

COMMUNITY, HOUSING, AND CRIME: FRAMING THE NEWS COVERAGE OF LAWRENCE HEIGHTS
AND REXDALE

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ABSTRACT

Why is there less media coverage or public outcry when Black or racialized people lose their lives in Lawrence Heights and Rexdale? My dissertation started with this simple question. By studying the intersection of media, housing, community and crime, my dissertation sheds light on how mainstream and independent news sources contribute to stereotypes and metaphors that influence the public perception of Lawrence Heights and Rexdale. Starting in 1960, ending in 2020, I collected news from the *Toronto Star*, *Globe and Mail* and *Share* in the three categories of housing, crime, community. I used 9 variables to determine what type of news appeared in a higher frequency to show how independent, Black news media has told a more nuanced story. My research found there is work to do in countering the high frequency of crime stories in the mainstream news, and the presence of independent publications like *Share* are vital in presenting counternarratives that give a voice to the community. As well as representing how residents, community groups and activists have come and are coming together to reclaim their right to the city.

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CHAPTER 1

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.” - Margaret Mead

INTRODUCTION

It is hard to move through the *Toronto Star* or the *Globe and Mail* without encountering news about young, racialized people of colour in Toronto being injured or murdered because of gun violence. Attuned to the news at the early age, I used to watch Dwight Drummond on CP24 (a Canadian specialty news channel owned by Bell Media), and I distinctly remember Jane-Finch being painted as this place rife with gang and gun violence, along with Malvern, Agincourt and Rexdale. The constant repetition of these places in relation to violence, murder, crime, guns, and gangs created images that stuck with me. These stereotypical images made me think these spaces were like this, despite never having been there myself. As I have aged and moved through these spaces, I know now that they are attached yet removed from these images and offer more than the stereotypes used to portray them and the residents that live there.

Moreover, I find myself having to question the assumption that lives lost in these spaces are somehow a part of crime as every year there are victims of gun violence who were going about the daily activities of their lives like Shane Stanford, Adu Boakye and Dante Andreatta in Jane-Finch, Thane Murry in Regent Park, and many more. The news media in North America tries to hold government institutions accountable, but it repeats the power dynamic found in a capitalist system, where very few wield a lot of power, and the masses have little power or the perception that the masses have little power. Although there are many times the *Globe and Mail* and the *Toronto Star* try to present the perspective of the working poor and working class, most

of the time, the papers work to recycle hegemonic narratives that criminalize Toronto neighbourhoods and Blackness.

The independent ethnic media¹ in Canada is well known, and there have been many regional and national newspapers that have catered to many diverse demographics as well as African, Caribbean, and Black Canadian communities. “Voice of the Fugitive” started by Henry Bibb in 1851 was the first Black newspaper published in Canada, followed by the “Provincial Freeman” founded by Mary Ann Shadd in 1853. These newspapers were followed by *The Dawn of Tomorrow* in 1923 and publications created in the latter half of the 1900s like *Contrast*, *Ghanaian News*, *Caribbean Camera* and *Pride* in the GTA (Greater Toronto Area) and Southern Ontario.² The ethnic media in Canada has had a vital part of informing the Black community in Toronto of stories that typically did not make it to the front pages of the mainstream news and we community news covered in my sample with *Share*.

Class, race, and identity are acted out through experiences of neighbourhood and space.³ The representation of this relationship can tell us about who in a society deserves to be protected and feel safe. The media is a tool of power and can be used to perpetuate or break stereotypes. Although at times they present more nuanced and thoughtful coverage, the *Toronto Star* and the *Globe and Mail* historically draw a picture of negativity and plight in coverage of Lawrence Heights and Rexdale. This in turn, first, affects the perception of these places in the media, and thereby public imagination and second, does the bidding of capitalism and its push to ensure a

¹ Sherry Yu, “Ethnic Media: Moving Beyond Boundaries” in *The Routledge Companion to Media and Race*, (Routledge, 2017).

² “African Canadian Online: An Online Resource by the Centre for the Study of Black Cultures in Canada,” (n.d.), <https://www.yorku.ca/aonline/>.

³ Robert MacDonald et al., “Growing Up in Poor Neighbourhoods: The Significance of Class and Place in the Extended Transitions of ‘Socially Excluded’ Young Adults.” *Sociology* 39, no. 5 (2005): 873–891.

labour class. Many powerful neighbourhood associations and industry groups tried to stop Lawrence Heights from being built in the early 1950s and the mainstream news never or rarely gave space to the voice of the residents who lived there, or their advocates and activists.⁴ As time moved on, housing and crime were the main categories through which the stories were told. There was a shift towards incorporating the voices of those who lived in the space starting in the 1960s and 1970s. Black news source *Share*, provides an alternative to mainstream media and shows the areas in a more positive light, ascribing the problems to deeper systemic issues tied to municipal planning and historical racism that Black people have had to face in the city and Canada as a whole. Overall, news sources that exist outside of the community although getting better or more accurate, tend to have a stereotypical portrayal that conflates the area and the people to stereotypes and presumptions, whereas *Share* shows the activism and community spirit in these spaces. What *Share* could do better is cover spaces more thoroughly, focusing on specific neighbourhoods and news that happens there. They do this with an Events section; however, it would be beneficial to have more localized news coverage.

The study of the media representation of crime, race, and space continues to grow, and many⁵ use it to show how stereotypes are created and come to exist in the public imaginary. It derives from the study of race and its relationship to democracy and the media, moving from an idea coded into biology used to classify Black people and spaces as subhuman,⁶ to essentialism

⁴ "Demand halt to Vast Housing Project," *Globe and Mail* (Toronto, Ontario), February 11, 1955. Toronto Public Library, *Globe and Mail Historical Newspaper Archive*.

⁵ Edward Grace Galabuzi, *Canada's Economic Apartheid: The Social Exclusion of Racialized Groups in the New Century* Toronto: Canadian Scholar's Press, Inc. [CSPI]; Doris Graber, *Crime News and the Public*, New York: Praeger, 1980.

⁶ Stuart Hall, *The Fateful Triangle: Race, Ethnicity, Nation* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2017), 23.

to the question of the “reality of race.”⁷ Current day theories of race, which my research draws on, argues that although race may exist more linguistically, culturally, and historically than anything, the material effects that derive from the processes of race, like death and violence are real.⁸ These material effects and processes show up in how people live their everyday lives in their neighbourhoods. The way that the news covers the material effects of race and class in a neighbourhood is a point of study because it contributes to public understandings of race and allows for dominant images to form and take precedence over the actual experience of an area or experience of race. My research uncovers the dominant news narratives of two Toronto neighbourhoods Lawrence Heights and Rexdale, which do not get as much media in comparison to areas like Regent Park, Jane-Finch, and Scarborough. I chose Lawrence Heights and Rexdale because of high racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity as well as the large number of residents who identify as Black. In addition to this, in the public imaginary, very broadly to those outside of the community, within Ontario and globally, these spaces are associated with images and symbols of violence and crime along with community, togetherness, and belonging. This sample traces how stereotypes and dominant images like the ‘criminalblackman,’ ‘thug’ and ‘gangbanger’ are created and maintained to understand the relationship between space, race, crime and community in a liberal democratic capitalist system.

North York is one of the most multicultural and multi-racial areas in the world. It existed as its own city until 1998 when it was amalgamated into the larger city of Toronto.⁹ The area was

⁷ Kobena Mercer, *Welcome to the Jungle: New Positions in Black Cultural Studies* (London: Taylor & Francis Group), 1994.

⁸ Hall, *Fateful*, 23.

⁹ John Sewell, *The Shape of the Suburbs Understanding Toronto's Sprawl* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 23.

primarily agricultural until the twentieth century and in 1922 only had a population of under 6000 people. As Toronto grew, so did North York, moreover, as Canada opened its borders to people from Eastern Europe, Asia and Africa, the population of the town continued to increase and was transformed into a central feature of the Toronto suburb from the 1950s into the 1990s. North York covers a swath of neighbourhoods including Lawrence Heights and Rexdale. In his work “The Three Cities within Toronto” David Hulchanski writes how “Toronto’s neighbourhoods are especially varied and distinctive, and each has a “collective action involving various social, political and economic forces both internal and external that lead to change.”¹⁰ North York is an area full of neighbourhoods that has undergone a lot of change since the 1950s. In 2016, the area had a population of over 640,000 people and over 60 percent of the residents were born outside of Canada and over 52 percent belonged to a visible minority.¹¹ The largest racialized community in the area in 2016 was Chinese at 14 percent followed by South Asian at 10 percent, Arab/West Asian at 5 percent and Black at 9 percent.¹² Black Canadians make up about 20 percent of the population west of Allen Road,¹³ with most living around Jane and Finch with pockets in Lawrence Heights and Black Creek. As more people moved to Toronto, it became a space that the Metropolitan Toronto Council eyed as a good area to build low-income housing, and despite the opposition of residents during the 1950s¹⁴ many units began to go up in the area. The

¹⁰ David Hulchanski, *Three cities within Toronto: Income polarisation among Toronto’s neighbourhoods*, (2006).

¹¹ Sako Musterd and Wim Ostendorf, “Segregation, Polarisation and Social Exclusion in Metropolitan Areas” in *Urban Segregation and the Welfare State* (London: Routledge, 1998).

¹² Musterd & Ostendorf, “Segregation.”

¹³ “‘Oh, I don’t feel safe at all’: Toronto Community Housing residents call for solutions to frequent gun violence,” *Toronto Star*, July 11, 2021.

¹⁴ “Claim Apartments in Danger Zone: Demand Halt to Vast Housing Project,” *Globe and Mail*, February 11, 1955.

¹⁵ Chris Richardson, “Orientalism at Home: The Case of ‘Canada’s Toughest Neighbourhood’.” *British Journal of Canadian studies* 27, No. 1 (2014): 75–95.

construction of dense housing in spaces that did not have adequate utilities, greenspaces, employment, transportation, and other social services has led to the situation at hand now.

In the news, North York has also become synonymous with violence and crime; it can be argued the name has been conflated with Jane-Finch, Scarborough and Rexdale. Pockets of space have been constructed in a perpetual state of violence because of the high population of non-Black immigrants and Black people in these areas of North York. For example, a 2007 article in the *Toronto Star* is titled “Jane & Finch residents tired of dodging bullets.”¹⁵ Another article in *The Globe and Mail* in 2007, described Jane and Finch as “a place where guns are abundant and gang turf determines who can go where.”¹⁶ The coverage of these spaces should include that they were poorly planned to begin with and then subsequently under resourced which in turn has led to lower employment and high school graduation rates, alongside increased violence and incarceration.

The proposal for both Lawrence Heights and Rexdale started in the 1950s, however the difference between the two is that Lawrence Heights at first was specifically a public housing space and Rexdale was in a mixed housing area that contained a large number of public housing units as well as single family homes, privately owned apartments, small businesses, retail and manufacturing facilities. Of the two neighbourhoods, Lawrence Heights is better known within the city, but both have been plagued with questionable media representation. Lawrence Heights, located in North York, like Regent Park, has undergone widespread ‘revitalization’ in the past

¹⁴ Richardson, “The case of Canada’s”; Lindi Jahiu, and Jonathan Cinnamon, “Media Coverage and Territorial Stigmatization: An Analysis of Crime News Articles and Crime Statistics in Toronto,” *GeoJournal* 87, no. 6 (2022):4547–4564.

couple of decades that has led to the displacement of Black residents.¹⁷ The neighbourhood is bounded by Lawrence Avenue to the south, Yorkdale road to the north, Varna Drive to the east and Dufferin Street to the west. Referred to as ‘the jungle,’¹⁸ soon after the area’s completion in 1962, the neighbourhood became synonymous with violence, crime and poor housing, despite being across the street from Lawrence Manor, a very affluent area of North York. Rexdale is located in North Etobicoke and the space has also been subject to negative media representation. It is bounded by Highway 427 to the West, Steeles Avenue to the North, Weston Rd to the East and the 401 to the South. Rexdale consists of multiple neighbourhoods and approximately 23 percent¹⁹ of residents identify as Black. In the mainstream local media, although there is some portrayal of Lawrence Heights and Rexdale in the subject of culture and community building, the focus is primarily on housing and crime, and these stories are often told through a negative lens.

Lawrence Heights is at the tail end of a large development project that began in 2010 and bears similarities to the Revitalization Plan in Regent Park in 2005. The Lawrence Heights Revitalization project is near its end, having initiated its fifth phase in 2018. Rexdale is not in the middle of major changes, however, there are silent development transformations that will become more noticeable with time. Focusing specifically on the turn of each decade from the 1950s to 2020, my project uses content analysis to examine over seventy years of media coverage of news that falls within three categories – crime, housing and community. The news media coverage of these areas is the focus of this research; I shine a light on stories that are not

¹⁷ Martine August, “‘It’s All About Power and You Have None:’ The Marginalization of Tenant Resistance to Mixed-Income Social Housing Redevelopment in Toronto, Canada,” *Cities* no 57 (2016): 25–32.

¹⁸ Residents fight stigma of an ‘OHC Jungle,’ *Globe and Mail*, October 15, 1975, B1.

¹⁹ Toronto Community and neighbourhood services. *Rexdale – Neighbourhoods Census/National Household Survey, 2011*.

often told around culture and community. Rather than the news including a nuanced coverage of crime as part of a larger narrative, crime becomes dominant. The representation of poverty and violence, or wealth and safety is ascribed along race and class lines,²⁰ disconnecting space from culture, race and class works to devalue space and the life that is there. The Black press provides a more balanced representation of these spaces, focusing on community through a positive lens which creates counter-images to violence and gives the areas and their residents agency in telling their stories. My research utilizes the *Toronto Star*, the *Globe and Mail*, and the *Share* archives to gain a better understanding of how representation of racialized space functions and how it can contribute to the way space exists physically as well as in our imagination.

²⁰ Marian Meyers, "African American Women and Violence: Gender, Race, and Class in the News," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 21, no. 2 (2004): 95–118; Martin Gilens, *Why Americans Hate Welfare: Race, Media, and the Politics of Antipoverty*. Chicago Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2000.

OBJECTIVES

Those who study the media representation of race make it clear how Western democracy has carefully etched out the place of race within a white supremacist capitalist patriarchy for the benefit of the dominant class, thereby making representations of Blackness steeped in unshakeable stereotypes.²¹ Gramsci would argue that the free press has always been grounded in politically-driven manufactured consent and has consistently worked to satisfy market pressures.²² Mainstream news media is a function of capitalism, which means the stories that get the most clicks or views are going to be prioritized over other, albeit important pieces of information.²³

Although there are independent and mainstream media that attempt to transform stereotypes in a way that provides more agency and mobility to Black people, there still remains dominant images these counternarratives must confront. Housing and community are intrinsically linked, as many housing stories are indirectly about the experience of employment and community in these spaces. Looking at planning and housing articles helps to understand how the news has approached ideas of space and the municipality's role in planning. For example, in a 2016 Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) news article titled "Lawrence Heights resident who faced eviction threat for years is rehoused — for now," long-time resident Cynthia Scott is profiled. Scott has lived in Toronto Public Housing at Lawrence Heights for 42 years and

²¹ Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, 2nd edition, London: Routledge, 2014; bell hooks, *Black Looks: Race and Representation*, New York: Routledge, 2015.

²² Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 2003).

²³ Susan D. Moeller, *Compassion Fatigue: How the Media Sell War, Famine, Disease and Death*, New York: Routledge: 1999.

was facing eviction so that construction could move forward on the revitalization project. The city had been trying to evict Scott since 2017 and instead of finding her permanent housing, it offered to move her into temporary housing and the shelter system. In ‘revitalizing’ the area, residents like Scott argued the city was “hellbent on making [her] homeless.”²⁴ Stories like this dominate the news about Lawrence Heights and although these stories should be told, there are other stories that also deserve attention. For instance, stories that present how the community showed up in droves to municipal planning meetings to vocalize both their concern and agreement of the contentious redevelopment of Lawrence Heights proposal in the mid 2000s.²⁵ Media organizations such as *Share* and *Contrast* and sometimes mainstream news, present counternarratives to the general public in a way that attracts visibility. News journalism can be used as a way to speak out against injustice experienced within Toronto neighborhoods and bring awareness to questions of identity and belonging. Showing counternarratives or images of the community can contribute to a new perception of the area in the public imaginary, which thereby may help the community achieve a better quality of life.

News in the 1950s had a very different place in society than news in 2020. Seventy years ago, the news was held in high regard as it was a way to learn about the war effort and it was also part of the war propaganda machine. According to Beate Josephi, in the early 20th century, “journalism was expected to promote “values such as rationality, certainty, consent, reason, order and objectivity and progress.”²⁶ The news at this time was approached from the structure

²⁴ Katie Swayers, “Lawrence Heights Resident Who Faced Eviction Threat for Years Is Rehoused — for Now,” *CBC*, June 12, 2021.

²⁵ “Just fix some of the old buildings,” *Toronto Star*, February 26, 2010.

²⁶ Beate Josephi, “De-Coupling Journalism and Democracy: Or How Much Democracy Does Journalism Need?” in *Journalism* (London, 2013).

of who, what, why, when and where and presented as objective.²⁷ In the 1950s, the relationship between the news media and the public was very different because print news was embedded into culture as a way for people to keep up to date. It was a very powerful tool for the government to deliver their political agenda and acted as one of the main public forums.²⁸ Now, there is the argument that objectivity in news is dead, which is forcing news organizations to take sides,²⁹ and the side that often wins is typically mainstream, which utilizes myth in storytelling. Jenkins believes that calling out myth can help destroy it.³⁰

Today in 2024, print news is in decline, and most news exists digitally and on video, both online and cable. It has been argued that the internet has democratized access to the production and consumption of news as social media and has restructured the position of the gatekeeper, resulting in new public forum(s) that are both niche and global.³¹ Therefore, the early news about these two spaces, reflects the power of the two mainstream newspapers and as time fast forwards to 2000 and beyond, there is a change as news is also more accessible digitally. However, in my research, it is not necessarily the shift from print to digital that has the most impact, but rather the introduction of the ethnic independent press.

From 1950 to 2020, there were three key shifts in the way Lawrence Heights was represented in the news media because of the changing shape of Canadian housing, immigration

²⁷ Gene Allen, *Making National News: A History of Canadian Press*, University of Toronto Press, 2013.

²⁸ Barbie Zelizer "On the shelf life of democracy in journalism scholarship," in *Journalism: Theory, Practice & Criticism*, 14(4), 459–473 (2012).

²⁹ Michael Schudson, *Why Journalism Still Matters*, 2018.

³⁰ Christopher Campbell et al., *Race and News: Critical Perspectives*, New York: Routledge, 2011.

³¹ P Bro and F Wallberg, "Digital Gatekeeping: News media versus social media" in *Digital Journalism*, no. 2, 3 (2014).

policy and the news media itself. The first key moment occurred when Lawrence Heights started to appear in the news in the 1950s as the topic of government-funded housing began to take shape. The introduction of social welfare policy by European and North American governments attracted a lot of public attention, especially as the problem of slums in Toronto became highly visible as the city was trying to grow. Therefore, early public dialogue was not just about Lawrence Heights, but in general how different levels of government could come together to build public housing in Canada. This meant that the news coverage of the area supported new government policies and calls for development, rather than examining the intricate details of the city's capability to ensure that new public housing had the right density and social supports or giving a voice to future public housing residents.

In 1960 and 1970 housing was a popular topic therefore it garnered far more attention than any other year in my research. The most popular codes used by the *Toronto Star* and the *Globe and Mail* to cover the proposal and construction were rationalizing and social justice. The mainstream media actively participated in the housing conversation, and built their own stake in the attention economy, often times being a voice for powerful government officials as we saw with Fredrick Gardiner's (the first president of the Metro Council) close relationship with both the *Toronto Star* and the *Globe and Mail*. Early on Lawrence Heights and Rexdale were represented through the categories of housing and community. Although positive, the focus on housing as a benefit to Canada's economy took attention away from the people moving into the area, so the gap seen was that the area was not built for the people who would move there, let alone ready for the increase of density and newcomers to Canada.

Gramsci also argued that community could challenge structures that defined reality through collective action.³² In a modern capitalist market economy, a community coming together to claim space and place, by producing its own social and cultural environment, and its own media is a way to oppose the outside forces that tend to produce an intense individualism undermining the essence of community.³³ My research re-members history to add to a new space in the public imaginary to achieve a greater plurality and justice. I add to the idea of a third space or heterotopia, which invites the reader to “deconstruct our old segregations based on race, class, gender, and worldview.”³⁴ The news can be a way to shine a light on those in the community who are changing the shape of the neighbourhood through the creation of programs and policies that support residents who are pushing back against the status quo.

How might news organizations approach crime coverage without perpetuating myths about people and communities of colour? Possibly by including coverage of societal dynamics that have led to current day circumstances.³⁵ Moreover, can alternative and Black news sources help to chip away at myth and create new metaphors and images in the public imaginary? Possibly as well. Although hegemony is accomplished through societal superstructures like the news, power is actively won and secured³⁶ therefore always shifting, which allows for it to at times land in the hands of those who have historically been without it. The ethnic press in Canada has been an example of independent media which has sought to combat both the

³² R. Rosales, “The Connection between culture, community and citizenship” in *Making Citizenship Work* (Routledge, 2023).

³³ Rosales, “The Connection between.”

³⁴ Kathy Hogarth and Wendy L Fletcher, *A Space for Race: Decoding Issues of Racism, Multiculturalism and Post-Colonialism in the Quest for Belonging* (Oxford University Press, 2018).

³⁵ C. Campbell et al., *Race and News*.

³⁶ Hall, *Fateful*, 23.

underrepresentation and misrepresentation of racialized and immigrant populations in Canada. Ethnic media is a term that has been contested. There are many other ways this media has been defined like 'multicultural media' but 'ethnic media' "has been used most widely in the field of ethnic media studies as well as in the public realm."³⁷ It is the emphasis on "ethnicity" or race that sets these media apart from so-called "mainstream media." In Canada and the U.S., the ethnic media have advanced alongside increasing global migration. Canada's "commitment to multiculturalism as a political philosophy made the country emphasize cultural diversity and the assistance of social integration for immigrants."³⁸ Newspapers like *Share*, *Korea Times*, and the Italian *Il Cittadino Canadese* helped to create culturally friendly media spaces and connected immigration populations to news specific to their demographic group within and outside of Canada.

In the late 1960s and 1970s, ethnic media emerged in Canada and there were more Black-owned newspapers like *Contrast* (1969-1991), *Share* (1978-present), *Caribbean Camera* (1990-present), *Pride* (1983-present) and *Word* (1992-2012) and *Mic* and *Spear*.³⁹ The introduction of a niche magazines created for the Black community in Canada and the GTA opened a new way of talking about Lawrence Heights and Rexdale, Toronto and Canada as well. In 1980, *Share* was considered more of a softer magazine on political issues than *Contrast*, which showed itself in the number of positive stories *Share* covered about everyday Black life. The creation of ethnic press helped to balance mainstream news and changed the shape of news because now Black people were media owners.

³⁷ Yu, "Ethnic Media: Moving Beyond."

