentrated in particular neighbourhoods was initially considered a major step to addressing the growing disparities. For the most part, the application of a racial spatial lens to youth work and community development work was received positively. This form of support brought new resources to these communities: on the other hand, it situated them within the stigma of troubled crime-ridden racialized spaces and subjected them to further social exclusions. The discourses, mechanisms, and effects of this racial spatial focus of youth work is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

Managing White Panic Over the Threat of Racial Youth Violence

Racial spatialized and poverty discourses quickly became attached to moral panics around racialized youth violence and gained saliency in mainstream discourses. Ontario found itself amidst another racial crisis in 2005 dubbed the ‘Year of the Gun,’ which consisted of fifty-two gun-related deaths out of Toronto’s eighty homicides, many of which involved Black youth. The Dec 26th, 2005, shooting death of a young White female by-stander, Jane Creba, on a key metropole street (Yonge and Dundas) resulted in significant outcry and jolted the public and national consciousness.⁸ There were nineteen young men under the age of twenty-two who died in 2005 before Jane Creba, some of them also innocent by-standers; however, they were Black males and did not receive the same degree of public outcry (Arvast, 2016). Colonial practices that relegated Blackness to the category of non-human and dangerous to the Canadian national

⁸ Gun violence statistics are regularly compared to this tragic year; for example, 2016 was considered the worst year for gun related deaths since the Year of the Gun with forty-one gun-related deaths (Edwards, 2016); that was until 2018 when we saw the record number of ninety-six deaths by homicides with fifty-one of those due to gun violence (Gillis, 2019).

project continue to authorize Black suffering as invisible or normal, while the same forms of suffering are not tolerated in the protected spaces of White metropolitan centres and White suburbs (Jackson, 2020; Maynard, 2017; Rios, 2020; Walcott and Abdillahi, 2019). It then becomes an issue of crisis when it spills over from the specific racialized neighbourhoods and onto the streets of the metropolis where it transforms into a threat to White security. Razack (2002) identified that racialized populations are rarely seen in areas that are deemed to be White settler spaces, such as the metropolis, other than as a racial shadow to be cleared. Subsequently, when violence from the racialized neighbourhoods spills over to the centres, there is significant terror associated with the event. Subsequently, significant effort is unleashed through racist over-policing, as well as the persistent systemic underfunding of racialized communities that contributes to their state of injury (Mbembe, 2019); however, forms of state terror recede into the background, while narratives of youth crime dominate the discursive field.

Outcry, investigations and reports, increased policing, and new underfunded programmes for marginalised youth swiftly followed under Ontario's Liberal Party (2003–2017). A new community policing unit, Toronto Anti-Violence Intervention Strategy (TAVIS) (2006–2017) and a racialized funding body, the Youth Challenge Fund (YCF) (2006–2012) were announced. After subsequent violence in 2007, the Ontario government commissioned the *Roots of Youth Violence Report* (McMurtry & Curling, 2008). In addition, the Toronto Police Services implemented the School Resource Officer (SRO) that introduced police into schools in primarily racialized and poor neighbourhoods. The UWGT's report *Poverty by Postal Code* (MacDonnell et al., 2004) released before the Year of the Gun (2005) authorized the use of a place-based approach, which became a dominant model of intervention of both policing and the youth work sector. The place-based approach brought in increased funding to certain spaces but also allowed

greater surveillance and governing of marginalised racialized neighbourhoods, initially labelled as Toronto's thirteen priority neighbourhoods.

Due to the significant impact that TAVIS had in the lives of racialized members in Toronto, I briefly expound on the program here. TAVIS was launched under the leadership of David Miller with \$5 million invested per year and was intended to be a temporary body focused on handling crime intervention, intelligence gathering, and community building (Gillis, 2018). TAVIS engaged in the highly contentious policing initiative of carding, which is the random stop-and-check practice of police in urban communities that disproportionately targeted young Black and other racialized people (Cole, 2020). The unit was responsible for collecting the largest amount of data on racialized community members over a short time through carding practices. During its almost decade-long existence, TAVIS manufactured the label, "known to police," of hundreds of Black and Brown youth, resulting in destructive and irreversible impacts on their lives (Eizadirad, 2016).

Despite calls for TAVIS and the practice of carding to be stopped by community advocates, the TAVIS unit was made permanent by the provincial government after the mass shootings in 2012 in the Danzig neighbourhood and the largest mall in Toronto, the Eaton Centre Mall. Ongoing criticism launched by BLM TO and activists like Desmond Cole brought further attention to the racial profiling inherent in TAVIS' practices. Nonetheless, as TAVIS was viewed by police as an important surveillance and policing tool, revised forms of carding were approved by the Toronto Police Services Board in 2015 under the leadership of the first Black Police chief, Mark Saunders (Canadian Civil Liberties Association, 2015). Carding eventually was disbanded in 2018 after ongoing advocacy and the release of a Human Rights Commission report labelling carding practices violating human rights of Black community members. However, the data

collected over the years remains available to police and continue to be utilized in the surveillance of racialized lives.

Saberi (2017) examined the rise of TAVIS as a form of governing poor and racialized communities using the spatial logics that focused on neighbourhoods. The policing of racialized, immigrant neighbourhoods was viewed as logical, for the growing non-White communities were blamed for the violence (Saberi, 2017). I argue that governing through racial spatialization logic goes beyond policing practices and governs inclusionary mechanisms such as youth work. The utilization of urban planning and spatial development knowledge frameworks by various stakeholders has authorized the focus on the racialized and the poor and remains a key form of organization within the youth work sector.

The Youth Challenge Fund: Strange Encounters and the Management of Space and Race

As mentioned earlier, neoliberal settler colonial governmentality engages in both disciplinary and inclusionary mechanisms of managing unruly subjects. Inclusionary mechanisms invite the stranger in with the hopes of them adopting the goals of the governmental project. Subsequently, alongside TAVIS, the YCF (2006–2013) was also established to address the issue of racialized violence on the streets of Toronto. The YCF was mandated as a racialized community funder and was tasked with providing short-term (3-year) funding for youth-led projects intended for racialized youth within what the City of Toronto had established as the 13 priority neighbourhoods.

YCF employed a spatial lens with the focus on the 13 priority neighbourhoods and had a focus on its four pillars to guide their work: youth led/driven; community-based; systemic transformation; and collaboration (YCF, 2013). The goals of the initiative revolved around social justice and social inclusion such as building voice and participation, and broadening access to

opportunities such as employment, social enterprise, and education. The YCF is noted to have received a contribution of \$41 million from the Ontario Liberal McGuinty government and the UWGT over the course of the YCF tenure (2006–2013). It rolled out \$60,000 in funding to over 110 youth-led organizations over three years in different phases for its first four to five years. This was followed by larger legacy initiatives of around 1–2 million dollars, a large portion of which went towards infrastructure investments in City of Toronto spaces as well as investments in youth-led capacity development, social enterprise, young women’s focus, education, and the arts.

The position of being the first racialized youth funder was considered a major opportunity for the racialized youth communities who were striving to bring about change in their neighbourhoods. A few of the interviewee participants played key roles during the YCF era and shared their experiences during this period of experimentation and capacity-building within the youth work sector. Interviewee #4 stated that the funding started off as piecemeal offerings of \$12 million and they were under rigid financial stipulations to raise further money for it to be matched by the province. They asserted that funds were raised under immense time crunch through the support of the UWGT and the YCF leadership, while they were simultaneously under pressure to build the infrastructure and serve the community.⁹ The piecemeal funding and initial 3-year funding period were derided by Interviewee #4 who played a key role in the YCF leadership:

⁹ Ron Rock was initially named YCF’s Executive Director but was succeeded by Pamela Campbell within two years, who remained till the end of the YCF’s existence.

Yeah, because you could do that in three years, right, Maria? Easy peasy. Nothing. Get the money in, just send it out, and you tick the box, and it's all done because we're not talking about systemic anything. Those pillars... That stuff, they didn't have any of that in place. They just wanted to have the tick box, photo op, political thing was, "Community asked for this. This happened. We gave this much money to 121 initiatives in 13 priority neighborhoods. Done."

The handful of interviewees who hailed from the YCF era shared the overwhelming pressures placed on them to meet rather unrealistic expectations. YCF remained in a precarious position during its entire tenure (2006–2013). Almost all the study participants highlighted that such social inclusion investments are undertaken to manage public relations around the moral panic surrounding racial violence; the investors have little regard for how such it leads to social change or alleviate the challenges faced by particular communities. The need to appease a frustrated community and maintain the state's equilibrium functions as a key motivator of such funding allocations. Coulthard (2014) and Kwon (2013) point to such efforts as being under the guise of social justice goals of recognition and redistribution but are not intended to be transformational.

The Roots of Youth Violence Report

The *Roots of Youth Violence Report* (McMurtry & Curling, 2008) played a critical role in the structural and discursive rollout of youth policy making and youth work in Ontario. The report targets gun violence and Black youth as its focal subject. The roots, mainly that of poverty, are connected to place and to racism; the report adds that poor community design, issues in the education system, family issues, health, youth disengagement and a lack of voice, lack of economic opportunities, and concerns within the justice system are critical areas that disproportionately affect urban Black youth.

The *Roots* report stated that the goal of an inclusive and safe society in Ontario was the impetus for taking action on the issue of youth violence and named gun violence as its focus and Black youth as its focal subject. Racism was singled out as a crucial issue within the *Roots* (2008) document and was interwoven in various parts of the discussion. The large consultative process that included vocal grassroots youth groups and various racialized community groups contributed to identifying racism as a key factor.¹⁰ As noted by many of the interviewees earlier, the direct naming of racism was not sanctioned within this period; therefore, it was considered a triumph by community members to be able to name racism within public discourse. In the opening pages of *Roots*' "Key Findings and Analysis" section, they stated: "We found the roots to be extensive and pervasive. They permeate society, but are intertwined and particularly virulent in certain neighbourhoods, and made worse everywhere when they include racism" (McMurtry & Curling, 2008, p. 2). The roots, mainly that of poverty, are connected to place and to racism; the report added that poor community design, issues in the education system, family issues, health, youth disengagement and a lack of voice, lack of economic opportunities, and concerns within the justice system were critical areas that disproportionately affect urban Black youth. While the report admitted to racism and included Blackness within this speech act, it firmly embedded Black youth violence within discourses of poverty, racial spatial lack, and mental health issues such as isolation, alienation, and anger management. The attachment of

¹⁰ Similar to the Stephen Lewis report, this report points to its hastened nature to meet with over 750 people in varied form. It lists off the many ways diverse and powerful voices were included, such as members from 12 different Ontario ministries, City of Toronto, United Way and members of the Grassroots Youth Collaborative. Travel to London to explore the UK's models of handling youth crime, especially urban Black youth crime, was also part of the one-year timeframe.

youth issues to these particular discourses has dictated the directions in which this issue has been taken up over the last 12 to 13 years.

Furthermore, in the naming of Black youth in a report set out to identify the roots of youth violence, the report attaches Blackness to violence and authorizes the fixation of the White gaze on black youth. Subsequently, Black youth are legitimised as subjects needing intervention within the sector. Racial spaces and its people are made to belong within a carceral archipelago (Foucault, 1979) as they are routinely problematised and brought under the White gaze and subject to increased scrutiny and discipline.

In addition, key parts of the report bracketed the conversation to not explore the roots but rather the immediate risk factors of the roots themselves (McMurtry & Curling, 2008). The report stated that:

We will not attempt in this chapter to outline every aspect of the roots we have identified.

We were asked to avoid reinventing the wheel, and it would serve no purpose for us to restate here the large volume of research findings and reports detailing the existence and nature of the roots we discuss in this chapter. Instead, we will review how each of the many well-documented roots can lead to alienation, a lack of hope, no sense of belonging, a sense of deep injustice, or to a combination of any of these and the other immediate risk factors. Our focus in this chapter is on the effects, rather than the existence, of these roots.

(2008, p. 29)

There appears to be a quick dismissal of the need to explore why such issues of poverty and racism exist within particular neighbourhoods. It takes it as an accepted truth that extensive knowledge has been produced on issues of racism and poverty in Canada and that trudging through those areas would be a waste of resources. Such assumptions efface Canada's history of

conquest and colonization that upend White settler mythologies of terra nullius and a national imaginary fashioned around goodness and benevolence (Razack, 2002; Thobani, 2007).

While racism is singled out as a crucial issue within the *Roots of Youth Violence Report* (2008); this was considered a triumph by community members, as the direct naming of systemic racism was not possible in this period by sector members. Even while governmental institutions such as police and education were named for their biases and prejudicial practices, it was individual racism that was underscored. This can be viewed in its definition of racism itself:

Racism is manifested in three ways. There are those who expressly espouse racist views as part of a personal credo. There are those who subconsciously hold negative attitudes towards Black persons based on stereotypical assumptions concerning persons of colour. Finally, and perhaps most pervasively, racism exists within the interstices of our institutions. This systemic racism is a product of individual attitudes and beliefs concerning Blacks and it fosters and legitimizes those assumptions and stereotypes.

(McMurtry & Curling, 2008, p. 238)

The definition is devoid of governmental actors and the project of settler colonialism, racialized disparity, and structural racism. There is little attention paid to how such stereotypes find themselves in circulation; racism simply is a naturally occurring phenomenon and the colonial and capitalist enterprise is hidden from view (Aubrecht, 2010). This omission of structural racism as a practice of neoliberal settler-colonial governmentality transpires either due to fear or duress and functions as another example of colonial aphasia. As stated earlier, colonial aphasia actively dismembers concepts from their objects and meaning and breaks the semiotic relationship of the signifier and signified by affixing things to vacuous ideas, making it challenging to name that thing which is being spoken (Stoler, 2011, p.14). In situating structural

racism as an outcome of individual opinions it frees institutions from taking any responsibility and the gaze is placed on individuals harbouring such views and their victims.

In naming racism, the *Roots* (2008) report narrowed the parameters of knowledge about structural racism and transferred the gaze to individual racism. This re-framing of racism sanitized and White-washed the radical social justice ambitions of Black activists like Dudley Lums and BADC's demands to focus on the racist systems from the 1992 Yonge Street riot circuit. It does not identify the system of power, the actors, technologies and tools that perpetuate racism, rather it fixates the gaze on the racialized community, racialized spaces, and racialized youth and their heightened potential for violence. Subsequently, this definition of systemic racism absolves institutions from taking responsibility and narrows the parameters of knowledge on structural racism.

Furthermore, the signaling of other knowledges to stand in place of colonial or racial knowledges is a recurring practice. The report listed 14 different scholarly theories in its literature review: biosocial theory; psychological theories; rational choice theory; social disorganization theory; economic deprivation; strain theories; social learning theories; subcultures of violence; social learning, the media and violence; perceptions of injustice, crime and violence; social control theory; self-control theory; integrated life course theories; and lastly critical perspectives on violence. Most of these theories are situated within medical and psychological scientific knowledges and were influenced by the social determinants of health (SDOH) approach.¹¹ These theories appear to converge on the point that the stressors of

¹¹ In 2002 Canadian social policymakers, community leaders, and health experts met for a conference on the social determinants of health. Ten were chosen based on existing reports from the World Health Organization and Health

inequality, such as racism and poverty, produce the conditions that trigger violence among particular groups of young people.

Therefore, when the effects of the roots were foregrounded, that of alienation, isolation, and disengagement, it was suggested that these risky and violent youth were to be managed within a psychiatric medical model that focuses on building their resiliency and mental health (Voronka, 2013). Mental health and trauma are mentioned heavily within the report; this eventually triggered the *Open Minds, Healthy Minds* (Ontario Ministry of Health, 2011) mental health strategy. The associated interventions of building cultural competency, cultural training, and hiring more diverse bodies were also a key part of its recommendations. The prominence of cognitive youth development models and positive youth development models in the governing of racialized youth will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 7.

Furthermore, the report's first and major recommendation is greater organization of sector goals through a youth development resource framework, strategy, and policy. The *Roots* report (McMurtry & Curling, 2008) identified its core finding as the lack of greater unity and discipline within the sector:

In approaching our work, we were asked not to reinvent the wheel. We found little need to do so. Good work and good ideas abound. To work with that metaphor, we found many excellent "wheels." The problem, however, is that they are not all connected to the same vehicle, and those that are on the same vehicle frequently have separate steering systems and often separate drivers with different ideas of what the destination is and how to get

Canada. The Toronto Charter on the Social Determinants of Health was created and ratified at the conference (Raphael et al., 2004)

there. That is why we give the highest priority to governance and otherwise tend to provide more advice than recommendations. What matters most is getting the wheels onto vehicles that are following an agreed-upon map to a shared destination. (p.3)

The need for greater governance, coordination, and management was heralded as the key recommendation of the document. The practice of colonial aphasia (Stoler, 2016) is evident in the discombobulated rationality of adopting managerial principles in the youth work sector as the cardinal recommendation in a report set to address the roots of Black youth violence. The report, while it made numerous critical suggestions throughout its more than 400 pages of findings, began and closed with the logics of not requiring much change as things were already working rather well. Instead, the political rationality of managerialism, which promotes the interests of neoliberal White settler governmentality, was offered and this has primarily gone unchallenged by members of the sector.

The recommendations focused on the construction of a central government body that could manage and govern youth-related activities and the creation of an evidence-based youth developmental framework to guide strategy and policy development. The governance focused interventions that were beneficial to the state, such as resource frameworks, strategies, and policies were meticulously carried out in the years following by the MCYS under the Liberal government. This was met through the launching of *Stepping Stones: A Resource on Youth Development* (MCYS, 2012a), Ontario's *Youth Action Plan* (YAP) (MCYS, 2012b), and *Stepping Up: A Strategic Framework to Help Ontario's Youth Succeed* (MCYS, 2013). The critical ideas to address systemic issues such as the surveillance and criminalisation of Black youth, embedded deep within the *Roots of Youth Violence Report* (McMurtry and Curling, 2008) were not activated, as governance-focused recommendations that furthered neoliberal settler

goals took precedence.

The *Roots of Youth Violence Report* (McMurtry and Curling, 2008) also brought youth work more closely within the medical, psychological, youth development frameworks and managerial principles of evidence-based programming. The political rationality of assets and managerialism, which promotes neoliberal goals (Sukarieh & Tannock, 2011) is advanced through discourses of crisis around racialized and Black youth violence. This emphasis on data and evidence-based programming redirected the nascent systemic critique that was being nurtured by racialized youth groups in the YCF era and shifted it towards assets and evidence-based programming to qualify for funding, or risk perishing. This shift curtailed grassroots community work, stunted experimentation and stifled the creation of alternatives by Black and Othered communities.

Subsequently, YCF was evaluated using the new managerial and evidence-based positive youth development model and was deemed ineffective in reducing youth violence (For Youth Initiative, Laidlaw Foundation and UWGT, 2018). YCF was not renewed in 2012 despite another spate of violence that year, with the Eaton Centre and Danzig mass shootings, the worst in Toronto's history. YCF's work was subsumed under the Ministry of Child and Youth Services Youth Opportunities Grant (YOP) and the UWGT; while TAVIS was renewed in 2012, cementing the state of exclusion that Blackness occupies in Canada (Walcott & Abdillahi, 2019).

YCF's presence as a Black and racialized youth funder from 2005–2012 resulted in the inclusion of Black, Indigenous, People of Colour (BIPOC) as staff and the grassroots organizations it funded being invited into traditionally white spaces to engage with politicians, policy makers, funders, and key institutions. This inclusion resulted in strange encounters (Ahmed, 2012) and the continual endurance of a soft violence. Interviewee #6 was closely

involved in these meetings and shared that naming racism remained elusive despite experiences of microaggressions:

It was always that elephant in the room that everyone wanted to say— fuck your comfort. But we couldn't, and we had to always dance around it, massage it, and make people feel good about even being in the room with us [Black and other racialized members]. And it's that work, that tension, and what it does to our sort of effective[ness]. Yeah, no, but even then, the emergent language of White fragility. White guilt. That was emergent language.

We were starting to put names to the things that we were being confronted with...

The lack of language to name the soft violence that endured through these encounters with Whiteness is a function of colonial aphasia (Stoler, 2011). The tenacity required to withstand the force of White comfort results in a silent suffering by racialized subjects within the sector and is a form of ongoing colonial pressure or duress that many experience (Badwall, 2015; Stoler, 2016).

There remains a sense of loss and yearning for the YCF era as it provided a unique institutional space for racialized, especially Black, youth capacity development, experimentation, innovation, and dialogue. Interviewee #12, a White provincial bureaucrat reflected:

So, the YCF to the YOF is a really good example, right? At this point [2019] the Youth Opportunities Fund has doled out significantly more money than the YCF. But we sort of still yearn for them... I was involved with something at both of them, but we still sort of yearn for the sort of YCF because it was a cohort of people that were deeply invested in that, who had their own voices and platforms.

The ability to come together to voice concerns and mobilize on particular issues, policies, and practices was a strength of the YCF. Interviewee #13 stated that despite the ongoing allocation of dollars to racialized groups, racialized members of the sector mourned the loss of the YCF. However, this is not an uncritical nostalgia, the loss is felt even while recognizing the YCF's flaws and weaknesses. There remains a yearning for the space for experimentation and the sense of community that it fostered, which felt snuffed out at its peak of community capacity-building and during another cloud of youth violence in 2012. The snuffing out of the rising practices of racialized and Black movement, innovation, and creativity is a key strategy of settler-colonial governmentality. Similar to the anti-racism efforts in the 90s, the alternative space created for engagement and community capacity-building during the YCF era truncated the spaces available for Black and other racialized youth and sector members' critical dialogue, solidarity building, and experimentation.

The Rise of Managerialism and Youth Development Sciences

The production of a framework of youth discourse to govern the sector was deemed necessary by the key stakeholders of the youth work sector, which includes the province, the city of Toronto and UWGT. Subsequently, we see the introduction of an asset-based framework and the MCYS launched *Stepping Stones* in the spring of 2012. It focused on the cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development of youth. The framework did receive criticisms from the youth serving sector for failing to focus on the social and structural elements that contribute to youth development. However, as its adoption was necessary for obtaining grants, the document was in high circulation and became part of the sector's dominant knowledge within a few years.

The roll out of *Stepping Stones* in the summer of 2012 was obstructed by one of the worst mass shootings in Toronto's history at the Eaton Centre in June, 2012, followed by the Danzig shooting at a local community barbeque that involved racialized youth in July, 2012.¹² The mass shootings were the peak of a tense and violent summer that had many youth across the city mourning numerous losses and trembling in fear of retaliation and further loss. Members of the Black community and youth advocates pushed the province and the City for a swift response. Media frenzy grew around the public's need to curb violence. There was a resurrection of the *Roots* report following the tragedies and the community uproar; issues of racism also regained some saliency.

Similar to the urgent response after the Yonge Street protest and the 2005 Year of the Gun, the mass shootings elicited a similar response by Liberal Premier Dalton McGuinty. The Youth Action Plan (YAP) (2012) was released 30 days after the Danzig shooting. The YAP spoke to the *Roots* report in great detail and stated that the report "correctly identifies other challenges [beyond access to services] that disadvantaged youth face, such as racism and lack of culturally appropriate services" (MCYS, 2012, p. 1). The *Roots* report's mention of racism and poverty once again gained a certain saliency, and issues of race and racism slowly entered the conversation again. However, in the early pages of the YAP we hear:

Over and above all else we have heard that there are already significant resources, capacity and leadership in these communities, and that we need to learn from and build on programs that are already working. We must increase support for evidence-based,

¹² The tragedies that occurred within six weeks of each other resulted in the deaths of two young people in the Eaton's Centre. There were two more at Danzig, one of them being a youth worker and the other a 12-year-old child, with dozens more injured in each event.

impactful initiatives that provide opportunities to youth and that strengthen community capacity; we must begin early in a young person's life, and we must better coordinate our efforts and take a long-term, sustained approach that focuses on positive youth outcomes. (2012, p. 2)

The YAP stated that there were significant resources already in place, along with great capacity and leadership in the community. After weeks of outrage from the community and widespread community consultation, the discourse of not reinventing the wheel and to focus on managerial goals of coordination were reiterated. This appears to be contradictory to the news reports and requests made by community to shift practices including education, criminal justice system, child welfare, and employment (Palamarchuk, 2012). The rallying cry for change was missing in the YAP's opening pages, and it rather opted for a narrative that helped to maintain the status quo of the state and substantiated the focus of the state to enhance governance and create an evidence-based model through which to invest in youth programs.

The Youth Opportunities Fund (YOF) (2012), with an investment of \$5 million per year and a mandate to focus on disadvantaged neighbourhoods, was launched and was considered an adequate response to the impending closure of the YCF. However, as stated earlier, members of the sector were critical of this investment as the YOF did not have a racialized youth focus, it was housed within the MCYS itself and did not have a focus on Toronto youth like the YCF did. The YAP also allocated funds to expand the Youth Outreach Worker (YOW) program. The number of YOWs increased from 62 to 97 across Ontario.¹³

13 Greater supports were guaranteed to the YOWs and groups such as East Metro Youth Services who spearheaded the training and support for the YOWs. Despite feedback provided on the YOW program, the YOWs limited mandate remained. The YOWs were only allowed to connect and refer youth out to various services and could not provide direct counselling even though they develop close relationships with the youth.

The focus on poverty and the need for redistribution of resources was the community's counter narrative to the violence that plagued the streets. The community's call for more youth jobs received heightened attention and became a dominant counter narrative to increased policing through TAVIS. A *Toronto Star* article quoted an anonymous source on the violence in 2012: "You know what's going on with these kids right now? These kids got no jobs, and they're hungry. And it's a big problem. A big problem" (Poisson & Dempsey, 2012). The need to provide employment to under-resourced youth was a theme throughout the aftermath of the shootings at Danzig and the Eaton Centre.

As a result, the YAP provided program expansion of the summer Focus on Youth programs to include 220 after-school jobs. The Youth in Policing Initiative (YIPI) summer program was also expanded to provide 270 after-school youth positions in Ontario. YIPI attempted to build positive relations with the police and youth from Toronto's marginalized neighbourhoods. In addition, actions such as expanding on existing Parenting and Family Literacy centres were also named within the YAP. The need to support the parenting skills of the broken Black family remained a recurring theme. Heightened surveillance and the promotion of a neoliberal entrepreneurial subject remained a key outcome of programs such as YIPI, and these themes are explored in greater detail in Chapter 6. The practices of data gathering and intervening based on data, especially race-based data, is problematized in my research as the gathering of data is not a simple numerical exercise and remains tied to systems of power and political rationalities (O'Connell, 2013).

Stepping Up's (MCYS, 2013) sudden shift to an evidence-based system also excluded numerous community-based groups and re-organized the youth work sector. Efforts to support community groups included the promotion of a collective impact model of working together and the establishment of the Youth Research and Exchange Hub (YouthREX) at York University, which works to support grassroots youth groups to build their capacity in evaluation frameworks and data collection. This significant shift in the youth work sector influenced the work of other actors such as the City of Toronto's *Toronto Youth Equity Strategy* (TYES) (2015). Chapter 6 examines these various strategies in greater detail and traces the evidence-based and youth development knowledges, practices and effects that govern the sector.

Black Lives Matter and the Rise of Anti-Racism Discourse in Youth Social Policy

BLM TO Chapter's protests (2015–2017) once again brought the issue of anti-Black racism to the streets, reminiscent of the 1992 Yonge Street riot. BLM TO called for justice for the deaths of Andrew Loku (2015), Jermaine Carby (2015), and Abdirahman Abdi (2016) at the hands of police officers in Ontario. The practices of carding by TAVIS also became a key concern for the BLM TO movement.¹¹ Once again in response to violence and upheaval on the streets, the Liberal government, under Premier Kathleen Wynne's leadership, established the Anti-Racism Directorate (2015), launched numerous large consultation efforts, and released *A Better Way Forward: Ontario's 3-year Anti-racism strategy* (Government of Ontario, 2017a) and population-specific initiatives to address anti-Black, anti-Indigenous, and anti-Islam racism.