³⁸ Yu, "Ethnic Media: Moving Beyond."

³⁹ "African Canadian Online: An Online Resource."

Contrast was often referred to as the Black Toronto community's "eyes and ears" because it covered content that the mainstream sources avoided. Pages of articles in *Contrast* supported the Black power movement and the magazine was very Black and proud, and therefore controversial. *Share* was seen as less political in comparison to *Contrast*, as *Contrast* published more hard lined opinions about immigration and called out the racism new immigrants were facing. *Contrast* was started by Alfred Hamilton in 1972 and circulation was 10,000 for Black people in across Canada. The paper was sold in 1983 and finally closed in 1991 in a rough economic climate. *Contrast* launched the journalism career of many popular Black journalists and writers in Canada like Jojo Chintoh, Cecil Foster, Austin Clarke, Royson James, Hamlin Grange and Olivia 'Babsy' Grange. The emergence of Black press in Canada at this time helped to provide balance to the stories published in the mainstream news. These papers provided a different way to showcase Blackness outside of violence, presenting the issues at top of mind of Black people, like barriers to employment and police brutality.

The second major shift in media representation happened in the late 1980s and early 1990s when the Multicultural Act was passed in 1988 alongside the North American Free Trade Act in 1992. More newcomers moved into Lawrence Heights, making it one of the most diverse areas in the city. In the late 1960s, the end of White policy in immigration meant that people from the global South, mostly Caribbean and Asia began to move to Toronto, in spaces that were designed and built for a certain density and white European residents. In 1980, increased immigration, coupled with free-market politics created a situation where people were moving to the country with the expectation that they would assume responsibility for their own lives. The introduction of the points system in immigration was a way to ensure a certain type of person

was moving to Canada, but even still with this, in at least the first few years of immigrating, immigrants still had barriers to access to education, healthcare, childcare and well-paying jobs. With the influx of people moving into Lawrence Heights and Rexdale, the federal government struggled to keep up with its maintenance and safety, while at the same time trying to account for managing the system with a shrinking budget. In Toronto, in 1980 and 1990, in the mainstream media Lawrence Heights became closely tied to racialized stereotypes of gangs and thugs, and there was a general dislike of not just the space, but of public housing and the ills it supposedly brought. At this time in the *Globe and Mail* and *Toronto Star* there was a shift from a high frequency of stories about housing, to more frequency of stories about crime.

The mainstream news leaned into stereotypes and the inside/outside binary to categorize young Black men in the two neighbourhoods as 'thugs' in gangs from outside countries. Focusing on problems at the individual level also helped to make it seem difficult to solve the problems the area was facing. The mainstream media did not focus on policing or the fraught relationship between the two communities and law enforcement, which was a story that was often covered by Black press in the GTA and Canada at large. In general, the mainstream media did not tell stories important to Black communities in Toronto, and people began to create their own papers in order to tell their own stories and provide news to Black people that showcased more than just crime. The shift to crime in the mainstream media also happened alongside the development of more Black press.

Space study scholars have often looked at the way we interact with space and how people define it or are defined by it.⁴⁰ Spatial justice theories provide a framework for how to talk about the intersection of space, race, class and neighbourhood. It examines space to point to the ways that various forms of injustice manifest themselves in everyday life. When thinking about the images that come to mind when thinking of Ontario, and Canada as a whole, the country is often showcased as a multicultural space where people have a chance to live their culture according to the values and traditions of their ethnicity or nationhood. Keeping this in mind, it is odd that stories of community and culture do not often appear on the front page of mainstream newspapers.

The study of the representation of space provides a framework to help understand the development of Lawrence Heights and Rexdale. Uncovering stories about public sentiment that existed before these spaces were built, shines a light on why and how from their inception have been underserved in terms of employment, transportation, and social services. When it comes to space, land value is always kept first and foremost. In Toronto for instance, in the past land near Jane-Finch was not popular because of its bad reputation, however, this is changing because of the new TTC subway stations that opened in the area in 2017. The value of land can change, and if public housing is always in flux, it's easier to move it or expand it or "revitalize it". My research found that most of the news we read about Lawrence Heights and Rexdale fell into the category of housing, whether the buildings were going up, or being taken down or being re-

⁴⁰ Edward Soja, "The Socio-Spatial Dialectic." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 70, no. 2 (1980): 207–225.

furnished.⁴¹ The housing category was a major interest for news stories about Lawrence Heights and Rexdale and that works to help us see these areas as always in flux and temporary. In articles that fell into both the housing and community categories there were discussions about the relationship between space and race, if residents were affected by their neighbourhood, if they affected the neighbourhood and how the media represented this relationship⁴² as well as questions about the function of community in urban planning. My research shows how the dominance of housing news works to erase the communities trying to root, while indirectly erasing the Blackness that exists there too.

The third and key moment that shifted how the area was represented was in 2005 when the year of the gun occurred. The year of the gun saw Toronto double its number of gun-related homicides to the previous year, a jump from 27 to 51 and hit its highest homicide rate in a decade.⁴³ The year of the gun cemented Rexdale and Lawrence Heights into history and brought so much attention that it changed the shape of the latter – arguably the catalyst for the redevelopment project proposed in 2006. At the turn of the century in 2000, the conservative, provincial Mike Harris government was in its final years. 2000 is the year that had the lowest news published about Lawrence Heights. The claw back in news media. During this time, there was an economic downturn and although there was a lot happening in the two neighbourhoods,

⁴¹ Barbara Bence, "Thistletown: An Example of Federal-Provincial Partnership in Land Development." *Osgoode Hall Law Journal* 9, no. 2 (1971): 313-333; Lina Alhabah. "Territorialisation of Public Housing: The Case of Lawrence Heights." Masters' Thesis, York University, 2019.

⁴² Katherine McKittrick and Clyde Adrian Woods, *Black Geographies and the Politics of Place*, Toronto: Between the Lines, 2007; Ronald Sundstrom, "Race and Place: Social Space in the Production of Human Kinds," *Philosophy and Geography* 6.1 (2003): 83–95.

⁴³ John, Lorinc, "Summer of the Gun: 10 years later: Part 1," *Spacing*, July 29, 2015, <https://spacing.ca/toronto/2015/07/29/summer-gun-10-years-later-pt/>.

they were not being covered by the mainstream news. The mainstream news leaned fully into the criminalization of space and race during the turn of the 20th century.

There are many studies that talk about the criminalization of race in the media.⁴⁴ Black people have been painted as inherently criminal and dirty, and this stereotypical portrayal gets put onto the land as well.⁴⁵ The argument becomes that Black people have degraded the land and brought crime with them as well, but in reality, crime existed before Black Canadians and other immigrants moved to the area,⁴⁶ moreover, when they moved into the space, they were subject to race-based hate violence. Little attention is paid to the poor planning, and accountability is removed from the government officials. Why is this? This research uncovers how the different levels of government have failed residents in many ways. With that being said, I also want to give agency back to the residents and those bringing the community together. News coverage of community building in 2000 to 2020 by *Share* centers people's experiences of space in relation to their identity, rather than the experience of crime and gentrification. Community building can take place in the form of publications, festivals, recreation centers, services and programs where people can put a voice to what they are experiencing, live their everyday life, as well as share in mutual struggle and joy. One of the ways that systems of power maintain the status quo is by isolating people with similar experiences.⁴⁷ Strong communities can help to deter

⁴⁴ Graber, *Crime*.

⁴⁵ Douglas Allen, Mary Lawhon, and Joseph Pierce, "Placing Race: On the Resonance of Place with Black Geographies." *Progress in human geography* 43, no. 6 (2019): 1001–1019.

⁴⁶ "Responsibility of Parents." *Globe and Mail* (Toronto, Ontario), November 5, 1960. Toronto Public Library, Globe and Mail Historical Newspaper Archive; "Jsa Sledgehammer, Pipe: 3 injured in Assault; 4 Brothers Arrested." *Globe and Mail* (Toronto, Ontario), November 14, 1960. Toronto Public Library, Globe and Mail Historical Newspaper Archive.

⁴⁷ Gramsci, *Selections from the prison notebooks*, (International Publishers, 1973).

or prevent violence, as well as deter or prevent the knocking down of people's homes to build more condominiums. By also looking at stories on community building this work demonstrates active resistance to the stereotypes that people have been trying to break through by revealing fuller narratives about these areas. My research re-examines a new image of Lawrence Heights and Rexdale. Focusing on *Share* helps to see how Black communities have covered these areas and can potentially show a better balance. Overall, my research adds to a growing body of literature that questions the media representations of these spaces to counteract the violence that these spaces still face. My dissertation aims to answer the question, why when young Black men are murdered in neighbourhoods like Lawrence Heights and Rexdale there is a lack of public and media attention, and my dissertation makes visible the stories of community that are actively confronting these dominant narratives.

CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION

Many scholars⁴⁸ have tried to explain the relationship between the news, race, space and neighbourhood. When it comes to the news, the contemporary understanding of the relationship between democracy and journalism has evolved since Western Enlightenment thinkers. In the 19th century and for most of the 20th century, “journalism was expected to promote values such as rationality, certainty, consent, reason, order, objectivity and progress” (Josephi, 2013, p. 442). According to John Stuart Mills, watchdog journalism⁴⁹ was a way to potentially denounce wrongdoing in government and private sector to increase accountability and positive change in society. However, others including Herbert Altschull would argue that in being a cultural production, “watch dog journalism” has always been involved in the producing, relaying and re-gearing of dominant hegemonic ideology” (Altschull 1984, p. 135). Can the news be an effective watchdog while also being a producer of dominant hegemony? There’s a lot at stake in examining the relationship between democracy and journalism.

What is and what is not normative behaviour is presented by the media. As Habermas writes, the media has power because it is a critical element in shaping the public sphere and can influence social action.⁵⁰ Fleras and Kunz argue that one of the ways people come to know about each other is through representation and the media can be a powerful tool in helping to shape the binaries of outside and inside.⁵¹ Jenkins argues that because the media is a place

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⁴⁹ John Stuart Mills

⁵⁰ Hartmut Wessler, *Habermas and the Media*. Cambridge, UK ; Polity Press, 2018.

⁵¹ Augie Fleras and Jean Lock Kunz, *Media and Minorities: Representing Diversity in a Multicultural Canada* (Toronto: Thompson Educational Pub., 2001): 49.

where power is claimed and won, it has the ability to shift. It can be argued that independent or ethnic news is now filling the watch dog role as the owners of production change and more racialized people become owners of media companies and get more, to some extent, say in what gets published and produced. In the late 60s into the early 90s, when immigrants in Canada started to become owners of production, more positive images of race, community and the diaspora were published.⁵² Ethnic or multicultural news media can tell more balanced stories of space, race and belonging in Canada, and although it may be apparent democracy does not need journalism any journalism whether independent or mainstream, good or bad, gaps and all, is always a reflection of democracy.⁵³

Although multicultural policy which paved the way for ethnic media may be changing the shape of media power dynamics in Canada, there are a group of scholars who abide by the idea that multiculturalism does not equate to belonging and embark on a critique of liberal pluralism's utopic outcomes. In looking at critiques multiculturalism, there are theories that challenge the idea that Canada is a mosaic where people from different cultures merge and live together somewhat harmoniously.⁵⁴ Razack, Furniss, Bannerji and Burman⁵⁵ argue that space within Canada is very contentious because it was stolen from Indigenous peoples, therefore any critique of the news, multiculturalism, space and race benefits from understanding Indigenous

⁵² C. Campbell et al., *Race and News*.

⁵³ (Hall, 1977); (Zelizer, 2012),

⁵⁴ John Murray Gibbon, *Canadian Mosaic: The Making of a Northern Nation* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1938); John Porter, *The Vertical Mosaic an Analysis of Social Class and Power in Canada* (University of Toronto Press), 1965.

⁵⁵ Sherene Razack, *Race, Space, and the Law: Unmapping a White Settler Society* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2002).; Elizabeth Furniss, *The Burden of History: Colonialism and the Frontier Myth in a Rural Canadian Community* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999).; Himani Bannerji, "The Dark Side of the Nation Essays on Multiculturalism, Nationalism and Gender," (Canadian Scholars' Press), 2000.; Jenny Burman, "Multicultural Feeling, Feminist Rage, Indigenous Refusal." *Cultural Studies, Critical Methodologies* 16, no. 4 (2016), 362.

experiences and their stake in the land. Enakshi Dua and Bonita Lawrence argue that there is a double consciousness at play in Canada because of the powerful dichotomies created as a result of the unequal spatial relationships between Indigenous peoples and white settlers.⁵⁶ Moreover, these early racialized spatial binaries provided the blueprint for spatial inequities in immigration policy that favoured White Europeans until the late 1960s, as well as the formation of multiculturalism policy.

Alongside news media theory and critiques of multiculturalism, the study of space plays a role in community formation and social justice. We racialize and classify space predominately through exclusion and distance.⁵⁷ The study of Lawrence Heights and Rexdale is unique in that North York and Etobicoke are two of the most diverse places in the world, therefore the study of these spaces can tell us about how race and Blackness both function in Canada and the GTA. One of the most studied space theorists is French philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre who critiqued everyday life and coined the concept of the right to the city. The right to the city is a cry and a demand, and necessary for transformative change.⁵⁸ An important attribute of this concept is that it can only be claimed through the working class and some theorists think that it is a political struggle, while others see it being political amongst other things. The right to the city asks who has power and who does not. It asks how heavily under resourced both spaces reaffirm and resist structural oppression, inequality and stereotypes.

⁵⁶ Bonita Lawrence and Enakshi Dua, "Decolonizing Antiracism." *Social justice* (San Francisco, Calif.) 32, no. 4 (102) (2005): 120–143.

⁵⁷ Sundstrom, "Race," 84.

⁵⁸ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2005.

Without essentializing race and space to a time, many within Black geographies ask researchers to make broad connections across history, time and space as no space exists without relation to the present and the past.⁵⁹ New images of space and race presented by ethnic and independent news help to create a counter narratives or counter images that disrupt common stereotypes in the mainstream news. By examining articles published every 10 years, over 70 years, from 1950 to 2020, my content analysis unearthed valuable historical and cultural insight over time. By focusing on one methodology, through the use of qualitative and quantitative methods, I was able to combine the broad analysis of charts with the specific details of real stories coming out of both neighbourhoods. How does the news media contribute to public perception and draw attention to violence in Lawrence Heights and Rexdale? And does this attention provoke any change in terms of politics and policy? Moreover, is there a difference in the way racialized media and mainstream news cover Lawrence Heights and Rexdale in the categories of crime, community and housing? With these questions in hand, this sample selected three Toronto newspapers, two mainstream, the *Toronto Star* and the *Globe and Mail*, and one independent, *Share* to study of the media's approach to space, housing, crime and community to unearth perceptions about spaces with large, racialized populations in Canada.

⁵⁹Katherine McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006).

LITERATURE REVIEW

STEREOTYPES, MULTICULTURALISM AND THE MEDIA

Elizabeth Furniss, Sherene Razack, Himani Bannerji, and Andrea Davis write about how multicultural policy has negative outcomes for Indigenous, racialized and immigrant people living within Canada. Scholars who critique Canada's multicultural framework refer to the country's attempted Indigenous erasure, racist immigration laws, and multiculturalism's increasingly close proximity to labour and capitalism. Multicultural policy works to obscure the relationship between Canada and immigrants that have settled in this space since the first white settlers arrived hundreds of years ago. Within the discourse of multiculturalism, Indigenous experiences have been rendered almost invisible and critiquing Indigenous experience in Canada lies outside of a multicultural framework because of Indigenous people's stake in the land. Many theorists such as Razack, Furniss and Coulthard argue that if Canada is going to be constructed as multicultural, it does so with the assumption that white settlers were here first and to disrupt this narrative we must center Indigenous justice within critiques of settler liberal pluralism.⁶⁰ Canadian policies and laws have attempted to render Indigenous experiences and people invisible through selective history and forgetting. The construction of Canada as multicultural has often pushed Indigenous stories and experiences to the periphery.

The invisibility of Indigeneity when it came to cultural policy in Canada is evident and writers such as Elizabeth Furniss write how it was tactic used to justify the continued occupation of land. In her book, *The Burden of History: Colonialism and the Frontier Myth in a Rural Canadian*

⁶⁰ Razack, *Race, Space, and the Law*.

Community, Furniss employs Raymond Williams's concept of "selective tradition"⁶¹ when examining the story told about Canada's development as a nation. For Furniss, multiculturalism in Canada tells a partial version of history because it does not include Indigenous experiences in an equitable way.⁶² She writes that Canadian history books do not give attention to "Aboriginal people's roles in shaping Canadian history" and that this exemption was "the manifestation of the hegemonic power of the "invisible Indian" stereotype."⁶³ For Furniss, the invisible stereotype is an attribute of selective tradition. This can be compared to the stereotypes that young Black men in Toronto experience, when they are labelled as "thugs" and "gangbangers." Jenkins argues that the othering of space and people works to make invisible the humanity of individuals experiencing high levels violence and crime. Moreover, the idea that Aboriginal peoples lack history prior to European contact supports Sherene Razack's argument in *Race and the Law* that the myth of Canada as a nation only works when the story begins with white settlers. Razack writes that it was believed that "white people principally developed the land" and that Aboriginal peoples were thought to be "dead or assimilated."⁶⁴ Andrea Davis also writes about how when it comes to Indigenous voices, Canada has adopted an "ontology of forgetting".⁶⁵ Furthermore, Haque writes how one of the three pillars of settler rule was "control of the 'Native population' through a systemic process of genocide, displacement, land and containment."⁶⁶ By acknowledging that white Europeans, predominately, have controlled the history written about

⁶¹ Furniss, *Burden*.

⁶² Furniss, *Burden*.

⁶³ Furniss, *Burden*, 60.

⁶⁴ Razack, *Race, Space, and the Law*, 2.

⁶⁵ Andrea Davis, "'The Real Toronto': Black Youth Experiences and the Narration of the Multicultural City." *Journal of Canadian studies* 51, no. 3 (2017), 732.

⁶⁶ Eve Haque. *Multiculturalism Within a Bilingual Framework Language, Race, and Belonging in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 21.

Canada as a nation, this unearths the idea that there are Indigenous realities and experiences that have been pushed to the periphery for a long time. And unfortunately discourses of multiculturalism while at times have done a fair job with bringing this story to the center, most of the time they continue to push Indigeneity further into the margins.⁶⁷ Indigenous people were excluded during the development of the Multicultural Act in 1988. In 1971 when Trudeau's government introduced the multicultural framework, the federal government simultaneously attempted to strip Indigenous peoples of their rights with a *White Paper* which proposed the unilateral abrogation of treaties.⁶⁸ There is an emerging discourse in the push back against multiculturalism that reveals how cultural policy, and its subsequent literature continues to maintain settler colonialism. To understand how the myth works within racialized spaces, it is crucial to understand how white settler origin stories contribute to the continued erasure of Indigeneity through myth making.⁶⁹ Many scholars now acknowledge the erasure of Indigeneity and try to reconcile invisibility by centering Indigenous justice when discussing the issues experienced by racialized peoples in Canada.

Writers that identify as Indigenous like Burman have discussed how within North American structures of liberal multiculturalism, both anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism exists, but that "difference is lived through in radically divergent ways."⁷⁰ Lawrence and Dua write about how anti-racism literature often erases Indigenous people and issues when discussing anti-racism and how this is problematic.⁷¹ MacDonald also echoes a similar sentiment when he says that

⁶⁷ Razack, *Race, Space and the law*.

⁶⁸ David Bruce. "Reforming Multiculturalism in a Bi-National Society: Aboriginal Peoples and the Search for Truth and Reconciliation in Canada." *Canadian journal of sociology* 39, no. 1 (2014): 65–86.

⁶⁹ Furniss, *Burden*.

⁷⁰ Burman, "Multicultural Feeling, Feminist Rage."

⁷¹ Lawrence and Dua, "Decolonizing Antiracism."

“although there are issues of oppression experienced by people of colour and recent immigrants, in the eyes of Aboriginals, these new groups are merely just settlers living on expropriated Aboriginal lands and continuing the colonial project.”⁷² Dua, Lawrence, MacDonald and Burman argue that it is important to be aware of how anti-racist critiques of multiculturalism can at times continue to further the contemporary colonial agenda. Discourses that examine Indigenous justice in relation to anti-racism work to fill the gaps of history and bring the past through present. This literature argues that any critique of Canada’s multicultural history should weave the Indigenous experience into the story to not repeat the historical erasure. If Canada is going to be constructed as multicultural, it does so with the assumption that white settlers were here first and to disrupt this narrative we must include calls for Indigenous justice along with calls for racial justice. When we construct Indigenous people as being here first, then we can recognize the duality and the multiple levels of double consciousness at play in Canada.

Immigration policy meant that people from different parts of the world descended into these communities to make a new life for themselves. The recent literature around multiculturalism’s close relationship with business and trade question whether the policy “can adequately deal with the issue of race, class, and gender inequities among Canadians or further advance an agenda based on equity.”⁷³ Abu et al. write that in the 1980s multiculturalism was linked to business interests and it sought to enroll and manage diversity for purposes of accumulation and development.⁷⁴ The ones that benefit the most from immigration are the

⁷² David Bruce MacDonald, “Reforming Multiculturalism in a Bi-National Society: Aboriginal Peoples and the Search for Truth and Reconciliation in Canada,” *Canadian journal of sociology* 39, no. 1 (2014): 65–86.

⁷³ Yasmeen Abu-Laban and Christina Gabriel, *Selling Diversity Immigration, Multiculturalism, Employment Equity, and Globalization*, 30.

⁷⁴ Walsh, “Marketization,” 285. James P. Walsh, “The Marketization of Multiculturalism: Neoliberal Restructuring and Cultural Difference in Australia.” *Ethnic and racial studies* 37, no. 2 (2014), 285.

ruling class of Canadians, not necessarily the immigrants that move to the country. Immigrants and racialized people move into North York neighbourhoods, or into public housing and get jobs that pay them under living wage, because these are the jobs in their neighbourhoods, write Abu-Laban and Gabriel. The reality of the situation is different than the promises made in the Canadian dream narrative. Jodi Melamed writes how multiculturalism codes the wealth, mobility and political power of neoliberalism's beneficiaries to be the just desserts of "multicultural world citizen".⁷⁵ Canada's increasingly capitalist-oriented immigration aims become apparent more into the 70s, 80s and 90s argues Harrison. With the elimination of the White Policy came an increase of immigration to Canada and an increase of the need to justify why Canada was allowing all of these new people into the country. With the rise of anti-immigrant sentiment came the belief that "that Canadians' attitudes towards immigration would be more positively predisposed towards those with money - even visible minorities - than towards those without."⁷⁶ The points system became a way to rank immigrants, and this new system was intrinsically connected to the economy of Canada as the more valuable a person in terms of work, education or language, the more points they earned to help them gain access to permanent residency or citizenship. Canada has basically commodified "minorities" and "minority culture."⁷⁷ However, on the opposite hand, even with points high enough to be allowed into the country, many new immigrants still find themselves making less money than the average Canadian.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Jodi Melamed, "The Spirit of Neoliberalism: From Racial Liberalism to Neoliberal Multiculturalism." *Social text*, no. 89 (2006), 24.