The efforts of BLM TO and the TRC, along with international actors, enabled the language of systemic racism to re-enter society in deeper and more profound ways; however, White ignorance, aphasia, and White rage continue to shape the way systemic racism is understood in this circuit as well. For example, in *A Better Way Forward*, then-Premier Kathleen

Wynne, stated “I had the chance to attend the first of these meetings. It was powerful and eye-opening to hear exactly how racism has directly affected people’s lives in our communities” (2017, p. 4). Similarly, McMurtry and Curling in 2008 stated in the *Roots of Youth Violence Report* that “Deep concerns about racism pervaded our consultations. We were taken aback by the extent to which racism is alive and well... We had assumed that progress was continuing to be made even though the discourse was less evident” (p. 39). Similarly, Lewis in 1992 stated, “Those discussions [on racism] had a visceral impact on me” (1992, p. 2). Despite long careers as politicians and witnessing various anti-racism struggles throughout that time, such recursive claims of ignorance and epiphany continue to support racial hierarchies (Mills, 2012; Thobani, 2007). Bonilla-Silva et al. (2020) argue that such naming allows for the ‘good White’ category to be upheld, where White supremacy is acknowledged but not one’s complicity in the system, which may have opened up possibilities for different conversations and interventions. The role of settler state’s ongoing complicity within these unequal relations of power and the oppressive conditions faced by many marginalized communities requires greater scrutiny within public policy. However, there are also risks that the rhetoric of complicity can spiral into apologies, an increasingly prevalent practice in government, but do little to shift the realities of those harmed (O’Connell, 2015).

The collection of race-based data, promoting culturally sensitive evidence-based models, and focusing on racialized and Black community’s needs has become the major focus in this circuit of addressing systemic racism and anti-Black racism. For example, *Ontario's Anti-Black Racism Strategy* (2017b) focuses on race-based data collection, culturally sensitive programming, and educating the general public on systemic racism. The *Ontario Black Youth Action Plan’s* (BYAP) allocation of \$47 million over four years (2017–2021) focuses on Black

youth employment, parenting and mentoring programs, and a culturally-sensitive aggression management program.¹² Many of the interviewees stated that despite all the resources targeting the Black community in this current cycle, there is little additional benefit to the communities that arise out of these mechanisms. Interviewee #10 noted the efforts made to develop a culturally sensitive collective impact model of working together in the youth work sector.¹³ He stated that the Ontario BYAP version of collective impact, “we call CI squared, Collective Impact Cultural Identity...it takes into consideration the realities that exist for the Black community because this is for the Black Youth Action Plan. It acknowledges the historical context of colonialism” (Interviewee #10). Interviewee #10 expressed the intentional efforts made to create a collective impact model that focuses on anti-racism and recognises the impacts of colonialism through the BYAP. However, as these areas have not been focused upon in the past, the infrastructure required to create culturally sensitive collective impact is a new undertaking, one that Interviewee #10 identified as requiring considerable political will and investment.

However, the change in government from the liberals to the conservatives in 2018, significantly stalled the momentum for change as BYAP efforts and other aspects of the Anti-Racist Directorate were halted or saw a reduction in funding. Subsequently, there are limits again placed on the Black imagination to re-envision a collective impact model. Furthermore, in a moment where systemic racism and anti-Black racism discourse has been sanctioned and named, the opportunity provided to build and innovate new strategies is narrowly limited to envisioning only within an existing evidence-based model focused on collaboration and not outside of it. The ability to envision new alternates and innovate solutions that might be more attuned to the community’s needs remains limited to settler state approved models.

Nonetheless, the insertion of anti-racism discourse, despite its limitations in its current formulation, has emboldened some members of the sector to critique and question White power systems and functions as a form of catharsis. A racialized member of the sector, Interviewee #14 stated, “It's very different than how we were operating 10, 15 years ago. And with the erection of the [Toronto Confronting Anti-Black Racism] office, now we're actually able to call people out on anti-Black racism shit.” It is deemed a feat to now name Whiteness and systemic racism in a country that unreservedly donned the cloak of multiculturalism, tolerance, and benevolence while skilfully erasing its Othering practices and maintaining settler rule. However, these slow discursive changes are not as comforting to the communities who interviewee #6 stated are ‘under siege’ in their own neighbourhoods where inadequate material conditions remain in place; however, Black and other racialized communities’ advancement and creativity is subject to cyclical erasures and aphasia.

Most of the interviewees shared the sentiment and concern that this may not shift practices in any substantial manner. Those who were present during earlier iterations of such cycles of anti-racism remained sceptical for they saw the erasure of such momentum. In the latest circuit of Whiteness, the current Conservative government (2018–present) has removed \$2 million in funding from its initial \$7 million to the Anti-Racism Directorate and closed the various secretariats (Dhanraj & Westoll, 2019). It shuttered the Provincial Advocate’s Office for Child and Youth, a critical voice on youth issues, as well as the Premier's Council on Youth Opportunities, along with cuts to various other programs such as community hubs that support marginalised communities. Furthermore, interviewees who were working on the BYAP stated that there has been a halting of action and momentum has waned upon the election of the Conservative government; for example, even information on the BYAP was no longer available

on the government website (2018–2020).

However, upon the revival of the BLM TO protests in 2020, due to the death of George Floyd in the US, the killing of BIPOC people at the hands of police in Ontario, and COVID-19's uneven impact on Black and poor communities, the government revitalized its anti-Black racism efforts. They allocated \$1.5 million dollars for an anti-racism panel and the BYAP once again was made available on the governmental website after these announcements. However, as Anderson (2017) noted, institutional focus can shift overnight to something else that requires resources; subsequently, funding allocations, erected directorates, or committees can be swiftly eliminated. Interviewee #4, a long-term Black youth sector member, articulated this violent act of cutting off inclusionary projects within governmental institutions:

Yeah, so CABR [Confronting Anti-Black Racism unit] is there at the City [City of Toronto], but that unit now has quite a few people... you and I both know that, tomorrow, our Mayor can say or the City--can say, "_____, that was a very nice game you played... Yeah, there is no money in the budget... Lob it off." And they're all gone because they're actually not even into the city infrastructure... We have these little pilot things hanging outside that are easily lobbed off, forgotten.

Interviewee #4's reflection evokes the way that Blackness remains external to the body politic of society. Anderson's (2017) concept of White rage, being systemic violence that works silently through bureaucratic measures, masked as progress and racial justice, can swiftly cut off Black movement through defunding, erasures, and unknowing; subsequently, social justice remains contingent on the political motivations of the settler-colonial state. The relationship between discourses of anti-racism and concepts of social justice, freedom, abolition, and transformation envisioned by groups like BLM are perpetually vulnerable to being severed and re-attached to

safer discourses of multiculturalism, inclusion, and participation. Interviewee #14 stated that, “If we alleviate and restore justice in a true— social justice in a true sense, then people would have the time and autonomy and energy and capacity to think beyond the four corners of their community and conceptualise what could actually be”. Walcott (2021) argued that this obstruction of the Black subject to think, create, and imagine is a fundamental goal of the oppressive mechanisms of White dominance and one that requires greater attention.

Despite the barriers to envision otherwise, Black and Othered subjects do engage in counter-conduct strategies, which Foucault understood as seeing otherwise and envisioning alternatives that shift power relations (Davidson, 2011). This includes efforts that shift the gaze from youth as objects of knowledge (Melamed, 2011) to strategically interrogating the sector by: a. mapping the sector, b. sharing knowledge, and c. creating alternatives. Strategically utilizing inclusionary technologies of power enables the possibilities of seeing otherwise and envisioning what Fanon (1952/2008) deemed a new form of universality not couched in liberalism’s racist notions of being human and social justice.

Reflecting on the Circuits of Whiteness in Youth Policy and Youth Work

This chapter mapped the various eras wherein colonial aphasia actively contributed to reconceptualising anti-racism, anti-Black racism in public discourse and youth policy leading to contradictory, stereotypical and limiting forms of support that focused on inviting youth into a neoliberal and settler project. The dominance of the circuits of Whiteness remains integrally linked to colonial aphasia, which includes erasures, unknowing, loss of words, dissonance and is never innocent (Hunt, 2019). Whiteness functions in differentiated ways, shifting between invisibility and hypervisibility. Despite the increasing political visibility of Whiteness, mapping systems of white power remains a difficult, yet important part of addressing oppressive racist systems (Hunter

& van der Westhuizen, 2021). This form of mapping stands in contrast to colonial knowing and its truth regimes. Shifting the White colonial gaze and sharing knowledge on the functions of White settler colonial governmentality holds the possibilities of disrupting the aphasia that dominates normative understandings and rupture the circuits of Whiteness.

Chapter 5: The Emergence and Impact of Spatial and Public Health Frameworks

This chapter examines neighbourhood place-based and public health frameworks that were catalytic in bringing attention to the needs of youth; these two seemingly neutral scientific and liberal frameworks took a foothold in the youth work sector starting in the mid-2000s.

Interventions stemming from these two frameworks focus on increased access to public services, youth capacity-building, and the engagement of Othered youth. The discussion first maps the discourses of geography, poverty, race, public health, violence, and youth that galvanized both carceral and inclusionary interventions of racialized youth. Secondly, this chapter interrogates the youth sector's key intervention of increasing access to services and opportunities within the youth work sector through investments in public spaces and argues that these practices remain embroiled in racial biopolitics that protect and promote the benevolence of the settler state, while continuing to contain, exclude, and at best foster the conditional belonging of racialized youth.

Key reports such as PBPC (MacDonnell, 2004), *The Strong Neighbourhoods: A Call to Action* (UWGT & City of Toronto, 2005), and the *Roots of Youth Violence* (McMurtry & Curling, 2008) are examined. The reports that are chosen here were highlighted by the interviewees as being central to the organizing of the youth work sector. Other reports do speak to space, race, poverty, and public health but an examination of all texts on spatialized poverty and public health frameworks is beyond the scope of this current project; however this remains a valuable area of exploration (See August 2014a; Horak & Moore, 2015; Lindgren, 2009; Saberi, 2017). The discussions from the interviewees are used to provide further context and highlight the complicated manner in which frameworks get activated and produce effects that maintain the status quo despite claims to do otherwise.

Critical Understandings of Space and Public Health

Both Foucauldian and CRT scholars' notions of space are valuable to this discussion.

Foucauldian theory understands space not as a static entity but rather as an element of power that is produced by various interrelated actors and through discourses. Space is an integral part of Foucault's (2007) governmentality framework, which explores the conduct of subjects and the control of populations (Crampton, 2013).¹⁴ CRT scholars, such as Lipsitz (2007), have asserted that "the lived experience of race has a spatial dimension, and the lived experience of space has a racial dimension" (p.12). The intertwining relationship between race, space, and systems of power, such as colonialism and capitalism, continues to impact the everyday lived experience of populations and contributes to varying degrees of privilege and marginalization. Similarly, Soja (2010) asserts that social justice has a spatial relationship and urges for deeper understandings of city and spatial justice. The processes of racial spatialization have direct impacts on one's experiences of housing, education, transport, policing, and health.

The violence associated with space within settler colonial rule includes the segregation of races, the displacement and genocide of Indigenous populations and the erasures of Black advancement through the razing of Black spaces (Anderson, 2017; Razack, 2002; Rios, 2020; Sucharov, 2022). Strategies such as mapping and the counting of populations through census tracts became integral to the maintenance of colonial power and their use value persists at present (Elden, 2007; Stoler, 2009). Stoler argued that:

¹⁴ Foucault examined the workings of power in spaces such as the asylum, leper colonies, and hospitals (2006), prison (1979), and other forms of geographies (2003).

A large colonial bureaucracy occupied itself, especially from the 1860s, with classifying people and their attributes, with censuses, surveys, and ethnographies, with recording transactions, marking space, establishing routines, and standardizing practices... Colonial regimes were trying to define the constituents of a certain kind of society, even as they embedded that act of creation within a notion that society was a natural occurrence and the state a nonpartisan regulator and neutral observer. (1997, p. 8)

Efforts to codify, define, and manage Othered populations, while appearing neutral and natural, were vital to colonial rule.

Place-based strategies have been supported by urban planning scholars from the 80s and 90s and include focused interventions in particular neighbourhoods, primarily racialized spaces. Place-based strategies often encompasses poverty de-concentration through mixed-income communities and building capacity within poor communities through increasing access to opportunities (August, 2014a; Lindgren, 2009). Scholarly research on spatial planning over the past decade has engaged with issues of gentrification and neoliberal urbanism (Garza, 2018; Horak & Moore, 2015) as well as their relationship to race (August, 2014a; Mele, 2013; Sriskandarajah, 2020; St. Louis-McBurnie, et al., 2021). Scholars are complicating the seemingly neutral urban redevelopment efforts, such as in Detroit, Cincinnati, Toronto, and St. Louis, as being anchored in neoliberal urbanism and colonial logics that risk the reinstatement of racial spatial injustices (Addie & Fraser, 2019; August, 2014b; Banivanua-Mar & Edmonds, 2010; Clement et al., 2015; Mele, 2013; Tach, 2009). Various poverty de-concentration strategies such as mixed income housing have been criticized more recently for their narrow understandings of especially racialized communities (Addie & Fraser, 2019; August, 2014; Lipsitz, 2007; Rios,

2021). This chapter scrutinizes youth work's intervention of access to opportunities within racialized spaces and its aim of reducing youth violence and increasing youth capacity.

Situating Public Health Within Biopolitics

Public health epistemology is primarily rooted in scientific discourses and is linked with cultural, social, and economic fields of thought (Pennington, 2021); it includes disciplines such as, “medicine, epidemiology, sociology, psychology, criminology, education, and economics” (Parsaud, 2021, p. 8). This interdisciplinary approach is predominantly considered to be neutral and objective with the goal to improve population health and it remains a powerful organizing force in society. It has often been associated with policies that hinge on controlling the spread of diseases and promoting interventions that focus on containment, vaccinations, and promoting self-regulation (Henderson, 2015).

The cementing of public health frameworks over the last 30 years by international organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) includes the expansion of the social aspects of health (Coveney, 1998). This approach has introduced strategies such as the SDOH, which have come to include structural issues such as racism and a community approach to violence (Ford & Airhihenbuwa, 2010; Paine, et al., 2021; Raphael, 2009; Riemann, 2019; Sharma, et al., 2018).

A Foucauldian and CRT lens is used to examine public health frameworks, which enables a tracing of the relationship between systems of power and the governing of populations (Coveney, 1998; Ford & Airhihenbuwa, 2010). Foucault's notion of biopolitics is valuable to this unpacking of public health logics. As discussed in the theory chapter, biopolitics involves “demography, epidemiology, psychology, on one side: family planning, public health, policing of the self, on the other” (Fassin, 2009, p. 52). As indicated in the discussion on colonial

governing of space, the 19th century saw the rise of an interest in governing through the mapping of spaces and populations; this period also activated knowledge about health and its role in relation to managing especially the poor and colonial subjects (Stoler, 2016). The biopolitical governing of populations, such as youth within youth work, requires the development of disciplines, which involves the coming together of various knowledges and fields of expertise. This discussion focuses on how the fields of geography, demography, health, and criminology come together to understand and manage the increase of racialized youth in Toronto.

Public health campaigns have focused on problematizing and improving outcomes for particular communities by focusing on hygiene, nutrition, and juvenile delinquents: topics explored in Foucauldian analyses of governmentality (Berlant, 2007; Bessant, 1991; Crampton, 2016; Stoler, 2016). Criticism around public health models, be it from a disease model or a social model, revolve around their ability to appear benign while they limit choice and action at the behest of the greater public good, responsabilize populations for their health, and often promote neoliberal consumerist goals (Coveney, 1998; Henderson, 2015; Pennington, 2021).

A CRT and governmentality perspective contends that public health logics justify key governmental goals; for example, various eugenics movements around the world were promoted as public health strategies and authorized the elimination of various Othered subjects, such as the LGBTQ community, the poor, the mad, differently abled, and communities of Black, Jewish, Indigenous, and other racialized subjects (Chapman & Withers, 2019; Pernick, 1997). Public health measures remain reflective of the dominant values in society and play a pivotal role in authorizing exclusionary and harmful practices towards those deemed a threat or unfit for society based on racist, ableist, sanist values (Spagnuolo, 2016). The neutrality of public health logics is

questioned in my discussion, and attention is drawn to how the youth work sector problematizes racialized youth under the logics of space, poverty, health, safety, and inclusion.

Spatial Frameworks, Poverty, Race, Violence, and Youth

The advancement of urban geography as a discipline and the usage of place-based approaches during the 1980s and 90s in countries such as the UK and US inspired its adoption in Ontario and Toronto (Saber, 2017). The seminal PBPC report (MacDonnell, 2004) highlighted the rates of poverty in the City of Toronto and correlated the data to the postal codes in Toronto, cementing a geographical focus that continues to this day. Alongside the UWGT's research, the City of Toronto's Social Planning and Research Units engaged in data-gathering of 140 Social Planning Neighbourhoods to create baseline indicators for future policy and strategy development in the early 2000s (Horak & Moore, 2015). Shifts at the provincial level with the Liberals coming into power in 2003 also helped build momentum around a neighbourhood lens for urban issues. In 2004, the City of Toronto, UWGT, and Toronto City Summit Alliance came together to launch the *Strong Neighbourhoods Task Force*, and the next year the *Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy* (2005) was launched; it recommended several governance bodies to promote a spatial focus, improved access to resources, and engagement of community members and promised further discussions to address systemic issues (Horak & Moore, 2015).

The PBPC report played a fundamental role in inscribing poverty and race as conjoined and endemic to particular neighbourhoods. The report underscored the growing rates of concentrated poverty and rationalized the adoption of a spatial focus to service provision and urban revitalization. The opening statement by the UWGT's President and CEO Frances Lankin stated that the report's focus was "on the geography of poverty, because neighbourhood poverty has a devastating human cost and also damages the economic and social vitality of an entire

region, affecting the quality of life for everyone in Toronto” (UWGT & CCSD, 2004, p. 1). The ascribing of poverty to particular neighbourhoods and its damaging impact on the broader city of Toronto is highlighted as a key rationale for intervention, and the statement suggests that this deepening division of poverty can impact Toronto’s “worldwide recognition as one of the best cities in the world” (2004, p. 1). The rationale for focusing on the spatial nature of poverty is intricately tied to Toronto’s identity as a global capital, which is related to the city being an emblem of diversity. Almeida (2022) asserted that in the City of Toronto’s governing body, diversity discourses continue to be synonymous with issues of race, but diversity language shrouds the issues of ongoing systemic racism within its institutional practices.

The PBPC report established the social problem of racial spatial poverty impacting mainly new immigrants and those deemed visible minorities through neutral discourses. For example, the PBPC report quickly drew attention to the drastic shifts in Ontario’s population since the mid-80s and narrows the problem to the “profound shift in the resident profile of higher poverty neighbourhoods, with ‘poor’ visible minority and immigrant families making up far larger percentages of the total ‘poor’ family population in these neighbourhoods today, than twenty years ago” (2004, p. 4). The PBPC report’s reference to the changes in population over a 20-year time frame aligns with the shifts made to Canada’s Immigration Act in 1978, wherein the 1910 race-based immigration laws that gave preference to immigration from European nations and kept out immigration from the Global South were officially eradicated (Thobani, 2000).¹⁵

15 A preference for skilled workers was slowly incorporated into the immigration strategy from 1967, but the official removal of the colour-coded Immigration Act was not removed till 1978.

Immigration laws are another form of governing space and are associated with settler colonialism's logics and the eugenics movement that attempted to keep what were deemed weaker races out of the national borders (Crampton, 2016; Thobani, 2000). The PBPC report noted that immigrants prior to 1980s, who were mainly of European descent due to the colour-coded nature of the Immigration Act, did not face significant income disparities to Canadian-born residents. The disparities are noted only after the 1978 shift to open the doors to more non-European immigrants. The exclusionary "catch-22" practices reduced skilled workers to menial labour jobs in many cases, subjecting immigrants to poverty and marginalization, such as my own family's experience in Canada as newcomers in the 90s, subsequently creating a colour-coded labour market (Block & Galabuzi, 2011; Contena, 2018) and corresponding housing policies that deepened racialized spaces of poverty. Anderson (2017) argued that such policies are indicative of strategies of White rage, wherein despite the removal of official racist policies such as slavery, or in this case racist immigration laws, the administrative and bureaucratic policies manage to prop up exclusionary forms of governing racialized subjects. Brendese (2014) drew attention to the function of the stranger from outside the borders as being both the cure and disease within racial biopolitics; while the cheap labour of racialized others is deemed necessary, the settler state of Canada continues to position racialized Others as disposable subjects.

In addition to bringing attention to racialized poverty and its association to space, the PBPC is highly credited in the youth work sector for naming and drawing attention to the concerns of youth within these spaces of racialized poverty and being the catalyst for broadening investment into the youth sector. The PBPC problematized the number of children and young people growing up in poverty and noted that many of them were racialized:

the fact that so many more children are being raised in higher poverty neighbourhoods today ... that they make up a growing proportion of the population of higher poverty neighbourhoods is deeply troubling. It raises concerns about the life chances of these children and the impact on their futures of growing up in disadvantaged communities. (2004, p. 42)

The growing number of children being raised in poverty was identified as a troubling trend. A later report by the UWGT (2008) referenced the 2001 census and indicated that “over 30% of all immigrant children were members of families who lived under the poverty line” (Tazim Virani & UWGT, p.11). The disparities around issues such as education, violence, health, and employment that children and youth living in spaces of racialized poverty encounter were highlighted by PBPC and subsequent reports. The PBPC brought attention to structural issues and pointed to challenges surrounding accreditation and lack of training and the report contended that shifts needed to occur in that area.

Around the same time, after a spate of violence in the early 2000s, Toronto’s Mayor David Miller spearheaded the *Community Safety Plan* in 2004, which attempted to address the rising violence in Toronto’s communities. The *Community Safety Plan* (City of Toronto, 2004) leaned into the implementation of the neighbourhood-based approach and recommended “neighbourhood action plans for key at-risk communities, target programs and services to designated at-risk neighbourhoods, fast track the development of innovative programs to combat gun use and gang involvement” (City of Toronto, 2004, p. 2). Subsequently, a combination of greater resources, responsabilization of the community, and increased policing was authorized within these neighbourhoods and racialized youth were primary targets of these interventions.

The PBPC report (UWGT & CCSD, 2004) and the Community Safety Plan (City of Toronto, 2004) was followed by *The Strong Neighbourhoods Task Force* (UWGT & City of Toronto, 2005), which recommended nine neighbourhoods for investment and revitalization based on existing service availabilities, infrastructure, etc. However, the City's Community Safety Plan's "Tri-Level Committee on Gun/Violence" staff work group's research adjusted for violent neighbourhoods (City of Toronto, 2006) and recommended 13 priority neighbourhoods (See Appendix B). Subsequently, the City of Toronto named its 13 priority neighbourhoods: Malvern, Jane-Finch, Jamestown, Kingston-Galloway, Victoria Village, Dorset Park, Eglinton East, Scarborough Village, Black Creek, Westminster-Branson, Crescent Town, Steeles-L'Amoreaux, and Kennedy Park. Neither the PBPC report (2004) nor the *Strong Neighbourhoods Task Force Report* (2005) explicitly named a connection between racialized poverty, violence, and specific neighbourhoods. The intentional categorization and threading of racialized spaces, poverty and violence through the priority neighbourhoods framework had strong implications in the lives of many racialized youths in the decades to come.

Public Health Frameworks: Violence and the Social Determinants of Health

Place-based models were partnered with public health's SDOH model and played a critical part in how Toronto's youth work intervenes in racial spatial poverty and youth violence. Public health frameworks appear as a neutral knowledge system to manage the well-being of the population and gradually have broadened to also include issues such as racism and violence. From the late 1980s, the multidisciplinary public health approach slowly gained international traction as a helpful way to prevent community violence using an epidemiology lens (Riemann, 2019). Key actors promoting this approach included popular advocates such as Gary Slutkin and his Cure Violence model (Butts et al, 2015). Since the mid-2000s, the WHO also advocated for

the adoption of violence as a health issue and situated violence within the SDOH approach (Parsaud, 2021). Public health's SDOH model brings attention to the varied factors that support well-being and health of a community. The City of Toronto's SDOH included 11 categories based closely on the WHO's model; they are early childhood care, education, employment, food security, health services, housing, income and income distribution, social exclusion, social safety net, and unemployment and job insecurity, and stipulated that Canadian women, Canadians of colour, and New Canadians are vulnerable (City of Toronto, 2002). However, the SDOH model has gradually focused on community violence, which is understood as violence that occurs in a public setting; moreover, it is youth violence that is often at the centre of these narratives and specific focus is placed on racialized and Black men in poor neighbourhoods (Parsaud, 2021).

This public health approach to address community violence utilizes epidemiological logics and activates strategies of treatment and containment. Gary Slutkin, a former WHO epidemiologist with experience in containing various contagious diseases in Africa such as AIDS and cholera (Tools of Change, 2021), advanced the idea of treating violence as an epidemic. Slutkin's model had been implemented in initiatives such as Cure Violence, which was founded in 1999 in Chicago and was featured in the renowned *Interrupters* (James, 2011) documentary. The program focuses on the causal factors that are considered to be the determinants of violence: they include factors such as community norms and lack of understanding of the alternatives to violence and its impact on community. These factors are supposed to be addressed through outreach, education, community mobilization, connection with faith leaders and clergy, and engagement with the police (Kecskes, 2016). Most of the interviewees noted that place-based and public health measures supported ending the invisibility of racial presence in the city and brought attention to some of the structural issues racialized youth face. For example,

interviewees #13 and #7 both made mention of the public health approach to violence and pointed to Slutkin's Cure Violence initiative and the *Interrupters* (2011) documentary, saying that it was an influential model of youth work in particular neighbourhoods during the 2000s.

Butts et al. (2015) argued that the Cure Violence model has recorded successes of reducing crime, despite challenges surrounding the model, especially in using previous gang members or those with criminal records as outreach workers. However, critical public health scholars such as Riemann (2019) have brought attention to this mounting practice of medicalizing violence and point to the risks of pathologizing and blaming racialized subjects. This form of responsabilization underlies the intervention of accessing the spaces and services made available to particular neighbourhoods through these frameworks and are discussed later in this chapter and taken up in greater detail in relation to youth development and managerialism in the following chapter.

The underlying relationship between the medicalizing of violence and the containment logics associated with disease and virus management has real implications on the lives of racialized youth. These resemble racist forms of governing colonial Others, such as segregation; for example, Riemann (2019) noted that "CV's initial step identifies zones of contagion. These zones are areas that in the past have shown a high level of violent acts occurring over time" (p.147). This identification of zones of contagion is a key element of containing violence. For example, Interviewee #13, a Black government official who had been a proponent of the public health model of violence, reflected that the public health approach to violence appears to be that "if violence is a disease. Then the diseased, the sick youth, are the transmitter, and needs to be stopped." His reflection aligns with the perspectives that a public health epidemiology approach focuses on person-to-person contact and stopping such transmissions is key to the containment of

epidemics (Akers & Lanier, 2009). Therefore, the focus is placed on the transmitter, the youth themselves. This individualized approach risks moving the attention away from systemic issues that contribute to violence; therefore, while structural issues are included in the verbiage of public health models, the specific interventions appear to be individually focused; such disjuncture are important examples of the colonial aphasiastic practices.

For example, the provincially commissioned *Roots* report (McMurtry & Curling, 2008) championed a place-based and public health approach for addressing racialized youth violence and cemented both these approaches within the youth work sector.¹⁶ The report asserted from the onset that “we found the roots to be extensive and pervasive. They permeate society, but are intertwined and particularly virulent in certain neighbourhoods, and made worse everywhere when they include racism” (2008, p. 2). The *Roots* report pointed to poverty and racism as key factors in youth violence and noted that particular neighbourhoods were especially at risk of cultivating violence. The *Roots* report championed a public health approach in its goals of addressing violence:

If these [violent] trends and impacts are seen as akin to a public health issue, then it makes no more sense for those not immediately affected to blame those who suffer from them, and otherwise ignore them, than it would to ignore an infectious disease outbreak in one community or neighbourhood. We know infections can spread and, even if they don’t, they can weaken other parts of the body and its systems, with regrettable mid- to long-term consequences. Therefore, we deal with the problem collectively and cure it, because

¹⁶ *Roots of Youth Violence* was commissioned by the province of Ontario after the shooting death of Jordan Manners in a Toronto District School Board school (2007).

ignoring it will simply make matters worse for ever-increasing parts of our body politic.

When we reject this time-honoured approach, we are expressing a very powerful message that our social fabric is in danger. (2008, p.102)

The goal of taking a public health approach to youth violence appears well-intended, in that it sought to remove the blame from the individuals that are embroiled in acts of violence, intending to share the social responsibility of such violence. Through the unification of a place-based and public health epidemiology rationale, and an apparent rise in violence since the early 2000s in racialized poor neighbourhoods, Toronto saw the cementing of a dominant narrative of racialized poor neighbourhoods being violent. As a result of the public health and place-based logics and their attachment to violence, the goal of designating these priority neighbourhoods increasingly came to be known in the media as being “to reduce crime, increase opportunities for young people and improve services for people in underserved areas” (Toronto Star, 2008).¹⁷ A form of racial biopolitics that targets troubled youth portrays poverty and violence through a disease lens.

Proponents of the public health epidemiology model, such as Akers & Lanier (2009), promote integrating public health and criminology knowledges to help address issues such as violence and note the similarities in approaches such as the primary, secondary, and tertiary forms of addressing crime or disease that range from prevention to eradication or incarceration. They stated as an example:

¹⁷ Ongoing changes to the place-based and public health approach included the adoption of the WHO’s Urban Heart (Urban Health Equity Assessment and Response Tool), which utilized 15 key indicators to assess community well-being. The priority neighbourhoods have now been renamed as Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIAs) and currently consist of thirty-one neighbourhoods requiring investment and intervention and are informed by the Urban Heart tool (City of Toronto, 2014).

targeting at-risk youths or offenders directly may be another form of secondary prevention to help avoid a “superspread” of a disease... However, after a crime (or vector) has been committed (or entered the host), tertiary prevention measures, such as incarceration (or, in the context of public health, quarantine in a disease outbreak) or, for victims (or patients), programs that provide instruction on how to avoid becoming revictimized (or reinfected)... (2009, p. 400)

This coming together of public health, criminology, and place-based approaches authorize a range of intervention measures and include both prevention and discipline to avoid ‘superspreader’ events. The relationship between investments into both disciplinary and biopolitical measures is intertwined with moral panics around violence spilling outside the racial spaces and into metropolitan spaces. Interviewee #13, a Black bureaucrat, stated that he had felt that a public health approach to violence would bring attention to racialized youth violence as a systemic issue rather than an individualized one; however, upon reflection he acknowledged it is not a benign framework. He emotionally shared the grim views of the public health perspectives on racialized youth violence from the settler state’s lens:

So here's the problem as a disease... Black kids killing each other is important. This is where we started to see, Black kids are important. It's something we think about, we don't want anyone to die. It turns to urgent when violence moves into the summer, where it actually affects us [rest of society].

He pointed to the troubling and narrow parameters within which Black youth are viewed as important: that is, when they are considered a potential biopolitical threat to the broader society. This layering of the logics of racial spatial poverty, racialized youth violence, and endorsing strategies of containment is dangerously reflective of colonial biopolitical practices and needs to

be positioned within those rationalities within a settler-state, rather than being considered a compassionate scientific driven framework.

Unsettling the Intervention of Increasing Access to Space and Opportunities

The place-based approach and public health focus on violence, poverty, and race provided the ‘neutral’ knowledge to intervene into particular communities; subsequently, key strategies within the youth work sector tended to revolve around increased services to youth, capacity development, and engagement (City of Toronto & UWGT, 2005, p. 5). This section explores the dominant intervention within youth work of increasing access to opportunities and space, which focuses on the development of public spaces and services within the identified neighbourhoods. While recognizing the need for improved access to public spaces and resources, the discussion highlights how they remain as spaces that promote colonial strategies of conditional belonging and containment and function to uphold white respectability.

Access to opportunities as an intervention adheres to liberalism’s framework of equality; however, naming and associating race with risk factors such as violence can reaffirm mainstream society’s fears of racialized Others and their dangerousness. The discourses circulated by the place-based and public health lens within youth work repeatedly emphasized “a great lack of community services and facilities for youth” (UWGT & CCSP, 2004, p. 43). The lack of youth services highlighted by the PBPC report (2004), the SNTF (2005) report, and the *Roots* report (2008) justified infrastructure investments, such as libraries and community centres, as well as youth programming. The UWGT and the City of Toronto adopted neighbourhood forms of granting funds and resources as well as launching the Action for Neighbourhood Change hubs across Toronto. There was an initial investment of \$9.1 million dollars into the SNTF’s nine communities and that resulted in more than \$100 million going to place-specific investments for

infrastructure, programs, and services in the initial five years after the launch of PBPC to the 13 priority neighbourhoods (City of Toronto & UWGT, 2005; Lindgren, 2009).

An urgent plea to develop youth spaces in community centres and schools is evident within the *Roots* report (McMurtry & Curling, 2008), the SNTF (City of Toronto & UWGT, 2005), and youth strategy documents such as *Stepping Up* (MCYS, 2013), and the TYES (City of Toronto, 2015) as central to improving opportunities. The YCF's \$41 million dollars allocated by the Province of Ontario and UWGT (2006–2012) was a key source of funding for youth programs and organizations within the 13 priority neighbourhoods and included infrastructure investments to youth spaces in its later phases. Ahmed and Carpenter (2017) noted that the construction of at-risk youth and a growing racial spatial lens in Ontario resulted in a wide range of programs that focused on youth and included:

mentoring, drop-in programs, leadership development, arts-based programs, recreation and physical fitness programs, resiliency programming, culturally relevant programming, and a range of “prevention” programs spanning school attrition (drop-outs), violence, drug use, homelessness, STI/STDs, and suicide. (p. 81)

There have been a wide array of short-term funded programs within marginalized neighbourhoods provided by various youth focused non-profit organizations over the last two decades. Ahmed and Carpenter (2017) questioned the effectiveness of the logics of increasing access to opportunities when gargantuan structural inequalities remain in the way of young people.

Scholars express concern that the focus on access to space ultimately works to responsibilize racialized youth and invite them to perform white subjectivities (Mackie & Tett, 2013). For example, Interviewee #13, a Black bureaucrat, suggested that the issue of access to

space is central to how the problem of gun violence is understood in mainstream society in Toronto and Ontario. He asserted that the state and mainstream society perceive the issue of youth violence as one of “access, so they're [racialized youth] living in their world [spaces of concentrated racialized poverty], they can't come into ours [middle-class spaces], and that's why they're shooting people... And that if they were able to come into our world, they'd be better off.” Similarly, Interviewee #1, a White female community organization leader, stated:

When it comes down to social justice, it's about equitable access to opportunities, equitable access to services, equitable access. I feel like that comes up over and over and over again...I don't know. I think there's something deeper that has to happen. I think talking about equitable access, which is how we understand it in the youth-serving sector, is important, but I don't really think that's justice. I don't think them being able to access the same services as their White counterparts, their White peers, is actually social justice...they [policymakers and youth sector] mean well... Except that that isn't true, right, because there's other things at play. I mean, there are racist attitudes of human beings. There's racism within institutions. There's income inequality, right?

Most of the interviewees echoed Interviewee #1's sentiments regarding increased access to services as a limited form of justice. Obtaining access to White middle-class spaces is assumed to be a desirable norm and is embedded within racial liberalism's tenets that promote White superiority. Such underlying assumptions leave little space and time for communities to engage in self-determination and create alternatives, which could contribute to creating a new universality that Fanon (1952/2008) speaks of. Furthermore, Rios (2020) argued that racial biopolitics determines who can live fully and where. She stated that it is often White spaces that are authorized as being able to live fully and even if racialized Others move to White suburbs

there is little guarantee that they will be able to live fully amongst unnamed White hostility. Therefore, the transformation of physical spaces or the location of racialized people does not necessarily guarantee the right to live fully, and ongoing exclusions can persist in spite of these efforts.

Almost all the interviewees mentioned that investments in programs and services occur when violence increases or spills over into White spaces, threatening the health of the larger body politic. Interviewee #13 stated:

Okay, well, as the ‘protector’ [the state], we got to do something. So they shoot a whole bunch of money in there. I don't see any change. But I've told people blatantly, “I made my career on getting that money.” Because I knew it was coming and I can almost forecast exactly—.

Interviewee #13, as well as a handful of others, stated that the youth sector has become conditioned to expect the flooding in of resources to increase access to opportunities and services during peak moments of spillover violence. This is often considered the epidemic phase of violence and instigates disciplinary measures of greater policing to contain the violence.

This cycle of crisis management speaks to the need for the settler state to maintain respectability and the status quo and remains indicative of the maintenance of the circuits of Whiteness. Interviewee #7 stated there is little attention given to communities:

...when it was relatively peaceful, now it's hot. You guys showing up around here and being like, “Hey, kids!” How do you think that's going to work, especially in the summer? Maybe they're in a school year, you can be in the schools or whatever. But while it's hot right now, trust me.

Subsequently, when resources are provided, youth violence is at its height. Controlling these spillover moments of violence primarily include disciplinary measures and smaller inclusionary measures to contain the threat and placate the moral panic of mainstream society. However, these piecemeal project funding models dry up once a cycle of violence subsides, while more often investments in disciplinary systems persist, such as the example of TAVIS versus YCF discussed in Chapter 4. Consequently, governmental efforts to provide access to opportunities and services are caught up in a complicated racial biopolitical relationship of threats to White spaces and youth violence, rather than a social justice-oriented aim of building thriving communities.

Conditional Access to Space

Racialized youth taking up spaces that have been traditionally associated with Whiteness tends to result in harmful forms of conditional belonging. I question whether within settler society traditionally White spaces can ever fully be safe spaces of belonging for racialized subjects. For example, the spaces that exist and those that were created through the influx of funding for the priority neighbourhoods did not necessarily account for their ability to work for racialized youth. For example, Interviewee #7, a Black previous youth participant and community worker, recollected the aftermath of the allocations of priority neighbourhoods and the implementation of the place-based approach (2004):

So, one of the findings that came from that report in terms of — they were saying it's really racialized here, but it's particularly in these areas, like underserved and that young people are underserved and that was kind of a lynchpin for United Way to start shifting to, “Okay. We need to prioritize youth.” And so all of this kind of converging at the same time, and I'm pretty sure this was just before a Summer of the Gun... But I think that United Way in

all of its institutional wisdom, they fund these core organizations that they funded forever and some of them are not in the particular neighbourhoods who are being identified as like acutely underserved. And now those organizations, who don't even particularly serve youth, are being asked to do so.

He expressed the frustration of having established organizations tapped to do youth work that had little experience in doing so. Similarly, Interviewee #14, a Black bureaucrat declared:

A lot of these programs that claim they're helping Black youth, they don't even know how to outreach to Black communities. So I'm just like, "Where's this money going?"...I feel like what's happened now is Black youth have become the flavor of the month. And so what I found both anecdotally and seriously like, "How dare you guys?" Organizations, agencies, who typically were not focused on the Black population, Black youth population, we're now making multi-million-dollar applications and hundreds of thousands of dollars being requested on behalf of Black people, which made me think, okay, so now that the pendulum has swung, but we still haven't dealt with the systemic frame of how Black youth are treated.

Many established organizations during the mid- to late-2000s did not have a youth mandate and were not native to the neighbourhoods. Subsequently, youth became an add-on target population to many organizations that previously only worked with adults. This left many organizations scrambling for staff and models of youth work. This haphazard manner of including a youth focus cemented some inadequate patterns of program and service provision within the youth work sector. The provision of dollars to organizations to provide access to services is often based on institutional reputation, stability, grant writing and reporting capacity, and in more recent years having an evidence-based framework, while capacity to work with young people is not

always at the forefront. The criticism launched against the non-profit sector for monetizing on marginalized subjects that they may not be equipped to support or even remain fearful of requires attention.

More importantly, the inherent racist sentiments and fear that remain in circulation over the inclusion of racialized youth within traditionally White public spaces is a major concern that the youth work sector needs to address. Interviewee #4, a White provincial bureaucrat who worked closely on youth issues noted the tensions that persist in the inclusion of especially Blackness into youth spaces in the sector:

There are folks that are fearful of Blackness in the sector still and don't understand it or resist it. But at the same time there are some really welcoming and lovely spaces where people can be their whole selves and imagine new futures.

Interviewee #7, a long time Black youth worker and youth advocate, declared:

They [many mainstream organizations] don't know shit and they're scared of these kids.

There are so many workers, so many managers who are straight up terrified of these kids, and a lot of it is based on stereotype and bias and they're not checked for it and this sector doesn't know how to address itself with that. I think it's another problem.

Interviewees #4 and #7 pointed to the fear of Blackness and the Other that circulates within the youth work sector despite claims of inclusion. The *Roots* report explicitly stated the degree of adult fear and exclusion that young people face within public spaces, saying, “And in some areas, youth, particularly youth of colour, feel discriminated against in public space by adults who fear that they are in a gang or up to no good and who seek to discourage them from using these places” (McMurtry & Curling, 2008, p. 48). The systemic racism embedded within the system continues to police who can access spaces.

For example, Matthews (2020) spoke to the exclusionary racist practices that are perpetuated in public libraries in her research, stating: “Libraries are a racial space where the dominance of whiteness is sustained through unacknowledged norms, values, and structures that have operationalized white ways of being and knowing as invisible and normative in both the profession and our institutions” (p. 5). Spaces such as public libraries have been attached to youth hubs and are idealized as welcoming safe spaces; however, these spaces continue to be exclusionary to racialized youth. As Interviewee #1 stated, “A library could be a safe space for young people, or it could be a space where they call security on them.” Similarly, Interviewee #14 asserted:

And that's the thing, talk to the library. They'll tell you, yeah, we are librarians. We are not youth people. They are getting a little bit more like oh, we have everybody coming in now, maybe we need to look at who we have in the space, finally... It's a one-day ban and a one-year ban. They have actually, TPL [Toronto Public Library] has several different bans including a day a month. I think PFR [City of Toronto Parks Forestry and Recreation] has the same kind of [policy on bans] and that's why a restorative justice practice in institutional spaces to me is like, really guys we have to be having this conversation. Meanwhile, the hired enforcement is there to regulate, right.

Despite increased funding and claims of inclusion within public spaces, such as libraries and community centres, racialized youth are often subject to bans and are the target of exclusion within traditionally White middle-class spaces.

The careful regulation of spaces to adhere to certain codes of conduct continues to privilege Whiteness and the status quo. For example, Interviewee #3 stated, “we've got gatekeepers at community centres that don't want youth to have a permit, that's racism.”

Therefore, even when increased access to spaces is prioritized through the funding and creation of youth hubs, blocking access to spaces through bureaucratic measures such as permits, fees and bans continues to persist. These measures belong to the mechanisms of White rage that continue to regulate White spaces from being infiltrated by the Other (Anderson, 2017). Place-based and public health strategies that promote youth access to public services fail to consider the inherently exclusionary nature of traditionally White and adult dominated spaces. Subsequently, greater consideration needs to be given to whether access to spaces within the youth work sector are actually anti-racist and safe spaces for racialized youth subjects.

Conclusion

Efforts to name the racial spatialization of poverty and a public health approach to violence while well intended, triggers both disciplinary and inclusionary strategies that reinforce colonial and neoliberal understandings of low-income racialized youth. Place-based and public health strategies espouse interventions that primarily focus on increasing access to services and opportunities, building the capacity of racialized subjects, and enhancing their engagement. As these approaches are founded on the exclusionary principles of liberal universalism that remain couched in racial capitalist logics, the discourse and practices they activate remain restricted by the Western liberal imagination. This chapter delved into the intervention of access to opportunities and argued that it is informed by logics of equal opportunity that suggest that if public services are equalized in all neighbourhoods, then the poor can help themselves to these resources and improve their conditions and perform productive middle-class identities (Kelly, 2006). Consequently, the interventions focus on leveling the playing field through improving access to public services and are viewed as neutral commonsensical solutions to racialized

spatial poverty and improving health and well-being.¹⁸ However, these strategies predominantly promote the ongoing containment of the threat of the racialized stranger from settler colonial society. Leaning on the public health epidemiological approach to violence endorses racial spaces as violent, a threat to the rest of society, and requiring containment.

The drawing of such connections between race, poverty, space, violence, and youth are not contemporary issues but rather signal the colonial policy-making history of Canada that sought to control Indigenous and Black subjects along racial and class lines (Maynard, 2017; Razack, 2002). Residential segregation has its roots in colonialism, such as Canada's reserve system; it is never a natural or innocent function (Anderson, 2017; Razack, 2002). Brendese (2014) reflected that Latino immigrants are considered both a disease and a cure within the American body politic: similar racial biopolitical arguments can be seen in relation to youth within racialized poor spaces who are deemed risky violent subjects and are framed as a disease. Subsequently, addressing racialized youth's propensity to violence is considered the cure to protect the safety of the larger body politic.

Racialized youth within these neighbourhoods are subject to further surveillance and conditional forms of belonging even in spaces designed in their name. Many sector members are aware of the racist framing of such frameworks and recognize it is not a just form of inclusion. They dejectedly expressed that this is how the settler state even comes to care for racialized and Black youth: only when they are considered a biopolitical threat to society. Furthermore, the chapter argued that the inclusion of racialized youth that occurs within these spaces is

18 This approach appears to continue to be validated through the usage of new models that purport social justice and inclusion, such as targeted universalism (Powell, 2009) that justifies funding for those not able to reach parity, and proportionate universalism (Dierckx & Devlieghere, 2020), which utilizes health models and speaks to administering the right dose of services to reach parity.

conditional and contingent on the relationship to violence, cementing their inclusion in society as always, a threat to be managed and surveilled. Additionally, these efforts to revitalize these racial spaces often support furthering the goals of Toronto's image of a global capital city.

Ahmed (2012) warned that progressive seeming policies often function in non-performative ways and do not do the things they say it will do. Paine et al. (2021) also cautioned against the declaration of issues, such as racism, within a public health lens, stating that:

At their best, the declarations are a first step to address long standing inaction in the face of need. At their worst, the declarations poison or sedate grassroots momentum toward anti-racism structural change by delivering politicians unearned publicity and slowing progress on health equity. (p.1)

Similar caution needs to be applied to declarations of anti-racism and claims of addressing racialized youth issues through the adoption of a racial spatial lens and a public health approach to youth work. These frameworks remain entrenched in official Western knowledge and work to supplant community knowledge and ways of problem solving.

Place-based and public health interventions rehash existing normative practices, and the implementation of strategies intended to address deep marginalization has now created an infrastructure of youth work that does things in the name of support but remains ineffectual or worse, harmful, to the community. Sector members find themselves within the thorny conditions of having to cope with these racist forms of inclusion and reflecting and recognizing their own complicity in promoting some of these frameworks, as they often appear neutral under liberal frameworks. Some also acknowledged the use of this situation of settler society being threatened by racial violence to then creatively obtain resources and funding to support community racialized youth, as funding coffers only open during heights of violence. Sector members

interviewed noted that they are continuously engaging in critical reflection and attempts to have critical conversations and shift the narrative and find alternative possibilities and hope for a more just form of inclusion. This problematic relationship within the youth work sector is tangled up in the relations of ongoing settler colonial violence and is explored in Chapter 7 on participation and counter-conduct. These strategies are not deemed all negative or invalid; however, as they stem from the existing spatial and public health literature that is rooted in colonial and capitalist histories, there is a persistent need to examine their function and materialization from both a colonial and neoliberal governmentality lens and a CRT perspective.

Chapter 6: Positive Youth Development and Managerial Frameworks as Mechanisms of Colonial and Neoliberal Governmentality

This chapter investigates two other key knowledge frameworks, PYD and data-focused managerial systems, and their dominance in the youth work sector. PYD and managerialism entered the youth sector around the same time in Ontario, after the austerity years of the 2008 recession and were more broadly institutionalized from 2012 onwards. These two approaches are specific to youth work and are entwined with the place-based and public health models explored in Chapter 5. These two frameworks could be discussed in separate chapters, but I intentionally speak about them together here to demonstrate how their simultaneous arrival drastically re-organized the sector and highlight their overlapping and entwined goals of upholding neoliberal and colonial goals in the governance of racialized youth. The widespread adoption of such measurement practices in youth work may appear to be a new practice; however, this study argues that PYD and managerialism's focus on structure, evidence, data gathering, and measurement mechanisms function as an extension of ongoing forms of colonial managerialism and contributes to the youth work sector's colonial aphasia.

My FDA of the policy discourses and interviews of key sector members inform this analysis of PYD and managerialism; the key documents analyzed in this chapter explore the onset and implementation of this shift. They include the *Roots* report (McMurtry & Curling, 2008), Ontario's *Stepping Stones* report (MCYS, 2012b), and the Ontario *Stepping Up* framework (MCYS, 2013); the TYES (City of Toronto, 2015) and Ontario's BYAP (MCYS, 2018) are also referenced.

The PYD framework is credited within childhood and youth studies with shifting discourses on youth from a deficit-based understanding to a strengths-based framework of youth

development (Gonzalez et al., 2020). PYD focuses on strengthening assets such as education and employment that are deemed critical for youth success (Lerner et al., 2021). PYD promotes the development of youth assets, such as resiliency, self-regulation, and competencies to achieve goals such as reducing suspension rates and reducing juvenile crime (Allison et al., 2011; Brown, 2010).¹⁹ On the other hand, managerialism, as an ideology and a system of organizing institutions, is focused on accountability, efficiency, expertise, and control (Davies, 2003; Klikauer, 2015). Managerialism has been touted by governmental and some sector leaders to bring greater efficiency and accountability to the youth work sector. I argue that PYD techniques of promoting positive youth discourses and managerialism's over-emphasis on data collection both privilege Western scientific knowledge and occur during a period of claiming to heed racialized community knowledge; the contrasting epistemological foundations of these knowledge frameworks can contribute to dissonance and colonial aphasia within the youth work sector.

There is a growing body of research critiquing PYD's practice of counting and measuring populations as exclusionary of racialized and marginalized subjects' perspectives (Gonzalez, 2020; Malorni et al., 2023). I outline in this chapter the implications of the shift from deficit to asset-based youth frameworks, alongside the move from an organic and non-centralized form of youth work into a more rigid managerial and evidence-based framework. While such evidence- and data-driven practices often appear neutral in and of themselves, when devoid of context, analysis, and history they can be utilized in service of colonial aphasia (Stoler, 2016), a feature

¹⁹ It focuses primarily on developing the protective factors of young people through various programs such as camps, wilderness excursions, art, music, sports, and school-based and mentoring programs (Waid & Uhrich, 2020).

of the ongoing circuits of Whiteness. These overlapping technologies recenter notions of abnormality, positioning White middle-class subjectivity as desirable, and reinforcing biopolitical measurements that mimic colonial practices of counting and organizing Othered subjects and institutions. I also further point to the manner in which the emphasis on science and evidence functions in an exclusionary manner of Othered knowledge, despite its claims of privileging community and youth voices; this highlights the colonial aphasia that persists in youth work due to the dominance of PYD and managerialism.

Mapping Positive Youth Development and the Shift to Managerialism

McKinlay and Pezet (2017) examined managerial governmentality as composed of three dimensions that underpin action: “the representation of the individual or of the social, the knowledge that underpins this representation, and the expert debates that legitimize this knowledge” (p. 11). I argue that managerial forms of governing utilize the expert knowledge of the evidence-based PYD framework to govern youth and youth work. For example, PYD draws on,

a wide range of subfields of the human sciences, including evolutionary biology, comparative psychology, bioecological developmental psychology, community psychology, developmental epidemiology, life-course sociology, developmental systems theory and so forth. (Lerner et al. 2005, p. 11 as cited by Sukarieh & Tannock, 2011)

The adoption of such supposedly neutral evidence-based knowledge is viewed as reliable in society and valuable for governing purposes. For example, Bartholomaeus (2016) identified developmental discourses on childhood, which remain foundational to PYD as well, to be a regime of truth, making them natural and irrefutable and difficult to think outside of it. PYD’s

and managerialism's appeal to facts and science has become etched into youth work as natural and therefore legitimate; this chapter seeks to disturb those established truths and hopes to trigger the possibility of thinking outside of it within youth work.

Early Days: An Organic and Fragmented Youth Work Sector

Prior to the imposition of managerialism and PYD, youth work in Ontario functioned in a more organic and non-systematic fashion. Interviewee #5 Black City of Toronto bureaucrat, who was involved in the sector since they were teenagers in the 90s, noted some of the changes that occurred in the youth work sector over time:

where we were—in those days when it was about youth spaces and basketball courts and all those—what do you call that? And then it's like with United Way came around with *Poverty by Postal Code*, it was like the paradigm shifted, and the language shifted. And we started to talk more about systemic racism, systemic change, which, for me, I don't think was really in discourse in the late 90s... I don't know what you'd call it, but in the infancy, it was very basic.

As Interviewee #5 explained, during the Conservative era in Ontario (1995–2003), youth work was funded to focus on a wide range of activities such as sports, arts, employment, and music programs, while reporting was primarily focused on head counts of attendees. It was not until the spatial discourses began to permeate the youth work sector during the Liberal era, through the PBPC report did, we began to see some mention of systemic issues. The YCF strived to bring attention to some of these structural issues by utilizing a critical lens and privileging youth voice

and experimentation.²⁰ However, the gradual ushering in of evidence-based systems and the desire for greater structure to the sector overpowered some of the critical dialogue that was burgeoning between 2006–2012. I explored some of these ebbs and flows of discourses, their implications in practice, and how they uphold colonial aphasia within the youth work sector.

Before Assets: Deficit and At-Risk Youth Discourses

Deficit-oriented language of at-risk youth was prevalent within youth work from the early 2000s, prior to the insertion of strengths-based discourses in 2012 onwards. At-risk labels framed young people as being a risk to broader society or engaging in risky behaviour that could potentially harm them (Bowler, 2013). Risk discourses have increased through the gradual rise of biopolitical tools such as actuarial risk analysis over the last thirty years (Rose, 1998). The rise of neoliberalism is also associated with the individualized understanding of youth as risky and dangerous (Bowler, 2013; Foster & Spencer, 2011; Giroux, 2012). Managing these apparent risky youth subjects from being a threat to society either through criminalization and/or risk reduction techniques became a primary goal in youth work.

Prior to development discourses being ushered in in 2012, the fields of criminology and forensic psychiatry primarily informed youth policy in Ontario and Toronto, especially due to youth violence often being the trigger for action on youth issues. Criminologists were routinely consulted in developing key reports: the City of Toronto's *Community Safety Plan* (2004) and

20 YCF for example funded a wide array of young girls' initiatives within various racialized communities that fostered a critical feminist lens, such as in the Canadian Tamil Youth Development Centre's Selvy's Circle, Gashanti Unity, a Somalian organization, and the Black Action Defense Committee's Set it Off Girls. These were also considered bold funding directions as it was a time when mainly young male issues garnered public attention and investment, while the challenge and barriers experienced by young girls was not often seen as an urgent enough problem.

Ontario's *Roots* report (McMurtry & Curling, 2008) leaned on youth justice and criminology knowledge in addressing risky youth behaviour, youth gangs, and risky neighbourhoods.

However, the discourses of risk had the potential to harm racialized youth by deepening racist stereotypes of lack and deficit; this categorization was troubling to various racialized communities, but particularly impacted Black youth (Baldrige, 2014). Many of the interviewees, both racialized and non-racialized, mentioned that many community members and youth workers were troubled by the broad sweeping nature of such labels. A Black City of Toronto bureaucrat interviewee mentioned the uneasiness with the widespread usage of Wortley's (2010) levels of youth gang categories which were incorporated within Toronto's community safety (2004) frameworks to identify at-risk youth behaviour. The interviewee acknowledged that the framework was intended to be helpful, but it was all encompassing and risked mislabeling young people's group behaviour as gangs by various institutional actors such as schools and the media. Active community advocacy by Black and other marginalized community groups pushed back against the establishment of this at-risk youth label. A few of the interviewees mentioned the efforts of the Grassroots Youth Coalition (GYC), as well as the *Roots* report (McMurtry & Curling, 2008), in addressing such negative labelling. The GYC was a coalition of youth-led community-based organizations who had advocated against the risk-focused categorizations to key stakeholders such as the City of Toronto and UWGT. The way these counter-discourses were taken up by the sector is explored later in this chapter as I unpack this ongoing tension between community voices and dominant discourses. I move now to unpack the rise of PYD and managerialism within the sector and then demonstrate how these frameworks further colonial aphasia.