⁷⁶ Trevor Harrison, "Class, Citizenship, and Global Migration: The Case of the Canadian Business Immigration Program, 1978-1992." *Canadian public policy* 22, no. 1 (1996): 7-23.

⁷⁷ Abu-Laban & Gabriel, *Selling*, 30.

⁷⁸ Galabuzi, "*Canada's Economic Apartheid*."

Many journalists past and present have called out the Toronto media's questionable representation of neighbourhoods with a large Black or racialized population. In 2017, Toronto journalist Vicky Mochama wrote an opinion piece for *The Toronto Star*, titled "Canadian media continue to uphold whiteness at work," furthermore, in July 2018, Mochama along with two other journalists participated in a CBC radio segment and subsequently wrote, "After fatal Toronto shootings, is it time for journalists to rethink how they cover communities of colour?"⁷⁹ Mainstream media is not passive as it reflects, reinforces, and advances the interests of those who control media processes, agendas, and outcomes.⁸⁰ In an attempt to uphold journalistic professionalism, the pretense of objectivity works to hide the greater factors at play during the publication of news. The normalization of violence in these communities at the hands of the news media, leads to the normalization of the loss of Black lives in Toronto.

Stuart Hall, bell hooks, Norman Fairclough, and Andrew Rojecki have all tackled the intersection of race, power, and representation in the American context. In Canada, Rinaldo Walcott, Joseph Mensah, Robyn Maynard, and others have examined how race is presented by the media. A text can be considered a part of a dialogue between an author and the audience, and the social aspect of communication can be used to achieve specific effects.⁸¹ Examining specific articles and the frames used to present issues facing communities that struggle for equity is significant. Moreover, the difference in the frames used by a community newspaper like *Share*

⁷⁹ "After fatal Toronto shootings, is it time for journalists to rethink how they cover communities of colour?" CBC, July 06, 2018.

⁸⁰ Fleras and Kunz, *Media and Minorities*.

⁸¹ Stuart Hall, *The Fateful Triangle: Race, Ethnicity, Nation*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2017.

versus the *Toronto Star* and the *Globe and Mail* is significant because it shows how broader social, political, and ideological forces are working.

The news media both informs and is informed by the culture in which it exists, acting as a source of information and a forum to voice opinions. Current concepts of journalism and the news media brought forth by theorists such as Barbie Zelizer argue that the link between democracy and journalism is diminishing, and the news no longer functions as a watchdog. Truth and political accountability are two central ideas that arise in the discourse of journalism, but the question becomes, how can journalism possibly reflect all the different truths to provide the greatest democracy for all? Waisbord would argue that the media cannot possibly provide all of the people, with all of the information, all of the time. Mainstream news sources such as the *Toronto Star* and the *Globe and Mail* cannot cover all the news relevant to Lawrence Heights and Rexdale, but with that being said, the overt focus on crime works to distort the image of these spaces in the public domain.

“Tell me who you work for, and I’ll tell you what you can write about,” says Waisbord.⁸² This quote accurately describes why ethnic media was necessary to combat the stereotypes often portrayed by the mainstream news. Waisbord says that there is an unequal power dynamic between democracy and journalism, because not everyone has the same access to tools of production. Ethnic or racialized media shines light on topics the mainstream media will not cover, because they are fulfilling a need for a different market. Ethnic or independent media may strive to work for the public rather than political or corporate actors, and therefore they may have more range in what they can publish says Cheran George. In his work “Ethnic media, community

⁸² S Waisbord, “Truth is what happens to news,” in *Journalism Studies* 19 (13), 1866–1878.

media and participatory culture,” Mark Deuze writes how the ethnic media provide audiences with “essential information that helps them to participate as equal citizens of their country of residence. They provide a platform for discussion and exchange within minority communities as well as between minority and majority communities.”⁸³ Ethnic media is crucial because it provides alternatives to mainstream outlets and has a hand in shaping the social realities of the communities to whom they speak says Douai, Perry and Lindgren.⁸⁴ Ethnic news media has an important place in the media landscape because it tells different stories than the mainstream news, partially because it is not bound to the same economic or political pressures. News on community and culture can deconstruct narratives of power and ownership and there needs to be an increase in the frequency of stories we see about the intersection of identity, race, community and culture, and this can come through more racialized people owning and being involved in the media production process.

⁸³ Mark Deuze “Ethnic media, community media and participatory culture,” *Journalism*, no. 7, 3 (London, England) 262-280.

⁸⁴ A, Douai & B, Perry, “A Different Lens? How Ethnic Minority Media Cover Crime.” *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 2018 60(1), 96–121; April Lindgren, *Front page challenge a case study examining what the ethnic media promises and what it delivers*, CERIS - the Ontario Metropolis Centre (2011).

SPATIAL JUSTICE

Critical geography studies provide a language, framework and concepts that exist at the intersection of space, race, class, and neighborhood. Critical geography is a scholarly tradition that arose in the 1970s and understands space as a critical tool as it “points to the ways in which various forms of injustice manifest.”⁸⁵ The development of this theory has ballooned within the past twenty years and has developed an abundant language and vernacular.⁸⁶ Contemporary space theorist Mustafa Dikec in “Justice and the Spatial Imagination” maps out a brief history of the emergence of space studies within the practical and academic realm. He writes how geography, in the 1960s and 70s grappled with issues related to “identity politics, rights to the city, right to difference and social justice.”⁸⁷ For Dikec, critical geography began to develop in 1968 when Bleddyn Davis, created the term “territorial justice”. This seminal text led to another book titled *Social Justice in the City* by David Harvey. Harvey’s text was also influenced by John Rawls’s *Theory of Justice*. *Theory of Justice* has also been recognized as a starting point for the geographical discussion around justice along with Lefebvre’s *The Production of Space*. In contrast, Soja argues that the first major text to make a clearer link was “Geography and Inequality” (1977), written by Coates, Johnston, and Knox.⁸⁸ Both Soja and Dikec also reference GH Pirie’s important text *On Spatial Justice* as another book that adds to the language of space as “not inviolate” and as a process.⁸⁹ For Soja, Pirie, “in a call for developing the specific concept of spatial justice, is

⁸⁵ M Dikec, “Justice and the Spatial Imagination.” *Environment and planning*. A 33, no. 10 (2001), 1785.

⁸⁶ Neil Smith and Cindi Katz. “Grounding Metaphor: Towards a Spatialized Politics.” In *Place and the Politics of Identity*, 66.

⁸⁷ Dikec, “Justice,” 1785.

⁸⁸ Soja, *Seeking*, 82.

⁸⁹ Dikec, “Justice,” 1786.

that it is the only substantive academic publication using the term published before 2000. Although giving him his flowers, Dikec does say that “although Pirie’s spatial sensibilities were certainly intriguing, Pirie could have pushed the conversation further and stopped at the perfect starting point.”⁹⁰ This early work drew the roadmap for the study of space and justice, which was developed further by Soja, Teelucksingh, Dikec and more contemporary writers.⁹¹ Edward Soja points to work of Davies and Harvey developed in the late sixties, early seventies, and he also includes Marxists, who although did not use the term ‘spatial justice’ were speaking about the urbanization of injustice such as Foucault.⁹² Now, Soja extends even further the study of space to include fields such as anthropology, cultural studies, law, social welfare, postcolonial and feminist critique, theology and race theory.

Spatial justice is an analytical framework that foregrounds the role of space as a set of material and ideological relations that act on and are formed by social relations. As mentioned above, although ideas of spatial justice emerged in the 1970s, it really was not used widely until the 2000s.⁹³ The study of space and justice has developed several major concepts such as the right to the city, space as a process and the racialization of space which will be explored. David Harvey is a leading scholar in socio-spatial studies and provided the early groundwork in the study. This idea of spatial justice developed by Harvey has been taken up by many critical geographers who attempt to identify to varying degrees how space can be used as both a veil and tool of power. His work *Social Justice in the city* is regarded by Dikec and Iverson as a move

⁹⁰ Soja, *Seeking*, 82.

⁹¹ Smith & Katz, “Grounding,” 66.

⁹² Soja, *Seeking*, 82.

⁹³ Jean Legroux, “Theories of social and spatial justice: dialogues with Geography beginning in the 1970s,” *GEOUSP* 26, no. 1 (2022).

from “liberal to explicitly socialist formulations of critical geography inquiry.”⁹⁴ Harvey links globalization with changes in our experience of space and time, seeing space as not an empty container of human activity but an active force that shapes life.⁹⁵ Harvey argued that human are spatial beings as much as they are temporal and social beings⁹⁶ and Dikec says that Harvey’s⁹⁷ central concern was how uneven geographical development is an “intrinsic feature of the capitalist mode of production, and the social construction of principles of justice.”⁹⁸ His main argument, influenced by Marx, Rawls and Young⁹⁹ is the idea that geography cannot remain 'objective' in the face of urban poverty and associated ills. Soja writes how Harvey spearheaded a “marxification of geographical analysis” whereby “historical materialism became the preferred route to connect spatial form with social process.”¹⁰⁰ Historical materialism argues that humans and their institutions are the output of economic activity, therefore according to Harvey spatial processes are intrinsically tied to capitalism and economy. Soja agreed with Harvey’s sentiment writing that space creates inequality by how societies build institutions such as land rent and use, industry, and transport. Soja says that in comparison to him, Harvey’s early work defines the term “territorial justice” in a more “dynamic and political way.” *Social Justice and the City* focuses on spatial justice in terms of “redistribution of income by changes in the location of jobs and housing, the value of property rights and the prices of resources available to the consumer.”¹⁰¹ In this

⁹⁴ David Livingstone, “The Spaces of Knowledge: Contributions Towards a Historical Geography of Science,” *Society & space* 13, no. 1 (1995): 19.

⁹⁵ Soja, *Seeking*. David Harvey, *Social Justice and the City* (Rev. ed. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009).

⁹⁶ Soja, *Seeking*; Harvey, *Social Justice*.

⁹⁷ Dikec, “Justice,” 1786.

⁹⁸ Dikec, “Justice,” 1786.

⁹⁹ Edward Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*, (London: Verso, 2011).

¹⁰⁰ Soja, *Postmodern Geographies*.

¹⁰¹ Harvey, *Social*, 86.

view, there is a focus on how redistribution of resources can help to remedy spatial injustices. Like Harvey, Doreen Massey also stresses the importance of spatial ordering as it relates to production and says that along these dimensions are which “relations of power and control, of dominance and subordination” run.¹⁰² Following Harvey, Soja and Massey see spatial justice as outcomes and process focused. Massey writes how places are always already connected to elsewhere, ‘constructed out of articulations of social relations (trading connections, the unequal links of colonialism, thoughts of home) which are not only internal to that locale.’¹⁰³ In addition, Soja writes how “geographies or distributional patterns are in themselves just/unjust and as are the are processes that produce these outcomes,” moreover, he goes on to say that it is easy to describe examples of spatial justice but hard to “understand the underlying processes producing unjust geographies.”¹⁰⁴ This shines light on the two major modes of thought when it comes to critical geography studies in which one branch focuses on a redistribution of resources and another, the decision-making process and who has a seat at the design planning meetings. Both perspectives as Soja writes, fall under the umbrella of uneven geographical development and to push the conversation further, social life must be seen as “an outcome and a medium for the making of history – in other words, as part of historical and geographical materialism rather than just a historical materialism applied to geographical questions.”¹⁰⁵ Soja criticizes Harvey in the sense that Harvey in his early work never moved towards the “socio-spatial dialectic” but always returned to a “formalism of rigorous Marxism, even when the limits of it became clear.”¹⁰⁶ For

¹⁰² Doreen Massey, *Spatial Divisions of Labour: Social Structures and the Geography of Production*. 2d ed. (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995), 88.

¹⁰³ Massey, *Spatial*, 183.

¹⁰⁴ Soja, *Post Modern*, 58.

¹⁰⁵ Soja, *Post Modern*, 58.

¹⁰⁶ Soja, *Post Modern*, 58.

Soja, space is not a “separate structure with its own set of rules, nor is it simply an expression of class structure emerging from the relations of production” rather it represents a dialectically defined component of the relations of production, which are both spatial and social.¹⁰⁷ Doreen Massey also rejects Harvey’s essentialist Marxist accounts of uneven development and focuses instead on locality studies and the relationship between global and local processes, generalization, and specificity. In her work, *The Spatial Division of Labour: Social Structures and the Geography of Production*, she sought to balance the uniqueness of place and structural processes. Coming out of the 70s and into the 80s and 90s, this is where the conversation of spatial justice moves towards – with some saying that its place, others saying its process, and a lot of people saying it is both.

Dikec is a contemporary spatial justice writer who also agrees with Soja that Harvey was more interested in the “structural dynamics of the capitalist society, and therefore interested primary in production.”¹⁰⁸ Dikec calls Harvey’s early work as having a focus on production, and says that in contemporary writings, socio-spatial studies is concerned with how “the very production of space, is inherently a conflictual process, and manifests as injustice but also produces and reproduces them,”¹⁰⁹ which echoes Soja’s argument about spatial studies being a study of a dialectical relationship and process. It is a movement away from the pure distributional approach and tries to see the distribution and decision-making approaches together as one. For Soja and Dikec, it is important to see how injustice functions within a spatial dimension, and how when the discourse is moved past location and physical space, we can open our eyes more to the

¹⁰⁷ Soja, *Post Modern*, 78.

¹⁰⁸ Dikec, *Justice*, 1786.

¹⁰⁹ Dikec, *Justice*, 1788.

function of how abstract spaces and social economic relationships sustain the “injustice of spatiality.”¹¹⁰ According to Dikec, in this sense, space is not just a critique of how things are set up in a city, but on “spatiality as a process” and the interrelatedness of “injustice and spatiality”.¹¹¹ In contemporary periods, Massey makes the argument that space is never complete and is a product of “interrelations always making” and Dikec adds to this assessment calling space “both disrupted as a source of disruption.”¹¹² Spatial justice theory is moving towards a place where there is more open-ended discussion about how to achieve it. Some think it is through disrupting a dialectic, others believe it is through locality and place. Scholars in this area pay special attention to how spatial arrangements and representations are used to produce oppression and inequality. One early concept of space studies that continues to rise to the top is the idea of the “right to the city” which was created by Henri Lefebvre. The right to the city has developed alongside new conceptions of space studies.

¹¹⁰ Dikec, *Justice*, 1792.

¹¹¹ Dikec, *Justice*, 1793.

¹¹² Dikec, *Justice*, 1793.

RIGHT TO THE CITY: SPACE AND SOCIAL FORMS

Mustafa Dikec says that in 1968, Lefebvre's *The Right to the City* changed how space studies viewed the relationship between urban designers, planners, and people.¹¹³ In Lefebvre's text, urban life is examined as a commodity increasingly uprooted because of its high price on the market.¹¹⁴ Many scholars like Lefebvre, Soja and Dikec have written about the 'right to the city' but Soja writes that the one who really expanded on it and used it to create critical social geography is Harvey. Soja writes how "Harvey was influenced by Lefebvre's spatial critique of everyday life in the modern world and Castell's theory of urban movements. For Lefebvre, the city and urban life is a need and Harvey expands on this idea in *Social Justice and the City*. Harvey writes that needs are inherent to an urban society.¹¹⁵ Harvey and Lefebvre also discuss the importance of the decision-making that happens within urban spaces. A trait of the 'right to the city' is that the working class [can] contribute to the "reconstruction of centrality found by decision making.¹¹⁶ And being involved in decision-making is essential because only "social force with long political experience can [create real change]."¹¹⁷ Harvey considers the 'right to the city' to be more than just about access to resources but a right to "change ourselves by changing the city"¹¹⁸ mainly because urban life is closely bound to social relationships. Dikec also mentions the political dimension of the right to the city and writes how "right to the city implies not only a right to urban space, but to a political space as well."¹¹⁹ Moreover, unlike Harvey he mentions how

¹¹³ Henri Lefebvre, *Le Droit À La Ville*. Paris: Anthropos, 1968.

¹¹⁴ Lefebvre, *Le Droit*, 1.

¹¹⁵ Harvey, *Social*.

¹¹⁶ Harvey, *Social*, 154.

¹¹⁷ Harvey, *Social*, 154.

¹¹⁸ Harvey, *Social*.

¹¹⁹ Mustafa Dikec, "Police, Politics, and the Right to the City." *GeoJournal* 58, no. 2/3 2002: 91-98.

this notion does not necessarily “derive principally from the idea of formal participation.”¹²⁰ For Dikec, the state is the primary site for political struggle rather than the construction of political identities.¹²¹ Harvey sees the ‘right to the city’ as a way to control one’s built environment and sees it as an essential element in the fight against destruction of urban communities. Harvey argues that increasingly “the right to the city’ is falling into the hands of ‘private or quasi-private interests’ because the city is a surplus product, therefore the state favours “corporate, capital and upper classes”¹²² in shaping the urban process of the city. Lefebvre says that the right to the city is a demand as much as a cry. Taking this into consideration, theorists like Harvey and Dikec argue that there is some practicality to its application. Harvey says that we must adopt ‘the right to the city’ as both a “working slogan and political ideal, precisely because it “focuses on the question of who commands the necessary connection between urbanization and surplus production and use.”¹²³ Dikec takes this idea further when we apply to concept to inequities in globalization and urban life. He writes how the right to the city now is concerned with new citizenship, social and political engagement and is leading the forefront of current debates about immigration.”¹²⁴

Soja also takes up the question of the ‘right to the city’ along the same lines as Harvey looking at how the ‘right to the city’ introduced a new “generative site for the creation of a radically new conceptualization of space and spatiality.”¹²⁵ Soja sees the ‘right to the city’ as an

¹²⁰ Dikec, “Police,” 96.

¹²¹ Dikec, “Police,” 96.

¹²² Harvey, *Right*, 38.

¹²³ Harvey, *Right*, 38.

¹²⁴ Liette Gilbert and Mustafa Dikeç. “Right to the City: Politics of Citizenship.” In *Space, Difference, Everyday Life: Reading Henri Lefebvre*, 2008: 254.

¹²⁵ Edward W Soja. “Response to Kurt Iveson: ‘Social or Spatial Justice? Marcuse and Soja on the Right to the City,” *City (London, England)* 15, no. 2 (2011): 4.

obtainable political objective,'¹²⁶ especially with the fact that the majority of the world's population live in the cities. Soja writes how in the past several years there has been a movement within critical geography studies that aims to link spatial justice to the search of the just city and that Lefebvre's concept is at the centre of this movement.¹²⁷ Dikec sees this as a call to advance an urban spatial approach to political struggles with the participation of all those who inhabit the city without discrimination.¹²⁸ Moreover, it not only implies participation of the urban citizen in urban social life, but more importantly, "his or her active participation in the political life, management, and administration of the city."¹²⁹ As Harvey mentioned earlier, Soja is also concerned with how taking control over the social production of social space is at the heart of this ideal. It is the idea that finally space is being seen in terms of how it can be used to exploit, dominate, and discipline, which are ideas covered by Foucault. The right to the city for Soja is an opportunity to see the struggles over unrestrained gentrification, gated communities and distribution of income.¹³⁰ Recognizing how space functions in this manner is both oppressive and liberating as with this knowledge there can potentially be an intervention, in which space is reclaimed.¹³¹ Soja also brings up the idea that right to the city is not an alternative to the struggle for social justice or human rights, "but rather concretizing examples strategic enhancements of these broader projects."¹³² Soja sees the search for spatial justice an effective way for achieving major human goals like reducing poverty and fighting racism and other forms of discrimination

¹²⁶ Soja, "Response," 3.

¹²⁷ Soja, "Response," 3.

¹²⁸ Dikec, *Justice*, 1790.

¹²⁹ Dikec, *Justice*, 1790.

¹³⁰ Soja, "Response", 3.

¹³¹ Soja, "Response", 7.

¹³² Soja, "Response", 7.

and inequality. The right to the city is a way to consider what new forms of community could look like and how to get there. In his critique of Soja, Kurt Iveson compares how Soja sees the right to the city to another important contemporary spatial justice theorist, Peter Marcuse. As echoed earlier, Iveson says that Soja sees spatial justice as a matter of outcomes and processes,¹³³ and that the right to the city is linked to broader processes. Iveson says that for Soja, spatial injustice is an outcome and a process because geographic and distributional patterns are within themselves unjust, similar to the processes that produce the outcomes.¹³⁴ Soja considers the broader processes that contribute to spatial injustice as wound within space. Iveson says that this is where Soja differs from Marcuse. Iveson says that Marcuse sees space as derivative and a sub-category that can be subsumed into a wider concept of social justice. Marcuse sees spatial justice as “derivative of broader processes of injustice”¹³⁵ and he distinguishes spatial patterns or forms of injustice which are social.¹³⁶ For Marcuse, people need “non-spatial as well as spatial remedies”.¹³⁷ Marcuse wants to ensure there is a movement away from spatial essentialism which is something Soja is also concerned with as well. Marcuse created the rallying cry of “cities for people, not for profit” from the idea of the right to the city. Although Marcuse and Soja have differing idea of what the broader processes are, they both agree that a turn to looking within cities and understanding how spatial justice is acting works to create possible new transformative

¹³³ Kurt Iveson, “Social or Spatial Justice? Marcuse and Soja on the Right to the City.” *City* (London, England) 15, no. 2 (2011): 253.

¹³⁴ Iveson, “Social,” 254.

¹³⁵ Iveson, “Social,” 254.

¹³⁶ Iveson, “Social,” 254.

¹³⁷ Peter Marcuse. “Spatial justice: derivative but causal of social justice,” *Justices et Injustices Spatiales* (2010): 90.

mobilizations and could potentially return decision-making back into the hands of the working class.

The right to the city has taken on many forms since it was first coined in 1968. Most of the literature now using this term tries to push past its existence as a rallying cry and attempts to get a better sense at how it is working in practice. Iveson and Marcuse write that aside from urban struggles, there are three ways in which inhabitants exercise their right to the city. The first is in everyday practice as they move through daily activities through ordinary use of public space. The second is through deliberate action to change the meaning of a space through tactical urban planning, which may not link back to everyday life. Lastly, inhabitants can organize and join participatory processes, where they are asked for their opinions on development projects or self-organize to oppose development projects to create disruption to traditional urban planning processes. These are all different ways in which inhabitants' exercise their right to the city.

RACE, SPACE AND PLACE

Critical geographers pay special attention to how spatial arrangements and representations can be used to produce oppression and inequality. And these arrangements have created oppression within the very voices that got/get to write on the topic. It is important to note how white and male spatial justice theory was/is despite the fact these theorists were writing on spaces undergoing so much change and the ideas concerned racialized or immigrant communities. More recently racialized writers like Dikec, Teelucksingh, Kobayashi and Peake have written about how race, class and gender can create alternative framings of accounts of race and racism in geography. Kobayashi and Peake write how “geography is a discipline founded on difference and hierarchy” commenting on how geography remains “insufficiently critical of its past” and therefore “reinscribes many of the racialized metaphors upon which it was established.”¹³⁸ McKittrick is also critical of how when it comes to the production of space, geography and traditional spatial theories “foster discourses that equate blackness with subordination, the ungeographic and metaphor.”¹³⁹ When delving into literature around the topic of Blackness and geography, or race and geography, it is important to note that the writers covered earlier in my literature review were functioning from a specific positionality, and geography had a specific face. Black geographies tend to operate from a lens that pulls from various disciplines such as literature, art, politics, and sociology because of the ways the race can be known through space.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ Audrey Kobayashi and Linda Peake, “Racism Out of Place: Thoughts on Whiteness and an Antiracist Geography in the New Millennium.” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 90, no. 2 (2000): 398.

¹³⁹ McKittrick, *Demonic*.

¹⁴⁰ McKittrick, *Demonic*.

In the article “Placing Race: On the resonance of place with Black geographies,” Allen et al create a guide for understanding the current literature situated within Black geographies. They write how older geographic research tended to focus on race as a demographic category for quantitative analysis but research now considers “complex conceptualizations that articulate the mutual, interconnected production of race and space.”¹⁴¹ In the same vein, Black geographies is not as a “catch-all for geographies of race but instead a term encompassing works that emphasize Black experiences, as well as alternative visions and articulations of space drawn from these experiences.¹⁴² The relationship between space and race for critical geographies is open-ended and ever-changing. Teelucksingh, Razack and Sundstrom write how in many senses “race continues to be “mapped,” both materially and symbolically, onto cities as an important organizing principle in keeping with notions of desirability and undesirability.”¹⁴³ The idea of race as an organizing principle in terms of spatial development is fair, but McKittrick would say, similar to Marcuse and Iveson, that only trying to quantify the relationship between space and race can be limited and essentialist because it “de-emphasizes other spatial experiences and imaginations that intersect with geographic materiality, affordability, and geometry.¹⁴⁴ According to Sundstrom “race is spatial and space is racialized”. For Sundstrom, systems of race also carry a “spatial extension”.¹⁴⁵ Sundstrom argues that an individual’s place, is a function of that individual’s geographic locations of residence and memberships in humankind.¹⁴⁶ Therefore, as

¹⁴¹ Douglas Allen, et al. “Placing Race: On the Resonance of Place with Black Geographies.” *Progress in human geography* 43, no. 6 (2019): 1001.

¹⁴² McKittrick, *Demonic*, 47.

¹⁴³ Sundstrom, “Race”; Razack, *Race, Space and the Law*; Cheryl Teelucksingh, *Claiming Space Racialization in Canadian Cities*. Waterloo, Ont: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2006.

¹⁴⁴ McKittrick, *Demonic*, 47.

¹⁴⁵ Teelucksingh, *Claiming*, 2.

¹⁴⁶ Sundstrom, “Race,” 84.

places are produced so are people¹⁴⁷ and even so much so that place can “come to inhabit our understanding of human categories and identities.”¹⁴⁸ McKittrick adds to this saying that because we live in and through a democratic, capitalist social system, “in terms of geography, this means that we are rewarded for wanting and demarcating “our place” in the same ways that those in power do (often through displacement of others).”¹⁴⁹ Therefore, spatial conditions are “part of and influenced by racial domination and resistance.”¹⁵⁰ Drawing from Soja and Harvey that space is a dialectic, Sundstrom establishes how race is expressed, experienced and produced spatially.¹⁵¹

Race becomes attached to place in a way that is detrimental because of the reifying/normalization of difference as abject. Kay Anderson writes how “racialized minorities enter the psyche as objects which cause unease and discomfort,” and that social exclusion emerges from the need to distance oneself from abject – that which disturbs identity, system and order.”¹⁵² Sundstrom writes how when it comes to “housing and residential patterns...race is the dominant organizing principle.”¹⁵³ Teelucksingh adds that Anderson and Sundstrom see race as an important tool because it is a source of white political power.¹⁵⁴ There exists a white aversion to living in “neighbourhoods that are majority Black, but the fear is not due to crime or neighbourhood quality, but rather as St. John and Bates have demonstrated in their research on

¹⁴⁷ Sundstrom, “Race,” 87.

¹⁴⁸ Sundstrom, “Race,” 87.

¹⁴⁹ McKittrick and Woods, *Black Geographies*.

¹⁵⁰ Teelucksingh, *Claiming*, 2.

¹⁵¹ Teelucksingh, *Claiming*, 2.

¹⁵² Kay Anderson, “The Racialization of Difference: Enlarging the Story Field.” *The Professional geographer* 54, no. 1 (2002): 26.

¹⁵³ Sundstrom, “Race,” 87.

¹⁵⁴ Teelucksingh, *Claiming*, 5.

“Racial Composition and Neighborhood Evaluation,” it’s because race functions as a marker of status.¹⁵⁵ This is the idea how certain spaces can become racialized and termed as “Black spaces” even if the majority of people that live in the space are not Black. Thinking about space within and as a system of production means that racialized spaces are invested with economic meaning which in turn “forges a common sense.”¹⁵⁶

Harvey argues that accessibility to employment opportunities, resources and welcoming services come at a price, usually equated with the cost of overcoming distance – he says that any discussion of accessibility, therefore, requires that we answer a fundamental question regarding the meaning of distance and space in an urban system.¹⁵⁷ Within a capitalist democratic system that essentializes spaces as raced, any distance to important resources is going to be further as spaces are deemed “Black,” regardless of how many Black people live there. If we apply Anderson and Sundstrom’s idea to how racialized peoples are often excluded because of their status as abject, it shows how certain industrialization, Crow segregation and similar redlining policies construct “the ghetto” as a concept of social space, and a physical space of hypersegregation and concentrated poverty. The “slum” as Harvey calls it therefore lacks the control over the channels through which resources are distributed or maintained.¹⁵⁸

The focus in critical geography studies on the ‘ghetto and the people that live there’ or the idea that it may not even be a real place is a double-edged sword. On one hand as many would say, the study of Black geographies “cannot be simply metaphorical, cognitive, or

¹⁵⁵ Sundstrom, “Race,” 90.

¹⁵⁶ Sundstrom, “Race,” 90.

¹⁵⁷ Harvey, *Social*, 57.

¹⁵⁸ Harvey, *Social*, 74.

imaginary.”¹⁵⁹ Moreover, Black liberation from stereotypes or normalization of difference must not be a quest for material ownership and Black repossession. For McKittrick, participating in community redistribution or decision making is a step in the right direction, in our critique of a labour market in which racialized peoples are/have been essential to capitalist development; we must be cognizant of creating a language of liberation through which ethical human geographies can be recognized and expressed.

Black geographies is moving towards a place that talks about Black geographies from an interdisciplinary lens “from the diaspora and the prisons to grassroot activisms and housing patterns – brings into focus network and relations of power, resistance, and histories, and the everyday, rather than locations that are simply subjugated, perpetually ghettoized or ungeographic.”¹⁶⁰ This is where the idea of place-making comes into play when thinking about the relationship between space and race. Many would argue that place-making helps to elevate beyond concrete boundaries, or simple hierarchies of power. Pierce et al write that that as “an agonistic, ongoing process, place-making is constantly being contested, negotiated, and renegotiated within a complex, multi-scalar set of power relations.”¹⁶¹ They argue that the social production of place and identity involves simultaneous production and that race and space are both made through social interaction and are socio-politically contested, that they incorporate diverse physical elements; and, importantly, that they are shaped by processes of capitalism.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ McKittrick, *Black*, 17.

¹⁶⁰ McKittrick, *Black*, 17.

¹⁶¹ Pierce, J. Martin, D. Murphy, J. “Relational placemaking: The networked politics of place.” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*. Vol 36(1): 54–70.

¹⁶² Pierce et al, *Relational*.

Bringing together research from an interdisciplinary lens allows for this research to be layered and interconnected. Multicultural policy works to obscure the relationship between Indigenous peoples and settlers. When examining the story about Canada as a nation, Furniss argues there is a “selective tradition” which utilized an ontology of forgetting. The invisible Indigenous stereotype that Indigenous people have had to go through can be applied to the ways that young Black men in Toronto have been stereotyped. Katheryn Russel came up with the term “criminalblackman” to describe the stereotypes of young Black men as violent and criminal. The hyper visibility of Black men as criminals, means that Black men in relation to other identities are rendered invisible. Narratives of racial justice have to address calls for Indigenous justice as well, and when we acknowledge this, the double consciousness that exists within Canada can be respected and seen as a lens through which other issues can be examined as well. Policy, media and the community shape the way cities come together argues Harvey and other space theorists. Space studies theorists are concerned with how inequality is built into spatial systems, because space is a material output of a democratic, capitalist system. The right to the city is a rallying cry as a way to change the city by changing circumstances, but Marcuse and Iveson also highlight that not all ways to change a city are material. The way that race can be attached to a place can be detrimental because as Sundstrom writes, place can become a stand in for people. Space is a product and a system of production within itself, therefore how race and space function is going to be representative of larger political and cultural constructs. Therefore, it is important to examine how spaces become racialized alongside other critiques of capitalist systems. The goal is to create a language of Black liberation that can be used to articulate new locations or show

the resistance that exists within place-making, which may allow for new stories or untold stories to be heard and emerge.

METHODOLOGY

Is there a difference in the way racialized media and mainstream news cover Lawrence Heights and Rexdale in the categories of crime, community and housing? This sample selected three Toronto newspapers, two mainstream, the *Toronto Star* and the *Globe and Mail*, and one independent, *Share*. For my content analysis, I grouped different key words into themes, such as street name, neighbourhood name, or social institutions (schools, churches, etc.). I then searched databases using key words in each theme to find articles on Lawrence Heights and Rexdale in the categories of housing, crime and community. After gathering my sample, I completed a survey of the dominating codes and placed them into the three categories and six subcategories of rationalizing (positive, neutral and negative), individualizing (positive, neutral and negative) and social justice (positive, neutral and negative). Articles could have one to two of these codes all the way up to all nine present. Content analysis helps to determine what types of stories about these two areas have been allowed to exist and how they have developed over time. A rationalizing code “presents issues in terms of instrumental reason.”¹⁶³ This means that the issue is discussed or evaluated based on quantification, calculation, and cost versus benefit analysis. With the individualizing code, “discourses of individual responsibility that tap into a master frame of ‘liberal individualism’¹⁶⁴ are front and center. Finally, the social justice code was present in articles that provided critiques of capitalism, touched on the vital nature of inequality to current systems of power and advocated for programs and services in benefit of residents. Content analysis can help to describe the characteristics and trends of the news articles, as well as make

¹⁶³ Redden, “Poverty.”

¹⁶⁴ Redden, “Poverty.”

inferences about the causes of specific types of content. It has often been used to study prejudice and changing cultural symbols and is often used to highlight the media underrepresentation and/or misrepresentation of racialized groups and neighbourhoods.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁵ Devi Prasad, "Content Analysis: A method in Social Science Research," Centre for Social Studies, 2008, 1.

SAMPLE

A non-random purposive sample was collected for the content analysis based on the geographic regions of Lawrence Heights and Rexdale in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Three print/digital newspapers, the *Toronto Star*, the *Globe and Mail*, and *Share* were selected. I am looking at the news produced in 10-year intervals starting in 1960 and ending in 2020. *Share* was created in 1978, therefore, I collected articles from this source starting in 10-year intervals starting in 1980. Unlike the *Globe and Mail* and the *Toronto Star*, *Share* is not comprehensively indexed and I had to rely on information that I could get manually from the microfilm copies at the Toronto Public Library. I also collected articles from three moments of time outside of my sample as an additional non-random critical case sample. These three time periods include the five years spanning from 1955 to 1959, during the proposal and construction of Lawrence Heights, 1961 to 1968, covering the proposal and construction of Rexdale, and 2005, labelled the 'year of the gun'. 2005 was a pivotal year for news about majority-Black neighbourhoods in Toronto, moreover, it altered the way provincial and municipal governments approached these spaces as it saw the creation of 13 priority neighbourhoods of which both Lawrence Heights and Rexdale were a part of. The supplementary non-random critical case sample was crucial to ensure that the sample was not missing three major moments of time that have been instrumental in how these areas have been represented in the news media since before 1960.

Share is one of Canada's largest and most influential ethnic newspapers that serves Black, Caribbean, and African communities in the Greater Toronto Area. It has been published weekly for over 40 years. The paper was founded by Arnold A. Auguste after graduating from Toronto Metropolitan University. *Share* focuses on providing "positive news about their target markets

to give readers valuable information and stories they normally would not get in the mainstream media.”¹⁶⁶ I chose *Share* because it primarily focuses on Black Canadian stories and covers them through a lens through a broader social, political, and geographic lens. *Share* does not claim to be objective and “realistic” but presents stories relevant to the communities they cover and the issues they face. Established in 1892, the *Toronto Star* is Canada’s largest daily newspaper in circulation. The newspaper is published seven days a week in the GTA area and publishes for a global audience on thestar.com.¹⁶⁷ I chose the *Toronto Star* as part of my sample because it is arguably the most well-known and influential newspaper in the GTA. The newspaper considers itself to be centre-left leaning in comparison to the *National Post* and the *Globe and Mail*. Moreover, it focuses on specifically covering different neighbourhoods, including many articles on Lawrence Heights and Rexdale. The newspaper recently underwent ownership shakeups and is now solely owned by Jordan Bitove, a marketing executive. Another popular newspaper in the Toronto area is the *Globe and Mail*, which was formed as a result of the 1936 merger of the *Toronto Mail* founded in 1872 and the *Toronto Globe*, founded in 1844. The newspaper is published six days a week (Monday to Saturday) and considers itself as politically centre and less socially liberal than the *Toronto Star* and *Share*. The *Globe and Mail* is currently owned by an investment arm of the prominent Thompson family. I chose the newspaper for my sample because like the *Toronto Star*, it is a well-known and read publication in the Toronto area and provides historical coverage of the areas I am analyzing. The *Toronto Star* and the *Globe and Mail* have been shaping the public imaginary in Toronto and nationally since the mid to late 1800s and

¹⁶⁶ “About Us” Share, accessed June 12, 2023, <https://www.sharenews.com/about-us/>.

¹⁶⁷ “About The Star,” accessed June 12, 2023, <https://www.thestar.com/about/aboutus.html>.

these two papers can tell us a lot about public perception and how the media works within Canada as a function of politics and power. Whereas *Share* is an alternative news source that has also been shaping the public imaginary for Black and racialized audiences and provides a space for stories that are often not told in mainstream media.

The *Toronto Star* and the *Globe and Mail* newspaper archives are both hosted by the Toronto Public Library which allows for keyword searches that can be filtered by year and search term. Unlike the previous two, the *Share* archive does not exist in a searchable way online. Through my search terms, I gathered 436 articles to understand the codes used to draw patterns and trends about the types of stories told and how they were presented. When searching for articles I grouped them into three primary categories: crime, housing, and community. For my secondary category, I searched for articles using the following key word groups: names of streets (such as Ranee Ave, Lawrence Ave, Kipling Ave and Rexdale Ave), names and nicknames of neighbourhoods (such as Thistletown, Lawrence Heights, Rexdale, Jamestown, the Jungle), names of recreation centres, churches and schools (Bathurst Heights Highschool, Lawrence Heights Community Centre). I chose the key word search groups because these were the terms most likely to retrieve articles about these two neighbourhoods.

My keyword search groups were selected because those words related to the physical space and returned better and more accurate results. This in turn created a wider set of articles that were read through to find out if they fell into the category of housing, community and, or crime and which articles did not fall into any of these categories. In determining if an article was about housing, the article would need to mention planning, community development, urban development and “revitalization”. Housing articles could also mention transportation, as the two

are intrinsically linked in that transportation systems are a vital aspect of a neighbourhoods or community. In terms of crime, the article would need to focus on murder, assault, theft, robbery, petty crime, police killings of civilians or civilian unrest where police were involved. Lastly for community, an article would be grouped in this category if it talked about community activists, community groups, neighbourhood events, issues, and coverage of employment news, healthcare, and social issues in relation to the neighbourhood. My content analysis provided a large amount of data about two small spaces. This methodology allowed insight into moments of substantial change in policy and news, such as the beginning of public housing policy, the relationship between immigration and multiculturalism and the creation of the ethnic /racialized press. In addition, by examining articles published every 10 years, over 70 years, my content analysis unearthed valuable historical and cultural insight over time. Focusing on one methodology, through the use of qualitative and quantitative methods, I was able to combine the broad analysis of charts with the specific details of real stories coming out of these spaces. I use content analysis with a focus on themes helped to provide context and tell a story of the data. This helps my dissertation to do some of the missing work in highlighting the stories from the past that were often overlooked.

There is a rich visual history about Lawrence Heights and Rexdale that my research did not engage with, such as the films *Mr. Jane and Finch*, *Unarmed Verses*, *Home Feeling: Struggle for a Community*, *The Real Toronto* and many other films and documentaries based on different public housing areas in Toronto with stories similar to Lawrence Heights and Rexdale. The addition of these films may have helped to add more credibility by lessening the potential of subjectivity and coding errors. Moreover, since my research collected so many articles there was

also the opportunity to perform a discourse analysis to add to my methodology. Discourse analysis can reveal meanings behind written language and can show how language occurs within a context. Although I did not perform a discourse analysis, my research does lean into thematic analysis with the nine subcategories. Moreover, the sheer specificity of my research topic means that the scope is narrow, which is a gift and a curse. There were many other newspapers and documents I could have collected and analyzed, as well as other interesting concepts and methodologies that my dissertation did not have the time or space to cover. With that being said, my research makes up for this by providing both numerical analysis coupled with thematic and context to thoroughly respond to my initial research questions.

CONTENT ANALYSIS

Content analysis is a research tool that can help determine the presence of major themes and symbols within a large body of collected texts. As a quantitative and qualitative research approach, it has been widely used within communication sciences because of the vast and variable amount of content that can be examined ranging from texts, images and video. In 1952, Bernard Berenson published *Content Analysis in Communication Research*, which recognized the technique as a tool for social science and media researchers.¹⁶⁸ It is an observable technique in that it “takes the communications that people have produced and asks questions.”¹⁶⁹ According to Prasad, there are three different types of content analysis defined by prominent developers of the theory. It can be seen as a description of the manifest of content,¹⁷⁰ a way to make inferences by identifying characteristics¹⁷¹ or a method of analyzing communication in a systematic, objective, and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables.¹⁷² Content analysis can help to describe the characteristics of content and trends, as well as make inferences about the causes of specific types of content. It has often been used to study prejudice and changing cultural symbols and is often used to highlight the media underrepresentation and/or misrepresentation of racialized groups.¹⁷³

My content analysis gathered a large sample of articles in the categories of housing, crime, and community, and further I examined what codes tended to lead in each specific area and as a whole. I use the codes of rationalizing, individualizing and social justice. I use these three

¹⁶⁸ Prasad, “Content Analysis.”

¹⁶⁹ F.N.Kerlinger, *Foundations of Behavioural Research*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 3rd ed, 1986.

¹⁷⁰ Prasad, “Content Analysis.”

¹⁷¹ Prasad, “Content Analysis.”

¹⁷² Kerlinger, “Foundations.”

¹⁷³ Prasad, “Content Analysis.”

codes because they help to shine a light on how the topics of housing, crime and community are presented to the public.

The questions I asked for coding themes are below.

Codes	Code Capsule	Example of how it would manifest	Coding question (yes or no)
Rationalizing Positive, Neutral and Negative	This type of code presents housing, crime, or community as an issue to be evaluated based on numbers and a cost-benefit calculation. Public housing in this example is often discussed in terms of its effect on surrounding land value and in connection to current or emerging social welfare policy.	During the proposal of Lawrence Heights, it was often mentioned how much money the project would cost as well as the income of future residents.	Is affordable public housing, crime or community being presented in terms of cost versus benefit? Does the article support the creation of public housing or act as a barrier?
Individualizing Positive, Neutral and Negative	For the individualizing code, as Redden notes the master frame of liberal individualism leads. And the people who are on the receiving end of crime are presented as being responsible for what is happening to them. We see the individualizing frame show up when it comes to crime and as well as housing when areas undergo redevelopment. There is also the positive frame which showcases residents excelling educationally, professionally or personally.	An example of an individualizing code is if a victim is blamed for their own circumstances, and violence or crime is not contextualized as the different levels of government do not take responsibility.	Is affordable public housing, crime or community presented as being the responsibility of individuals? I.e., It is the individual's responsibility to not be attacked?
Social Justice Positive, Neutral and Negative	Access to adequate affordable housing, reduced crime and community are structured as a "matter of equal rights" and "a better quality of life". Issues are framed in relation to a broader economic, social, and political context allowing for a better public understanding. Community advocates and residents starting programs that help fill gaps in social services and education.	An example of the social justice positive code is news that presents advocates of Rexdale and Lawrence Heights exposing government plans to privatize public housing.	Is affordable housing, crime or community being presented as a matter or right to equality or quality of life?

According to Redden, a rationalizing code “presents issues in terms of instrumental reason.”¹⁷⁴ This means that the issue is discussed or evaluated based on quantification, calculation, and cost versus benefit. In this case, public housing is discussed in terms of “cost” or “benefit” to Toronto in economic terms, rather than looking at it from a social or geographic lens, or even at times through the lens of immigration and racism. Coverage in my sample is identified as being an individualizing code if the issue or topic is framed as the individual’s responsibility. The individualizing code can be positive or negative, because sometimes individuals who are able to overcome barriers are presented in a positive way. On the other hand, individualizing codes do a great deal of affective work through drawing on stereotypes, particularly when linked to depictions of people with a low-income¹⁷⁵ and crime. In her research, Doris Graber finds that news on crime tends to focus on racialized individuals and people from low socio-economic groups, moreover, crime is portrayed as dramatic and isolated events, disconnected from politics, policies, and social structures.¹⁷⁶ In crime stories, Black people are active participants, and in stories relating to employment, housing, or education, they are the problem, if anything by their presence.”¹⁷⁷ Moreover, as Redden notes, depictions of people with a low income or needing public assistance are covered through the quotes and the voice of local politicians rather than their own words. With the individualizing negative code, the event is constructed as

¹⁷⁴ Redden, “Poverty.”

¹⁷⁵ Redden, “Poverty,”

¹⁷⁶ Graber, *Crime*.

¹⁷⁷ Graber, *Crime*; Denise L Bissler and Joan L Connors, *The Harms of Crime Media: Essays on the Perpetuation of Racism, Sexism and Class Stereotypes* Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Incorporated Publishers, 2012).

unrelated to broader social issues, which makes it difficult to solve a problem that seems like it only exists because of a particular person, or a particular group in a neighborhood.

My final code is the social justice frame, which looks at these areas in relation to quality of life, the right to city, and equal distribution of resources. The connection to collective action or community uplift is usually explicit but sometimes implicit.¹⁷⁸ The content produced by *Share* is strikingly different than that found in the *Toronto Star* and the *Globe and Mail*. In *Share* coverage, the social justice positive code leads, and the perils faced in these areas are often connected back to systemic racism, unjust policing and poor public planning. Whereas in the *Toronto Star* and the *Globe and Mail*, the individualizing negative codes leads, although there are articles that present the social justice positive code. Moreover, the *Toronto Star* has a structural commitment¹⁷⁹ to cover social issues, therefore it publishes a greater number of articles about Lawrence Heights and Rexdale than *Share* and *Globe and Mail* overall.