The Rise of Positive Youth Development and Managerialism

Soon after the 2008 economic crisis, the youth work sector in Ontario experienced the simultaneous rolling out of managerialism practices as well as evidence-based practice (EBP) models such as PYD. This resulted in a heightened dependency on the psy-disciplines, greater rigidity in the sector's organization, and stunting of grassroots and radical forms of youth work practice. The seminal *Roots* report (McMurtry & Curling, 2008) that stemmed from the bursts of violence in the years earlier cemented the need for greater governance, being its primary recommendation, and it suggested a youth development-focused policy and strategy as one of its key recommendations (McMurtry & Curling, 2008). Interviewee #12 a provincial bureaucrat central in the building of the youth development frameworks and its managerial forms of governing, believed that there was a need to construct a knowledge block or discipline around youth in Ontario and was a key motivation behind such recommendations being central in the *Roots* report (2008). Interviewee #12 argued that a knowledge block on youth had a twofold purpose, stating:

In the youth space, we're not blessed with a broad consensus that investing in youth matters and changing youth trajectories at that stage can make a difference, right? So that's where things like the evidence of science, that's where that work came from, is to try to copy what they did in the early years to give people a sense that this was a good, sound scientific investment and all those political terms... The reason we have to keep explaining this stuff is the same reason why people have to explain climate change, right? They're not accepted ideas.

Youth sector bureaucrats felt responsible for bringing attention to youth issues within government, validating the investments required to focus on youth issues while simultaneously

being responsible for creating an efficient sector during a period of neoliberal austerity. However, as noted in Chapter 4, there continues to be a contentious pattern of youth violence issues necessitating youth policy action, with adult-driven attention and investment into youth occurring only within the discursive framework of youth as problematic, risky, and dangerous and often associated with racialized youth as a biopolitical threat. This is substantiated by MCYS's use of the *Roots* report (2008) to inscribe the fundamental recommendations such as a youth strategy, policy, and a governing body for the youth sector.

Alongside this need to focus on youth issues, there was also a heightened interest in a cost-benefit or return on investment rationale governing the investments in youth work after the 2008 recession. Allocating specific dollar amounts to avoid potential future negative ramifications that might arise through ignoring youth and other social issues became an increasingly popular strategy undertaken by state actors as well as sector and community members. In Ontario's *Stepping Up* framework (MCYS, 2013) on youth strategy, we hear:

Wiser, more informed investment choices in youth services will lead to a stronger overall economy and thriving society. By supporting positive youth development today, we are minimizing costs to our health care, justice, child protection and social assistance systems in the future. (p. 6)

Such appeals to economic outcomes to justify supporting and organizing social issues became commonplace. *Stepping Up* (MCYS, 2013) further explained that:

Having healthy young Ontarians will also help minimize demands on health care and can provide long-term benefits for communities... Ontario's health care system is facing unprecedented fiscal challenges. Economists have forecasted that without significant

changes, our health care spending will consume 70 per cent of the provincial budget within 12 years. (p. 54)

Such market and financial based projections are sought to create concern and urgency and subsequently substantiate the need for investments in the youth sector, which remained a fundamental challenge when government coffers were tight during the post-2008 recession. De St Croix (2018) shared similar shifts in the implementation of outcomes and measurement practices within UK youth work over the last two decades through the launching of the youth impact agenda. The *Roots* report (McMurtry & Curling, 2008) pointed to the UK as providing inspiration for a structured youth policy & outcomes shift. Subsequently, government and key funders focused on constructing a more organized sector through research, data gathering, measurement, and evaluation to understand the impact of their investment.

Following the recommendations from the *Roots* report (McMurtry & Curling, 2008) the provincial government's youth policies and strategies ushered in a framework that embraced both PYD and managerialism. The Ontario government developed the Ontario *Stepping Stones Youth Development Resource Framework* (MCYS, 2012b) which adopted a PYD framework. The *YAP* (MCYS, 2012) and the *Stepping Up Youth Success Strategy* (MCYS, 2013) together were Ontario's first ever youth strategy and utilized an asset-based framework. The *Stepping Up* (2013) youth strategy focused on 20 outcomes and connected indicators across seven key themes that were deemed significant for young people in Ontario (MCYS, 2013, p. 2). These included health and wellness, strong supportive friends and families, education training and apprenticeships, employment and entrepreneurship, diversity, social inclusion and safety, civic engagement and youth leadership and coordinated and youth friendly communities (See Appendix C).

The province's asset and evidence-based models were then emulated by various actors, such as the City of Toronto in their TYES (2015), the UWGT in their *Youth Success Strategy* (2015), the Ontario government in their BYAP (2017), and other foundations across the province in the years that followed. *Canada's Youth Policy* (Government of Canada, 2019) resembles a similar evidence-based PYD model. This gradual establishment of a structured youth policy framework and youth work sector rooted in PYD, and managerial principles has been cemented over the last decade. The following section unpacks the implications of these two frameworks especially as they relate to racialized youth and tries to tease out the various ways in which these frameworks contribute to an ongoing colonial aphasia within the youth work sector.

The Perpetuation of Colonial Aphasia

I illustrate below the workings of colonial aphasia in two ways: first, I trace the shift in discourses of risk and deficit to PYD's emphasis on assets and resilience, and I argue that despite their positive tonality these frameworks remain exclusionary and perpetuate White middle-class norms. Secondly, the discussion focuses on managerial techniques of data collection embedded within PYD's evidence-based frameworks, I argue that this emphasis on data collection as action and positioned as social justice work functions in an aphasiastic manner as it repurposes colonial strategies of accounting, augments the White gaze, discounts community knowledge, and contributes to the surveillance of racialized youth.

From Deficits to Assets: Linguistic Shifts but Racial Exclusions Remain

As mentioned earlier, PYD is often positioned as a response to the deficit, risk, and needs focused youth discourse and promotes youth as agentic beings through building personal assets of their own to be strengthened (Fusco, 2012; Tyyskä & Côté, 2015). This shift from risk and needs to assets was cemented in *Stepping Stones* (MCYS, 2012b), which stated:

While the treatment of specific youth issues will always remain a critical component of youth development, *Stepping Stones* is intended to focus on developing the personal assets of our youth in a broad and rich way, rather than on the elimination of youth issues and challenges. (p. 11)

This statement and the PYD logics that underpin it performs a pivotal role in shifting the direction of the youth work sector from focusing on marginalized youth inequalities and needs to one that focuses on the strengths of all youth. While PYD does not ignore risk or the sociological and environmental factors surrounding a young person (Waid & Uhrich, 2020), its emphasis on the individual and asset-building have been the primary uptakes and considerations within youth work and the program design level (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2002). The ramifications of this narrow focus in relation to racialized youth in dire marginalized positions is explored further in this discussion.

Most of the interviewees voiced that an asset framework focuses on the normative notions of youth and quiets the focus on the intersecting oppressions that young people experience in their day-to-day lives. While I acknowledge some of the benefits of an asset rather than deficit lens in viewing youth, I align with the interviewees and scholars who critique PYD's individualistic focus, its omission of structural oppressions, and its promotion of a normative entrepreneurial youth subject as an ideal (Gonsalves et al, 2020; Kelly, 2006; Lerner et al., 2021; Sukarieh & Tannock, 2011).

Context for Context's Sake

Due to criticisms made by racialized community members and sector members, there was a degree of recognition of environment and context in the youth development model, *Stepping Stones* (MCYS, 2012b). This inclusion of context was seen as a progressive update to the

development and asset-based framework; however, the naming of context has little impact on the practice of youth work.

Figure 2

Stepping Stones Resource Development Framework



Note: Stepping Stones (MCYS, 2012b)

For example, Interviewee #7 asserted:

The thing that I think about is just how things started to move into this sort of asset-based kind of space, where it became like the work of the GYC pushing back against the term of at-risk and labeling young people as problematic and labeling communities by extension.

M.B: So, pushing back on that deficit model?

Interviewee #7: Yeah. And in that respect. I think those things are still firmly in place. I think we use a different language. I think we use different codes to classify it...

Interviewee #7 outlined that despite community advocacy and the subsequent conceptual shifts to move away from the risk categorization of youth to these different models, the underpinning negative narratives around youth have remained. Foucault (1980) noted that notions of criminality began to include context in the nineteenth century. For example, the thief is

understood to have stolen because he is poor, rather than evil; nonetheless, the perception remains that since not all who are poor tend to steal there must be, “something wrong with him, and this is his character, his psyche, his upbringing, his unconscious, his desires. And with that the delinquent is handed over either to the penal technology of the prison or the medical technology...” (Foucault, 1980, p. 44). Subsequently, despite the recognition of context, references to systemic issues result in individual-focused interventions that responsabilize young people for their behaviour.

This practice of individualizing youth interventions despite the nod to context is evidenced in Ontario’s youth policy. In *Stepping Up* (MCYS, 2013), on discussions around safety and the issue of over policing some communities, the strategy suggested:

Some of Ontario’s young people – particularly Aboriginal, minority and racialized youth – face challenges and barriers that may increase their risk of coming into conflict with the law. Supporting young people to avoid involvement with the justice system, make positive contributions to their communities, and get back on track... (MCYS, p. 72)

Systemic issues are stated in a platitudinous manner and the scrutiny shifted to youth and their adherence to the existing criminal justice system. While community policing efforts are highlighted as possible methods of addressing challenges, the only group that is tasked with being held accountable are young people. The document states:

When young people come into conflict with the law, they need to be held accountable for their actions. They also need to be provided effective programs and reintegration support so they can get back on track with their lives and reduce their chances of re-offending. (MCYS, 2013, p. 73)

The encounter with police automatically presumes criminality and triggers discourses of discipline. In addition, while support is recommended to reduce recidivism there are few details on what those supports would be to reduce the barriers Aboriginal and racialized youth would require for their specific context.

Furthermore, the discourse of systemic racism within the police force and police accountability remained part of the subjugated discourses during this time.²¹ For example, the *Roots* report (McMurtry & Curling, 2008) attempted to introduce critical dialogues on revisiting what is deemed youth crime itself and suggested that the over-policing of certain neighbourhoods may potentially be contributing to the higher rates of racialized youth crime. However, these discussions are buried deep within the report and do not gain precedence in the manner the report (McMurtry & Curling, 2008) was activated by governmental apparatuses.

Colonial aphasia is at play in this discursive play on individual assets versus deficits that now includes the notion of context, to appease criticism from the sector and community, while still having the underpinning ideas of deficit and risk when dealing with racialized youth. Therefore, the concept changes but the meaning or connotation associated with it goes unchanged and is attached to the newly introduced concepts. Using Barthes' (1968) concept of second order signification, as in the connotation, even when marginalized young people are signified as holders of assets, the second order signification is still intact, and they remain considered dangerous or risky. For example, the leaning on criminology as an expert knowledge area to govern youth continues; however, youth developmental discourses and more recently a

21 Coincidentally, I am revisiting this section of my dissertation on June 15th, 2022, the day Toronto Police Services provided a public apology for the systemic racism and discriminatory practices endured by the BIPOC community at the hands of the TPS for decades: one that activists such as Beverley Baines and Desmond Cole have called out for being performative.

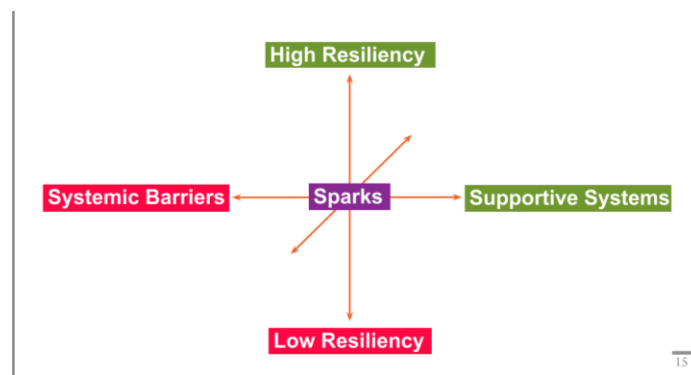
decolonial and anti-racist lens are also layered within this discursive formation of youth work. The dueling nature of these discourses requires greater critical scrutiny in youth work theory and practice.

Risk to Resilience

PYD frameworks also ushered in the discursive shift from risk to resilience, which was situated within developmental psychopathology (Bottrell, 2007; Lee et al., 2012). It appeals to the strengths of marginalized youth and to understanding how some youth overcame adversity and achieved success. The City of Toronto's TYES (2015) that followed the *Stepping Up* (2013) strategy document, utilized resiliency discourses in increasing marginalized youth's assets. It outlines this in the strategy's "Vulnerable Youth Spectrum"

Figure 3

Vulnerable Youth Spectrum



Note. TYES, 2015, p. 15

The vulnerable youth spectrum identifies that those with higher resiliency and supportive systems are less likely to act in negative ways during trigger moments or sparks in their lives.

The TYES stated:

Sparks, events that take place in a young person's life that can be positive or negative, can either increase or decrease resiliency and systemic barriers for vulnerable youth. The Spectrum helps service providers identify how programs and systems can become supportive and assist youth in building resiliency. (p.15)

The acknowledgment that systemic barriers exist in these young people's lives was then considered a positive step for racialized justice issues. While there is general acknowledgement that systems also need to become more supportive, recommendations often do not move past discussions, committees, and reports. It is assumed that service providers and young people have to find strategies to develop positive assets and strengthen their resiliency to the bombardment of oppressive forces that youth face.

The discourses of resilience and grit have come under criticism for further subjecting marginalized youth to undue pressure (Foster & Spencer, 2011). Interviewee #14 reflected on PYD and its challenges for Black youth:

For sure. I mean I think when it takes 25, 30 years to get Black youth on the agenda on a policy and programmatic wavelength — problematic. Naturally, we expect that youth grow up in healthy, thriving communities and naturally they should have the opportunity to be educated, not grow up in violent situations, have mentors, have autonomy and choice but that's not the reality. There's something very unnatural where these — expectations and expectations can be healthy if it's the supportive environment. If we create expectations, we create pressure. We create stress for young people.

Similar to Interviewee #14, several other interviewees echoed these sentiments that the PYD model places undue pressure on young people who are already feeling the burdens of multiple systemic barriers on their shoulders.

Within youth work in Ontario, supporting risky youth to meet educational goals and transition to successfully entering the labour market remains a key indicator of success, regardless of the systemic conditions surrounding the marginalized youth. Scholars have brought attention to PYD's relationship with EBP being influenced by neoliberal forms of government disconnected from the experiences of marginalized youth, while promoting a White middle-class ideal subject that reinforce forms of exclusions (Coleman, 2021; de St Croix, 2018; Gonzalez et al., 2020; Malorni, 2023; Sukarieh & Tannock, 2011). Organizing efforts to reduce the barriers themselves or adjusting the expectations placed on these youth are not part of the youth work parameters.

Therapeutic and self-help language has become more prominent in recent years as the focus on individual mental health has taken prominence in youth work; however, such policy frameworks risk pathologizing racialized youth and absolving unequal systems from taking responsibility (Voronka, 2013). Scholars have brought attention to the harmful and individualizing nature of resilience discourse and have also noted the growing influence of psychological and therapeutic language in social policy, a practice that has heightened during neoliberal rule (Brunila et al., 2021; Kelly et al., 2018). Brunila et al. (2021) utilized Berlant's (2011) concept of cruel optimism to understand these biopolitical expectations placed on youth. Berlant's (2011) concept of cruel optimism speaks to the desire to obtain ideals and goals that remain out of reach due to the systemic barriers in one's life and can make one feel inadequate or a failure due to this ongoing desire. Brunila et al. (2021) argued that the positivity imperative in the field of youth education is a form of cruel optimism. Similarly, the positivity imperative present in PYD frameworks has been noted to be harmful by scholars such as Sukarieh & Tannock (2011). The ongoing practice of measuring, tracking, and reforming those deemed to

not have sufficient assets has become a critical part of the youth work sector. Furthermore, skillful discursive games are at play, wherein an inclusive and positive-seeming focus on youth assets continues to fixate the gaze on Black, Indigenous, and racialized youth as needing to reach normative goals in society, feeds into racial biopolitics that continues to dominate and exclude certain subjectivities.

Managerial Knowledge Systems and Data Gathering: Forms of Colonial Accounting

I argue that PYD, as part of an EBP framework, supports the goals of managerialism, with its apparent goals of effectiveness and accountability and contributes in various ways to ongoing forms of colonial accounting and colonial aphasia in the youth work sector. PYD was introduced as a method of shaping youth work into a form of science, away from anecdotal forms of knowledge to a standardized, organized, and measurable form of work. Klikauer (2015) defined managerialism as comprising both management tools and an ideology that has infiltrated “organizations, public institutions, and society while depriving business owners (property), workers (organizational-economic) and civil society (social-political) of all decision-making powers” by proclaiming itself to possess “superior ideology, expert training, and the exclusiveness of managerial knowledge necessary to run public institutions and society as corporations” (p. 1105). Within youth work, PYD’s data gathering efforts support managerial goals to systematically slice human development into categories that can be tracked, managed, and evaluated more efficiently.

Waid and Uhrich (2020) stated that PYD programs deemed effective “require a clear theory of change, well-defined targets of intervention and intended outcomes, fully explicated linkages between intervention components and programming goals, and rigorous evaluation methods to link theory, practice and outcomes” (pp. 18–19). In order to develop the necessary

conditions to implement PYD, there was a need for a structured system to be implemented in Ontario's youth work sector. In the years prior to the creation of the provincial youth strategy and policy in 2012, governmental actors expressed concerns over the lack of existing data on youth indicators and the challenges that posed for the creation of an evidence-based system within youth work in Ontario. This concern over the lack of data is expressed in the *Roots* report in relation to data around issues of race and racism:

We note in this context that our report does not have the benefit of the kinds of statistical analyses often available when similar issues are looked at in other jurisdictions. Ontario has limited data, particularly on the many issues where racism intersects with other roots. (McMurtry & Curling, 2008, p. 29)

Roots employed great care to outline the various areas where more data is required, especially around issues related to race, poverty, and crime, and functioned as a vehicle in authorizing data gathering mechanisms within youth work.

Ontario's *Stepping Up Youth Strategy for Success* (2013), the first youth development framework in Ontario, expressed the numerous challenges in creating an evidence-based document with the limited data available. *Stepping Up* noted that the gathering of existing data from various sources did not include the voices of Indigenous and other marginalized youth voices and stated:

we commit to digging deeper into the experiences of marginalized youth – including Aboriginal youth, youth in and leaving care, youth with disabilities or special needs, racialized youth, newcomer youth, LGBTQ youth, Francophone youth, youth living in rural and remote communities, youth from low-income families and youth in conflict with the law. (MCYS, 2013, p. 95)

Gathering and generation of data of an increasingly diverse youth population, including a growing Indigenous and Francophone youth population, in Ontario became an urgent priority. Stoler (2016) argued through her example of the Dutch Indies colonial enterprise that the energy to acquire data and engage in research of Othered unruly populations remains a colonial strategy to control and manage its colonial subjects. Similarly, the implementation of a data gathering infrastructure through PYD's evidence-based interventions has become a major part of the youth sector's work over the last 10 years and is often focused on knowing the Other. This commitment to managerial forms of youth work with an emphasis on outcomes and data generation has become integral to obtaining successful grants within the sector and appears to mimic the situation across various locations like the US, Europe, and Australia (de St Croix, 2018).

While some welcomed the ability to tell stories of marginalized youth and in using scientific data mechanisms, many members of the sector expressed worry and frustration around the purpose and energy allocated to data gathering practices. For example, Interviewee #4 expressed frustration about the category of Black youth being monolithic in the data gathering enterprise and worried about it reinforcing stereotypes:

The underlining assumptions about Black youth, so the point that I raised earlier, there's no lens or filter to deal with nuance or individuality. And that could be individuality of circumstance or background or, "Okay. So I didn't grow up in Toronto community housing, or I just got here from Ghana, which is different from somebody who just got here from Jamaica, which is different from somebody who just got here from Kingston, Kingston, Jamaica, versus someone who just got here from Portland, Jamaica." There's no lens. There's no fine-tooth comb. There's no triaging or in terms of understanding. There's

just this monolithic kind of Black youth, and then within that, we have a bunch of stereotypes.

Such glaring gaps in knowledge around Black youth and other racialized youth risk ignoring the complexities and nuances present within and among these communities and can potentially pin negative stereotypes on all its members. In addition, Interviewee #9 a Black youth sector member and academic stated:

I was worried that there would be a misunderstanding just based off of numbers and not understanding nuances of communities. The Indo-Caribbean community versus the Afro-Caribbean versus African from the continent versus first-generation born in Canada. Those nuances, I felt would never be explored or explained from the collection of data. And then at the same time, I felt like if community was not keeping in mind or did not understand kind of the intention for its demise, [laughter] right, like for institutions —if the community did not understand, like folks [in institutions] don't really care ... You can have people using that data in these very sort of problematic ways, right...to maybe pit communities against communities, right? So, I was just never settled on the data thing. I'm still not, yeah. I'm still not settled.

Concerns over the exclusionary potential of the use of data was evidenced among many of the interviewees, along with the push for more nuanced data. Similarly, James (2012) sharply pointed to the potentially dangerous outcomes of race-based data collection and warned that its usage can potentially reinforce harmful stereotypes and exclusions.

The concerns are validated by CRT and Foucauldian scholars, who argue that data gathering practices can also resemble colonialism's practices of counting populations in the

colonies (Andersen, 2016; Stoler, 2011). For example, Razack (2000) stated in relation to Indigenous suicide rates:

The settler as humanitarian is understood as committed to civilization and to the rule of law, and is not associated with the barbarism of dispossession and genocide. Within such a context, counting the numbers of dead bodies in custody and explaining how and why people die is a complicated business. The numbers offer the opportunity to confirm an old colonial belief (they are dying due to an inherent incapacity to survive modern life) as much as they do the opposite (we are killing them). (p. 193)

The energy dedicated towards counting and telling stories of racialized populations can be utilized to reinforce colonial narratives of apparent lack and deficit of racialized subjects and their inability to keep up with the civilized goals of Western modernity.

Andersen (2016) pointed to the challenges that persist around Canada's settler colonial government counting Indigenous populations such as the Métis, resulting in errors in categorizations that the Métis have then been forced to use, as they are deemed legitimate data. She stated that the drive for race-based data "also render the very idea of alternative categories and configurations—ones that might be more respectful to the Métis nation—not only implausible but nearly unthinkable" (p. 68). This potential of the erasure of alternative possibilities and the reinforcement of settler colonial goals are the risky and violent effects of frameworks such as PYD.

The Exclusionary Results of Investing in Positive Youth Development and Managerial Systems

Furthermore, caution needs to be applied to the investment of data gathering practices, especially that of race-based data gathering within youth work practices. Davies (2003) pointed

out that in managerialism and EBP many of the resources that would have been allocated to professional work have now been allocated to auditing and surveillance and this practice has gone unnoticed or is weakly critiqued. Many of the interviewees pointed out that despite all the resources targeting PYD outcomes and an evidence-based framework, there is little additional benefit to the communities that arise out of these mechanisms. Furthermore, the usage of cost-benefit technologies and the push for evidence-based policy-making support institutional managers in appearing to have a more organized and controlled youth sector but less focus is placed on supporting the long-term youth outcomes. This point was expressed with anger and frustration by numerous interview participants. Interviewee #4 stated:

Again, human beings. We're not widgets. And I think sometimes we are treated like that in the sector. I'm going to write my proposal for my funding application and I'm going to target 95 or 25% increase over last year for Black youth. That's widgeting. That speaks nothing about how. It's all in the doing and the how, not setting targets. Which is what we're reverted to. Just setting targets and outcomes that can be done in an office without engaging, without building relationships, without any of the human being stuff. That's the issue. No one wants to put any time into that.

It is the chosen indicators and the numbers themselves that have become the focus of the sector, rather than the outcomes on the ground. As Interviewee #9 explained:

The reasons we're given is, "It's too much. It costs too much." It forces us to go on a different strategic direction. We don't have resources to tackle poverty...we don't have the competency or the capacity to tackle issues with disparity.

Interviewee #8 shared a concrete example of how these indicators get managed and whether the acceptable standard is met. Some racialized young people who require discipline in schools are not facing consequences:

because the school does — well, it takes a lot for them at this point to suspend, especially a Black child for anything ... in order to not allow those stats [suspension of Black kids] to be high anymore. We are now having an opposite reaction of not touching them. There are ramifications for that.

Interviewee #8, who has close knowledge of Ontario's elementary teachers and of racialized youth issues, gave this example to complicate the statements that the rates of Black child suspensions have dropped significantly in a few short years within school boards such as the TDSB. The TDSB stated that “the percentage of all suspensions/expulsions given to Black students in 2017–18 was down 5.4% compared to 2011–2012” (2019, p. 2). The ramification of such shifts to indicators is a slew of new concerns.

For example, the report *Facing the Facts: The Escalating Crisis of Violence Against Elementary School Educators in Ontario* (ETFO & Santor et al., 2019) spoke about the heightened stress and fears among teachers. Interviewee #8 stated that the report tried to capture rising issues of violence in the school community but also stated that many Black and other marginalized children are increasingly ignored within the school system, which leads to students feeling like “‘Oh, I'm almost like this untouchable. I'm untouchable now.’ Right? So they're walking around the school feeling untouchable, even though the whole system like outside of the school, they're being crushed.” While the idea of untouchability sounds powerful, Interviewee #8 noted that it results in the lack of necessary supports and resources being provided to these youth. They are excluded from the student population through a form of inclusion, being the lack

of suspension. Using Agamben's (1998) concept of homo sacer, Othered children, especially Black children and youth are reduced to bare life and made expendable within certain spaces like the school. This occurs not just in exclusionary forms of conduct and strategies but also through this inclusionary manner where they continue to be reduced to bare life: in this situation Black youth are once again subjected to the position of homo sacer for the sake of lowering indicators.

Interviewees stressed that the energy invested in the gathering of data and establishing standardized outcomes is not directed in the same way towards ensuring that the outcomes are achieved. Davies (2003) pointed to goals such as every child achieving the minimum literacy rates as an example of something which cannot be disputed as a positive goal to support the development of democratic citizens. However, the resources required to activate such goals, such as new models, theories, data, and implementation of tools and mechanisms takes the resources away from the goals of literacy itself. This is a key critique that is relevant to PYD's and managerialism's function within the youth sector in Ontario and was discussed by many of the interviewees.

Davies (2003) argued that managerialism and its drive for setting targets does not concern itself in a significant manner with how the work is carried out or if particular effects are reached:

Little or no attention is paid to the actual effects on the work that this new panopticism might have, other than to monitor the meeting of institutional objectives. As long as objectives have been specified and strategies for their management and surveillance put in place, the nature of the work itself is of little relevance to anyone. If the auditing tools say that the work has, on average, met the objectives, it is simply assumed that the work has been appropriately and satisfactorily tailored according to the requirements of the institution (and often of the relevant funding body). (p. 1).

Davies's statement affirms Interviewees #9 and #4's earlier sentiments that these goal-setting exercises are in and of themselves the goals of managerial efforts and are not intended to necessarily reach their outcomes.

The implementation of all the various steps within the PYD and the managerial model requires considerably more resources than accorded to most community youth organizations. However, funding periods within the youth sector range from short project funding for six months to a year, with few funding opportunities consisting of multi-year or core funding. While funds were severely depleted after the 2008 economic downturn, there appears to have been a gradual shift back towards at least three-year funding at the provincial level after the austerity years of 2010–2015. The need to obtain longitudinal data on youth and youth programs has influenced the shift towards longer term funding. While this longer-term funding has been welcomed, it comes with a slew of managerial expectations that are embedded within the evidence-based PYD framework.

Interviewee #12 a long-time White sector member and leader of a key youth organization, indicated that a significant change has been occurring since 2018 especially at the federal level regarding funding and evidence-based monitoring:

So if you think about the life cycle of a youth program and system change, that, for me, when we look at changes that might be happening...so they were really focusing in on outcomes for a while, they were asking for unrealistic things. There's no way we could even touch causality or system change in one year or even three years. So they seem to have accepted that and also accepted that programs need to change, and adapt, and figure out what they're doing, and evaluate and keep going throughout the process.... that's hopeful because this long-term funding is something that as a sector, we've all been

screaming about, that you can't expect an evaluation framework to be established and built, and then offering of actual findings within a year with very small funds as well, and then also that's as a sector we don't even have — most did not have a framework in place. And I don't know actually if they do still. So this still weeds out a lot of people and probably is not applicable to the youth-led groups of course.

The federal shift towards longer term funding appears hopeful to a sector expected to report on long term outcomes with six to 12 months of funding. Current funding through Ontario's Youth Opportunities Grant includes grants that range from one to three years, such as the Youth Innovations Test/Scale grant (\$100,000–\$150,000), and two to five years, such as the Systems Innovation grant (maximum \$250,000). Three year granting periods were present during the YCF era but dissipated after the 2008 economic downturn and periods longer than three years were only made available to the few organizations that had member funding through UWGT or core funding by various levels of government. The growth of five-year funding cycles is thus a critical shift in the sector.

Appeals for longer-term funding have been an ever present ask by sector members, community, and youth. Almost all the interviewers touched on this dilemma of short-term funding plaguing the sector and the need for longer commitments to effectively support youth. However, this shift is now appearing to occur not necessarily because of decades of appeals, but rather to accomplish the managerial goals of closing biopolitical knowledge gaps on youth populations and meeting managerial goals of managing youth and the sector.²²

22 Interviewee #11 noted that while long-term funding is being promoted, it is happening in phases and resembles a kind of courtship process where funders are not fully committed until they have established trust with the organization.

Barring Grassroots and Youth-Led Organizations From Funding Eligibility

It is important to note Interviewee #12's point on the shift to PYD outcomes-based managerial systems of delivering youth work still functioning in an exclusionary manner and making funding inaccessible to many smaller groups without a PYD outcomes framework or evaluation system. Even MCYS acknowledged this exclusion, due to intense criticism from grassroots youth work sector members. As the *Ontario Youth Action Plan* (2012a) stated:

Evaluating the results of our collective investments is critical to ensuring that we are delivering value for money, achieving intended outcomes, avoiding duplication of efforts, and ensuring that partners are not working at cross-purposes. But we know that some smaller youth-serving agencies lack the capacity to spend scarce dollars or time on rigorous evaluation. (p.11)

The inability to incorporate PYD evidence and measurement-based managerial mechanisms as part of organizational vocabulary had dire consequences on organizational funding in the Ontario sector since 2012. Grassroots and CBYOs tend to not prioritize the language of Western scientific evidence and accountability through measurement; instead, their sense of accountability remains to the community and to developing programming and services based on community knowledge and needs. Knafo et al. (2019) stated that managerialism was promoted by neoliberal institutions as a way to oppose experiential knowledge and common-sense decision-making through the introduction of mathematical tools to support governance. This shift has pushed out many grassroots groups, many of whom are small community-based organizations supporting racialized youth, from funding opportunities.

To address the criticism lodged against MCYS on this exclusionary practice, support, training, and tools have been developed over the years to address the exclusionary nature of the

evidence-based shift. Initiatives such as York University's YouthREX and the Students Commission of Canada's Sharing the Stories evaluation and research platform have functioned in a supportive role to the YOF grantees and to the broader sector. However, it remains the case that grassroots organizations are required now to allocate their scarce energy and resources to learn more about assets-based youth development work alongside managerial tools such as theories of change, logic models, and language such outcomes, outputs, and indicators.

Habitual Model Hopping

Many of the interviewees stated that the practice of habitual model hopping showed a lack of genuine commitment to invest in the model of the day heavily criticized by the interviewees.

Interviewee #14 added:

The only other thing I would say as well is that when we have larger pieces of documentation led, these *Roots of Youth Violence*, which we erect, but then don't find ways of actually empathically implementing. Then again, we have theory without applied practice in a meaningful way, which then creates these really heightened notions of where we need to be... And the things that we were hoping to affect have come back to us many times over. So if we're creating really big policy document, research documents without the ways of looking at full implementation then these are just words on a paper. These are moot. Everybody has *Roots of Youth Violence* as a heavy-weight shelf document in the fucking cabinet. Meanwhile, here you are digging out page 562 to bring that knowledge to life.

This lack of motivation in implementing the models to create the necessary effects was noted by the interviewees, making all the actions around model-chasing and development of infrastructure irrelevant busy work. Interviewee #4 expressed: "We never complete a thing. We never do what

you actually do for those models, evidence-based logic model approaches to work.” The production of these documents, with substantial energy placed in the generation of literature reviews, outcomes, indicators, and data has exponentially grown since the PYD and managerial turn and has consumed the efforts of the sector over the past 10 years and have come to stand in for notions of effective youth work and supporting youth social change. Voronka (2019) noted a similar process within the field of mental health and its obsession with evidence-based research and data coming to stand in for action and change. She argued that this focus on data contributes to slow death (Berlant, 2011), as efforts to support the community are derailed by the focus on data gathering, measurement, and evaluation.

Interviewee #14, a Black government bureaucrat, discussed latching on to evidence-based asset models to justify youth work investments:

These are great ideologies, theories, and models, but for whom and when? ... I think for racialized youth, for me and for Black youth, specifically, is that when the models are tested with people that don't look like you, they don't — they can't be applied. And I don't know, in a true community development, youth development organizations and people that do that well, aren't looking up the theory. They're just doing it. So, thank you, Research Institute for creating the 40 developmental assets. I appreciate that. And maybe that helps some groups of young people, but we have — the 40 development assets are sold based on the capacity-building model, which is hundreds of thousands of dollars, if you really want to implement that in the community... Who has that when you're talking about impoverished communities and organizations can't keep the roof over their head?

Interviewee #14 expressed frustration towards the adoption of evidence-based models that do not resonate with the communities they are intended to serve.

In the last decade, collective impact, an evidence-based and outcomes-based model of working collaboratively across sectors adopted from the US, has been heavily instituted within the youth work sector. Cincinnati's Strive model and its "cradle to career" approach has been touted across the youth work sector in Ontario as an emblem of success and subsequently the collective impact model has been institutionalized and replicated in many cities across North America. At present, there are efforts to re-face such dominant evidence-based models with a cultural lens to address racial youth inequalities. Interviewee #10 shared that the collective impact model has been embedded within the BYAP (2018) and recognized the challenges that such a model provides to the work of supporting Black youth in communities:

Collective impact is the new thing. So the Black Youth Action Plan we developed and made an Ontario version of collective impact. For all the praises they sing about collective impact, the critiques are most damning in terms who we are trying to serve. Collective impact is very homogenous. It's very top-down.

The model has been critiqued for focusing too rigidly on the evidence-based model and the narrow focus on particular indicators, such as education and employment, and not accounting for various interlocking complexities in young people's lives.

Interviewee #10 shared that efforts are being undertaken to create more nuanced and culturally sensitive models of the collective impact model within the province:

So when they made an Ontario version, we call CI squared, Collective Impact Cultural Identity. We run it through a critical racism lens so that it is — it takes into consideration the realities that exist for the Black community because this is for the Black Youth Action Plan. It acknowledges the historical context of colonialism. And the government and funders practice of funding programs are not funding infrastructure so ensuring those

communities continue to live within a deficit world where they haven't developed the capacity really to run organizations from a cultural perspective because there just haven't been enough resources tied to that element of it.

Interviewee #10 discussed the intentional efforts made to create a collective impact model that focuses on anti-racism and recognizes the impacts of colonialism through the BYAP. However, these are areas that have not been prioritized in the past and therefore funding infrastructure to create a culturally sensitive collective impact model is a new undertaking that requires considerable political will and investment. However, Interviewee #10 and many other interviewees who have been working on creating new ways of working and supporting communities within the limits of a PYD and managerial framework, highlighted that the change in government from the Liberals to the Conservatives in 2018 significantly stalled the momentum in transforming these Western universal models to ones that can better reflect marginalized communities.

This example also highlights the ongoing efforts to limit marginalized communities' ability to envision new alternatives outside of the confines of these colonial practices of accounting and models and speaks to the subtle ways in which circuits of Whiteness remain in place. In a moment where anti-racism discourse has been sanctioned and named within neoliberal settler colonial governmentality, the opportunity provided to build and innovate new strategies is limited to an existing rigid evidence-based model and confined to discourses of collaboration. The ability to envision new alternates and innovate solutions that might be more attuned to the community's needs remains limited.

The Ongoing Subjugation of Community Knowledge

Many interviewees expressed a deep concern for the erasure and usurping of community knowledge, practices, and traditions through the ongoing infiltration of Western models that claim to address social issues. Razack (2000) critiqued the obsession with numbers in the obsessive counting and inquiring over the Indigenous people who die in custody and argued that “evidently, it is necessary to go beyond the numbers if we are to distinguish one story from the other. The overemphasis on the numbers can indicate a reluctance to confront what lies beneath them” (p. 193). The erasure and opposition to community knowledge and anecdotal evidence often shared through story-telling and other mechanisms existed prior to the rise of managerial governance and could offer different truths for us to learn from. De St Croix (2020) has argued that storytelling and other forms of knowledge sharing could hold value and urges youth work to return to these forms of evidence.

Interviewee #4, a key Black member of the YCF team who was present during this transition to managerial techniques and evidence-based structures stated:

Yes, you need to be able to have those benchmarks to figure out where you started and where you're going and what changes you need to be made — that you made. What accidents or mistakes happened because you have to make them. That's the way you learn. And that's what I mean by iterative. But what I don't think make sense is what the situation that we're in now where — and that we were quite poised to be where those people who become awakened when they — I call them born again. And they start to tell, "Well, we need research. We need research." What are you researching? If it's not [laughter] people's story, it becomes a purely academic exercise that has no rooting and no value. I'm serious.

Interviewee #4 referred to “born again” members of the sector as those who embrace managerialism’s drive for data collection and evidence to legitimize community knowledge and themselves as professionals. Many interviewees did question this devotion to data. Interviewee #9 asked:

Who's doing the asking? Why are they asking? And what is their vision for the use of this data? I don't think that that is the place we need to invest all of our social justice energy. There's movement that can happen in the absence of data. Because I think like, “Look, we're human beings. We see. We see things, right? I don't always need to translate what I see into numbers for it to be justified for action again, right?” So for me, it's like I push back and ask critical questions around why, who, and that stuff. And then, “Can we do this without the data?” is a question I always ask as well.

The energy that is taken up by the data gathering process was noted by various interviewees, and some questioned the efficacy of expending that energy when other forms of truth-telling exist.

Discrediting non-Western scientific forms of truth gathering is built into the managerial regime and can be traced back to the meticulous practices of governing imperial colonies. For example, Interviewees #3 and #4 stated that in the years leading up to the PBPC (United Way, 2004) report, community claims about the linkages between systemic racism and the growing racialized spatial concentration of poverty were regularly disqualified by sector members as anecdotal or irrelevant to the well-being of the state. Similarly, many of the interviewees pointed to the ongoing ask by community members to address key systemic barriers to allow for better youth outcomes for racialized youth. The refusal and negation of community knowledge, despite claims by state and sector actors to value lived experience, in favour of Western science-based arguments was noted by most of the interviewees. Most of the interviewees also recognized how

within governing institutions, quantitative evidence remains emblematic of legitimate knowledge, while community knowledge that is considered as lived experience knowledge continues to be sidelined or utilized to further dominant political interests.

Stoler (2009) pointed to the practices of colonial managerial systems where “grids of intelligibility were fashioned from uncertain knowledge; disquiet and anxieties registered the uncommon sense of events and things; epistemic uncertainties repeatedly unsettled the imperial conceit that all was in order” (Kindle Edition, Location 172). The efforts to measure and count the unknown and bring it within a controllable system was an important aspect of colonial governance. Foucault (1980) identified that actors in power categorize subjugated knowledges as weak knowledge, while scientific approaches hold greater authority. My mapping highlights an ongoing process wherein community knowledge is recurrently embedded/converted into scientific frameworks, such as place-based and public health, and youth development frameworks but have different epistemological roots and focus. PYD and managerial forms of working within the youth working sector limit and narrow the opportunities for such re-envisioning and reinforce normative forms of being. The governmental process of devaluing community knowledge by requiring its conversion into scientific knowledge that then comes to stand in as the only form of knowledge, after periods of community outcry, is emblematic of colonial power systems (Akena, 2012).

Evidence-based policy-making such as PYD models, and managerial data gathering in relation to youth needs to be positioned within a critique of the ongoing practices of colonialism. Shahjahan (2011) asserted that this connection between managerial and evidence-based policymaking to colonial systems of governing is not as widespread a critique and requires greater attention. She pointed to evidence-based policymaking resulting in the forced “cultural

assimilation, theft, and the plundering of Indigenous land” (p. 182). These critiques and the discussion engaged in this section unsettle the assumption that evidence-based models such as PYD and managerial forms of accounting are inherently good.

Relatedly, Klikauer (2015) drew on Chomsky’s work to argue that the rise of this form of new managerialism “deprives owners of decision-making power and workers of their ability to resist managerialism. In fact, the rise of managerialism may in itself be a response to people’s resistance in society and more specific workers’ opposition against managerial regimes” (p.1105). The heavy leaning on scientific tools and PYD knowledge frameworks to create structure and organize institutions stems from this desire to eradicate opportunities for resistance and is a fundamental characteristic of this version of managerialism.

Ginwright and Cammarota (2002), in their promotion of a social justice model of youth development, stated that “the limits of current youth development models are bound by an inability to examine the complex social, economic, and political forces that bear on the lives of urban youth” (p. 82). Unfortunately, almost two decades later their criticism of youth development models continues to ring true. Interviewee #14 spoke about not using the tools of the master and creating a different framework that is built in consideration of them, not simply included in the Western European framework:

What we're really talking about is what do we think youth need to thrive or to be successful and I think we need to get better at doing more work with the population groups we're serious about supporting and not that we're not serious about supporting our universal youth, but if we're trying to solutionize for a demographic of young people that consistently get missed, then let's stop applying the tools of the master and actually create things that are a little bit more genuine to the population groups we want to serve. So, I

want to articulate that in such a way to say that, while these evidence and data, models might create some frameworks, they're not the only ways of intervening.

Interviewee #14 along with some of the other interviewees stressed the need to envision alternatives outside of Western managerial epistemologies.

Advocacy efforts by community groups and CRT scholars push for the creation of a more reflective asset and strengths framework, alongside the development of culturally sensitive models. The Assets Coming Together (ACT) project created by York University (2009–2014) sought to provide a community and culturally sensitive lens to the youth developmental assets through the engagement of members of the Jane & Finch community. A report generated stated that ACT For Youth report integrates the PYD perspective with a social justice approach that recognizes that “youth in ‘marginalized’ urban communities experience barriers such as racism, sexism, poverty, zero-tolerance, and unemployment that are ‘toxic’ to their well-being” (2011, p. 1). However, such community knowledge and research are integrated primarily within the context section of policy frameworks; it does not impact the productive subject expectations and resiliency discourses that continue to be promoted.

Conclusion

This chapter argued that the positive-seeming nature of an evidence-based PYD framework, along with managerial mechanisms of goal setting, data gathering, measurement, and evaluation function in colonial aphasiastic ways as they remain rooted in neoliberal and colonial logics. Inclusive and progressive seeming discursive shifts such as the PYD model, that shifted the discourse from deficits to assets, do not always translate to transformative change-making on the ground. A range of actors, such as policymakers, discipline experts, organizations, and youth

workers continue to hold unhealthy expectations of marginalized racialized youth to meet normative set of assets.

The practice of transforming Western models of youth development by adding context to meet culturally- or community-specific purposes appears to be habitual practice within the sector but the parameters of the transformation are somewhat narrow and require substantial effort and resources, which are not always present. Furthermore, culturally sensitive models built on the backs of innately racist underpinnings have weak capacity to provide the nuance and flexibility necessary to support marginalized youth and instead contribute to the maintenance of colonial aphasia. The adopted models and disciplines appear to be better suited to serve the goals of neoliberalism and managerial governmentality and their desire for evidence, data, and order.

PYD's dependency on Western scientific practices of goal setting, tracking, and accounting enabled greater managerial scrutiny of the activities of the youth and the youth work sector, which is an increasingly important governmental goal. The chapter also noted that the desire to be counted has a complex relationship with community members and within the youth work sector, as the desire for data to tell the stories of injustice is valid, but this remains a double-edged sword, as the data also are applied to strategies that potentially reinforce the oppression of communities.

Chapter 7: Social Justice Frameworks and Counter-Conduct in the Youth Work Sector

This chapter dissects understandings of social inclusion, social justice, and discourses of participation within the youth work sector and unpacks the encounters between racialized subjects such as youth and youth workers within institutional spaces. The discussion concentrates on the complex practices of truth-telling by racialized youth and workers and unpacks some of its well-intended but exploitive aspects as well as the counter-conduct opportunities that are made possible. The chapter argues that racialized youths' and workers' speech acts range from forms of avowal (Foucault, 2014) to parrhesiastic truth-telling, identified as a risky act of speaking truth to power to disrupt the system (Foucault, 2012). The latter part of the chapter traces the acts of counter-conduct envisioned in moments of inclusion/exclusion and unpacks their possibilities, limits, and ongoing threats from governmental powers.

Theoretical Understandings of Social Justice

The concept of social justice is a contested term that is historically and contextually influenced (Rizvi, 1998) and has predominantly been limited to Western liberal paradigms of redistribution and recognition (Coulthard, 2014). Tuck and Yang (2014) invited us to question what concepts such as justice mean beyond general notions of moral and ethical positions of righteousness and fairness. They argued that “indeed, justice may only be comprehensible when we do not get too bogged down by its commonly understood denotations...[and] may fall apart at their seams when we pay close attention” (2016, p. 4). Social justice claims put forth in youth policy documents are rarely tracked and noted for where and how they come together and fall apart from the claims made (Ahmed, 2006). Fraser & Honneth (2003) debate among them on social justice frameworks, included Fraser's consideration that both redistribution and

recognition to be necessary for a state of participatory parity, wherein all subjects are treated equally. Honneth (Fraser & Honneth, 2003) on the other hand attested that the fair recognition of marginalized groups is a prerequisite for social justice and promotes concepts such as love and self-actualization. Rawls proposed freedom and equal distribution of wealth to be critical to the principles of social justice and placed the state as a key actor in developing equitable social policies (Cited in Rizvi, 1998). Many of our present-day social policy frameworks remain heavily influenced by the Rawlsian conceptualization of justice. However, notions of parity and equality tend to simplify the persistence of power dynamics and the degree of work that is required to create such conditions; more importantly, existing models do not propose shifting the existing order itself but rather work to maintain existing power structures (Armstrong & Thompson, 2009) and produce problematic conceptual tools in working towards social justice.

Many of the liberal conceptualizations of fairness and equity hail from Enlightenment notions of the universal man, which excluded Black, Indigenous, and other racial subjects from the category of human (Jackson, 2020; Mills, 2021; Walcott, 2021). Scholars such as Coulthard (2014) have argued that seeking recognition from a colonial state reproduces relations of dominance. He argued:

instead of ushering in an era of peaceful coexistence grounded on the ideal of reciprocity or mutual recognition, the politics of recognition in its contemporary liberal form promises to reproduce the very configurations of colonialist, racist, patriarchal state power that Indigenous peoples' demands for recognition have historically sought to transcend. (2014, Kindle Edition, Location 144)

Such forms of recognition are promoted within the liberal human rights framework but still requires the state, as colonial master, to confer these rights on those historically relegated to the

category of unworthy. Fanon (1952) questioned such Hegelian notion of interdependence between the state and the slave, which considers recognition to be a mutual act. Subsequently, practices of social justice remain limited to inviting marginalized subjects into colonial governmental systems and promoting parity with existing Western norms (Coulthard, 2014; Dhillon, 2017). Liberalism's racist underpinnings have been buried and glossed over, subjecting society to a state of colonial aphasia and at a loss for the language to critique these discourses (Stoler, 2011). Similarly, Tuck and Yang (2011) argued that:

Teleological theories of resistance and youth resistance, like teleological theories of international and human development, operate (usually without thought or intention) under colonial theories of change that place the Western world and neoliberal, white ideology at the finish line of societal evolution. (p. 522)

Current models of social justice continue to take as their starting point that marginalized subjects simply need to be invited into the dominant neoliberal Western world to achieve social justice. As a result, notions of freedom and justice remain integrally tied to a master/slave dialectic wherein power sharing occurs at the behest and due to the apparent benevolence of those in power. Envisioning freedom outside of this constricted and oppressive relationship continues to be elusive; consequently, normative society's paradigms, structures, and practices are rarely transformed or even questioned.

Such convoluted principles of social justice are further complicated when considering social justice, recognition, and redistribution in relation to children and youth. As Thomas (2012) stated:

Honneth does not talk about children except in the context of primary relationships of love and care. This is not surprising: the default position of most social and political theory,

even now, is either to disregard children entirely or to regard them only as adults in waiting, and Honneth generally opts for the latter. (p. 461)

Similarly, Fraser's notion of parity of participation idealizes a triumphant democratic adult-oriented space: young people are not necessarily considered to occupy this democratic public sphere (Fraser & Honneth, 2003). Naturalized assumptions of youth immaturity continue to have an influence on social justice theorizing and tend to follow a deficit frame of youth as citizens-in-waiting or citizens-in-the-making (Biesta et al., 2009; Dhillon, 2017; Kennelly, 2011; Kwon, 2013; Thomas, 2012).

This is further complicated by the colonial history that discounted children and youth from colonies. Youth participation practices that remain rooted in adult-oriented notions of Western liberal social justice need to be reconsidered with children and youth as moral beings with agency, with greater accountability for systems of violence such as colonialism. Fields such as child and youth studies and sociology of childhood promote children and youth as agentic beings and bearers of knowledge and rights; however, there remains limited understanding as to how this translates to the sharing of power within everyday youth work relations.

Youth Work and Youth Participation

Youth participation discourse has increased circulation over the last 30 years since the adoption of the UNCRC in 1989, which broadened children's rights and participation in decision-making on issues related to their lives (Muncie, 2005). The growing interest in youth participation by government actors is warily considered as a positive shift by long term sector members, who recall the exclusionary position towards youth within society. Interviewee #12, a long-term advocate of youth inclusion since the 80s, was cautious yet optimistic about the efforts to include youth. She argued that the effects of the measures undertaken by youth advocates:

has been to legitimize the participation. So that's the biggest piece of it. And I guess in terms of that is also, practically speaking, has allowed you [sector members] to actually write dollars in [laughter] to support youth participation. So you're no longer challenged by things like food and transportation and honorariums or even salaries. You actually get brownie points, and brownie, I mean Girl Guide brownie, in terms of having salaries for young people to execute programs.

M.B: Wow.

Interviewee #12: That's a headway, right? Before, it was like ...

M.B: It's actually a headway?

Interviewee #12: It's totally a headway. We used to have to hide that. But really, we did. Or we had to find other pockets of money, so you could get staff funding. But if you needed food for youth meetings, it was always the discretionary item that went. The salaries for young people would be — well, you don't really need them. They don't need to be paid. So that's certainly been really important ... because it's recognizing, I think, in some ways, the equity, and the importance of the value of youth participation. And I think there has been a general recognition and acknowledgment that things are better. The products are better.

Processes are better. That these policies and practices do improve.

The historic lack of interest in youth in Canada and its youth policymaking or youth participation is highlighted by Interviewee #12's reflection of past experiences within the sector around stringent funding towards youth participation. The innovative means through which funding for youth participation had to be obtained speaks to the narrow parameters within which young people were permitted to exercise their citizenship.

On a similar note, Interviewee #7 stated, “I think people [those in power] have learned enough that you need to consult community. I think that's just become more of a common practice.” Inclusion through consultation functions as a standard mechanism of recognition but it is observed that even this was not always a normative practice in youth issues. Participation and voice were outside the acceptable discourses and the value of young people itself was in question; subsequently, the mere presence and voices of young people are viewed as part of a positive incremental change.

However, many youth organizations often find themselves promoting limited and tokenistic adult forms of inclusion and participation (Dhillon, 2017; Kwon, 2013; Tuck & Yang, 2014). Youth inclusion and participation in the sector is often limited to citizenship rights, engaging in the formal political system, and becoming productive and contributing citizens; however, the social rights aspects of inclusion that would address barriers, such as equitable housing and welfare, receives less attention. As France and Wiles (1997) stated, the social rights aspects of inclusion require time, resources and energy. The next section explores racialized youth participation as a form of inclusion in the youth sector and argues that these inclusionary practices are concomitantly attached to promoting settler and neoliberal goals of productive citizenry.

Unraveling Notions of Social Justice and Racial Inclusion

This section traces the problematic understandings of social justice, inclusion, and participation within youth work as it relates to marginalized racialized youth. A key question from the interview focused on how those in the youth work sector understand social justice. Interviewee #10 stated:

I mean I think there's a lot of social justice language and stuff that comes out in a lot of these [government and community organization] reports. And we all get behind it. Yes, we all want social justice, but our day-to-day work isn't so much focused on social justice.

The heightened circulation of social justice discourses in youth policy was noted by Interviewee #10 and most interviewees. However, the sector's understanding of social justice and its implementation in practice begins to fall apart when brought under scrutiny. Interviewee #7 reflected that:

those languages are relatively new... I don't think we're really even really using that type of language — from as early as 2012. I don't remember that being part of the discourse at all. So, to me, the concept of social justice and the community sector, still feels like an incongruency. I think social justice is going to mean something different to people that are living as marginalized people, as oppressed people, versus people who learn about it in school and don't have day-to-day contact with some of the conditions that have people calling for justice. And I think the response of wanting more services isn't necessarily something that comes from community. I think it comes from this sector. I think it comes from professionals.

Kwon (2013) work pointed to similar incongruences between social justice movements' language of empowerment versus the provision of youth work's resource- and youth development-driven model of improvement.

Youth work has increasingly become attached to discourses of access, space, and place to strengthen youth ties to citizenship through productivity and participation and has distanced itself from some of the radical structural change forms of youth work rooted in various rights-

based social movements in the nineteenth century (France & Wiles, 1997; Van de Walle et al., 2011).²³ Interviewee #9 stated:

social justice yeah, at least, as a racialized person, and also with my education, my training, and my experiences, I knew social justice was more than that [access], right?

But at the table, they kept sort of confining it to conversations about place and space.

For example, efforts by the TYES (City of Toronto, 2015) provided grounds for youth involvement through increasing access to spaces, such as in the “resolution of conflicts over the uses of City-run spaces” and stipulated that the “Toronto Public Library will recruit two Teen Advisors to its Board” (p. 27). These specifics do allude to the ongoing exclusion of racialized youth from public spaces, as community centres and public libraries often order bans on youth for being unruly and acting in apparently threatening ways. As noted in Chapter 5, there is a recognition that Canadian libraries remain sites of exclusion for non-White youth subjects and greater scrutiny is required of the systemic racism embedded within its practices (Matthews, 2020). TYES (City of Toronto, 2015) attempted to broaden the definition of violence to include structural violence through such specific examples.

For the most part, inclusionary discourses focus on the improvement of youth indicators from a developmental framework perspective. The *Roots* report (McMurtry & Curling, 2008) pointed to other texts such as the Falconer Report (2008)²⁴ and smaller community reports to establish that youth engagement helps address youth violence and alienation. In addition, texts

23 As discussed in Chapter 6, the rise of youth work after the 1950s focused on reintegrating young people into the social fabric to ensure smooth transitions to adulthood (France, 1997). Kelly (2006) noted that social inclusion discourse arose from French political thought as a form of integrating workers and a growing number of young people who were facing exclusions from the work force.

24 The Falconer Report (2008) arose from a School Community Safety Advisory Panel that was asked to address concerns after the shooting death of Jordan Manners at the C.W. Jeffreys Collegiate in May 2007.

such as Ontario's *Stepping Up* (2013) youth strategy promoted youth engagement within the positive youth development knowledge system and stated:

Civically engaged young people enjoy higher self-esteem and grades, and tend to be more physically active and committed to their friends, families and communities. Giving young people more of a voice in government, policy and decision-making builds their capacity while providing platforms for youth to lead change and take action. (p. 77)

Youth development research, such as that by Busseri and Rose-Krasnor (2009), tends to claim that youth participation increases youth assets; this is subsequently utilized as a key logic by policymakers at present for investing in youth participation initiatives. However, these claims appear to be valid primarily by those who are already engaged in other social spheres (Hooghe, 2003 as cited in Van de Walle et al., 2011). This chapter dissects these claims and argues that youth participation is primarily promoted to achieve neoliberal entrepreneurial goals of developing responsibilized youth (Bernard, 2016; Kwon, 2013). Firstly, the discussion unpacks the complex ways in which participation makes space for the circulation of lived experience knowledge that can be obtained and used in exploitive ways that are in opposition to social justice.