The historical media coverage of Lawrence Heights and Rexdale has aligned these spaces with dominant ideologies that frame these areas as ‘violent’, ‘poverty-stricken’ and ‘ghetto’. My analysis sheds a light on how the news media in Canada has taken an active hand in shaping the public imaginary of these areas which in turn helps to contribute or reduce the violence currently faced by residents. Through content analysis I determine the extent of stereotypical portrayal that has entered into the public imaginary, as well as counter-images and their salience within wider narratives. My content analysis also documents how often these stories are blended – for example, in a story about crime that has individualizing negative as the leading code, we see

¹⁷⁸ Redden, “Poverty.”

¹⁷⁹ “About The Star.”

elements of the social justice negative code appear as well. Such as an article about the innocent death of a community member that mentions the work that person had been doing to help steer youth in the neighbourhood away from crime. Content analysis is a useful conceptual tool for understanding how a particular idea persists across time and this is true for my research. The data analyzes how the relationship between housing, race, and community has been created and how this dynamic is currently working.

CHAPTER 3: THE RISE OF PUBLIC HOUSING AND COMMUNITY ACTIVISM

INTRODUCTION

Lawrence Heights and Thistletown 1 and 2 in Rexdale were the second and third public housing developments ever built in Canada. They were both controversial, with Thistletown 1 and 2 facing more barriers to construction than Lawrence Heights. At the time of Lawrence Heights' construction, Toronto was in desperate need of public housing and it was an important issue to the public as 62% of Torontonians¹⁸⁰ supported the construction of a large-scale public housing project. Housing drew a lot of public attention and thereby media attention, and in my sample, out of the 59 articles written about housing in Lawrence Heights, 30 were written during proposal and construction, and 17 were written in 2010 when major developments changes were proposed and approved. When the Metro Toronto Council was formed in the early 1950s, one of its mandates was to build public housing, and Lawrence Heights was its way of acting on this mandate. It can be argued that Lawrence Heights became a way for the Metro Toronto Council to justify the creation of this new governmental body and the *Globe and Mail* and the *Toronto Star* both supported the construction of public housing through an economic benefit frame. They showcased how the government was listening to the public and acting, however this act was always tied to and motivated by economic benefit, rather than framed as a way to help needy Torontonians achieve a better quality of life. With Thistletown 1 and 2 in Rexdale, cost-benefit was also highlighted, and the mixed development also became a response to the perceived failures of isolated developments like Lawrence Heights and Regent Park.

¹⁸⁰ Purdy, *Framing*.

Although it was thought that public housing built within a mixed-use area would create a space of harmony and community, eventually the area was affected by similar violence and crime because Thistletown 1 and 2 were still built on a small a pocket of land only a few streets away from each other.

Although during construction it was difficult to find articles that gave a voice to people who needed public housing, this changed in 1960 and 1970 when residents moved in and community members began to speak out and come together to provide themselves with services missing in their neighbourhood like transportation, recreation, social supports and healthcare. In 1960 and 1970, Lawrence Heights and Rexdale community members actively spoke out and claimed their right to the city. The residents came together and wrote to the newspapers, attended meetings, enacted change and these early actions provided insight into how Lawrence Heights became an activist community and how Rexdale residents have also fought for their right to city.

BEFORE AND DURING CONSTRUCTION

LAWRENCE HEIGHTS

At the end of the Second World War, the Toronto urban area was dense and compact. It consisted of three urbanized municipalities: The City of Toronto, population 700,000; the Borough of East York, population 100,000; and the Township of York, population 100,000. North York was created as the northern part of the township of York and had a population of under 40,000. To round out the Toronto suburbs was Scarborough, population 35,000 and Etobicoke, population 30,000. These communities in the early 1950s were incorporated into Metropolitan Toronto which in 1949 had a population of about 1.1 million.¹⁸¹ Located in North York, Lawrence Heights is the second largest housing development ever built by the Metropolitan Toronto Council outside the City of Toronto and one of the first in Canada as well. The neighbourhood is bordered by Lawrence Ave, Yorkdale Road, Varna Drive and Dufferin Street. In the mid-1950s to early 1960s when the development was completed, it cost approximately \$15 million dollars with 75 percent being funded by the federal government, 17.5 percent by the provincial government and 7.5 percent by Metropolitan Council.¹⁸² At the time, housing units would be rented from \$65 to \$78 a month and accommodations were only available to families whose yearly incomes ranged between \$2,800 and \$4,800.¹⁸³ Although the area was designed before the development of the Allen Expressway (previously the Spadina Expressway), plans for the arterial expressway existed in the 1950s and Lawrence Heights was built with this in mind.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸¹ Sewell, Shape.

¹⁸² "Federal Foresight Pays Off," *Toronto Star*, June 2, 1954.

¹⁸³ "\$1,350 Unit, \$14,000,000 Housing for North York," *Toronto Star*, December 9, 1954

¹⁸⁴ Kareem Webster, *Deconstructing Lawrence Heights through Planning, Race, and Space*. Master's Thesis. Faculty of Environmental Studies, 2012.

This analysis includes the supplementary news coverage that occurred between 1955 to 1959 because these are years when the new Metropolitan Toronto Council was formed, and Lawrence Heights was built. These years provide insight into how instrumental the Metropolitan Council was in creating public housing, community resistance to social housing policy, and arguments about the clearance of slums. In 1953, York Township, Scarborough and Etobicoke were incorporated as part of the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto. The National Housing Act that made this change argued a two-tiered government, with the formation of a Metropolitan government, governed by a Metropolitan Council, would provide strategic functions, while existing municipalities would retain all other services.¹⁸⁵ The new municipality had power to tax real estate and was responsible for roads, water facilities, regional planning, public transportation, and housing. One objective of the Metropolitan Council was to lay the infrastructure for growth of the Greater Toronto area and its creation gave way for the proposal and development of Lawrence Heights.

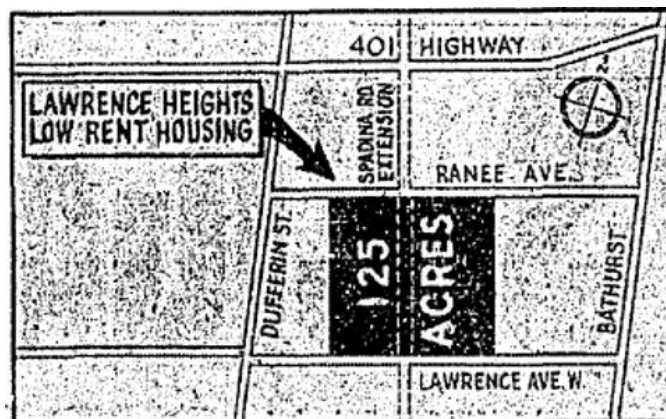
In the 1950s, Canada was in a post-war period undergoing an economic boom and like many global nations, the government began to adopt social welfare policies, including old-age pension, family allowance, utility, sewage systems and public housing. Regent Park was Canada's first public housing development. It was built between 1947 and 1957,¹⁸⁶ and the final approval of the Lawrence Heights development came at the end of 1955.¹⁸⁷

IMAGE 1 - ORIGINAL MAP OF LAWRENCE HEIGHTS

¹⁸⁵ Sewell, *Shape*, 23.

¹⁸⁶ Sewell, *Shape*.

¹⁸⁷ Sewell, *Shape*.



“\$1350-Unit \$14,000,000 Low rental Housing Plan for North York.” *Toronto Star* (Toronto, Ontario), December 9, 1954. Toronto Public Library, Toronto Star Historical Newspaper Archive.

These two public housing projects “marked the beginnings of an active urban renewal program that planners and civic officials considered both necessary and beneficial.”¹⁸⁸ Lawrence Heights was the Metropolitan Council’s first attempt at public housing and the Council was looking to establish itself as a government leader. It can be argued that the reception of Lawrence Heights in the news media was tightly wound to the Metropolitan Council’s goal of increasing its positive relationship with the public as a housing leader. A 1954 article in the *Toronto Star* wrote, “No Metropolitan problem is more pressing than housing, and the new project is certainly a major move toward solving it.”¹⁸⁹ The same article continues by explaining,

Metro authorities deserve credit for initiating the new project, and the province for participating in it. The Lawrence Heights plan demonstrates what the *Toronto Star* has been saying for the past five years – that federal legislation makes ample provision for new housing construction if the Ontario government chooses to take advantage of it. It is hoped that further projects will take shape without undue delay.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁸ Luisa Veronis, “Exploring the Margin, the Borders Between Regent Park and Cabbagetown.” *National Library of Canada*, 13.

¹⁸⁹ “A Fine Housing Project,” *Toronto Star*, December 11, 1954.

¹⁹⁰ “A Fine Housing.”

In the mid to late 1950s, when Lawrence Heights was mentioned in the news, so was the important role of the Council to the development of Toronto and its surrounding area. Most articles from the *Toronto Star* and the *Globe and Mail* that discussed the proposal of Lawrence Heights presented a rationalizing code that portrayed the development as a major project that would benefit the city and take care of the affordable housing issue.

Overall, the *Toronto Star* and the *Globe and Mail* wrote 59 news stories in the housing category about Lawrence Heights. There are 20 variations of codes used throughout the stories, which shows just how complicated it was to write about housing in Lawrence Heights through the decades. Rationalizing positive (nine news stories) had the most stories using that code, which supports the argument that the news had a favourable sentiment towards constructing Lawrence Heights. The development was a fix to Toronto's growing public housing crisis which was attracting public attention. The rationalizing negative code (seven new stories) was also high, which represents the arguments against the construction of the area and its future maintenance. Many community groups did not want public housing in the area because of associated stereotypes such as increased crime and land degradation.¹⁹¹ In their article "Living on the Other Side of the Tracks: An Investigation of Public Housing Stereotypes," Motley and Perry write how "living on the wrong side of the track" is often illustrated in popular culture and there is a stigma attached to public housing residents, which sets them apart from others. The complex nature of public reception to public housing means there were stories which had contradictory codes where parts of the article were rationalizing positive and others were rationalizing negative. For

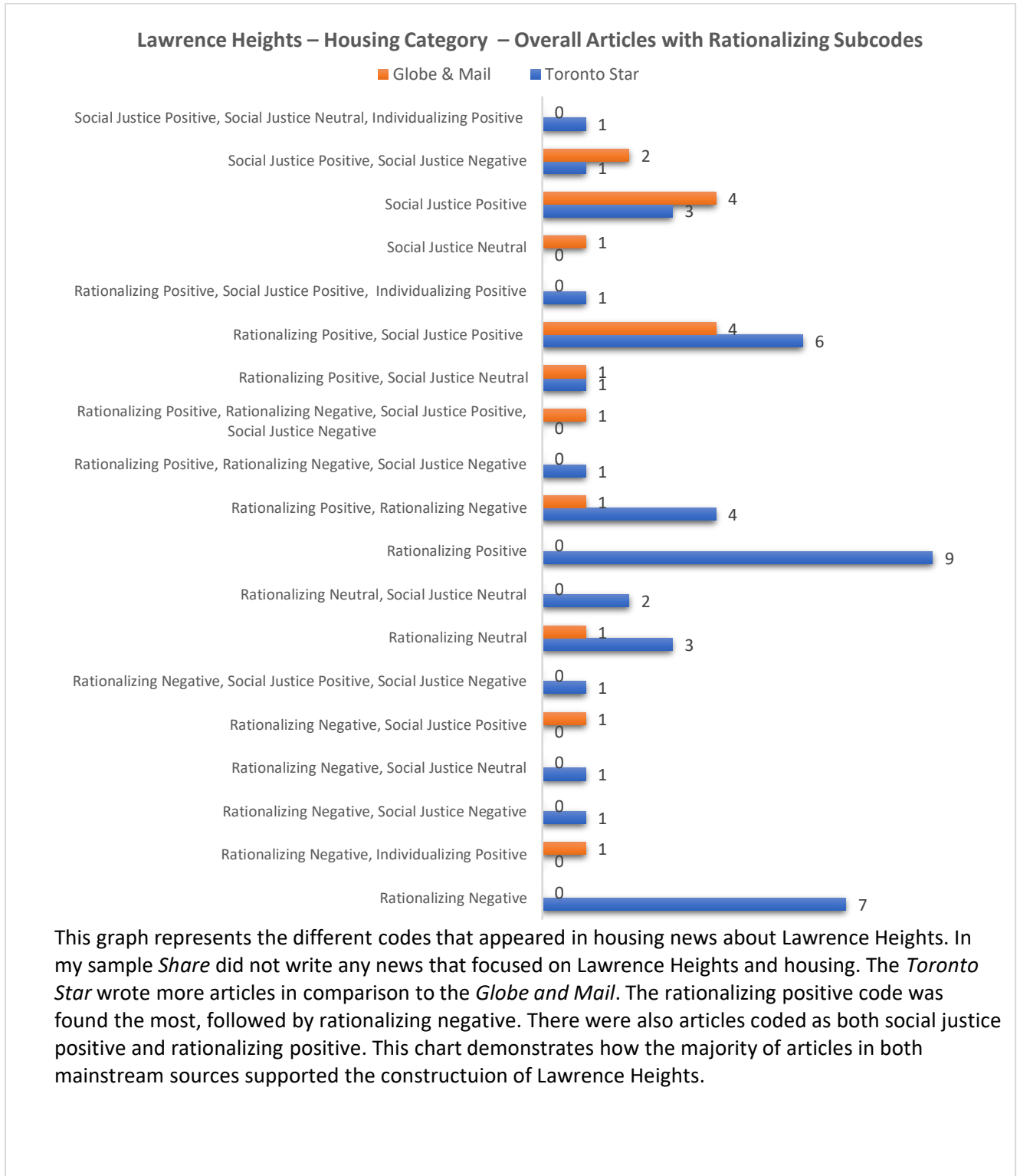
¹⁹¹ Carol M. Motley and Vanessa Gail Perry, "Living on the Other Side of the Tracks: An Investigation of Public Housing Stereotypes," *Journal of public policy & marketing*, 2013 no 32, p. 48-58.

example, a rationalizing positive code was presented in an article that covered Gardiner trying to get a By-law amended so the project could start, the same article also presented the Lawrence Manor Ratepayers objections because of reduced property values, which was rationalizing negative.¹⁹² Or articles can be simultaneously rationalizing positive and social justice negative because although there was support for building public housing, there was little information about future residents and their plight. For most people, public housing falls outside the range of their knowledge and understanding and the news media is a source of constructing this image. Therefore, omitting the stories of the people moving to Lawrence Heights works to erase the residents voice in the planning process,¹⁹³ especially considering the sheer number of stories written during this time about housing compared to the other years. Out of the 59 articles written in my sample about housing in Lawrence Heights, 30 were written during proposal and construction, 1955-1959, and 17 were written in 2010, when major development changes were proposed and approved.

¹⁹² "Housing Project at Bathurst-Lawrence urged by Gardiner"

¹⁹³ Sean Purdy, "Framing Regent Park: The National Film Board of Canada and the construction of 'outcast spaces' in the inner city, 1953 and 1994." *Media Culture & Society*. Vol 27(4) 523-549.

CHART 1 - LAWRENCE HEIGHTS - HOUSING CATEGORY - OVERALL SUBCODES



The federal and provincial government were outspoken about the need for public housing, and the news was a vehicle to present and contextualize their perspective. Housing issues in Toronto at this time in the news were constructed through an economic lens, always tied to a cost-benefit analysis of the land use.¹⁹⁴ This meant that specifics about rooms, number of new residents, their incomes, and rent payments were the primary focus, moreover, the people often interviewed were federal, provincial, or municipal politicians, like Gardiner. Additionally, there was a heavy emphasis on how the city should address public housing in general as there were grave housing shortages in big Canadian cities after the war. The rationalizing code was positive when it used numbers and cost analysis to justify the project as good for the city and Canada as a whole. In 1947, in the City of Toronto municipal election “there was a question on the ballot asking property owners and long-term lease holders for financial and political support for a large-scale public housing project and 62 percent voted yes.”¹⁹⁵ Moreover into the early 50s there was a lot of pressure on the government from Veterans’ groups, unions and other social groups to provide low-income housing to soldiers returning from war. Therefore, the government took action because it was an election issue they had promised, and the news media supported their efforts. The rationalizing code was negative when numbers, zoning, and housing prices were used as a reason not to build or to stop construction of the area. This sentiment was usually held by local municipalities as they were more affected by the everyday of the project’s existence.

¹⁹⁴ Joanna Redden, *The Mediation of Poverty: The News, New Media, and Politics*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2014.

¹⁹⁵ Purdy, *Framing*.

In the 1950s there was a general housing boom because of accelerated economic growth coupled with the rapid expansion of highly dense cities. Critical geographer David Harvey links globalization with changes in our experience of space and time. When we consider who was serving on the Metropolitan Council, none of them were from the communities for whom they were building this space.¹⁹⁶ Moreover, none of the residents, who would eventually occupy Lawrence Heights, were interviewed at that time. Important decisions were made by the Metropolitan Council, which was a small group of people who had a lot of power to shape life through space.¹⁹⁷ One theme of critical geography is the importance of the decision-making process and who has a seat at the table. Lingham, in her article, “Development Theories and Community Development Practices: Trajectory of Changes” writes how “social planning that is community-based builds consensus in a manner that is transparent and creates opportunities for economic and political engagement.”¹⁹⁸ The Metro Council had all of the power during this time to decide what Lawrence Heights would look like and the only input they really considered was from the Lawrence Manor Ratepayers. The lack of resident early input contributed to the lack of appropriate services for their needs after they started to move in.

¹⁹⁶ Harvey, *Social; Soja, Seeking*.

¹⁹⁷ Harvey, *Social*.

¹⁹⁸ L Lingham. “Development Theories and Community Development Practices: Trajectory of Changes,” *The Handbook of Community Practice*. SAGE Publications, Inc. (2nd edition).

IMAGE 2 - PUBLIC PROJECTS URGED: EXPERTS CLAIM SLUMS ONLY CHOICE FOR MANY

The intolerable conditions under which many families are being raised and elderly people are spending their declining years, were emphasized by Mrs. Johnson. This is happening, she said, "in times of prosperity and in a metropolitan area where thousands of new houses are being put on the market, but not nearly enough."

Quoting the Metropolitan Planning Board for the figure of 360,000 families in the Metropolitan area, she showed that there is a shortage of 25,000 dwellings; that in 1951 there were 16,000 units which required major structural repairs, and about 18,000 units deficient in private sanitary facilities.

Pure inability of many family heads or individuals, like pensioners, to pay the going prices for decent accommodation is the main reason for the present housing conditions, she said, quoting figures for both owned and rented premises.

"Public Projects Urged: Experts claim slums only choice for many." *Globe and Mail* (Toronto, Ontario), May 23, 1957. Toronto Public Library, *Globe and Mail* Historical Newspaper Archive.

The Metropolitan Council provided so many services to the local municipalities that its leader, Gardiner, developed the nickname of "Big Daddy".¹⁹⁹ Moreover, he was often interviewed or quoted in most articles and even offered full pages to express his views. The rationalizing positive code was found in twenty-two *Toronto Star* and seven *Globe and Mail* articles. The Metropolitan Council used Lawrence Heights as a way to prove its purpose – a show of great planning to help with the establishment of Canada's burgeoning welfare-state status. In 1950s building public housing was considered a reasonable use of tax dollars and the media reaffirmed this view. The media became an avenue to showcase to the public the important work of the Metropolitan Council and Gardiner himself wrote articles. Such as one in 1955 where he wrote, "without Metropolitan Toronto, Toronto would have not been able to carry out a task (building Lawrence Height) so large."²⁰⁰ Moreover, in another article he wrote, "the Lawrence Heights project [was] self-liquidating through rents, over 40 years and [was] not subsidized."²⁰¹

¹⁹⁹ Sewell, *Shape*, 23.

²⁰⁰ "Gardiner Sees 1955 as Most Important Year for Metro Development," *Globe and Mail*, Jan 4, 1955.

²⁰¹ "\$1,350 Unit, \$14,000,000 Housing."

The rationalizing positive code is not necessarily good just like the rationalizing negative code is not always bad. It's positive to shine a light on public housing but it is negative if only done so for votes and to attract more readership versus actual on-the-ground change. Moreover, some articles where the rationalizing negative code was found raised fair arguments about the area's lack of detailed planning and oversight. The attention to public housing in a burgeoning social welfare state meant that the public was receptive to this type of news and supported the Conservative government's social policies. Then Conservative Premier Leslie Frost was another prominent government figure who spoke on the subject of housing. In a *Toronto Star* article titled, '1,350 Unit \$14,000,00 Low Rental Housing Plan for North York', he said "the Toronto Metropolitan area soon will give leadership to all Canada in great housing projects."²⁰² The Council had so much power in terms of where, when and how public housing was built and there was little input from the surrounding communities. There was no disputing the positive effects of the Metropolitan Council led by Gardiner in shaping life in the city. However, not enough community and resident input meant that crucial details were left in limbo. There needs to be input from residents because they can speak to their needs the best and provide critical insight. This did not happen during the proposal phase of Lawrence Heights and the poor working class did not have a voice in the mainstream media, but this changes in 1960 and 1970.