The Encounter: Lived Experience Knowledge and Truth-Telling

This section focuses on what transpires in the encounter between governmental apparatuses and racialized subjects, be it youth or youth workers, through forms of participation. The acquisition of lived experience knowledge and the gathering of truth-telling stories from marginalized subjects has become a formative practice in the sector. Interviewees were asked

what knowledges dominate the sector and many pointed to lived experience as a highly sought-after knowledge within the sector, alongside evidence-based youth developmental knowledge.

Consumption of the Other

Lived experience knowledge is often obtained through the inclusion of particular youth invited into certain public spaces, such as meetings, events, and forums, to share stories of their lives. Interviewee #3 stated:

I don't know if this, if you would define this as knowledge but it's a theme, youth with lived experience has become a very prominent theme. So. And this is the one you've heard all the time. "Nothing for us without us." Is the one that sticks out all the time. But. That's an interesting term because when we're talking about young people with lived experience, I would say we usually end up going to a certain group of young community champions who have lived experience in this priority [funding area].

As noted by Interviewee #3 and others, only certain young people are invited to tell particular stories. Interviewee #9 asserted, "Yes. Let me say this. The most valued lived experience was the lived experience that was couched in struggle and pain." Similarly, interviewee #7 stated that the sector sought out particular speakers: "It wasn't just any young person whose lived experience was valuable. It was that real, kind of, once you open your mouth, I can hear the trauma. That's the stuff that I want. Right?" The raw stories of living in states of exclusion and woundedness are harvested but often managed with little respect or care. Interviewee #9 shared that a young person enters the space holding some hope that their truth will lead to healing and also acknowledgment of their struggles:

So when a young person would bring that to the table I'm going to say they were just expecting that that be received. They were expecting some adult in that room to say, "Man,

young person, we've really messed up." Right? "We damaged you." Right? "And we accept responsibility for that and we apologize," or whatever. Right? They needed that — recognition and reconciliation ...

Regrettably, this does not occur in most cases and is rather consumed as what Interviewee #5 termed “poverty porn.” Interviewee #13 noted that “there's a thin line between tokenism and inspiring people...[tokenism] when you basically come monetize them and turn them into a piece of property for your benefit.” Interviewee #13 referred to even the act of giving honoraria and transit tokens to youth who are invited in to speak their stories as a form of tokensim.

The commodification and consumption of these stories coheres with hooks’ (2015) discussion of eating the Other and the allure of being in contact with the dark Other. hooks states “that simply by expressing their desire for ‘intimate’ contact with black people, white people do not eradicate the politics of racial domination as they are made manifest in personal interaction” (2015, p. 371). Nonetheless, various governmental non-profits, funders, and ministries construct this ritualistic space for marginalized racialized youth participation to function as an opportunity to experience and know the Other. I had to face my own role and complicity in this process during my time as a sector employee in community engagement roles. I experienced the nagging discomfort and feelings of exploitation that were present in some situations where I was representing racialized youth voice as a young adult from a marginalized community. In other scenarios, I was an adult and staff member who facilitated other youth to tell stories of pain and trauma at various public spaces and did not always understand the implications and harms of such tellings in those moments or recognize my complicity in this process. My research seeks to bring attention to the inclusionary and exclusionary aspects of this practice of seeking the raw lived knowledge of marginalized communities and in the next section I delve deeper into these

seemingly innocent practices of harnessing lived experience knowledge through truth-telling practices.

Truth-Telling Speech Acts of Avowal and Parrhesia

This section explores the complexity of truth-telling acts, as they perform varied functions: this includes confessional truth-telling, which takes on the form of penance and acceptance of appropriate forms of conduct (Foucault, 2014). On the other hand, parrhesia's risky truth-telling can support counter-conduct practice and seeing otherwise (Foucault, 2012). This study recognizes the grey areas between these forms of speech acts, and this section strives to work through the slippery nature of both these forms and their potential effects and recommends that greater attention be paid to the forms of truth-telling, what they do, and what their effects are.

Truth-Telling as Avowal and Repentance

Foucault in his work, *Wrong-Doing, Truth-Telling and the Function of Avowal in Justice* (2014), examined the ritualistic function of truth-telling in seeking penance, from antiquity to modern judicial systems. Foucault argued that truth-telling as an act of avowal is inextricably connected to “a relationship of obedience, a relationship of submission” (2014, Kindle Edition, Location 2040). Truth-telling performances by Others often encompass offers of redemption that involve stepping through to the other side to achieve acceptance.

Within the youth work sector that youth who were often called upon to speak their raw truth and share their lived experience knowledge were young people who were deeply marginalized; they were often those who were involved in negative behaviour but eventually shifted their habits to lead normative lives. These youth were often framed as saved and penitent youth and were accorded access to the sector spaces through the organizations that they were

engaged in to partake in opportunities and build their social and cultural capital in exchange for their truth-telling.

For example, Interviewee #13 a Black male bureaucrat, reflected on the role he played when he was younger and new to the sector; that he was called on to play the “gang guy,” to continuously speak about the issue and be a representative of being the good youth. He stated, “I was always called on news or in a conference. I was just a gang guy. I was the gang guy... So my conversation was also damaging because I validated the view of many, of the youth.” He, as a Black male himself, recognized the role he had played in reinforcing stereotypes of youth involved in violence and criminal activities. Practices of penitent truth-telling often includes sharing of the conditions of bare life, repenting violence, and accepting the responsibilized role of the neoliberal governmental subject. Foucault (2014) identified the pivotal role that techniques of confession and verbalization play from ancient Greek to modern society. He argued that confessional truth-telling supports understanding oneself and how others understand you.

Parameters of Truth-Telling

In addition, interviewees highlighted that acts of truth-telling need to adhere to parameters of conduct, in order to be consumed by its audience, mainly those in power within governmental institutions. Interviewee #9, a previous Black youth male participant and sector member explicitly outlines these conditions of speaking:

Yeah. So in terms of tensions, one of the pieces that is always front and center is the ability for young people to maintain the decorum around their participation ... The form and performance of participation. So we don't want young people to come there if they're going to embarrass us — but the truth needs to come across unvetted, right? So there's always

that tension. We want the truth, but we want to make sure that you present the truth in a packaged way. Unvetted.

Interviewee #9 illustrated the need to manage the truth so that it does not threaten the status quo.

He added:

M.B: And what does packaged here look like?

Interviewee #9: The right language. Pulls on the right emotions. So you can't pull on guilt but you can pull on sympathy [laughter] and empathy. You can hold us accountable to the things that are tangible. So tell me you need more funding, but don't tell me that I need to go home and work on my bigotry and [laughter] — right? Don't ever tell me that, young person. But if you want, a department that can work on that [laughter].

The parameters of the liberal charity model of social justice and truth-telling permits empathy but denies dialogues of transformative systemic changes (Chapman & Withers, 2019) As such, it is interesting that Interviewee #9 describes new departments to address the systemic issues raised by community members are not threatening or transformative.

The careful packaging of this knowledge often becomes the responsibility of racialized youth workers, who are young themselves. They are considered to have access to the truth of the Other and can facilitate the moment of avowal and truth-telling. Interviewee #12, a white provincial bureaucrat reflected that “there's this dimension like, ‘Oh, you know your community; therefore, we're going to commodify that. And you're here because of that connection to the community.’ And oftentimes, these hiring agencies aren't seeing the full person.” As Interviewee #12 highlights, racialized workers are identified as the conduit that facilitates settler knowing and manages the acceptability of that performative act.

Interviewee #9 asserted that access to the Other provides immunity to a certain degree to the racialized worker, for “you’re the guy who has access to community so you’re cool. Alright. Untouchable. You become untouchable because of the untouchable narratives [laughter].” Holding access to the knowledge of the Other and being able to translate that knowledge for settler purposes provides certain clout and status and access within the youth sector. However, the subject with access to lived experience and knowledge of the Other plays a similar role to that of the native informant that Spivak (1999) spoke of under colonial rule. The native informant often confirms orientalist (Said, 2003) understandings of the Other as uncivilized while the colonial West stands as an antithesis: as civilized, progressive, modern.

However, interviewees noted that the celebration of certain youth speakers and workers with access to knowledge can quickly shift to expulsion of the native informant subjects if youth do not perform their roles in the prescribed manner. As Interviewee #9 explained:

They [racialized workers] need to measure quality. They are held responsible for the packaging of the young person ... because if what you have is not presented in a particular way, you’re in trouble. You’re a problem. You’re rogue. You’re the rogue worker who is trying to develop radical young people [laughter]. I’ve been told that before [laughter].

The dangers and precarity of participation are ever present in the minds of those included.

Interviewee #9’s reflection resembles that of Du Bois’ (1994) state of double consciousness where Black subjects persist in a position of dual conflicting identities but one that also holds the possibilities of resistance.

However, if racialized workers did not meet the guidelines set out for youth speakers, they risked their position within the sector. The requirement to package the speech act within acceptable codes of conduct coincides with Chapman and Withers’ (2019) critique of notions of

charity and social justice in social work; they argue that it requires social justice acts to function within “the safe middle ground of liberal individualism,” which “maintains that things should change — slowly — based on individual efforts and traits, such as ‘character’ but not shifting the status quo and approaching social problems in a structural manner” (2019, p. 54). In alignment with the liberal approach to social justice, the moment of youth truth-telling is a well-orchestrated act that promotes feelings of goodness and righteousness, focuses on the individual’s pain and transformation; subsequently, it does not threaten but strengthens the existing order.

Moreover, the process of being invited into institutional spaces that were earlier closed to youth functions as the fight for social justice itself. Interviewee #9 explained:

It's a build up to that moment. That moment of disclosure ... or that moment of involvement, it's like a cathartic moment, right? “Oh my God. We have the young people here on the table. Yes. We're good” [laughter].

M. B: So that moment when you're getting them there, that is social justice?

Interviewee #9: The prior investment to get them to that moment is seen as a social justice work. Whatever else happens after that involvement, A, they will either relegate it to the responsibility of the young person, right? To pull on resources, pull on the adults if you need help understanding something ... And there's a lot of energy at the beginning, right? We got to get them tokens. We got to make sure they have the meeting minutes. Did somebody call them to make sure they're on their way? Are they okay? There's all this kind of energy and investment of resources to get them to the table. And once they're there, well, you know [laughter].

M. B: That's interesting that they are then held responsible to ...

Interviewee #9: That's when the responsibility shifts to the young person. We got you here. The rest is up to you, right? And that, for me, is like a thread of neoliberal thinking, right? We will do everything we need to at the front end to support you to become whatever we want you to become. But once we get you to that at that point, you're on your own. Right?

Providing access to space to speak and advocate for oneself functions as being equivalent to social justice. Since social justice is situated within the processes of inclusion and participation, there is an assumption that the sector is functioning in a successful manner.

However, the narrow confines in which participation is defined and set up removes considerable power from youth and community members in shaping the conversation.

Interviewee #7 stated:

And those things are set up to be the, “we consulted youth” aspect to different pieces of legislation but it's not necessarily — it doesn't run the other way. It's not the youth saying, “Hey. We think you should be doing this or creating this policy.” It's the premier saying, “Yo. I'm about to do this policy. It's going through the policy process or whatever. You guys are another check in the pipeline of — So your job is going be — you get what? 75 bucks a meeting or whatever, here's a whole policy document, go through it and add your feedback.” It don't run the other way around.

This one directional nature of the invitation to participate reinforces the master-slave dialectic as noted by Fanon (1952/2008) and Coulthard (2014). Similarly, Interviewee # 3, a Black male bureaucrat and past youth participant, reflected on their experience:

We joke around, play, hang out with people my age interested in the same things that I am ... hear interesting speakers, meet interesting people, yeah. I think though that, oftentimes, we weren't told, which is not ethical, why we needed the feedback, what was going to

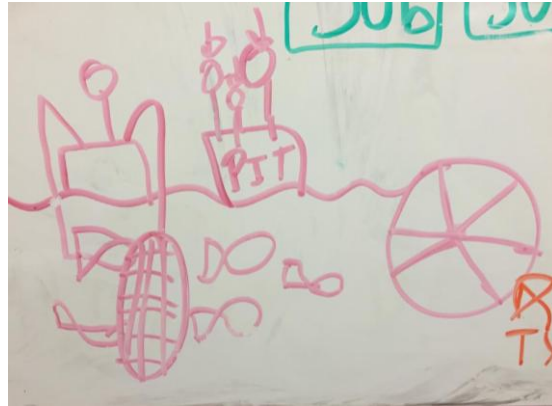
happen with our thoughts and comments. The full picture was never shown to us. It was like, “Oh, we just need you to give us some feedback on what do you think about this, what do you think about that.” Which was a really disservice to all of us ... So yeah, there's a little bit of exploitation there and unethicalness of that. What did it feel like? Well, we didn't know because we didn't know ... but we showed up. We participated. We were fed ... But as we got older though, the issue with police became more of, we're angry. I'm angry.

Interviewees who had been youth participants in the sector — five of the 14 interviewed, shared feelings of being used and being kept in the dark around the purpose of their inclusion. Various scholars have unpacked the harms of such tokenistic practices and have noted that such inclusion remains closer to exclusionary forms of citizenship (Bessant, 2003; Bragg, 2007; Camilleri-Cassar, 2014; Dhillon, 2017; Kwon, 2013).

Interviewee #13 described this process using an analogy of fish swimming in dangerous waters due to a turbine that will lead to their demise. People get the fish out of harm's way and place them within a confined pit or aquarium, believing it to be in the best interest of the fish. They celebrate the process of saving them and hearing from them, unable to recognize that they have been only placed in a different unnatural setting that they did not seek out themselves.

Figure 4:

Fish and Turbine Drawing by Interviewee #13 During Interview



Young people are fished out from zones of containment, racialized marginalized neighbourhoods that are subject to multiple forms of structural and personal violence; they are invited in to participate in dominant spaces and expected to adopt their goals of success with little freedom to imagine or choose their directions. Young people are expected to utilize the capital built from this inclusion to fix themselves and achieve settler goals, which Interviewee #13 considers an unnatural environment. The invitation to participate becomes a phase of responsabilization, in that accepting the invitation compels an acceptance of settler goals and the entrepreneurial disposition of self-advocacy, self-motivation, and resilience to achieve one's goals.

Subsequently, stories seeking penance and the obedience that is demanded to tell these stories require the acceptance of settler colonial conduct and disavowal of the Other, which is often associated with crime and violence.

Interviewee #13 and a majority of the interviewees argued that participation of youth does not offer the promise of justice and is used to validate the work of the sector and even benefit one's own financial future. Interviewee #13 furthered his example:

So if I pull the fish out to tell its story. What benefit does it have to the fish? Nothing. But it definitely has a lot of benefits for the people in the boats. Tell me more, 'oh sad I had to go through all this but I made it, and I want to thank Maria for getting me here!' Here's some more money [from funders], Go, right, go fish some more. But that isn't the problem, it's a problem of saying to the government, in this case, stop running the turbine. And I think there's not enough of that conversation happening.

Similarly, Interviewee #7 reflected on his own experience of being invited to participate as a young Black male in the early 2000s versus that of the tactics utilized by BLM in more recent years. He shared:

And those people [including youth] don't interrupt the processes that you already have in place. And they might actually contribute good ideas and whatever. But there is still the way that they participate does not threaten your status quo. You know what I mean? So you can have that type of inclusion and participation at different levels of government or whatever. And it looks great. Right? But that's why something like BLMTTO exists. And that's why they're like we ain't going to no meetings. Closed door? We're not doing it. You know what I mean? We're going to have a meeting right here outside Queen's Park. We're not doing anything behind no doors. When I saw them with that tactic, I was like, "Word. I respect that so much." And I felt like a fool. I felt like I had used myself or allowed myself to be used in a way that went beyond my own awareness of it. You know what I mean? Because I loved being in those spaces. I felt privileged to be in those spaces. I thought that I was making a difference in those spaces.

The inability to name supposedly progressive forms of participation as violence, especially when its purpose is to combat youth violence, resembles Fanon's observation of the Black Frenchman

“doomed to hold his tongue and bare his teeth” (1952/2008, p.195) since there was nothing to call out. Hughey (2007) shared the conflict experienced by Black subjects who participate in groups that are deemed to be anti-racist and progressive. Racialized individuals who are included in these groups suggest that they feel like a “sell out” to their own community but many attend the meetings and events because they feel responsible to be the native informant. Despite feeling that they are being paraded around and consumed, they feel that if they are not there, then their community’s concerns will not be brought up.

These inclusive technologies risk perpetuating oppressive colonial practices of extracting knowledge to govern and allowing Whiteness to feel good about itself. Participation in most cases functions as a native informant reaffirming orientalist understandings of the marginalized Other and poses as benevolence with its invitation to adopt settler life. Deep interrogation around what social justice is, how change-making occurs and can occur, or who should speak do not occupy much space within the youth sector’s discursive field.

Truth-Telling as Parrhesia and Counter-Conduct

This section examines parrhesia as risky truth-telling and considers strategies of counter-conduct that can assist in shifting the gaze away from the Othered subject and onto the systems that oppress them to enable seeing otherwise. These strategies include moving the gaze from the youth as objects of knowledge (Melamed, 2011) to strategically interrogating the sector by: a. mapping the sector, b. sharing knowledge, and c. critical consciousness development that leads to creating alternatives.

Foucault’s concept of counter-conduct is “political and ethical, is an activity that transforms one’s relation to oneself and to others; it is the active intervention of individuals and constellations of individuals in the domain of the ethical and political practices and forces that

shape us” (Davidson, 2011, p. 32). The objective of counter-conduct acts is to envision new forms of being while rejecting normative subject positions (Foucault, 2001). Similar to Du Bois’ (1994) articulation of double consciousness, counter-conduct has the potential to disrupt and threaten governmental power. However, counter-conduct does not promise an overcoming of power; rather, it is a productive form of power itself through envisioning new relations of truth (Legg, 2019).

Foucault’s counter-conduct has strong relations to critical attitude as noted by Lorenzini (2016) and emphasizes the ethical work that occurs within oneself. Foucault pointed to the practice of critical attitude and engaging in fearless truth-telling to power in antiquity. He explored the concept of parrhesia in his later lectures in *The Government of Self and Others* (2010) as well as in *Fearless Speech* (2001). Tamboukou (2012) summarized the four conditions that are necessary for something to be considered a parrhesiastic act:

First is speaking the truth; second, having the courage to speak the truth in situations where there is a risk or danger for the truth-teller; third, parrhesia is a form of criticism, either towards another or towards one-self and it should always come from below, from the powerless (or rather the less powerful, if we want to keep with the Foucauldian notion of power) and finally parrhesia, the telling of truth, is regarded as a duty and is further related to freedom. (p. 854)

Fearless truth-telling can potentially uncover games of truth and unveil the conditions that created them. Parrhesiastic truth-telling is in greater alignment with promoting social justice than forms of truth-telling that require obedience and confessions.

However, the pact between the truth-teller and the ruler in the context of a settler governmental state requires further scrutiny. The challenge of entering into a pact with a system

of power intended to oppress complicates fearless speech and heightens the risky nature of these speech acts. As outlined by Fanon (2008) and Coulthard (2014), recognition theories assume that there is a reciprocity in the relationship. However, as elucidated in the above section, truth-speakers can inadvertently function as native informants, speaking opportunely packaged truth in support of settler-colonial governmental order. Truth-tellers are invited into delivering packaged and rehearsed performances that invoke compassion in return for paltry rewards.

The parrhesiastic subject is often considered to be an abnormal subject that threatens the normative conditions of society. Foucault identified three forms of parrhesia: the first is based on Plato speaking truth to power in a court to enact change in the ruler's soul and subsequently govern more fairly, which Legg suggests "marks a philosophical courage within a political frame" (2019 p. 34); the second is Socratic, which moves away from the court and to the city to transform the public through ethical truth-telling and developing the critical consciousness of society; the third form is that of the cynic who exists beyond the borders of acceptable conduct of society. Foucault described the cynic as one that occupies space on the outskirts of society, subject to bare life and non-belonging, as "he is also the man who roams, who is not integrated into society, has no household, family, hearth, or country and he is also a beggar" (2012, p. 170). This way of life is an important aspect of the cynic's ability to speak courageous truth, for they are unattached and unbound to societal constraints; consequently, this subject is in a better position to strip away normative expectations.²⁵

²⁵ The example of Diogenes in antiquity is noted by Foucault "of masturbating in public and saying: But why are you scandalized, since masturbation satisfies a need, just as eating does. I eat in public, so why should I not satisfy this need also in public? So, the mode of life has this reductive function with regard to conventions and beliefs" (2012, p.171).

Young People as the Parrhesiastic Cynic

These various forms of parrhesia are explored in this discussion, beginning with the cynic, as racialized marginalized youth are often on the outskirts of the boundaries of society and it is their lived experience that is often shared in these spaces. Foucault spoke of the cynic's desire to make himself available to speak: "He heads for all the big public gatherings. He is seen at the games and the theaters. He gives his own life as testimony to everyone" (2012, p. 254). This resembles the parrhesiastic youth speaker who is often present in multiple spaces to speak their truth. Four of the 10 Black interviewees were youth participants in their teens and reflected on running to meetings whenever a racialized kid was needed in order to represent and speak the truth of their community. While these stories can be utilized for commodification and consumption, they can also play an important role in unsettling normative assumptions of society. In that moment of strange encounter, the cynic's speech act can also cause ontological anxiety (Puwar, 2004) among institutional actors as narratives of benevolence are not held together as neatly. Those enveloped in raw pain, subject to bare life, with very little to lose are often the ones who speak truth to power in institutional settings.

The courageous truth-telling of these young people is potentially dangerous to governmental power. Interviewee #1, a White sector member, who works closely with racialized youth and participation focused programs, stated:

One of the reasons I love these young people is because they actually fight against a lot of the stuff that is the status quo and that is this capitalist machine. It's part of what I love about them. I love it when they're like, 'F the government. F the world.' I'm like, yeah, good for you.

M. B: But they will also participate?

Interviewee #1: But then we're also saying, "But please join us." It's this really strange cycle or strange relationship. And I also think it's part of us living out our own frustrations through them. Oh my god, you want to tell this guy to go F himself? So do I. But you can because you're a young person. This is you using your voice ... Say exactly what you feel, because I have to censor myself.

Young people who exist outside the margins of society are able and encouraged to speak risky truths, unlike those incorporated more deeply within the neoliberal colonial governmental project, such as the sector members themselves who fear the risk of expulsion by authority figures in the sector. Fine et al., (2014) recognized that "young people embodied an appetite for justice and dignity and would thereby retreat from and/or challenge social relations, institutions and dynamics that, in the language of Du Bois, were designed to 'eat our young'" (p. 48). There is often admiration and an attraction to those who speak truth within the youth work sector; however, sector workers need to be self-reflexive and ensure they are not leaning on the young people's courage and strive to take their own risks for those often subject to bare life.

Interviewee #13 along with a handful of other interviewees also questioned the responsibility that is carried by included subjects. He asked:

Should the fish or the young people be responsible to tell the fishermen how to stop the turbine. My argument, is yes, you got a little skin [in the game] ... Whereas is this the responsibility of these people [youth] to talk about this. I don't know.

The onus being placed on youth and racialized workers to arrive at solutions to their lived realities isolates the issue and holds them responsible when strategies do not deliver the desired results. Ahmed (2014) spoke to the uneven distribution of diversity and equality work being placed on the backs of those deemed different and how this can be experienced as a heavy

burden. That the tensions and weight of this responsibility are experienced by youth and the workers, who are also often young, is a form of violence.

However, Interviewee #1 acknowledged that these truth speakers are attractive for their lived experience knowledge and raw speech, but the end goal remains to bring them within the neoliberal project. Interviewee #1 explained:

But then I was like, hold on, hold on. But now we need you to fit a role. It's crazy. It's totally crazy. And yet, I totally love them for it ... I want it. I envy it. But in the end, if they want to keep a job and have an income, which many of them need to feed themselves or house themselves, they need to learn how to play the game. So in an awful way, I'm celebrating it and then I'm suffocating it and that for me, that's actually a tension that I acknowledge.

Parrhesiastic young people are invited to a neoliberal governmental way of life and remains a goal for youth workers even while admiring their ability to speak risky truths to power. Actors striving to promote social justice measures remain at odds with this invitation. As stated by Interviewee #1, this parrhesiastic threat is perpetually subject to governmental intervention to transform it into a less disruptive form so that it resembles truth-telling that is more apologetic of the dark ways of the Other.

Similarly, Dhillon (2017) asserted that the invitation to speak within the sector is essentially an invitation into the settler project. There is an ongoing responsabilization of young people to participate and attain the “good life” as purported by neoliberal settler society. Berlant (2007) identified this as a form of cruel optimism, as “a condition of maintaining an attachment to a significantly problematic object,” that being the “good life” (2007 p. 24). The expectation of

young people to be engaged, overcome multiple oppressions, and meet the varied goals of society risks wearing them out, and is a form of symbolic violence.

Racialized Sector Workers as Platonic and Socratic Parrhesiastic Speakers

Many of the racialized actors who had been invited in either through their participation as youth or later as adult workers tend to approach their work from an ethical position and function as Platonic and Socratic parrhesiastic speakers. Legg (2019) asserted that “while Plato and Socrates seem less obviously as characters of resistance, Foucault insisted that they were also parrhesiasts, though through what we might call elite ‘policy advice’ and individual therapy rather than systemic challenge” (p. 42). Some of the critical and risk-taking sector actors function similarly to that of Plato’s parrhesiastic role in advising the governing ruler, while others engage in the Socratic parrhesiastic role of bringing greater awareness to the broader public on key issues impacting marginalized communities. However, these roles continue to be surrounded by various personal risks and require greater scrutiny.

Interviewee #11, an executive director of a youth engagement focused organization, stated that in her experience many of these individuals approach this opportunity of inclusion with a degree of responsibility to their communities:

I mean, I have a great quote of ____ at 16 [years old] on video saying, “We’re learning to be obnoxious, but obnoxious in a good way” [laughter]. But it’s really important that that 16-year-old is now helping create — is an architect of City of Toronto policy for not just youth but writ large, right? So it’s important that some of the folks who came through [organization name] in the Year of the Gun (2005) and went on to do all kinds of things are now actually employed by school boards ... police boards ... That’s really important ... They’re with salaries and going to get pensions and are there being counterparts in those

spaces that need to be changed. They are increasingly a significant presence in those spaces with opportunities to make decisions and influence policies. ... my sense is that they carry with them their awareness of why them being where they are, is really important.

The 11 racialized interviewees of the 14 interviewees acknowledged that they do harbour a sense of responsibility to represent their community in institutional settings and work to change the conditions of existence.

Some of the interviewees noted two unique identities or strategies undertaken by the included subject. Interviewee #9, a Black male community advocate and sector member, labelled them as the untouchable and the rogue; while others did not utilize the same labels, they described them in similar form. As Interviewee #9 explained:

The untouchable works for the outcome and well-being of organizations and institutions.

The rogue worker, their feedback, their source of accountability is community. So they go to community for their energy. They go to community for their validity and credibility.

They go to community for their mentoring. Communities are always who they check back in with ...

Interviewee #9 spoke of the untouchable as someone who had community knowledge and is therefore seen as having a degree of immunity within the sector due to the access to the inaccessible or untouchable lived experience knowledge. The untouchable utilizes this knowledge strategically to support community interests but also to protect themselves and gain immunity in some ways. The rogue worker on the other hand tries to stay accountable to the community at all points, placing themselves at risk of expulsion. These two subjects are often

pitted against each other, and a strained relationship exists between these identities. As

Interviewee #9 stated:

What I've observed is within racialized bodies in the same space, you can have the rogue worker, and you have the untouchable, and that tension of rogue worker and untouchable, woo! Within racialized bodies, oh, Maria, it is painful to watch. It's painful to watch. Yeah. The untouchable being the strategic mover, and the rogue worker being like, "Yo. I've got my guns out. I'm blazing. I don't care" [laughter].

M. B: And there isn't a marriage of sorts, I guess, between the two, or should there be?

Interviewee #9: Well, I think that is even worth exploring. Right? Because we juxtapose the two. Is it possible for there to be a marrying of the two within dominant mainstream institutions? Do these organizations and institutions allow for a marrying of the two, or do they strategically build spaces for the untouchable and the rogue? These are real cool questions to explore.

Often these spaces where speakers meet are brimming with tensions around who is more authentic to the community, who is better at addressing present needs on the ground, and who is selling out the community for personal gain. Lipsitz noted in *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness* (1995) that such conflicts and division remain integral to the maintenance of White power. Lipsitz argued that Whiteness intentionally pits racialized groups and individuals against each other to compete for resources and for approval.

The Risks of Truth-Telling

These identities and responsibilities come with great risks and constant negotiations, as identified by Badwall (2015) in her work on racialized social workers. The snuffing out of parrhesiastic voices includes various tactics such as direct expulsion, not having a pathway to

grow within the sector, and pushing subjects to burn out, or what Berlant identified as slow death, a wearing out (2011, p. 95). The dangers of speaking up within the sector were noted by a majority of the interviewees. Institutional players are deeply aware of the risks they take when they speak and are cognizant of their conditional belonging, be it as the untouchable or rogue actor. The potential for expulsion or extermination of risky parrhesiastic speakers, regardless of the strategies used, remains a pervasive fear. Furthermore, pitting racialized members against each other, such as the untouchables and rogues, results in divisions and the draining of energy from organizing against the system.

Interviewee #12, a White male bureaucrat, further reflected on these exclusionary mechanisms that drain the energies of racialized sector members over time:

It's like at the outset, there's a great deal of enthusiasm and excitement about being able to change things. And I think that sort of bottoms out often where people start to feel overwhelmed and feel the burden of community. And then they reach a point where because of those first two phases, their identities have been so commodified by others that they really struggle to sort of make the transition. So they don't belong to the sector, they weren't hired into the sector in a mainstream way, so they don't fit in a mainstream contract so 10 years in, they're starting to feel like there's no real path for them. So it's sort of this weird up, down, down kind of thing that I see that happens.

Racialized presence is required for making the sector seem progressive and for objectifying their knowledge of the community. The perception that they were hired through the backdoor does not extend to them the same pathways that non-racialized workers have for future promotion within an institution. They are viewed as risky subjects who have nothing to offer beyond being

conduits to their community and as objects of knowledge, and they feel exploited and worn down eventually.

For many workers, these experiences echo Mbembe's (2019) view in *Necropolitics*, where racialized actors are in a state of siege and woundedness. I argue that this is part of the slow snuffing out of those strangers that were part of the colonial encounter. For example, Interviewee #7, a Black male community advocate and youth worker, shared his painful decision to step away from the sector after being active since his teen years in varying capacities:

Well, I mean, I quit for me, man. It was really taking a mental toll, man. I was not right. I was not in a right state of mind when I quit ... Yeah. I would get the shakes. I remember I finally — I was supposed to take a vacation. I got a vacation and then realized, “Oh, this was not long enough. I do not feel prepared to go back.” But I went back, and then I was like, “All right, let me take another week off,” and I'm looking at the calendar and the week that I was planning to take off, we lost a kid in that fucking building. And so now it's another round of, “Okay, take care of the kids.” Staying out late with the moms and supporting them. And they're impacted by it and going to another funeral. Yeah, I quit for me, man. I mean, on principle too, but I was done then. I was done then.

Interviewee #7 painfully expressed the trauma of staying in the field for a long period and striving to remain accountable to the community, especially in a state of constant crisis. Berlant (2011) addressed how it is difficult to recognize these strategies of wearing down subjects, as it is often within the “zone of ordinariness, where life building and the attrition of human life are indistinguishable” (p. 96). Similarly, Stoler (2016) identified such gradual wearing down of colonial subjects as part of an ongoing duress. Therefore, it is important to map out the everyday forms and deliberate nature of these exclusions and violence.

Anderson (2017) attempted to chart these difficult-to-name exclusions through the concept of White rage, which persists in the everyday bureaucratic measures that continue to uphold racial oppression even while promoting liberal notions of racial progress. For example, institutional focus can shift overnight to something else that requires resources; subsequently, funding allocations, directorates, or committees can be swiftly eliminated. Interviewee #4 articulated this violent act of cutting off inclusionary projects within governmental institutions:

Yeah, so CABR [Confronting Anti-Black Racism unit] is there at the City [of Toronto], but that unit now has quite a few people. So they're there, I guess, in middle-management kind of. They're all now clustered in the black — Or ghettoized in [laughter]. Yeah, but they haven't accessed the sector because you and I both know that, tomorrow, our Mayor can say or the City — anybody can say, “_____, that was a very nice game you played,” or, “_____, that was very nice. Yeah, there is no money in the budget, and you've put how much into it. Lob it off.” And they're all gone because they're actually not even into the city infrastructure ... We have these little pilot things hanging outside that are easily lobbed off, forgotten.

Interviewee #4, a Black advocate and long-time sector leader, posited that Blackness and Black subjects remain external to the body politic of society. This was illustrated earlier in the dissertation through the erasures of the Anti-Racism Directorate in its previous iterations. While racialized subjects may be included to fit the progressive appearance of settler governmentality, the goals of Black, Indigenous and other racialized people's sovereignty are rarely embedded in the institution. Racialized Others are treated like an ugly growth on the societal body that is tolerated for a certain period of time, but it is inevitable that it will be excised.

When status quo in dominant spaces is threatened by the inclusionary practices, the extinguishing of parrhesiastic speech and expulsion of Blackness and other racialized subjects can swiftly occur. Walcott (2021) stressed that the curtailment of Black freedom is noticed in this post-emancipation progressive world when Black movement occurs, both literally and metaphorically. This appears to happen when the racialized Other does not adhere to codes of Whiteness (Badwall, 2015), or if it is no longer deemed advantageous. This danger is most pertinent to the cynic parrhesiastic speaker but also applies to Socratic and Platonic parrhesiastic speakers within the sector.

Counter-Conduct Practices: Mapping, Sharing Knowledge, and Critical Consciousness Development

Despite the dangers involved in being parrhesiastic actors within governmental institutions, many subjects strategically engage in acts of counter-conduct through risky truth-telling, mapping the system, sharing knowledge with the community, and developing critical consciousness in themselves and others. Foucault identified counter-conduct work as any form of force that shifts the possibilities of action in a particular area. Davidson explained that “resistance and counter-conduct modify these force relations, counter the locally stabilized organizations of power, and thereby affect, in a new way, the possibilities of action of others” (2011, p. 29). This section focuses on the techniques marginalized subjects utilize, such as, a) mapping the system; b) sharing knowledge; and c) developing critical consciousness for the creation of alternatives.

Being relegated to thinking within the parameters of youth work’s dominant discursive formation was noted by many of the interviewees. Interviewee #14, a Black female bureaucrat and past youth participant, stated, “that goes back to when we talked about not being able to

think if you don't have that basic income. You cannot innovate. You cannot create. You cannot imagine. You're busy trying to hustle some food.” The ongoing strategy to stifle and destroy the imagination of colonial subjects is critical to maintaining settler colonial dominance in government and the non-profit sector. Interviewee #14, a racialized sector bureaucrat, passionately explained:

We're so typecast into telling community what they think they need, and telling them, “Here's what we can do. Employment law, invest in the community centre, put up the basketball court, [inaudible] floors,” and not to the broader — and I think this is an issue of — and I hate to say it this way, but it's an issue of class, as well as an issue of, “I never had the means before to really understand the possibilities of what I can dream up.” Or the narrowing of the imagination in terms of what is possible, right? ... You have lost your ability to envision what a truly safe and thriving community could look like. So when we're talking about communities looking for intervention, they can only think as far as what is being presented, sometimes offered. They have a good idea. Sometimes it's corrupted by the people that claim that they're providing support ... conceptually, they can't think beyond what they've been — and that's the problem with colonization. If we alleviate and provide and restore justice in a true — social justice in a true sense, then people would have the time and autonomy and energy and capacity to think beyond the four corners of their community and conceptualize what could actually be.

The freedom to envision beyond the prescribed discursive confines is an invaluable skill to foster among marginalized subjects. For example, Walcott (2021) argued that the erasure of the Black subject's ability to think, create, and imagine is a fundamental goal of the oppressive

mechanisms of White colonial governmentality, as it disallows the envisioning of alternatives.

Walcott (2021) and Mills (2021) both pointed to the value of promoting the Black radical imagination as the hope for envisioning alternative worlds beyond the limits of the liberal White Enlightenment that remains steeped in colonialism. Similarly, racialized subjects are often viewed as objects of knowledge rather than surveyors of knowledge (Melamed, 2011).

Subsequently, shifting the colonial gaze, as Du Bois (1994) spoke to in his concept of double consciousness, requires greater attention. Yancy (2012) argued that this ability to shift the gaze is a gift and is considered in this study to be an indispensable form of counter-conduct. Yancy asserted that “seeing whiteness from the perspective of, in this case, Black people functions as an invitation to see more, to see things differently” (2012, Kindle Location 201).

Mapping the sector and the ways in which Whiteness is deeply embedded within its walls is a critical counter-conduct mechanism that racialized subjects engage in. Interviewee #14 stated that she is able to maneuver through the system and implement certain systemic changes partly because:

I've already mapped the power grid. I've already figured out who's who in this Rubik's Cube and who I need to gain respect from in order to be here to continue the work that I would like to continue to do and unapologetically ... And I think poverty does this to you, I think getting educated forces you to have to understand what you're walking into ... or institutional knowledge, which now, you're using to corrupt the way things are working or typically have worked, but you're still constrained because you don't want to get fired, and you still need to pay for your condo. Right?

Almost all of the racialized interviewees shared similar sentiments, that upon being invited to the table, they were able to figure out the networks, the players, and dominant strategies and work to

develop counter practices and knowledges. However, they acknowledged that the extent of the counter-conduct practice has its limitations due to constraints placed on them as participants in a capitalist society.

This study argues that the mapping out of the sector's regimes of truth, its networks of power, and its actors is integral to counter-conduct work. Shifting the colonial gaze and sharing knowledge on the functions of government can corrupt normative practices. This form of mapping stands in contrast to colonial knowing and its truth regimes, for the White gaze was always focused on possessing knowledge of the Other by categorizing and mapping colonial subjects, while Whiteness itself remained invisible (Dyer, 1997; Yancy, 2012).

Subsequently, the ability to empower the next generation of community workers and advocates through the sharing of sector knowledge is seen as vital to countering the practices of an oppressive system. Interviewee #3 reflected on his experience working within the sector as a young Black male while also continuing to stay accountable to the Black community through grassroots advocacy work:

You're building your career, your portfolio, network, linkages, all that stuff. So it's not totally altruistic. There is an undertone of, "I want to get paid ..." But outside of that, there's that organizing that's happening. That's almost like a silver lining, counterculture, sub-culture, a sophisticated network, who may line things up to work this way or share and disclose patented secret information and how you could access certain leverages within an organization or tools and resources. So that's the knowledge I'm talking about that wasn't there because our parents weren't in there doing that. We came in and did that and then passed that knowledge onto the next generation. So now, they have the guts to come to up

to say, “ED [executive director], you cannot do that in our neighbourhood.” There is accountability and we're watching or we're aware.

Interviewee #3 noted that having access to the inner workings of elite or government power was unavailable in past iterations of resisting settler colonial governmental power. Similarly, Interviewee #9 stated the importance of youth workers and racialized members within the halls of power knowing the sector's history and knowledge frameworks:

The greatest outcomes for me is just young workers in the sector knowing, right — like GI Joe says knowing is half the battle, I truly believe that. Just the knowing shifts you and impacts your practice in a different way. Right? ... And also, you need to find yourself within that. Where does your history of work come from, right? When you have a genealogy you can look at it and say, “Okay. I position my identity from this history of the work.” It's important.

As Interviewee #9 and others stated earlier, mapping systems of power and the knowledges and practices that govern a field is essential to undoing the normative ideas and practices that are present, and more importantly, for creating alternatives.

The emphasis placed on knowing indicates that the lack of knowing, or what Stoler (2016) termed the occlusion of knowledge, is the normative practice in the sector. Despite the limitations and harms of liberalism's recognition paradigm, the slow inclusion of marginalized subjects into the halls of power offers up the possibilities of creating counter-knowledge and allies within institutions, opportunities that were not available in previous iterations of social change.

Foucault (1988) asserted that one of the goals of his genealogy of institutions and their processes, especially those that governed the abject of society, was to unravel the universal

nature of these systems, highlighting their arbitrariness and situating them in a historical context, and consequently determine what change remains possible. While academics are usually considered to engage in this process of mapping, racialized members within institutions are also engaging in varying capacities of mapping institutions and this is a vital act of counter-conduct. It is performed with the hopes that community members as well as workers can use this knowledge to subvert actions and create alternative forms of government. A stronger relationship between these parrhesiastic actors, critical theorists, and academics in the youth work and CYS field is required to respond to the dominance of colonial knowing and to develop alternative forms of knowing.

Lastly, a key theme that also arose around counter-conduct was the Socratic form of parrhesia that seeks to educate and support the critical consciousness of community and racialized sector members. Walcott (2021) pointed to Dionne Brand's emphasis on self-observation to know things. The need to look internally to examine the nature of the truth being spoken resembles Foucault's technology of the self, wherein focus is placed on knowing oneself. Foucault stated:

technologies of the self, which, permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and semis, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality. (1988, p. 18)

This internal work of self-actualization is often suffocated by and through colonial technologies of power.

Interviewees spoke about the need to look inward to develop a strong connection to the self in order to understand what they are doing and how their work is impacting marginalized groups.

Interviewee #9 stated that the individual who is engaging in truth-telling has to reflect on the truth he is telling and engage in that self-talk, asking:

Is this a truth of my community, is this a truth of mine? What's the impact on my community, what's the impact on me? What are my elders in the community going to say, when they hear that I said this right? There's that kind of governing, if you will, in that moment of telling.

Similarly, Interviewee #7 stated:

It is a regular tension, and it is a constant question of accountability and I'm trying to find the right term here. Accountability and self-actualization am I being true to myself? What am I compromising? What have I let go to hold this place? Am I holding this place as much for my ability to pay rent and afford a meal and raise a family to being one element of accountability within this institution, one voice of change in this institution?

This form of self-talk and critical consciousness development holds promise for a deeper connection to the work that one is engaged in. Interviewee #9 asserted that when parrhesiastic speakers share their voices, it often goes beyond the institutional goals:

[they] are doing something beyond that [affirming governmental goals]. Because that getting in touch with something deeper, right? Funding can't speak for that, right. Let's idealize the transformation that I crave, that is deeper in me, that is allowing me to sit in these spaces and go through the microaggressions, and all of that. It's because I have a vision about something that funding can't even speak to. Right? ... Some experiences defy language, right? And I think that's really what's happening for young people. What they're envisioning, this reality right? Utopia defies language. Because the language that they have is a language of pain. It's a language of accountability.

The space for dialogue and reflection fosters greater accountability to one another, rather than seeking validation from government funded programs and consultations that remain steeped in liberal notions of social justice that have portrayed racialized Others as abject.

Some of the interviewees argued that youth spaces and programs hold greater promise when the focus is placed on developing the critical consciousness of young people. Similarly, Interviewee #7 suggested that racialized youth workers, bureaucrats, and young people need to focus on opportunities that allow for the community to build its own knowledge, its own capacity, and not bombard it with the agenda that the social services sector imposes on it. He stated:

Every community needs these leaders and in terms of the young people themselves, like the role of these organizations, I think is to process some of that in these young people themselves. It looks great for the organization [to have youth leaders], but it's also about ensuring that the community is renewing its capacity to be able to organize on its own.

Advocate on its own. And giving them the early tools to start engaging in that shit.

However, activities that ensure the community remains central to the work is not often part of the official governmental program. Building community capacity often takes the form of building employment and educational capacity, which meets neoliberal governmental needs and not the needs of the community. Subsequently, actions that attempt to provide space and resources for communities to take risks and experiment are often a result of counter-conduct practice within the sector. For example, interviewees shared how youth programs in grant applications are written to satisfy the goals of governmental funding outcomes but in practice are routinely innovatively contorted to meet the goals of the community. Efforts to create funding models that respect the slow nature of community-building and are more comfortable with the risks involved

in that process are gradually being explored at places such as Laidlaw and other private foundations. Foucault argued that discovering new forms of government is not possible through critique alone; rather it is necessary to create and envision new forms of conduct that counter existing forms of being (Ferguson, 2011).

Conclusion

The chapter illustrates the prominence of a liberal understanding of social justice within the sector and the limited understanding of racial justice within this paradigm. Discourses of social inclusion and participation circulate in the sector, buttressing the sector's notion of goodness, while sanctioning the erasure of discourses of racism, Blackness, and colonialism despite ruptures that continually struggle to name them. Meanwhile, miniscule attempts for redistribution remain incongruent with the stark material inequalities faced by Black youth and continue to demonize and subject them to ongoing misrecognitions. Furthermore, concerns about diversity and inclusion have become attached to safety, the euphemism for the biopolitical threat of Black youth. Subsequently, the recognition interventions of creating access and strengthening inclusion remain focused on disarming the threat of the Other and inviting racialized youth subjects into the neoliberal settler colonial governmental project.

Youth participation and racialized inclusion become emblematic of social justice, and this requires greater scrutiny. Personal stories, confessionals, and anecdotes from racialized community members come to stand in for social justice within the sector. Youth stories once excluded are now consumed and commodified for settler knowing and is racial injustice cloaked as social justice. Racial justice under this liberal paradigm of social justice is promoted through acts of inclusion, such as participation in White spaces with little room for the creation of their own sense of sovereignty and freedom beyond settler colonial goals.

This chapter also explored how, through counter-conduct and parrhesiastic speech, new possibilities of being and thinking can be made possible by strategically utilizing the space of inclusion. The chapter asserts that while liberalism's notion of social justice governs the sector, parrhesiastic subjects engage in forms of counter-conduct to subvert these opportunities and support marginalized communities, often at great risk to themselves. The subversion of liberal inclusionary technologies of power to envision alternatives to the neoliberal White settler colonial project needs to be a persistent strategy of counter-conduct by parrhesiastic actors.

This study finds that within the youth sector counter-conduct strategies include parrhesia, mapping the system, sharing knowledge, and developing greater critical consciousness in workers and the youth. Strategically using inclusionary technologies of power, alongside technologies of the self (Foucault, 1988), enables the possibility of seeing otherwise, speaking fearlessly, and envisioning what Fanon (1952/2008) deemed a new form of universality that is not couched in liberalism's racist notions of social justice and being human. This requires greater investment in technologies of the self that foster critical consciousness and the creation of the Other's imagination.

However, the line between penitent forms of truth-telling that seek obedience and risky truth-telling, which counters existing systems, is often blurry. Furthermore, the challenge remains that one often does not know the effects of one's truth-telling. Foucault cautioned us that critique functions not just against power, but it can also be a weapon of governmental power, as critique can get actioned in particular ways that benefit systems of power (Folgers, 2016). This persistent tension where critique and parrhesiastic truth-telling can get taken up in problematic ways requires the continual presence of counter-conduct actors within institutional spaces to obstruct, divert, and revise strategies from being absorbed by normative systems.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

I begin this chapter with reflections from the beginning of this research journey. Working in youth-led, youth-driven organizations that were steeped in participation logics, I often struggled at the end of a long difficult day to find words for the distressing affective emotions that others and I were left with when working on initiatives that were supposed to be inclusionary and socially just. As we built trust, in a field that pitted us against each other for funding, some of us slowly began to share our uneasiness and discomfort with the practices undertaken by others and ourselves. In those rare moments when we carved out time to reflect, we felt that while we were probably helping young people to build some individual social capital, we could not shake the feeling that we were not really serving the goals of the young person or their community so much as upholding the goals of dominant institutions. A little over a decade ago, we did not always have the right words to make sense of the ramifications of our actions and the function we played in youth work and within these systems of power.

Influenced by these experiences, my research journey intended to map out the knowledge frameworks that allowed acts of inclusion to appear rational and to stand in for care and empowerment while limiting, silencing and molding marginalized, and often racialized young people to fit neoliberal and colonial governmentality goals. My research highlights the challenges of habitually adopting frameworks that are rooted in liberalism's notions of social justice that, despite benevolent intentions, can slip into reinforcing normative goals that perpetuate existing harms. The research focused on rethinking these practices by exploring the counter-conduct undertaken by critical actors and racialized subjects within the sector, in their efforts to map the sector, share knowledge, and develop critical consciousness of youth and the sector members. I urge for youth work sector actors to broaden and include marginalized

epistemological frameworks in their work, not only at a discursive level but in the core aspects of the work that often require re-knowing how youth are viewed within diverse communities, evaluate their capacity to be allies through counter-conduct and risky parrhesiastic efforts in the creation of dynamic alternatives.

Research Methodology and Method

The dissertation utilized Foucauldian colonial and neoliberal governmentality perspectives and CRT as its theoretical framework. It engaged in a Foucauldian genealogical analysis that focused on the messy mapping of the youth work sector's power structures, dominant actors, dominant knowledges frameworks, practices, and effects. Key texts from 1992–2019 were analyzed to chart the various shifts in the *dispositif*, paying attention to key events, discursive frameworks, and actors present and invited in. I tracked key texts “to see how they move as well as how they get stuck” within the youth work sector (Ahmed, 2006, p. 105). The manner in which certain recommendations are activated while others only live within the text is important to this study. Interviews with 14 key sector leaders were conducted in a semi-structured fashion with enough flexibility for participants to take the time to tell their stories and engage in dialogue on the discourses that govern them, explore their own role and relationship to power within the sector and its implications for young people and social justice goals. The data chapters traced the workings of colonial aphasia in the activation of various knowledge frameworks over the last thirty years and highlighted how they flow in a circuit of Whiteness that includes aphasiastic knowing and brutal erasure, both of which constitute epistemic violence. The research explored the key knowledge frameworks of spatial, public health, managerialism, youth development, and participation that govern the youth-serving sector under the umbrella of change and social justice. The data chapters demonstrated how the seemingly positive frameworks around which

practices are organized can bolster resources or develop capacity in some respects but can also limit the possibilities, maintain the status quo, and even have negative impacts on the governing of racialized communities and their youth.

As discussed earlier, anti-racist scholars need to engage in multi-layered work that not only unveils dominant racial knowledges but rewrites these histories by illuminating the experiences of racialized subjects (Bogues, 2014). While there are academic research on the forms of intervention and ways to improve youth work, the history of racialized youth and youth worker inclusion within the youth work sector has not received much attention. Therefore, I sought to examine the discourses, practices, and effects within the youth work sector. Brown and Strega (2015) point to this vital need for research to counter dominant knowledge frameworks. I conducted this research with the goal of making space for subjugated knowledges and experiences of the sector's efforts for racialized youth inclusion. This project does not aim for finality or closure in its understanding of the governance of racial subjects but rather stays open to perpetual discomfort in order to be ethical and responsible to ongoing meaning making.

By exploring counter-conduct and parrhesia within youth work and social work, this research aims to provide further dialogue on engaging in ethical responsibility within critical youth work for social work practitioners and academics. It is my hope that this genealogical investigation and attention to counter-knowledge production, especially in Chapter 7, creates opportunities for new relations where insurrectionary and local knowledges can be ignited and made knowable again (Foucault, 2003; Janzen et al., 2015). My research urges for the need for safe spaces within the youth work sector for critical dialogue among racialized subjects to support solidarity building, rethink current practices and develop alternative ways of approaching racialized youth inclusion and social justice.

Data Chapter Summaries

Chapter 4: Governing Through Inclusion

Chapter 4 traced the persistence of colonial aphasia and the upholding of the circuits of Whiteness in relation to racialized youth and youth policies in Ontario from 1992–2019. The chapter mapped the rise and disappearance of anti-racism discourses within key documents produced often in the aftermath of moments of crisis such as racialized youth violence. Ahmed (2006) noted that documents produced after crisis moments are often non-performative in nature, wherein the production of the documents themselves come to stand in for action itself and do not do what they promote. The non-performative nature of the policy documents and the maintenance of the status quo was demonstrated through examples of the narrow offerings of change, such as through offers of increased service, increased funding, training, and the selective activation of objectives that remain in service of neoliberal settler-colonial governmentality. Meanwhile, the social justice goals that were urged by marginalized communities risk being relegated to tokenistic actions. The chapter stressed the importance of questioning progressive claim-making and tracking the discourses to their actions, to recognize the incongruencies, gaps, and limits between them. The colonial aphasiastic practices of dissonance, erasures, and silences that occur between discourses and practices requires greater scrutiny (Stoler, 2016). The need to critically unpack such colonial aphasiastic practices remains relevant not only in youth work but also in various other social policy-making spaces.

A key takeaway from Chapter 4 is the demonstration of how quickly anti-racism discourses can disappear from the public sphere. During my dissertation journey, I witnessed the rise of BLM and the TRC's efforts from 2015 onwards that increased the circulation of anti-racist and decolonial discourses. The current circuit of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and

Decolonization has had an almost 10-year run; we find ourselves now in 2025, in a moment where there is backlash against these discourses. Anderson (2017) framed such backlash as being part of the White rage that results in discursive and bureaucratic push back against movements for social justice and change. We find ourselves yet again in a moment where the circuit of Whiteness reasserts itself to retain the status quo of white settler dominance (Bernard, 2023). Considering these continuous circuits of erasures and silences, the chapter contributes to the mapping of these anti-racist knowledges within our public sphere and stands in contrast to colonial knowing. Foucault (2012) intended for such forms of genealogical mapping of discourses and events to give space to subjugated knowledges that also contribute to these moments and hold the potential for alternative conversations.

Chapter 5: The Emergence and Impact of Spatial and Public Health Frameworks

Chapter 5 explored the advancement and embedding of place-based and public health frameworks within youth work and engaged in a nuanced dialogue on its purported goals and its effects in governing racialized youth. The discussion situated these two approaches as elements of liberal models that promote universal rights and social justice, albeit in limited ways. Despite some of its well-intended goals of bringing attention to racial poverty in key spaces in Toronto through the PBPC report (MacDonnell et al., 2004) and the gradual uptake of spatial neighbourhood interventions that made claims to equity and social justice, the gradual association of these approaches with youth violence through the public health and SDOH models translated their function into a form of racial biopolitics that surveilled youth and activated the logics of containment and cure.

Youth work in Toronto's explicit connections to the priority neighbourhoods model and the interventions of increasing access to opportunities, capacity-building, and engagement

continued to fix the gaze on the individual racialized youth subject. The emphasis on addressing both poverty and youth violence resulted in investments to increase access to public spaces. However, the discussion pointed out the persistence of colonial aphasia through the conditional forms of belonging that persist through these inclusive interventions. It identified the maintenance of exclusions and non-belonging even when interventions and investments are intended specifically to include racialized youth subjects.

Chapter 6: Positive Youth Development and Managerial Frameworks as Mechanisms of Colonial and Neoliberal Governmentality

Chapter 6 emphasized two other dominant frameworks that govern youth work at present: PYD and managerialism. While they come from differing foundations, they share the adoption of expert knowledge to legitimize action by the government on particular subjects for the benefit of society (or a certain aspect of society) (Foucault, 1971). I argued that the intersection of these two liberal frameworks and their shared arrival at the youth work sector in Ontario had profound implications for the organization of the sector. Despite PYD's intention of bringing an asset-based framework to understand youth, to counter the risk and deficit frameworks that were prominent in the sector, it introduced rigid understandings of development and promoted models of assets and resilience that remained slightly out of reach for youth struggling under multiple systemic barriers. Berlant's (2011) notion of cruel optimism was useful to this conversation, which outlines how the setting up of goals that remain unattainable, or indeed acquiring them, will harm subjects in the process. Cruel optimism allows us to understand how the setting up of these apparent evidence-based outcomes, rooted in generalized White middle-class goals, subject racialized and other marginalized youth to intense scrutiny and pressure.

The dangerous unification of PYD and managerialism is highlighted mainly by their preferential practice of upholding Western scientific knowledge and discounting community driven knowledge, while simultaneously making grand claims to listen to lived experience and community knowledge. Many of the interviewees shared their concerns with this shift towards scientific forms of governing models of youth care, and the rigid managerial accountability structures that became embedded in programmatic models, requiring narrow tracking, measuring, and reporting of human behaviour. The sidelining of community knowledge and experimentation to privilege evidence-based models of care and organizing youth work, especially when youth-led and youth participation efforts were at their highest, is an explicit form of colonial aphasia within the youth work sector.