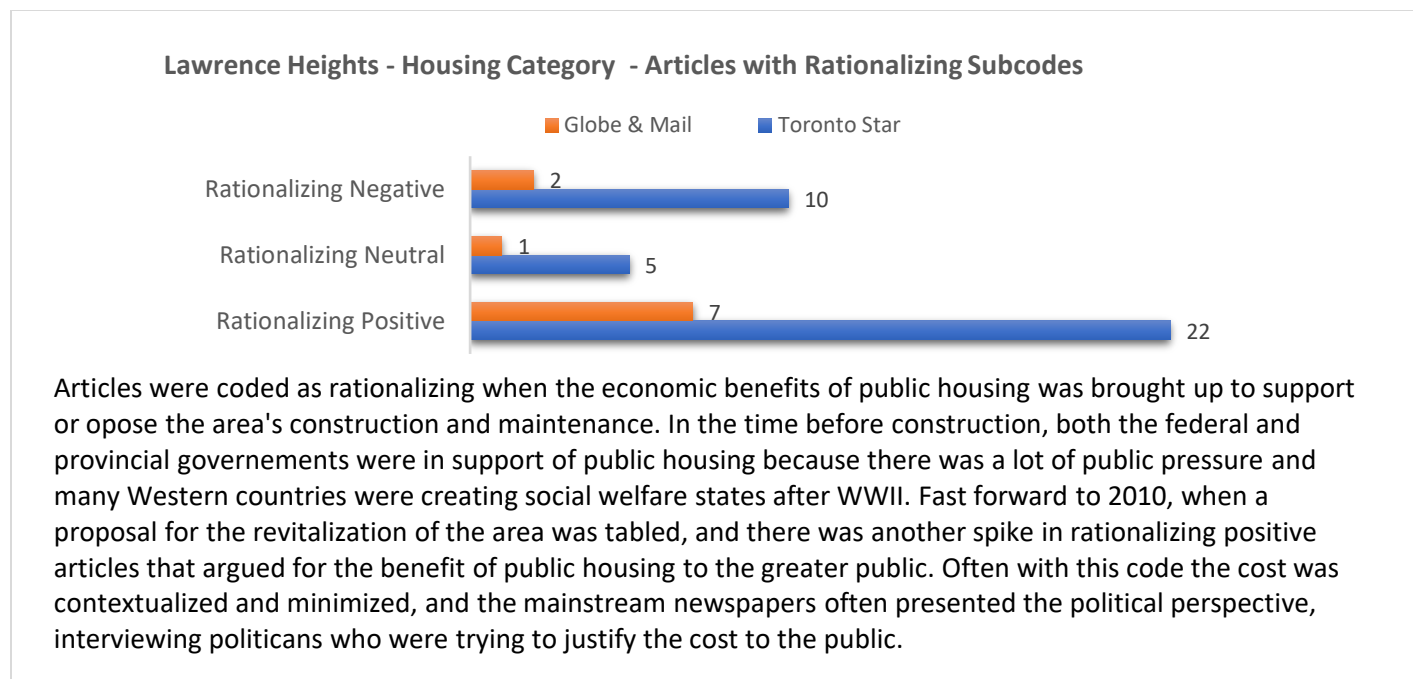
Most of the objections to the Lawrence Heights project came from local residents and community/industry groups. The rationalizing negative code is found in ten *Toronto Star* and two *Globe and Mail* articles and eight of those instances occur in the years before and during construction from 1955-1959. There were many instances where the Lawrence Heights

²⁰² "\$1,350 Unit, \$14,000,000 Housing."

development was amended to limit and control the number of potential residents. The area was not built so its residents could flourish and that's partly because the Metropolitan Council was more concerned with building its reputation thereby justifying the creation of the Metropolitan governance system, rather than consulting the community to provide proper long-term, low-rent or no cost housing. Uneven "geographical development is a central feature of the capitalist mode of production."²⁰³ When it came to Metropolitan Toronto, the Council was making changes to a space where services enabling urban growth – water, sewage, and roads – already existed.²⁰⁴ Therefore, although it "seemed" successful at the time, the Metropolitan Council created inequality in how it built Lawrence Heights because the area selected for construction was not ready to handle the increased needs on public services, such as land use, industry, transportation, education, healthcare, and childcare. Or the diverse cultural communities that would move there. There was a non-existent image of the poor because it was omitted. Housing and poverty were connected in a discreet way and it was never or rarely mentioned why public housing was necessary until the 1960s. Frames that rationalize and package the topic of public housing brought up the income of the residents, rent and the cost of the project to create an image of who the new Lawrence Height resident would be and how much of the reader's potential tax money would go into giving them a home.

²⁰³ Harvey, *Social*.

²⁰⁴ Sewell, *Shape*.

CHART 2 - LAWRENCE HEIGHTS - HOUSING CATEGORY - ARTICLES WITH RATIONALIZING SUBCODES

From 1954 to 1959, the *Toronto Star* and the *Globe and Mail* printed eleven articles about the Lawrence Heights development. It can be argued the news discussed the project through a cost-benefit analysis because it was still in a proposal phase and the government had to justify the return on investment cost to the public. The future residents did not have a voice or any decision-making powers, moreover there was a limited picture painted about the current status of public housing in Toronto. The first social justice positive code that was presented at this time was printed in 1960, in an article titled “How Metro Fails in Housing the Needy.” Moreover, there were only three articles written before and during construction with the social justice positive code, but all of them also have the rationalizing negative code as well.

In 1954, the first article about Lawrence Heights appeared in the *Toronto Star* titled, ‘Federal Foresight Pays Off’, the article wrote that with the new development, “Metropolitan

Toronto was to have its first big government-sponsored housing project.”²⁰⁵ At that time, the units were to be rented from “\$58 to \$70 a month with an average of \$68 and those with children would be given priority.”²⁰⁶ The article also mentioned that “it was expected that the project would pay for itself over a period of 50 years with interest at four percent.”²⁰⁷ As the years moved on, the cost of rent inched up and became a range of \$65 to \$78 a month only to families whose yearly incomes range[d] between \$2,800 and 4,800. In the 1950s, a good average salary was around \$63 a week or \$252 a month.²⁰⁸ Therefore, the average working-class family qualified for public housing because an average salary was around \$3,024 a year.

In his article “It was tough on everybody: Low-income families and housing hardship in Post-World War II Toronto,” Sean Purdy writes how “in 1958, the Department of Public Welfare (DPW) in Toronto commented that it was receiving frequent calls from the public about affordable housing spaces” and that “many of the requests came from families in houses unfit for human habitation” as well as those who “had difficulties finding places to rent because they had children.”²⁰⁹ There were a lot of people applying for public housing and at this time the public perception and news coverage of social welfare programs was in its infancy. The news coverage was approached from a governmental and policy lens, focusing on politicians. When the individuals receiving support were mentioned, the focus was usually on the elderly because the public was/is more favourable towards providing vulnerable groups with help.²¹⁰ Despite that

²⁰⁵ “Federal Foresight.”

²⁰⁶ “Federal Foresight.”

²⁰⁷ “Federal Foresight.”

²⁰⁸ Sean Purdy, “It was tough on everybody”: Low-income families and housing hardship in Post-World War II Toronto,” *Journal of Socia History* Vol 37, 2 (2003), 457-482.

²⁰⁹ Purdy, *It was tough*.

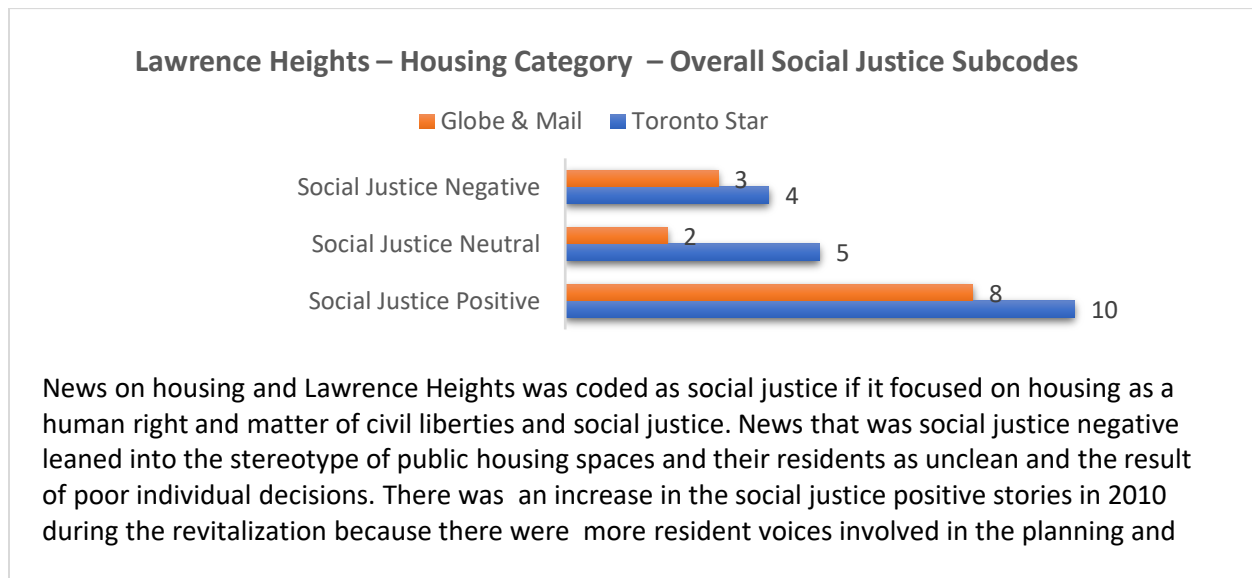
²¹⁰ “Gardiner sees 1955; “Public Projects Urged: Experts Claim Slums Only Choice for Many,” *The Globe and Mail*, May 23, 1957; Gilens, *Why Americans*.

Toronto had large population of people seeking public housing, their details of their circumstances were rarely covered.

It is important to remember that in the 1950s public housing was being built primarily for white people of European descent because immigration still barred many people from racialized spaces around the world. Moreover, racialized people who found themselves in Canada during the 50s, were subject to racist housing policies and bias. They made up a small number of people applying for subsidized housing, but the vast majority were typically immigrants from European countries. At this time, dominant images of poverty were white and “conjure[d] up images of south European or Irish immigrants, or of white dust-bowl farmers.”²¹¹ The focus on subsidized housing for the elderly was a way to focus on the ‘deserving poor,’ which influenced what poverty meant and the approaches to the issue.²¹² With that being said, the elderly were rarely mentioned in the pre-1960s era of Lawrence Heights and discussion of the space was fully grounded in economic costs and benefits with regard to how much it would cost different levels of government, rather than the stories of everyday Torontonians seeking public housing because of domestic abuse, workplace injury, unlawful evictions and inability to work. The focus on cost and economic benefits helped to calm anxieties to show people that the government was being fiscally responsible, when in fact not enough was being done about the growing issue.

²¹¹ Gilens, *Why Americans hate welfare*, 64.

²¹² Redden, *Mediations*.

CHART 3 - LAWRENCE HEIGHTS - HOUSING CATEGORY – OVERALL SOCIAL JUSTICE SUBCODES

The social justice positive code presents the desperate need of low-cost housing in Toronto. This code provides context and grounds early public housing conversation in a wider context of human rights. Articles with the social justice positive code supported public housing by emphasizing the people who were in need rather than the economic benefits. Out of all the three social justice sub codes, when it came to housing, social justice positive showed up the most in my sample. This was mainly driven by news in 1960 that covered residents advocating for their access to transportation, equal treatment and the push for additional support in the area.

IMAGE 3 - METRO'S HOUSING PLANS

Metro's job in building expressways, trunk sewers and water mains is no doubt essential. But one of the main purposes in setting up the Metropolitan corporation was to meet the housing shortage which has never been more acute in the Greater Toronto area. The Lawrence Heights undertaking will be a fine start. Its units will be available to families with annual incomes of from \$2,800 to \$4,800 a year. Rents will run from \$58 to \$78 a month. The federal government will finance 75 per cent. of the cost; the province 17.5, and Metro 7.5 per cent.

"Metro's Housing Plans." *Toronto Star* (Toronto, Ontario), April 16, 1955. Toronto Public Library, Toronto Star Historical Newspaper Archive.

One article was published in the *Globe and Mail* that did give a voice to the people in need of affordable housing, albeit from a questionable, elitist approach. This article also mentioned immigration saying that, "with the expected increase in population to 2,800,000 by 1980 (with immigration), Toronto should be building about 11,000 units for newly arrived families and 8,000 to replace obsolete or substandard dwellings. People do not want to live in slums, but slums are the only place some families can afford," said Mrs. Falkner, a social worker working in the area.²¹³ "Costs of bad housing are large. Whatever way you look at them."²¹⁴ The article was problematic because the people interviewed were not future residents, rather elites who were discussing the lack of public housing. Despite this, it was a rare occurrence when an article mentioned both the number of families living in intolerable conditions, the shortage of housing, and the incoming problem of increased immigration without proper housing supports. This is why some articles in my sample are coded as both social justice positive and negative. What is positive is the spotlight

²¹³ "Public Projects Urged."

²¹⁴ "Public Projects Urged."

on the lack of public housing, however what is negative is that the people interviewed were not everyday people in search of affordable housing.

Lawrence Heights in the mid-1950s was a highly contested proposal. Despite articles like the example above demonstrating the need, the idea of public housing, especially within the Toronto suburbs was an issue for different municipal governance organizations. The rationalizing negative code appeared six times before and during the construction of the area. This code presented arguments against the development and gave a voice to groups who attempted to stop it from happening. From the beginning, the North York Planning Board and Lawrence Manor Ratepayers Association “bitterly opposed the scheme.”²¹⁵ Many articles in both newspapers discussed the Ratepayers and their objections. In 1955, a *Toronto Star* article titled, “Housing Project at Bathurst-Lawrence Urged by Gardiner”, covered Gardiner submitting development plans for approval and the Ratepayers relaying their objections. The neighbourhood group argued the project “would reduce property values, increase traffic hazards and create new school problems.”²¹⁶ The Ratepayers even went as far as Ottawa to stop the project. A *Globe and Mail* article titled, “Claim Apartments in Danger Zone: Demand Halt to Vast Housing Project”, discussed how the three-man delegation from Toronto argued the “construction of the apartment project, slated for next month would constitute a breach of faith to adjacent Lawrence Manor dwellers and endanger occupants of the new project.” Their main argument²¹⁷ was that the project was too close to the Downsview Park Airport, which posed a danger to the public.

²¹⁵ “Claim Apartments in Danger Zone.”

²¹⁶ “Housing Project at Bathurst-Lawrence”

²¹⁷ “Claim Apartments in Danger Zone.”

They argued the “project would produce buildings taller than any other building in North York²¹⁸ and they cited traffic problems as the main reason the area should be moved to downtown Toronto. They wrote that “present roads to the city were overloaded and there was little hope of relief for several years.”²¹⁹ A negative sentiment against public housing was displayed here as the Ratepayers tried to connect their resistance to public safety and zoning. However, their arguments were typical objections to public housing that included fear of “dropping property values, inferior design, strain on community services, adverse socio-economic mixes, and establishing precedents for building higher densities in lower-density areas.”²²⁰ These barriers to the Lawrence Heights development set up by the Ratepayers were common in developments of this nature and the media’s coverage of these objections help to better understand how support of public housing was being framed. Lipsitz says that homeowner associations “exacerbate residential inequalities, increase urban problems, promote fragmented communities, and create “haves and have nots.”²²¹ The extensive coverage of the Ratepayers Association and lack of coverage of public housing residents shows how mainstream news sources continued to be a voice for those with power.

The Ratepayers Association were partially successfully in their efforts as the proposal for Lawrence Heights was only approved on the condition that a) only “single family units will be built on the site”²²² and b) the elimination of six, 12-storey apartment buildings, which resulted

²¹⁸ “Claim Apartments in Danger Zone.”

²¹⁹ “Claim Apartments in Danger Zone.”

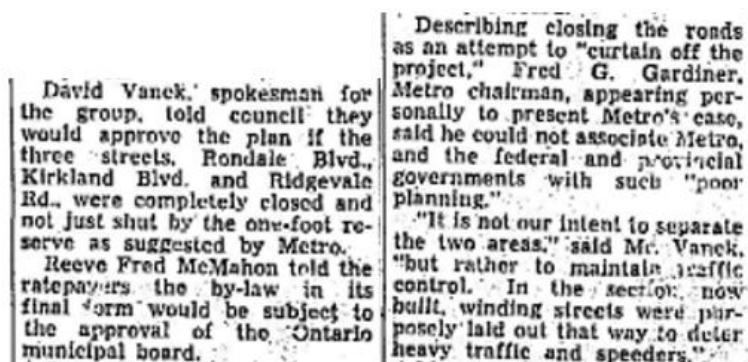
²²⁰ George Fallis and Alex Murphy, *Housing the homeless poor: new partnerships among the private, public, and third sectors* (University of Toronto Press, 1990) 243.

²²¹ George Lipsitz, *How Racism Takes Place*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011.

²²² “Alter Zoning to Allow Low Rental Project,” *Toronto Star*, April 1, 1955, 19.

in a loss of 1,350 apartment units. The additional row housing added in its place also increased the cost of the project.²²³ Moreover, another amendment was that two of three access roads between Lawrence Manor and Lawrence Heights were closed to vehicle traffic.²²⁴

IMAGE 4 - ALTER ZONING TO ALLOW RENTAL PROJECT



"Alter Zoning to allow rental project." Toronto Star (Toronto, Ontario), April 1, 1955. Toronto Public Library, Toronto Star Historical Newspaper Archive.

One article in the *Globe and Mail* that covered the changes to the proposal, although questionable and classist had some valid points. This article was negative because it linked the degradation of property values with a fear of the working-class poor and negative outcomes for Lawrence Manor residents. However, the comments the author made about population density and transportation were valid.

Even before its physical existence, Lawrence Heights existed in a representational sense. It existed in the sense that there were strong objections to public housing and what it would mean for the surrounding neighbourhood. Moreover, even though it was approved, it took years for construction to begin and in the meantime, families suffered in inadequate quarters while politicians spent time on rolls of red tape. In the mid 1950s after World War II, many Western

²²³ "Alter Zoning to Allow."

²²⁴ "Claim Apartments in Danger Zone."

countries including Canada are creating the beginnings of social welfare programs, including public housing. The public supports social supports and so does the government because it is a political issue, and the new media presented the government perspective. At the beginning of the 1960s when taxpayers become more concerned with how their money is being spent, we see a shift in the willingness to build any more areas after Regent Park and Lawrence Heights.

In many articles from the *Globe and Mail* and *Toronto Star* written in the 1960s, from my sample, it is clear the Conservative federal government was not putting money into public housing and was more focused on balancing the budget. If at times the Chair of the Metropolitan Toronto Council (Gardiner) openly spoke against public housing, we can bet there was not going to be the same care and attention put into the planning of the area. Instead of focusing attention of building a space that would thrive, more attention was spent talking about housing poor needy people and what that would mean for the surrounding neighbourhoods as well as the Metropolitan Council's reputation. The focus on the economic aspect of the project worked to obscure the fact that many of the wealthy neighbours in Lawrence Manor did not want to open their neighbourhood to the working poor. There was so much attention paid to the type of people moving into public housing that this eventually gave way for only allowing families as they were seen as safer. Lawrence Heights had its own narrative before the first shovel went into the ground because many of the community members in North York from businesses to families had an issue with public housing being built in their area.

The news media is a key site of the representation of ideas and provides information and speculation which shapes wider sets of ideas about social welfare.²²⁵ News journalism is involved

²²⁵ Campbell, *Race and News*, 1.

in the social construction of reality through a range of organization and production techniques. Decisions about what stories to select, what priority to give them, and how to present them, involve principles of selection and value-laden assumptions. Lawrence Heights is an area that existed in the public imaginary before it was built. In the 1950s, as the suburbs grew, the Metropolitan Council helped to create infrastructure. Although during the 1950s there was general sentiment that more public housing was needed, the Lawrence Heights project continued to suffer from negative stigma.²²⁶ The mention of average income and rent was a way to read the bodies that would live there against the backdrop of geography to understand “who [was] elite and who [was] subjugated.”²²⁷ . Those with power were represented and those without omitted in the early articles written about the space during construction and in 1960. The development of Toronto was very tied to social housing, but it is only seen through the lens of what it will mean for image of the Metropolitan Council as well as the federal, provincial and municipal bodies, rather than what it would mean for people’s lives.

²²⁶ Alhabah, “Territorialisation,” 45

²²⁷ Jennifer Nelson, *Razing Africville a Geography of Racism* (University of Toronto Press, 2008) 40.

REXDALE

Etobicoke, a suburb to the west of Toronto was incorporated into a township in 1850.²²⁸

Rexdale is different from Lawrence Heights in that it includes a group of several neighbourhoods, there is a mixture of public and private housing, and the area is home to many businesses and attractions. The area is bounded by Highway 401 to the south, Steeles Avenue West to the north, Highway 427 to the west and the Humber River to the east. Rexdale was formed soon after World War Two when entrepreneurs were looking to develop outside of the Toronto centre. With the approval of the municipality, Rex Wesley Heslop purchased land in the Alderwood area of Etobicoke for \$110,000 in 1955 and built streets, water mains, sewers, and houses.²²⁹ He also built what was then known as the Rexdale Plaza which was one of the first major shopping centres in the Metro area. Thistletown was the name of a police village that would eventually become amalgamated with Rexdale before the formation of Metropolitan government.

In the 1950s alongside other Toronto suburbs, Etobicoke formed the Metropolitan Toronto Council. Lawrence Heights was the Metropolitan Council's first foray in building public housing outside of the downtown core. With the development of public housing in Etobicoke, the Metropolitan Council strengthened its reputation in fulfilling its mandate of creating infrastructure in Toronto. There was much more hesitancy to building public housing in Toronto after Lawrence Heights because public attention was now focused on the issues occurring in the area. Therefore, the government jumped back into reputation management mode because

²²⁸ Mike Filey, "How Rexdale Was Born," *Toronto Sketches 9* (Dundurn Press: 2006), 103.

²²⁹ Filey, "How Rexdale Was Born."

although public housing was still desperately needed in the city, it had to be balanced against growing negative sentiment.

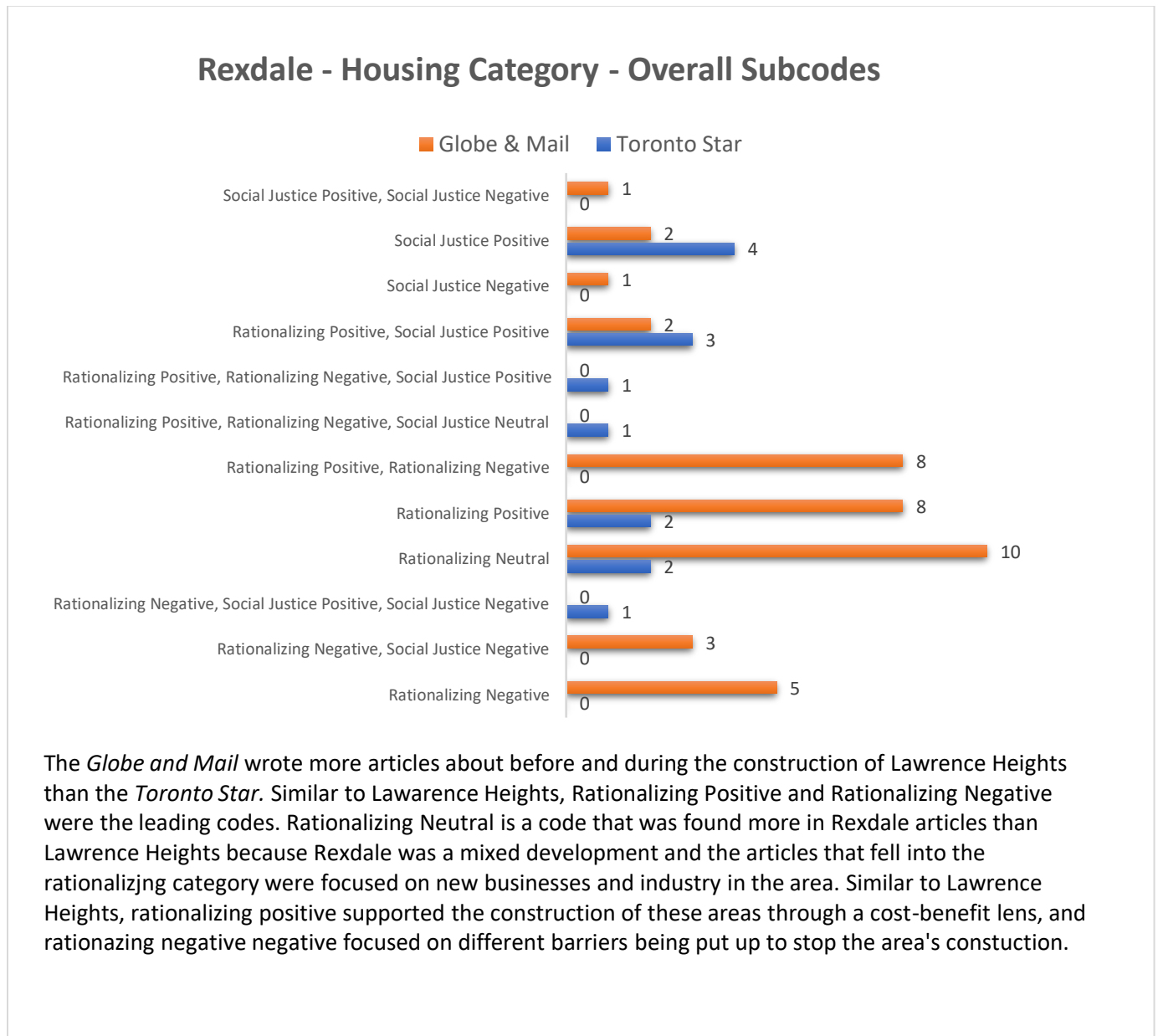
Thistletown 1 and 2 were the first two public housing developments in Etobicoke built under the same 1953 National Housing Act that saw the creation of Regent Park and Lawrence Heights. Passed in the 1950s, this act saw the joint participation of federal, provincial and municipal governments²³⁰ in the building of public housing in the greater Toronto area. When the Thistletown developments were proposed in 1958 there was a lack of clarity as to who could provide final approval as the role of the Metropolitan Toronto Council in Ontario public housing was still undefined. The municipality of Etobicoke heavily disagreed with the Metropolitan Toronto Council in terms of how many subsidized units would be built, and the municipality's control over roads, water and planning gave them the necessary power to delay construction. Over the 8-year span from proposal to completion, the plans for Thistletown 1 and 2 were often called on and off. Eventually the Thistletown developments were built as well as other public housing developments in north and central Etobicoke. Excluding Thistletown 1 and 2, there are currently 6 Toronto Public Housing developments located in the Rexdale area of Etobicoke. They are called Humberline, Robert Smith Apartments, Westacres, Westacres Extension, Torbolton Drive and Rowntree Manor. The areas are mixtures of high-rise apartments, townhomes and walk-up low-rise apartments.²³¹

²³⁰ Bence, "Thistletown."

²³¹ "About Us" Toronto Housing, accessed June 27, 2022, <https://www.torontohousing.ca/about/our-housing/Pages/Wexton-Rexdale.aspx>

It is important to examine the narrative that existed before Thistletown 1 and 2 came to be. The majority of the Thistletown development began after the 1960s. Therefore, articles written by the *Globe and Mail* and the *Toronto Star* about construction occur outside of my core sample because there was an 8-year time span from proposal to partial completion. Like Lawrence Heights, in my sample, news that supported the Metropolitan Toronto Council and its efforts was coded as rationalizing positive, and the news that argued public housing negatively affected property values was coded as rationalizing negative. A difference between Lawrence Heights and Rexdale is that during construction Thistletown 1 and 2 were connected to the expansion of Rexdale in a social-mixed housing environment. The aim for social-mixed housing was an attempt to ensure the area was properly resourced, which also became the main way the government justified the area's construction to the public. Despite positive aims, the high density of the development posed an issue and although mixed the area experienced similar social issues to Lawrence Heights.

CHART 4 - REXDALE - HOUSING - OVERALL SUBCODES



The formation of the Metropolitan Toronto government in 1953 meant that public housing was divided between the Metropolitan Toronto Council and the municipalities, with the federal and provincial government funding the majority of the cost.²³² The initial National

²³² Bence, "Thistletown," 315.

Housing Act legislation program saw a 75 to 25 federal-provincial ratio, and the amount of financial responsibility placed on municipal governments was a matter of the province.²³³ The goal of the Metropolitan Toronto Council was to create infrastructure for growth in Toronto. With Regent Park and Lawrence Heights complete or almost complete, sights were now set on housing in other suburban areas like Etobicoke and Scarborough. Thistletown 1 and 2 was the Metropolitan Toronto Council's second attempt (after Lawrence Heights) at public housing in the newly formed Metro Toronto area. The proposal for the Thistletown development was tabled in 1954, the same year the land was purchased for a cost about \$1,700 per acre²³⁴ and the title was held by the Central Mortgage Housing Corporation (CMHC).²³⁵ The CMHC is Canada's national housing agency, a federal crown corporation that administers the National Housing Act.²³⁶ When the Metropolitan Toronto Council purchased the land from the CMHC, the purpose of the acquisition was unclear, as the intention was to create affordable housing through two streams, private and public. A good portion of the land was sold²³⁷ to developers at a subsidized cost to build rentals and privately-owned housing²³⁸ and the second stream accounted for public housing. At the time, both private dwellings and public housing in Toronto were scarce and expensive. There was a lot of attention on the issue of affordable housing and Canada was creating social welfare programs to help people living in poor conditions.

²³³ Bence, "Thistletown," 315.

²³⁴ Bence, "Thistletown."

²³⁵ National Housing Act, S.C. 1953-54, c. 23, s. 37(4).

²³⁶ Bence, "Thistletown."

²³⁷ Bence, "Thistletown."

²³⁸ Bence, "Thistletown."

The goal was for Thistletown 1 and 2 to be an ‘integrated’ community as social-mixed housing was perceived as a model of community planning.²³⁹ In an interview about the proposed development, Henry O’Waffle, the Reeve (a city Councilman) of Etobicoke said, “our work will be dedicated not only to 1200 households whose rent we will subsidize but to the 3200 families who will live in a complete environment with a sense of community, and with full awareness of the dignity of the human being.”²⁴⁰ Social-mixed development was seen as a way to move away from unequal development that came along with isolated public housing developments such as Lawrence Heights. This meant private renters, owners, schools, healthcare, recreation, and green space would exist alongside subsidized and public housing. It in theory moves towards a greater social justice in urban planning, however in practice, it is hard to build an area with preconceived notions of how people will live there.

Wendy Sarkissian writes that since 1954 in the United States, housing and planning legislation has understandably (if inefficiently) emphasized social mix at the neighbourhood level.²⁴¹ Sarkissian argues that integrating public housing within other developments was a response to the “physical problems of the ‘decaying core’ and the social problems which were seen as the product of high residential mobility, racial and class homogeneity.”²⁴² In aiming for a social-mixed neighbourhood, city planners said they were acting in the best interest of residents, but it can be argued who these residents were. Were the residents they were looking out for the working-poor or the middle to upper class as well as private industry? It seemed the plans

²³⁹ Bence, “Thistletown,” 315.

²⁴⁰ Bence, “Thistletown.”

²⁴¹ Wendy Sarkissian, “The Idea of Social Mix in Town Planning: An Historical Review,” *Urban Studies* (Vol 13, 3, 1976).

²⁴² Sarkissian, “The Idea of Social.”

catered more to people who would have to live among the public housing.²⁴³ The city justified the creation of the Thistletown 1 and 2 developments by arguing that property values would not decrease drastically because of all of the amenities and privately-owned housing in the area. The rationalizing positive code was found in news coverage of the construction of public housing in Rexdale because the fact the neighbourhood would be socially mixed was often brought up. This argument tried to dispel fears of an isolated development and the ills that it brought, which was fresh in the public minds because of Regent Park and Lawrence Heights. There was/is a public perception that public housing equates to decay. Luisa Veronis writes that “at the urban level, cities are reorganized into new centres and margins. These new centres are not just physical but primarily economic (changing relations of production) political (decision making) social (exclusion), cultural (consumption) and geographical (uneven development). The media needed a positive story which supported government choices and social-mixed development meant more aligned geographical development, but it left out the social, cultural, political and economic dimension.”²⁴⁴

The question of if social mixing can lead to a greater social justice is heavily debated. Joseph argues that although low-income residents benefit from increased access to quality goods, they do not benefit from social interaction. Fraser and Nelson say it’s better for the middle-income residents and Wilson says it’s not enough to generate social mobility.²⁴⁵ Harvey would argue it’s an antagonism in that the “means available to construct utopian ideals are the

²⁴³ Thistletown Public Housing: Etobicoke Project Hurdles Rift,” *The Globe and Mail*, November 5, 1963,

²⁴⁴ Luisa Veronis, “Exploring the Margin.”

²⁴⁵ M. August, & A. Walks, “From Social Mix

conditions that make impossible any ideal realization.”²⁴⁶ Harvey says that with social-mixed housing a contradiction is at play because “utopia of forms is not a utopia at all, as a community of architecture and urban design is insufficient as the essence of community.”²⁴⁷ Space is active and its meaning is constantly in flux. A community is a conversation between the people who occupy it. At this point in time, the people who are going to be moving into Thistletown were not provided with a voice or a seat at the table. Their right to create the space where they would live did not exist, much like the residents who eventually moved into Lawrence Heights. Spatial injustice is active in the construction of Thistletown 1 and 2 through both media representation and the physical space. The future residents were omitted in both. It is incorrect to assume that once a space is built for citizen participation that this will happen, especially if future residents were not part of the proposal. “The human-constructed landscape is epiphenomenal. It reflects, and may even constrain human relations, but it does not cause them.”²⁴⁸ You cannot build a community in a way that determines how the people who move there will interact. Harvey would go so far to say that there is the presumption that “neighbourhood is equivalent to “community” and “community” is what most people want and need.” Harvey thinks space should transcend the scale of community.²⁴⁹

In Toronto at the end of the 1950s, the city was dealing with people moving to the suburbs and the city was trying to spread out public housing developments based on where people were settling. Thistletown 1 and 2 were the Metropolitan Toronto Council’s response to the public call

²⁴⁶ Paul Clarke, “The Ideal of Community and its Counterfeit Construction,” *Journal of Architectural Education*, 58, 3 (2005).

²⁴⁷ Clarke, “The Ideal of Community.”

²⁴⁸ Clarke, “The Ideal of Community.”

²⁴⁹ Clarke, “The Ideal of Community.”

for all levels of government to be more active in supplying affordable housing outside of the city. At the time the Metropolitan Toronto Council was trying to build its reputation and it can be argued that the *Globe and Mail* and the *Toronto Star* helped with the establishment and reputation of this new municipal organization. The two mainstream news sources supported public housing actively and openly criticized officials that did not support like the Etobicoke Planning Board.

The Thistletown development was a symbol of what was to come as social-mixed neighbourhoods and communities became “a major planning and policy goal in North America.”²⁵⁰ These types of communities worked as a way to maximize valuable real estate and economic potential while giving way to a “utopian vision of social harmony and/or utilitarian functions of diverse employment base and economic stability.”²⁵¹ Mixed development was said to increase resident safety, accessibility to resources and offer an overall improved quality of life. Therefore, developments like Thistletown were going to set the stage in terms of a newer, better way that the Metropolitan Toronto Council was going to build public housing. Although it was thought that the mixed housing would create a space of harmony and community, eventually the area was affected by violence and crime and it became a space in some cases where second-generation disadvantage deepened.²⁵² As public perception of government-assisted housing changed, so did the prominent codes in the articles. When Thistletown 1 and 2 started to get a bad reputation, then the codes became individualizing negative and social justice negative.

²⁵⁰ M. August, & A. Walks, “From Social Mix to Political Marginalization? The Redevelopment of Toronto’s Public Housing and The Dilution of Tenant Organizational Power,” in *Mixed Communities: Gentrification By Stealth?* eds G. Bridge, T. Butler, & L. Lees (Bristol, Chicago: Policy Press, 2012).

²⁵¹ Sarkissian, “The Idea of Social;” Alhabah, “Territorialisation.”

²⁵² Alex Murray, *Housing the homeless poor: New partnerships among the private, public, and third sectors* (University of Toronto Press, 1990).

Rather than holding the Metropolitan Toronto Council or the Etobicoke Planning Board accountable, the news become more focused on the new residents. The mainstream news had a pattern of showcasing and providing space for the government and not future residents during proposal and construction, however after construction this switches as focus on the government dwindles and more attention is paid to the details of the resident's lives.

The *Globe and Mail* and the *Toronto Star* both covered the proposal and construction of the Thistletown development through two codes. The rationalizing positive and negative are the leading codes for the majority of the coverage and then near 1967 and 1968 the individualizing positive and negative codes are found. As with Lawrence Heights, the rationalizing code focused mainly on the numbers, cost, and benefits. The rationalizing negative code included the argument that this type of housing brought down property value of important land.²⁵³ There was also a focus on community integration with social-mixed housing, as well as a focus on the red tape and bureaucracy that paused construction and eventually stopped the area from completing its initial proposal of 1,200 units. The project was canceled before completion, and this was partially blamed on the residents that moved in as buildings were completed.

High-profile attention on the lack of affordable housing in Toronto at this time by the public contributed to why the plan was approved and began.²⁵⁴ When the Thistletown public housing units were proposed, many articles wrote about how it was the "largest public housing project" in Metropolitan Toronto.²⁵⁵ The first mention of the development appeared in a *Globe*

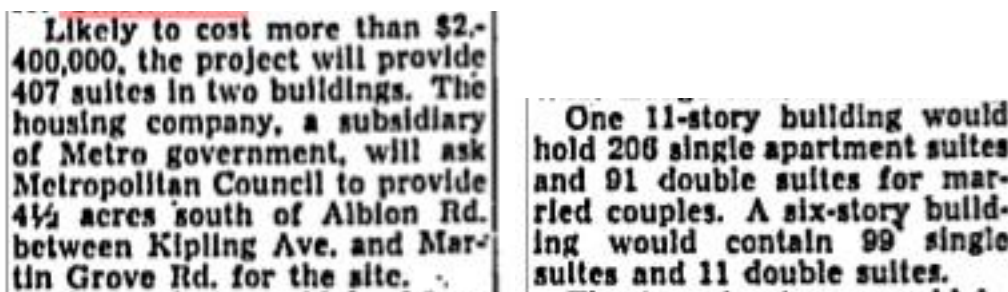
²⁵³ Murray, *Housing*.

²⁵⁴ Murray, *Housing*.

²⁵⁵ "An Ideal Plan in Etobicoke," *The Globe and Mail*, August 23, 1962; "Low-Rental Plan for Thistletown Largest Planned," *The Globe and Mail*, November 8, 1961, 5.

and Mail article written in 1961. The article titled “Low-Rental Plan for Thistletown Largest Planned” wrote how the project was going to accommodate elderly persons.²⁵⁶

IMAGE 5 - LOW-RENTAL PLAN FOR THISTLETOWN LARGEST PLANNED



Low-Rental Plan for Thistletown Largest Planned,” *The Globe and Mail*, November 8, 1961, 5. Toronto Public Library. Globe and Mail Archive.

Consistent with the findings in the sample for Lawrence Heights, the articles in the first decades of the sample concentrated on housing for seniors. Gilens writes how there is a combination of support for welfare in principle and cynicism toward welfare recipients. People are ok with welfare, but not ok with “people on welfare”.²⁵⁷ The public was more apt to be okay with providing seniors with subsidized housing and this was the reason why the news focused on them when talking about government spending.²⁵⁸ Thistletown 1 and 2 were not just for the elderly, but the news rarely mentioned other groups such as families and single individuals. This article also went in depth about the specifics of the construction, writing that the project would cost “more than \$2,400,000 and provides 407 suites.”²⁵⁹ The article went on to say how the development would contain “one, eleven-story building holding two hundred and five apartment suites and ninety-one double suites for married couples. As well as that a six-story building would

²⁵⁶ “Low-Rental Plan.”

²⁵⁷ Gilens, *Why Americans Hate*, 30.

²⁵⁸ Gilens, *Why Americans Hate*, 30.

²⁵⁹ “Low-Rental Plan,” 5.

contain ninety-nine single suites and eleven double suites.”²⁶⁰ When Thistlethown 1 and 2 were proposed there were high hopes for how this development would help ease affordable housing concerns, however, at the same time, the news sources helped to show how its construction was good business.

Another *Globe and Mail* article published after the proposal’s approval mentioned how the cost had increased to \$3,000,000 and the space now included “305 bachelor suites and 102 one-bedroom suites” as well as that the area bordered “Kipling and No.27 Highway”.²⁶¹ From proposal to approval, the units all become bachelor suites with only a quarter being one-bedroom units. These changes highly limited families and lowered the number of people that could eventually move in. Moreover, this was just a portion of the subsidized housing that would be built in Thistlethown 1 and 2. The cost of the remaining units was not addressed nor how these units would be paid for. In another *Globe and Mail* article titled “An Ideal Plan in Etobicoke”, the article interviewed O’Waffle again, and he was quoted as saying “the \$40,000,000 Westhumber complex [would] occupy 500 acres of land acquired by the Federal and Provincial Government and included was a large regional park. Of the 3,200 dwelling units planned in Westhumber, 1,200 were subsidized.”²⁶² The number \$40,000,000 refers to the cost of all the new housing and buildings in the area. In 1962, the current approved public housing units for seniors was a fraction of the price tag at 3 million dollars. Contextualizing \$3,000,000 as part of a \$40,000,000 plan worked to showcase the minimized financial impact of subsidized housing to the public.

²⁶⁰ “Low-Rental Plan,” 5.

²⁶¹ “At Thistlethown: Committee Approves Project for Elderly,” *The Globe and Mail*, March 9, 1962, 5.

²⁶² “An Ideal Plan,” 7.

In a later article written in 1963 by the *Globe and Mail*, readers got some insight into the incomes of families who would move there. Previous to this article, like Lawrence Heights, there were no articles profiling or interviewing future residents during the planning and proposal stage. In an article titled “Board Backs Low-Rental Housing Plans” the article again examined how the Etobicoke Planning Board approved construction of 309 subsidized low-rental housing units for families with yearly incomes less than \$4,600. And that these would be the first of the 1,200. Although this seemed to be talking about a new group of individuals, the income of \$4600 was still referring to the seniors who would move in first.

The rationalizing positive code was found in articles that wrote about the construction through an economic lens and always tied land use to a cost-benefit analysis.²⁶³ People that were profiled or interviewed by the *Globe and Mail* and the *Toronto Star* were usually politicians like O’Waffle and Gardiner. Moreover, the only units discussed were ones allocated to the elderly. Only bringing up the numbers, details and seniors when presenting news on Thistletown worked to rationalize to the public the development was not going to be a drain on public resources and that there was a moral obligation to take care of seniors. Attitudes toward public housing at this time were more positive in comparison to the years after 1980. As the 80s moved on it became clear people did not want to invest or believe taxpayer dollars should be used in large quantities towards public housing, as there was a movement towards neoliberalism and free-market politics.²⁶⁴ By always referring to the numbers and cost, this worked to show the government’s thought process in building housing and how they were

²⁶³ Redden, “The Mediation.”

²⁶⁴ Gilens, *Why Americans Hate*.

doing it in the smartest and most efficient way, rather than showing concern for the people who would be moving there.

The *Toronto Star* did not write many articles about the construction of Thistletown 1 and 2. The few articles that did reference the construction in 1961 shone a light on the federal government's position on public housing as well as individuals in need of it. At that time, the Moss Park encampment was cleared and instead of building subsidized housing like "Toronto wanted" it became medium-rental unsubsidized housing "which the federal government wanted."²⁶⁵ The Diefenbaker government in 1961 had an affordable housing issue in urban cities it could not avoid and was pressed on it by news like the *Toronto Star*. In an article titled "Where is the Family Housing?" the paper wrote that, "Toronto's prime housing problem – that of low-income families with several children – remains untouched." The article interviewed then Public Works Minister David Walker, who insisted the "downtown area was not an appropriate site for family housing, and such housing would be provided on the outskirts of the city, which [would] give children the very best educational, religious and recreational facilities."²⁶⁶

Although the Minister said the very best would be located in the suburbs, this was not the case. In Toronto, it's long been argued that there are better services in the core. However, as Luisa Veronis writes, "hegemony is expressed in an imagined centre. In the centre's imagined place."²⁶⁷ In space planning the core represents "order, normality and progress" and therefore the periphery must be controlled.²⁶⁸ Despite the fact that Thistletown 1 and 2 were actually being

²⁶⁵ "Where is the Family Housing?" *Toronto Star*, May 9, 1961, 6.

²⁶⁶ "Where is the Family."

²⁶⁷ Luisa Veronis, "Exploring the Margin."

²⁶⁸ Stefan Kipfer and Mustafa Dikeç, "Peripheries Against Peripheries? Against Spatial Reification," *Massive Suburbanization*, 35–55. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019.

built for single or elderly people as the previous *Globe and Mail* articles demonstrated, the new development was being used as a scapegoat for when people asked about affordable housing for families, despite that the area planners did not want families to move there. It has been argued that “although municipalities [were] often placed in the best position to gauge housing need, they [were] not given direct responsibility.”²⁶⁹ The federal government had a major role at this time in controlling public housing construction because they were putting up the majority of the cost. The federal, provincial, and municipal governments were still trying to sort out each governmental body’s role in shaping and funding public housing in the city. In the case of Thistleton in Rexdale, there were a lot of eyes on how it would be a solution the federal government promised, however at the local government level, there was a lot of resistance to the new space. The federal government did not want to build affordable housing in the downtown core because affordable housing would take up valuable land space. The land in Rexdale was considered less valuable by the federal government, but obviously local officials disagreed with this, especially as the suburb was shaping up to be home to many manufacturing companies and small businesses.

The disapproval of the project by the Etobicoke Planning Board along with other industry groups were voiced in an article titled “Thistleton Plan Considered Unfair”. The rationalizing negative code is found in the article that gives a platform to D. G. McDonald of the Urban Development Institute, which is a mixture of private interests from business in construction, real estate, and non-profits. The UDI Ontario’s chapter wrote to the new Economic and Development Minister Robert Macaulay, claiming that “the plan [clashed] with the minister’s campaign to

²⁶⁹ Murray, *Housing*.

stimulate new Ontario industry.”²⁷⁰ Rexdale at the time was shaping up to be a place where a lot of businesses had set up their storefront or manufacturing facilities. Making land available for public housing meant there would be less land for private industry. The Etobicoke Planning Council did not like that the federal government was selling local land at a discount for people to build homes, private or public. Industry members stated in the above article that “federal and provincial land holdings may cause “dislocation” in normal land development and housebuilding markets.”²⁷¹ Moreover, O’Waffle also more openly objected to the public housing development and argued “it would be a great injustice to the township, the adjacent property owners, the taxpayers and the person who moved into it.”²⁷² This is similar to the Ratepayers argument against the construction of Lawrence Heights.

Etobicoke was stalling the process so much that the provincial government stepped in to ensure that “never again [would] a Metro municipality be able to obstruct a public housing project the way Etobicoke [had] obstructed the Thistletown development.”²⁷³ This comment was made in an announcement by then Economics Minister Stanley Randall. Moreover, the Metropolitan Toronto Council Chairman, William Allen suggested that there may need to be a “Metro central housing agency or a special Metro department formed to co-ordinate responsibility and authority.”²⁷⁴ Etobicoke wanted the discounted land, but they did not want subsidized housing because there were specific attitudes about public housing that not even social-mixed housing could help to alleviate. A *Toronto Star* article wrote, “for a year now

²⁷⁰ “Thistletown Plan Considered Unfair,” *The Globe and Mail*, January 25, 1963, B2.