Chapter 6 pointed to the explicit exclusion of many grassroots organizations who were working in experimental ways with various epistemological foundations. It also shared the subsequent forced adoption of both PYD EBP and managerial forms of functioning in these organizations in order for them to acquire funding. The imposition of the PYD and managerial forms of youth work remains deeply disturbing as the youth work sector acquiesced with little push back from sector members, and it was made possible due to the colonial aphasiastic practice of both frameworks being positioned by dominant actors as being positive, effective, and rooted in evidence. However, the institutionalization of these models has resulted in greater surveillance of both youth and the CBYOs working to support young people. The usage of outcome metrics, indicators, and constant measurement of youth behaviour has reinforced deficit understandings despite the strengths framework in place at a discursive level (de St Croix, 2018). This instance of colonial aphasia prohibits calling out the usage of strengths and asset language

to be the new signifier for deficit-based practice as inherently disrespectful and violent as it is embedded in the language of evidence and empowerment.

Chapter 7: Social Justice Frameworks and Counter-Conduct in the Youth Work Sector

Chapter 7 investigated the parameters of truth-telling and highlighted the consumptive process of knowing the Other that invitations to participate can generate. Through the difficult sentiments shared by the interviewees, the chapter explored the harms and challenges of ensuring inclusive spaces for youth and racialized youth work sector members' voices are respectful to the lived experience, knowledge, and truths that they bring. Cruikshank (1999) argued that to shift existing understandings of citizenship, new ways of being having to be invented; she did not shy away from revolutionary options but pointedly stated that "the revolutionary subject must be made" (p. 66). I argued that many of the Othered subjects who are involved in the sector are resistant to the subjectivities imposed upon them there and continue to struggle to carve versions of themselves that are true to their lived experience, their communities, and the work they are being asked to undertake. Cruikshank's assertion points to the value of nurturing parrhesia as a revolutionary skill. Therefore, I ask how we can foster the necessary conditions for the growth of courageous parrhesiastic subjects. Critical youth workers can perhaps support young people in developing their parrhesiastic skills, while shielding them from some of the risks involved in risky truth-telling. This practice would stand in opposition to the current role youth workers play in developing civic engagement skills to ensure young people become responsibilized citizens within dominant youth-related institutions.

For example, youth and adult subjects who are invited to participate in dominant social work institutions can potentially engage in parrhesia to expose the constricting and violent nature of neoliberal and settler goals through naming and mapping institutional practices that are

cloaked as progressive discourses but remain grounded in deficit-based youth development models. In addition, they can identify how practices of inclusion continue to promote racial neoliberal practices and reveal the Whiteness that is unseen in these spaces (Yancy, 2012). It is critical that the truth-teller speaks of the linkages to multiple perceptions, reopens past histories, and shares the circulating competing and contradictory discourses that are currently not uttered within spaces of inclusion (Ahmed, 2013). This refusal to simply be governed and instead speak courageously to disrupt the practices of governmentality can allow for new forms of power relations, subjectivities, and different practices of being (Pyykkönen, 2015). Nonetheless, the potential for change through truth-telling runs the risk of being romanticized. Walters (2014) attested that courageous parrhesiastic acts do not entirely escape the calculations of technologies of administration but do so at least momentarily.

Contributions

Contributions to Research

This research contributes theoretically to the field of child and youth studies, CYS, critical social work, and critical youth work. Through the review of the literature and my experience in practice, it is evident that there is a need for the critical unpacking of notions of engagement, empowerment, inclusion, and social justice-themed efforts within the youth work sector and beyond. My literature review determined that CYS and childhood and youth studies can benefit from further applying a Foucauldian lens and CRT lens to understandings of child and youth inclusion to help complicate the power systems that are involved in children and youth's lives. Scholars such as Anderson (2018) Besley (2010), Bessant (2003), Egbo (2012), Kelly (2006), Kwon (2014), and Raby (2014) have paved the way with their critical analysis of progressive seeming discourses, youth policy, and practices from a governmentality perspective.

Valuable insights on youth issues from critical race and decolonial perspectives have also been explored by Ahmed and Carpenter (2017), Dei et al. (1997), Dhillon (2017), Baldrige (2017), James (2012). I also owe a great deal to critical social work thinkers who problematized various progressive notions such as diversity and participatory efforts (Almeida, 2017; Janes, 2024). These studies made possible my own analysis of the youth work sector using a Foucauldian and CRT lens.

Child and youth studies as a field has been a champion of child and youth voice, participation, inclusion, and rights over the last few decades, and these frameworks have been valuable indicators of the need to respect children and young people in society. My study joins that conversation and offers a critical perspective on some of the assumed benevolence present within those liberal frameworks of child and youth engagement, voice, inclusion, and social justice. I ask that we situate the idealistic goals of liberal frameworks of freedom, equality, and social justice in colonial and racist systems of knowledge (Adam-Wiggins & Taylor-Garcia, 2020; Liebel, 2020; Melamed, 2011) and critically examine inclusionary efforts and practices with these complexities in mind. I believe there is an urgency for CYS research to critically interrogate efforts of individual inclusion that remain devoid of movements for systemic change; it is important to acknowledge the limits of such invitations to participate as they maintain the status quo and dominance over marginalized youth subjects and can contribute to forms of ongoing soft violence over marginalized subjects.

Foucauldian governmentality studies often focus on the discursive level or the workings of the technology but not as much focus is given to the failures and fissures (Brockling et al., 2011). My research examined not just the textual data governing the youth work sector, but through the critical dialogue with interviewees who were able to engage in conversation with the

texts, I was able to highlight how discourses travel, take form, govern, disappear, and fail. Through the discussions in the data chapters, I illustrated how these dominant frameworks are pushed back, re-imagined, and countered by critical actors, especially those from racialized communities themselves as they juggle their own insider/outsider positions in trying to address social injustice through the system. Chapter 7 especially explored these tensions of how policies travel through the sector, how they get activated, and how critical actors struggle to strategically utilize discourses and resources to reach the goals of young people and communities. The successes and the solidarity-building, along with the refusals, the acts of complicity that are part of these efforts, were highlighted and require further attention in future research.

The conceptual work undertaken in this research around youth work and policy discourses functioning in colonial aphasiastic (Stoler, 2016) ways has value to fields such as critical child and youth studies, critical youth work, critical race studies, and social work. This study recognizes the value of examining both disciplinary mechanisms and inclusionary forms of governing, as they are part of the same logics (Echeverri-Alvarez, 2020; Foucault, 2008). As mentioned, the biopolitical governing of Othered youth through inclusion has received less attention in academic literature in comparison to disciplinary mechanisms such as policing. This dissertation's investigation of how inclusionary frameworks such as racial spatial, public health, youth development, managerialism, and participation logics are activated to palliate the ongoing practices of colonial governance, and the neoliberal economization of youth lives, highlights the need for such layered examinations to capture the messiness of youth governmentality projects, makes visible the colonial aphasia and through the knowing makes counter-conduct more possible.

The usage of key concepts such as colonial aphasia (Stoler, 2016), native informants (Spivak, 1988), and the generation of ideas such as the circuits of Whiteness to describe the ongoing patterns of settler dominance helped me unsettle taken-for-granted assumptions at the level of knowledges and frameworks that govern the sector as well as their effects and push for alternatives. The concept of colonial aphasia helped highlight the circuits of governing through inclusion and exclusion, wherein the actions undertaken and the discourses that govern them can become disconnected and unrecognizable from the intended meanings. I urge for the need to make these disconnections and omissions apparent in inclusionary frameworks; drawing the connections to colonial and neoliberal forms of governance is important for future youth work and CYS research.

The utilization of Foucault's (2012) concepts of parrhesia and counter-conduct provide new avenues of research within the field of youth participation and youth work. They allow us to explore further how those who are invited in are able to strategically utilize these spaces and make it possible to envision otherwise by mapping the sector, sharing knowledge, and critical consciousness development. My research examined sites of government as spaces that are continuously redefined by active subjects who seek to understand the tactics and strategies that are utilized in halting, shifting, and realigning policies to be more ethical and to portray a more complicated framework of power and resistance. The discussion highlighted that all these knowledge frameworks are taken at face value as being good; however, critical theory, critical race, and decolonial scholars such as Fanon (2008), Coulthard (2014), and Foucault (2008) urge us to not feel settled in canons and truths. I recognize that certain positive efforts have been generated from working from these frameworks; I urge that we continue to remain critical of the underlying assumptions that bring these frameworks together.

My research sought to shift the gaze often placed on racialized youth to instead focus it on the youth work sector's systems of power, institutional actors, knowledge frameworks, discourses, and actions. This reorientation towards the workings of neoliberal settler colonial governmentality holds the possibility of disrupting the aphasia that dominates normative understandings and rupturing the circuits of Whiteness. Future research on youth work can benefit from greater focus on examining systems of power and institutional formations and inserting alternative knowledge frameworks into the work of supporting youth.

Contributions to Youth Policy & Practice

As for youth work practice, I believe there is value in reflecting on the model-hopping, as my interviewees alluded to it, that occurs within the sector and examine the catalysts, purposes, goals, and effects in everyday work. The somewhat quick adoption of some of these various models aligns with an ongoing dalliance with evidence-based neoliberal and colonial frameworks within youth work. This relationship with data and evidence-based systems often finds itself at odds with some of the sector's community-focused underpinnings (Lohmeyer, 2017). Fusco (2013) recognized the ongoing challenge within youth work to gain legitimacy as a caring profession through efforts to align with male-dominated fields such as law and science, which risks negating the complex forms of care that are required for youth work. She argued that youth work has been courted by scientific models and asserts that perhaps this is a problematic courtship as it promotes a very narrow understanding of care. The drive for measurement within youth work stands in for social justice itself, often differing from the call for race-based data that hails from the community itself. The youth sector's commitments towards measurements are often not aligned with the goals of the community, instead it can risk contributing to the depletion of scarce community energy by redirecting it towards data production and counting.

Subsequently, it stifles counter-conduct and resistance and furthers the destruction of community knowledges and ways of knowing, being, and caring. I urge those within the sector to engage in the critical examination of the logics that underpin the outcomes, indicators, and measurement metrics that determine the ongoing work at present.

To effect change in the sector, spaces for critical dialogue need to be created, authorized, funded, and supported but these remain ever scarcer, as seen in the erasure of the YCF model of emergent and iterative community work. Racialized youth sector members need to urge policymakers to revisit the funding of such spaces for critical dialogue and in the investment in experimental community-driven models that do not have to adopt the limited evidence-based models that are currently imposed on many organizations. Despite the claims of supporting anti-Black, anti-racist, decolonial models at present in various governmental funding discourses, my research demonstrated that these do not necessarily match the actions undertaken. Funding to racialized groups is mainly provided to replicate Western models of social justice such as those rooted in PYD and managerial models, for the most part and allow only for minor modifications to account for cultural nuances such as informing a cultural sensitivity version to Collective Impact for youth in Ontario. Despite the limits and challenges present within the YCF model, the value of racialized community driven spaces such was demonstrated in my research and lends itself for further examination; I do intend to focus my future research on the presence and complexities that underly racialized youth sector member driven spaces within the youth work sector. I seek to explore their value in contributing to fostering solidarity, knowledge sharing, dialogue and experimentation leading to the envisioning of alternatives.

In addition, greater attention is needed to organizations that engage in youth work through active refusals of neoliberal and colonial frameworks, as well as to initiatives that

cultivate hope and imagination by advancing alternative understandings of youth work and youth development, grounded in decolonial and anti-racist community knowledge. My future research will take up these explorations, situating such practices as forms of counter-conduct through their articulation and enactment of alternative possibilities. Tracing a genealogy of counter-conduct within the youth work sector therefore represents an important direction for future research.

It is also important to stay vigilant when alternative discourses are included in the sector and ensure that they do not get co-opted to function in colonial aphasiastic ways (Stoler, 2017). Through the tracing of the dominant frameworks in the youth work sector, I was able to demonstrate the ways in which colonial aphasiastic practices are active in racial spatial and public health frameworks and subsequent actions; how youth development and managerialism work to surveillance youth and the sector in a rigid manner; and how invitations to participate can be a form of consumption and responsabilization of the Other. However, the agentic nature of Othered subjects holds the possibility for counter-conduct acts that can result in mapping the sector, sharing knowledge, and building critical consciousness. This research functions as a form of mapping of the sector and contributes to the sharing of knowledge to develop critical consciousness and support the building of alternatives.

Limitations

I strove to work through various challenges and contentions in the research process but there remain limitations to the work that are important to address. I note that in my efforts to respond to the emergent themes that arose from my textual analysis and the interviewees' perspectives, the scope of my research expanded beyond only exploring the participation discourses as initially set out in my research proposal. This required the exploration of racial

spatial logics, public health, youth development, and managerialism. I feel that these conversations were vital to the strength of the mapping that I was able to produce; however, I could not explore these themes in depth. Within the confines of a dissertation, I was only able to engage in an overview of these themes and there are considerably more layers to peel through, and further insights from the interviewees remain to be shared. In having a broad conversation to engage in the mapping, certain points that required greater nuance may have not received the necessary attention, especially racial spatial and epidemiology discussions of public health in relation to the themes of containing youth violence and the various ways racialized subjects make meaning and respond through their participation. It was not my intention to gloss over the complexities of these conversations, and I intend to pursue these discussions in future research as I seek to explore these themes separately and provide the necessary space they require.

Secondly, I feel that more attention could have been paid to the differentiated ways racialization and exclusions manifest and work on Black, Indigenous, and other racialized subjects. Especially in having worked in the sector prior to the efforts of the BLM movement, I am a product of the circuit of Whiteness that was mainly only permitted to speak of racialized youth in the aggregate and did not specifically name groups, which may have influenced the usage of the blanket term of racialized youth throughout the dissertation. I did note that many of the youth policy frameworks, especially ones that were triggered from moral panic after moments of violence, tend to focus on Black youth, whether they name that group specifically or not, as they remain dependent on the circuit of Whiteness active at the time. However, I do not claim to speak about their experiences, being an outsider to the Black community. While I made efforts to understand the potential impacts on specific groups where applicable, I did not have the

data available or the experience to highlight further nuances, so racialization was captured more broadly.

In addition, I did not speak to the specific ways that Indigenous youth are governed through these very same documents and practices. Some of the documents themselves stated they did not specifically include the experiences of the Indigenous community, such as the Ontario's Race Relations Report (Lewis, 1992), but that they do have congruency to their experiences. My work experiences in the Toronto youth work sector allowed me to work closely with various racialized youth, including those that identified as Latino, Filipino, Tamil, Afro-diasporic, Caribbean and Black, but I was not as connected to Indigenous youth. Therefore, I could not speak to the nuances through which Indigenous youth are governed through these texts, even though I speak about settler colonialism and colonial aphasiastic practices throughout this dissertation. I strongly believe that these dominant Western scientific frameworks remain part of the colonial knowledge frameworks and practices that governed Indigenous children and youth and authorized practices such as the residential school system. These ongoing circuits of Whiteness continue to have major impacts on Indigenous children and youth and the way they are included remain limited and problematic, as noted by Dhillon (2017), Razack (2000), Coulthard (2014), and others.

I wish I could have made space for these dialogues in my study; however, I recognize my own blind spots and limitations in knowledge as someone who was part of the Canadian education system that erased the persistent presence of Indigenous communities in Canada. I have invested time over the course of my doctoral study to unlearn and relearn the legacies of settler colonialism and its impact on Indigenous communities. The impact of the TRC and other advocacy efforts occurred during my academic journey and have allowed me to learn the

alternate and ongoing histories of colonial rule in Canada. Despite the lack of focus on Indigenous youth in my dissertation, I hope that my broad discussions on racialized youth can be supportive of future research on supporting Indigenous communities in Canada and that more nuanced discussions on the differentiated ways these governing frameworks and texts impact their specific communities can be explored by other investigators.

Striving for Ongoing Ethical Research Encounters

I am deeply grateful for the time and most especially the trust the research participants placed in me to have raw, open, and difficult dialogues. The individuals, chosen through purposeful sampling, were mostly people I had existing professional relations with, many of whom I had the opportunity to reflect with on our critical thoughts, concerns, and worries in activating certain policies or practices. They were also those who had in-depth historical insider/outsider knowledge of the sector and the racialized community's experiences, since most of them were racialized themselves and some were young people who had participated in the sector.

Indigenous scholars such as Tuhiwai Smith (2012) have criticized Western research for being exploitive and exhorted us to engage in research that is ethically responsible and not produce work that is grounded in a saviour complex. I sought to be careful with these tensions as I hold an inside/outsider position as a marginalized racialized woman who was closely involved in the sector for almost ten years and is now engaging in this discussion with some distance as a researcher.

The interviews deeply influenced the direction of this research. My proposal initially had only sought to explore participation as a key discourse; however, upon sharing my preliminary findings of the textual analysis with my interviewees, and the reflections that stemmed from that

and the research questions, I revisited the research goals and broadened them to include the various knowledges also present in the sector as this was deemed important by my participants.

The dialogues with the participants often left me with a feeling that we were peeling away the layers of an onion, as we had to move from initial layers of sector speak and official discourses to eventually unsettling what these efforts of inclusion felt like for them when they were young, or what limited rationales they were rooted in. This onion peeling process included many affective responses including moments of silence, need for pause, as well as shared tears as we reflected on the work that we had and were engaging in. The opportunity to make space for the pain experienced by the young people, and many of the marginalized workers who were young themselves felt valuable. It also provided us space to recognize our role as adult allies, our limits, and our complicity within the structures and institutions that we have bought into and remain confined by. Furthermore, it also functioned as a safe space and allowed for moments of healing and reflection.

I strove to stay connected and to actively share the knowledge generated through my emerging research back to the sector through informal chats, workshops, and lectures on various topics through groups like the Students Commission, YouthREX, and the City of Toronto. These opportunities to stay connected and share my emerging findings from my research allowed for critical dialogue with sector members and youth workers on the ways in which their work was connected to longer pieces of history and knowledge. They also allowed for reflections on the need for risk taking, parrhesiastic speech, and the generation of alternatives within the youth work sector. However, I do not consider myself to be a holder of knowledge but rather a facilitator active in holding space for critical dialogue so we can engage in meaning-making and research. I recognize also the limits of my research-sharing efforts within the confines of

completing the PhD and hope to reach out more intentionally to my community connections who are critical thinkers engaged in this sector to collaborate in the sharing of counter-conduct efforts and the creation of alternatives.

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Appendices:

Appendix A: Youth Sector Related Timeline: Events, Policy, And Action (1992–2020)

1. Moral Panic/Resistance	2. Consultation/policy/reports 3. Directives and funding	4. Changes in government goals	5. The setting in of colonial aphasia
Yonge Street Protest Against Systemic Racism (May, 1992)	- Ontario Race Relations Report (Lewis, June 1992)-names anti-Black racism as a key issue - Anti-Racism Directorate (1992-1995) - SIU governance shifted - Employment Equity laws - Jobs Ontario youth program		
	Jobs Ontario youth program- Arts Funding: Fresh Arts Program (1992) supporting youth and critical consciousness building	Conservatives Mike Harris Elected (1995-2000) and Ernie Eves (2000-2002)	- Anti-Racism Directorate Shutdown (1995) - Jobs Ontario youth program Shutdown (1995) - Fresh Arts Shut down (1995) - Systemic racism & Anti-Black racism as a discourse not nameable anymore
	- Liberal focused on youth employment and youth participation as a result of International focus on youth by the World Bank, UN Charter on the Rights of a Child (1992) - Gradual opportunities for counter-conduct/knowledge within youth sector	Liberals Dalton McGuinty Elected (2003-2011 majority)	Youth participation frameworks activated- lots of focus on youth-led initiatives, youth voice, engagement, racialized youth especially
Summer of the Gun (2005) & Boxing Day Death of Jane Creba (Dec, 26th 2005)	- Poverty by Postal Code (2005) (racialized poverty by neighbourhood proof) - Public Health frameworks- Social Determinants of Health- cure violence approach - Youth Challenge Fund (2006-2012) Ontario and Canada's first racialized funder - Toronto Anti-Violence Strategy (TAVIS) (2012-2018)		- Place-based & Public Health frameworks - utilized to instill 13 priority neighbourhoods & TAVIS-community policing programs, carding practices - Racialized youth- named, not systemic issues or anti-Black racism
Shooting Death of Jordan Manners in a TDSB school (2007)	- Ontario's Roots of Youth Violence Report (2008) -names racialized-Black youth especially subject to poverty, exclusions, isolation as roots, asks for greater organization of the sector through policy and strategies - Ontario Stepping Stones Resource Development Framework (May, 2012)	Economic recession- subprime mortgage crisis	- Roots of youth violence used to activate youth sector governance, youth strategy/ policy frameworks/managerial tools - Policing-Student resource Officers in schools - More consistent Funding for TAVIS - YCF end date set to 2012
Toronto biggest Mass Shooting, Eaton Centre Mall (June 2, 2012) Eaton Centre (July 16, 2012)	- Ontario Youth Action Plan (August, 2012) - Ontario's Stepping Up: A Strategic Framework for Helping Youth Succeed (2013) - Toronto Youth Equity Strategy (2014) - UW Youth Success Strategy(2015)	Liberals Dalton McGuinty Elected (2011-2013 minority)	- Positive youth development frameworks- assets - Managerial forms of youth work - TAVIS made permanent and increased funding - Youth Opportunities Fund (YCF not renewed)
Black Lives Matter TO movement (2014) response to the deaths of Jermaine Carby's, Andrew Loku, Abdirahman Abdi at the hands of police	- Anti-Systemic Racism Directorate (ARD) (2016) - A Better Way Forward: Ontario's Anti-Racism Strategy (2017) - Ontario's Anti-Black Racism Strategy (2017) - Black Youth Action Plan (2017) - City of Toronto Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit (2017) - Anti-Black Racism Action Plan (2017)	Liberals Kathleen Wynne (2013-2018)	- Emphasis on hearing from racialized and Black community especially- moments of "epiphany" of not knowing before - Apologies - Black youth action plan- focus on mentorship for Black youth - Programs with cultural lens-SNAP (youth aggression program) Collective impact youth model -no new models created by community - Evidence-based programs preference maintained
		Conservative Doug Ford Elected (2018-current)	- ARD Secretariats shut down (2018) - Black Youth Action Plan missing from website (halted 2018) - Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth shut down (2018) - Anti-Systemic Racism Directorate -budget not spent
- Black Lives Matter TO (2020)-Protesting death of George Floyd and Regis Korchinski-Paquet, Chantel Moore *this circuit not part of current study-future work	- Black Youth Action Plan visible on website again (2020) - funding rolled out - Allocation of small amount of dollars to ARD	Covid (2020)	

Appendix B: Maps

Figure B1



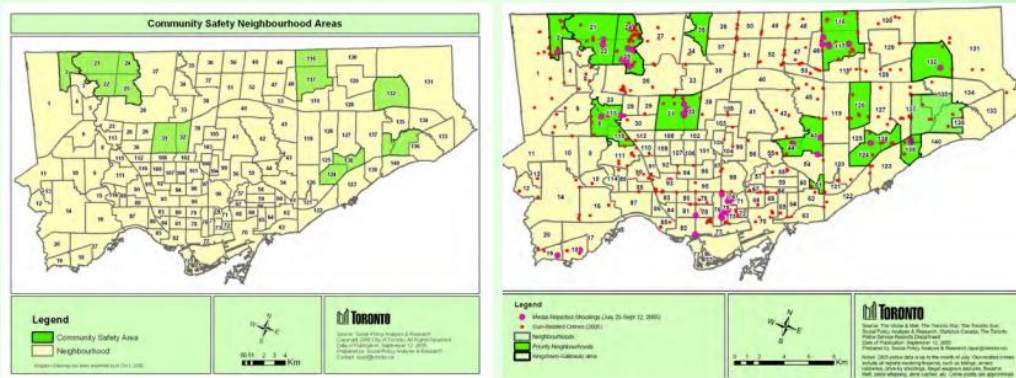
Note: From Strong Neighbourhood Task Force Neighbourhoods

Figure B2

Community Safety Area (L); Gun and Media Related Crimes (R)

ADDITIONAL FACTORS IN DETERMINING THE PRIORITY AREAS

- Also factored in are the Community Safety Plan, and neighbourhoods that experiencing violence.

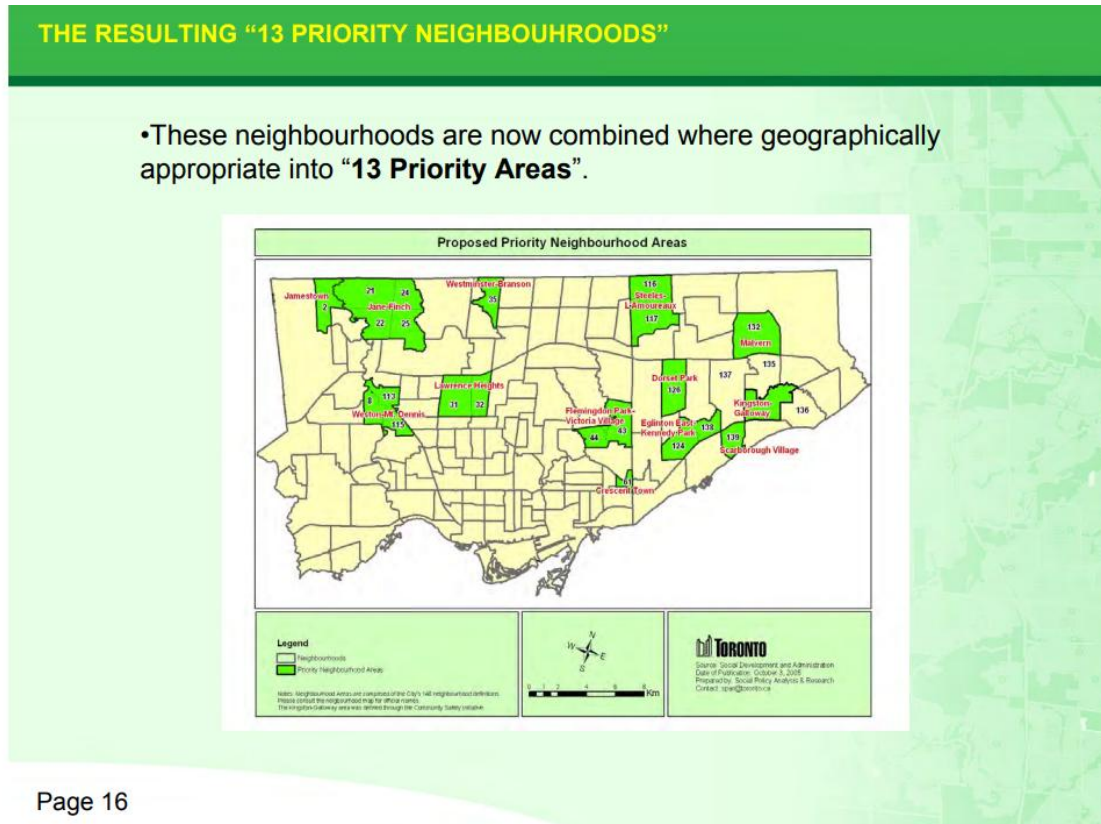


Page 15

Note: From Toronto's 13 Priority Areas: Research Methodology by the Tri-Level Committee Gun/Violence Staff Work Group (City of Toronto, 2006)

Figure B3

Final 13 Priority Neighbourhoods



Page 16

Note: From Toronto's 13 Priority Areas: Research Methodology by the Tri-Level Committee Gun/Violence Staff Work Group (City of Toronto, 2006)

Appendix C: Ontario's Profile of Youth Wellbeing



Note: From Ministry of Children and Youth Services. (2013). *Stepping Up* (p. 97).

Appendix D: Key Texts Explored in Genealogical Analysis

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Appendix E: Research Interview Questions

Notions of Social Justice in the Sector for racialized and Black youth

1. How is social justice comprehended in Ontario's youth serving sector, especially in relation to racialized and Black youth?
2. How are these youth viewed/included within the youth serving sector?
3. What are the dominant knowledges (models, theories, ideologies) that influence the youth serving sector?
 - a. How are these knowledges related to the social justice goals for racialized youth?

Youth Participation Within the Youth Serving Sector

4. What is the function of youth participation policies/practices within the youth sector (in Toronto, Ontario, Canada)?
 - a. Are there tensions that arise in the practices of racialized youth inclusion/participation?
5. Are racialized youth participation practices aligned with the sector's narratives of social justice and inclusion?
6. If not, are there alternative forms of youth participation that can be considered more socially just?

Racialized Youth Sector Members on Their Inclusion & Voice

7. How do racialized youth sector employees (and previously youth participants) make sense of their role in being included in the sector?
 - a. What has been your own experience with youth participation practices? (previous youth participants)