²⁷¹ “Thistletown Public Housing: Etobicoke Project Hurdles Rift,” *The Globe and Mail*, November 5, 1963, 5.

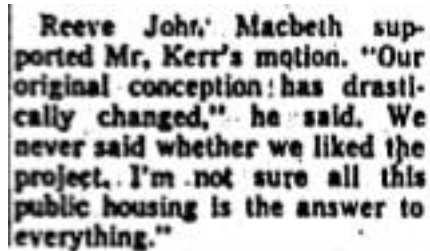
²⁷² “Thistletown Public Housing: Etobicoke Project Hurdles Rift.”

²⁷³ “Action by Mr. Randall,” *Toronto Star*, December 18, 1963, 6.

²⁷⁴ “Governments Plan to Review Public Housing,” *The Globe and Mail*, November 4, 1963, 8.

Etobicoke has blocked the Thistle town projects. Etobicoke's attitude is "let the needy go somewhere else."²⁷⁵ The *Toronto Star* also tried to connect the residents waiting for the units to the civil rights movement happening at the same time in the US. The article wrote, "discrimination against a citizen who would be a public housing tenant – if there was public housing available. No less than the Negro child in Alabama, the Toronto boy who was bitten by a rat last Saturday is a victim of prejudice. This prejudice is largely to blame for Metro's shameful public housing record. The typical attitude – "Sure, I'm all in favor of public housing; but not near me" impresses local politicians."²⁷⁶ This is one of the times there is disagreement with federal and provincial governments on one side, which the mainstream media supports, and the municipality on another, which the media do not support.

IMAGE 6 - THISTLETOWN PUBLIC HOUSING: ETOBICOKE PROJECT HURDLES RIFT



Reeve John Macbeth supported Mr. Kerr's motion. "Our original conception has drastically changed," he said. We never said whether we liked the project. I'm not sure all this public housing is the answer to everything."

Thistle town Public Housing: Etobicoke Project Hurdles Rift, *The Globe and Mail*, 05 Nov 1963: 5. Toronto Public Library. Toronto Star Archives.

The provincial government eventually bypassed Etobicoke on the \$22 million Thistle town public housing project by eliminating the township's veto power over the project.²⁷⁷ This happened when Stanley Randall gave the Metropolitan Toronto Council the final authority and

²⁷⁵ "Action by Mr. Randall."

²⁷⁶ "Discrimination Right at Home," *Toronto Star*, March 16, 1965, 6.

²⁷⁷ "Ontario will bypass Etobicoke," *The Toronto Star*, December 18, 1963, 28.

responsibility for public housing within its boundaries.²⁷⁸ Finally, about 6 years after the plan was initially proposed it was approved with major conditions, 20 to be exact. First was that the number of units was cut down from 1,196 units to 900. Moreover, another condition was that the partnership [sold] 50 acres of land at a price of \$6000 an acre to Etobicoke for industrial or commercial development.²⁷⁹ Finally, the Thistleton development got under way in 1964 and it became a symbol of public housing for the Metropolitan Council and upper tier governments. In a *Globe and Mail* article titled, "Metro Council Hails Low-Rent Homes Plan" the chairman William Allen says, "the plan was an indication of the progress that has been accomplished in the field of public housing in the past three months."²⁸⁰ Moreover, he went on to say that with this "more has been accomplished during that time than in the preceding 13 years in Metro."²⁸¹ Every time the Metro Council completes public housing area, they make a big show of it in the media for the public attention and votes.

The plan for Rexdale was proposed in 1954, but in 1962 as the project stalled, the *Globe and Mail* and the *Toronto Star* increased their coverage of the construction. Most articles referred to the social-mixed nature of the development with the goal of community integration. In 1962 soon after approval by the Etobicoke Council, Planning Board and Board of Education, the *Toronto Star* published an article titled "The Ideal Community". The article wrote the area "[would] not be a ghetto, where the poor [were] subsidized to decent accommodation at the cost of their pride."²⁸² Moreover, the *Globe and Mail* wrote that because of the integrated nature

²⁷⁸ "Ontario will bypass."

²⁷⁹ "Lists 20 Conditions: Etobicoke Approves Housing Plan Terms," *The Globe and Mail*, January 21, 1964, 5.

²⁸⁰ "Lists 20 Conditions."

²⁸¹ "Lists 20 Conditions."

²⁸² "The Ideal Community," *Toronto Star*, August 9, 1962, 6.

of the community that “there would be no artificial boundaries to enclose the public housing community as a separate entity.”²⁸³ The attitude towards public housing at this time was mixed as some people did not feel like their tax dollars should have to subsidize it. Along with the general “fear of declining property values, inferior design, and a strain on community services. There was also a fear of creating more density in a low-density area.”²⁸⁴ This rationalizing positive code helped the public feel as though Thistletown 1 and 2 would not become a drain on public resources as it would be spread out within a “proper” community. The development at Thistletown was a chance to do public housing differently. This was the Metropolitan Toronto Council’s first attempt at a mixed development, and this point had to be highlighted to show there would not be the same problems as Lawrence Heights and Regent Park. The mainstream news used the rationalizing positive code to focus on government’s economic reasoning for investing in social housing and the Diefenbaker government could show Canadians that they were solving the popular affordable housing issue.

The rationalizing positive and negatives sub codes were found the most in the coverage of the proposal and construction of Thistletown 1 and 2 in Etobicoke. Mainstream media focus was rarely on the people that would move into the neighbourhood and a substantial amount of focus was given on how much the development would cost and where the money was going to come from as well as how it would not hinder commercial and industrial development. Thistletown 1 and 2 were the first social-mixed developments where all of the services the neighbourhood needed were addressed at one time. Unlike Lawrence Heights, there was not a

²⁸³ “The Ideal Community.”

²⁸⁴ Murray, *Housing*.

neighbourhood that already existed, and this created its own set of challenges. The idea of social-mixed communities may have helped Thistletown in its development, but there were still pockets of high density and isolation that eventually replicated the same issues faced by Lawrence Heights and Regent Park. Soon after 600 of the units were built, the Etobicoke Planning Council blocked construction of any more homes. The site grew faster than the services that could support them, and the lives of the people who were moving there was not fully thought through. The argument was that “social, recreational, and health services in the community [were] inadequate for the present population,”²⁸⁵ and some heads of neighbourhood associations thought that the partnership did not account for the potential “damaging effects of high-density living.”²⁸⁶ The plan to stop the development at that time was controversial but eventually more public housing developments would descend on the area. The way the Thistletown development took shape paved the way for social-mixed public development in Toronto and its inner suburbs, which has been characterized by high density apartment buildings with few supports and infrastructure to make the neighbourhood achieve a high quality of life. Moreover, it also showed that the governmental support for public housing developments was disjointed as federal and provincial governments pushed forth development that was not entirely accepted by the municipality.

Although Rexdale built recreation centres there were not enough for the number of children that ended up living in the space. There was so much attention paid to housing seniors that it left out any discussion of the needs of children and families. Which shows itself in the lack

²⁸⁵ “Etobicoke moves to stop building in Thistletown,” *The Globe and Mail*, May 26, 1970, 5.

²⁸⁶ “Etobicoke moves to stop.”-

of childcare centres, playgrounds, recreation space and adequate transportation. Articles that covered the development of public housing in Rexdale started to appear in the early 1960s and taper off at the tail end of the decade. Starting off with the perception of the area during its construction is important because it offers insight into historical public attitudes towards public housing in Rexdale. The Thistletown developments in Rexdale show how the Metropolitan Toronto Council was trying along with the government to provide housing for people, however, it had a lot of resistance and complexity, and was largely influenced by public pressure to act. It is almost as if the area again, like Lawrence Heights was not wanted and this then contributed to the very early issues it faced soon after the first families moved in.

1960 AND 1970

LAWRENCE HEIGHTS

In 1960 to the 1970s and beyond, more people were immigrating to Canada and settled in cities such as Toronto and Montreal. There was a lack of adequate public housing which in turn created slums and the government became more paternalistic and saw it as something they should solve. Keynesian politics started to shine through in the sense that the government started developing affordable housing policy with the construction of Regent Park and Lawrence Heights. In 1960, Lawrence Heights is represented through all three codes. The rationalizing and social justice codes continue to lead but there is the emergence of the individualizing code. The rationalizing positive code continued as the area was finished but the difference was that Lawrence Heights became an example used in a larger dialogue about social housing policy. Harvey argues “we must focus on the relationality of space-time rather than space in isolation. As the relationship between social processes and spatial forms determines meaning.”²⁸⁷ Therefore, as Lawrence Heights’s relationship with spatial processes grew, so did the representation of these processes. In the 1950s, when the various levels of government came together to address how to house the needy, they started to see space as a social practice and generally accepted that some redistribution must take place because there were parts of the population who could not attain an adequate standard of living.²⁸⁸ One would think an added focus on affordable housing would help elevate the status of the people who moved there. However, as Harvey argues, “hidden mechanisms” of redistribution increase inequalities rather

²⁸⁷ Harvey, *Social*, 14.

²⁸⁸ Harvey, *Social*, 53.

than reduce them.”²⁸⁹ Mainly because there were groups who were denied access to systems of power from the start, as they did not get to define their future by controlling how they would access housing, recreation, and childcare. In this sense, the very act of creating affordable housing although a seemingly morally upright thing to do, has inequality built into its design. The issue is that individuals in need of housing were not involved in the redistribution of resources, therefore public housing was built in a way that did not meet their needs, which as the years went by increased inequality. Most Torontonians that moved to Lawrence Heights at this time came from the downtown core where they had easy access to transportation, jobs, healthcare and community. Moving them to the inner suburbs without these necessities set up a worse situation for them, and residents eventually recognized this and started to work towards change.

In 1960, other than Regent Park and Lawrence Heights, not a single unit of subsidized public housing was built²⁹⁰ in Canada. There was rising pressure to keep voters happy, therefore all levels of government had to explain the shortage of affordable housing. At the time, the federal government was a large financial supporter of public housing in Canada, providing usually over 50 percent of the cost.²⁹¹ The federal approach to social housing policy had a direct effect on how housing policy was developed at the provincial and municipal level. Moreover, it was understood that municipalities typically just did what the provincial government wanted them to do. The rationalizing positive code in the *Toronto Star* and *Globe and Mail* works to tie public housing back to the neoliberal project of capital and land exchange versus use value. Exchange value is how much someone will pay for something and use value is what you can do with the

²⁸⁹ Harvey, *Social*, 53.

²⁹⁰ Low-rent homes aim of 10,000, *Toronto Star*, January 5, 1960.

²⁹¹ Sewell, *Shape*.

thing.²⁹² For example, a phone's exchange value is \$1000, and its use value is its functional capabilities, tell time, call, text, etc. In 1960, in articles that have a rationalizing positive code, the focus was on the exchange value rather than the use value. The cost of land and its future value was more important than land being used for housing. As Redden says the "focus on cost implicitly sets up the comparison – are these services worth the money? And relieving poverty is more associated with the monetary value and not a social value."²⁹³ In 1950s the voice usually shared in mainstream media was that of politicians, in 1960 and 1970, people who lived in the neighbourhood started to get a voice. The agency of residents and community workers increased as they started to make decisions about maintenance and infrastructure.

Critical geography is concerned with how the working class can exercise their right to the city to transform unjust circumstances such as a lack of transportation, housing, employment, health and social services. Accessibility and proximity are important features of any urban system. For Harvey, any discussion of accessibility requires we answer a fundamental question regarding the meaning of distance and space in an urban system. Moreover, this is not the idea of proximity towards good things, but a proximity towards things people do not make use of like a rundown environment.²⁹⁴ Lawrence Heights was built in the suburbs, which was not ideal to the surrounding area and also not ideal for the area's future residents. It was isolated as an inner suburb and the only jobs available close by were low-paying jobs in manufacturing and retail with few or no public transport options.

²⁹² Harvey, *Social*.

²⁹³ Redden, "Poverty," 826

²⁹⁴ Harvey, *Social*, 57.

With the rationalizing negative and social justice negative codes we see how decisions kept the neighbourhood isolated from the surrounding area which in turn created material effects. This is seen when we look more closely at the articles drawn from the sample written during the 1960s. In an article titled *Big Daddy Has a Housing 'Cure'* in the *Toronto Star*, Gardiner faced questions about the construction of more public housing in Toronto. When speaking about people waiting for adequate housing, a journalist asked Gardiner, “[was] there not a strong moral obligation on the part of the community towards these people?”²⁹⁵ In his response, Gardiner said, “I’ve never been dedicated to the concept of public housing. I’ve been a private enterpriser. But I know we must provide for those less fortunate and we have been providing the best we can.”²⁹⁶ Gardiner continued to say that the Diefenbaker government was more focused on balancing the budget and said, “you’ve got to be careful you don’t sour people on the whole idea of public housing.”²⁹⁷ Few in the news media call into question the federal government for their stance on social policy. Although, Gardiner puts blame on the Prime Minister, he admitted they were trying to manage public attitudes on social spending. Everything was discussed except the basic characteristics of a capitalist economy.²⁹⁸ The Conservative federal government was not putting money into housing, therefore the Metropolitan Council could only focus on cleaning up areas rather than developing new ones, as well as a continued focus on seniors. Harvey would argue that wealth is produced in a system that relies on scarcity for functioning. Capitalism is forever increasing its productive capacity and many institutions are geared to maintain

²⁹⁵ “Big Daddy Has a Housing ‘Cure,’” *Toronto Star*, January 8, 1960.

²⁹⁶ “Big Daddy.”

²⁹⁷ “Big Daddy.”

²⁹⁸ Harvey, *Social*, 144.

scarcity.²⁹⁹ The Conservative Diefenbaker government knew³⁰⁰ there was a lack of public housing, but they would rather address other topics they had promised to voters. The Diefenbaker government was focused on cutting taxes to reshape Canada into a country in control of its own economic and political destiny.³⁰¹ Cutting taxes meant cutting social services that increased taxes like public housing. Any land or public resource owned by the government was focused on generating more money therefore the use value of housing was pushed to the periphery. Toronto and the GTA just finished building three public housing areas (Regent Park, Lawrence Heights and Thistletown 1 and 2), therefore there was less focus on building more, but eventually the government would have to give way to public pressure because of the rising need and growing presence of slums in Toronto.

In 1960 and 1970 when it comes to housing news, the newspapers both affirm and critique the job different levels of government were doing in regard to social welfare policy. There was a focus on exchange value and benefits to taxpayers and voters, alongside a focus on the benefit to people in need of public housing and their lives. A *Globe and Mail* article, "Homes for Needy Lost in Red Tape" wrote that "most of the holdups for public housing can be directly blamed upon multiple government departments. The 34 stages of progression and retrogression between the local and senior levels of government could obviously be reduced to a maximum of eight."³⁰² This lack of action was pointed out by the news, which broadened its scope of interviewees, Gardiner, who critiqued transportation planning and community members who

²⁹⁹ Harvey, *Social*, 137.

³⁰⁰ Smith, Denis (1995), *Rogue Tory: The Life and Legend of John Diefenbaker*, Ross, p280

³⁰¹ Smith, *Rogue Tory: The Life and Legend of John Diefenbaker*.

³⁰² "Home for Needy Lost in Red Tape," *The Globe and Mail*, May 2, 1960.

started to show up to planning meetings to voice their concerns. These groups came together to advocate for the equal right of residents in Lawrence Heights. One way systems of power maintain the status quo is by isolating people with similar struggles. The media showed how these groups often came together with the shared interest of a better life for public housing residents. Harvey writes that quality of life has become a commodity as the city itself is a major aspect of the urban political economy.³⁰³ Therefore within a city, mostly the rich and powerful have access to make decisions, like the Metropolitan Council and the Ratepayers. Lefebvre's concept of the right to the city argues that ordinary citizens should be present and able to contribute to the decision-making process in order to affect change. Lawrence Heights community members in 1960 and 1970 started to formally participate in planning decisions which helped them to improve their everyday life.³⁰⁴ By representing placemaking and people trying to claim their right to the city, the *Toronto Star* and the *Globe and Mail* show how the community backed by local politicians and sometimes the news media, created access to necessary institutions like healthcare and transportation through changes to social welfare and housing policy.

Public transportation is an important part of a public housing eco system. Low-income residents often struggle to afford car ownership and therefore rely on public transit systems to get to work, groceries, healthcare and other services. Access to transportation can improve or decrease quality of life and its cost can either narrow opportunity gaps or contribute to spatial inequity. The sample demonstrates that by 1960s, insufficient transportation planning widened

³⁰³ Harvey, *Right to the city* 31

³⁰⁴ Dikec, *Justice*; Harvey, *Social*; Soja, *Seeking*.

the inequities between Lawrence Heights residents and those in more affluent neighbourhoods. Transportation is an important and key piece to city development and has a close relationship with housing. Harvey argues that “transportation systems have favoured suburban areas and neglected the needs of inner areas as far as access to employment is concerned, moreover people living in inner city have greater transportation costs.”³⁰⁵ Lipsitz also writes how “spatial isolation from employment opportunities and municipal facilities also raises transportation costs”³⁰⁶ and this was true for Lawrence Heights residents in 1960. They faced transportation barriers when they first moved in, however, they were able to break them down by advocating for their rights.

During the Lawrence Heights construction, the city closed off three streets and major artery roads were created through the densely populated neighbourhood. This design made it difficult to maneuver through the area. This was a decision that came on the request of the Ratepayers Association to suit the affluent Lawrence Manor area close by. Closing off the streets had negative effects for residents and Gardiner tried to stop this from happening. This demonstrated an instance when the Metropolitan Council was at odds with other municipal and provincial governing bodies. Although Gardiner disagreed with this proposal, he did not have the power to stop it from happening.

³⁰⁵ Harvey, “Social Justice,” 63.

³⁰⁶ Lipsitz, “How Racism,” 9.

IMAGE 7 - BIG DADDY HAS A HOUSING 'CURE'

Describing closing the roads as an attempt to "curtain off the project," Fred G. Gardiner, Metro chairman, appearing personally to present Metro's case, said he could not associate Metro, and the federal and provincial governments with such "poor planning."

"It is not our intent to separate the two areas," said Mr. Vanek, "but rather to maintain traffic control. In the section now built, winding streets were purposely laid out that way to deter heavy traffic and speeders."

"Big Daddy Has a Housing 'Cure'." *Toronto Star* (Toronto, Ontario), January 8, 1960. Toronto Public Library, Toronto Star Historical Newspaper Archive.

Being a closed development meant that Lawrence Heights could not access amenities that were located further away. Over ten percent of the sample for 1960 and 1970 focused on the Toronto Transportation Committee's (TTC) reluctance to provide the area with adequate transit and most of the articles were found in the *Globe and Mail*. In the sampled article, "Will Not Permit Bus Rerouting" the Metropolitan Housing and Welfare Committee heard resident complaints about a lack of TTC service and asked the TTC to reroute its Lawrence Heights Ave bus into the area. The residents who needed the service also advocated for their right to transportation by writing opinion pieces published in the *Toronto Star*.

IMAGE 8 - SENIOR CITIZENS' BUS SERVICE?

Bus for Pensioners

• The senior citizens (at **Lawrence Heights**) have too far to walk for a bus and most are 75 years or over and cannot do it. If they can walk to Lawrence for a bus they must pay carfare for about four blocks. Getting home means a taxi trip of 70 cents. If they want to go to the city it means a double fare which they cannot afford. Also, there are many young mothers with children who are in the same way.. Surely a bus could go around a small circle certain times a day as a small help for these people.
—MRS. M. R., Toronto

“Senior Citizens' Bus Service?” *Toronto Star* (Toronto, Ontario), February 26, 1960. Toronto Public Library, Toronto Star Historical Newspaper Archive.

Quality of life decreases when you have to pay extra to get access to necessities. The opinion piece above offers the perspective of a resident, which gives a voice to people who paid more for transportation. The concept of ‘deserving poor’ was evident as well with a focus on the elderly and single mothers. This makes sense for this article to be positioned this way because at this point when it came to public housing policy, the Metropolitan Council seemed to be only acting for seniors.

IMAGE 9 - FINDS TTC SLOW TO ALTER ZONE IN NORTH YORK

“They work fast when it comes to changing subway routes but are rather slow on other matters,” said the Metro chairman. Mr. Gardiner is annoyed over the TTC scrapping the Spadina subway route in favor of a Christie St. line. The TTC will meet North York Council May 3 to discuss extension of the Lawrence Ave. bus route.

“Finds TTC Slow to Alter Zone in North York.” *Globe and Mail* (Toronto, Ontario), April 22, 1960. Toronto Public Library, Globe and Mail Historical Newspaper Archive.

Everyone should benefit from TTC services and Gardiner brought attention to the failing of the TTC to help people in need. He tried to get the TTC to extend the bus route north of the Lawrence shopping plaza and spoke about the decisions the organization had been making.³⁰⁷ The TTC's reasoning for not changing the bus route was that it would "add costs and inconvenience more passengers than it would service."³⁰⁸ We see profit over people as the TTC does not see transportation as a public good, but as a way to generate profit despite being primarily funded through tax dollars. This is another example of placing more importance on exchange value. However, after much pressure³⁰⁹ the TTC agreed on a bus route to service Lawrence Heights. Although Lawrence Heights was located in what was then the inner suburbs, the way it was treated reflects that of the inner city. The closed off way in which it was built meant that residents were forced to walk far to shop, work, and access social services. This unequal development did not allow residents to fully participate in their community. The articles published in the *Toronto Star* and the *Globe and Mail*,³¹⁰ began to show the power of the community and gave an early picture into how Lawrence Heights would become a front runner in resident advocacy. The space becomes an example of the change that can occur through citizen's claiming their right to the city. Housing news in 1960 and 1970 showcased resident activism and this is a change from 1950 when we saw more focus on the Metropolitan Council on the 3 levels of government.

³⁰⁷ "Metro Seeks TTC Fare Aid for old persons," *Globe and Mail*, July 1, 1960.

³⁰⁸ "Senior Citizens' Bus Service?" *Toronto Star*, February 26, 1960, 8.

³⁰⁹ Housing Project Gets Bus Route, *The Globe and Mail*, July 6, 1960.

³¹⁰ Housing Project Gets Bus Route, *The Globe and Mail*, July 6, 1960.

In the sample for 1960 and 1970, alongside news of housing and community comes crime. The codes found in the articles were individualizing negative and social justice negative. Crime was blamed on the individuals that lived in the area, but it was normalized because of whiteness. Whiteness functions under the cover of invisibility, therefore crime was not racialized but functioned as an output of class. Coverage in my sample is identified as individualizing if the issue was “presented as an individual’s responsibility.”³¹¹ This code presents crime that occurs in the area as a responsibility of the residents, who caused the problems and therefore needed to determine the solutions.

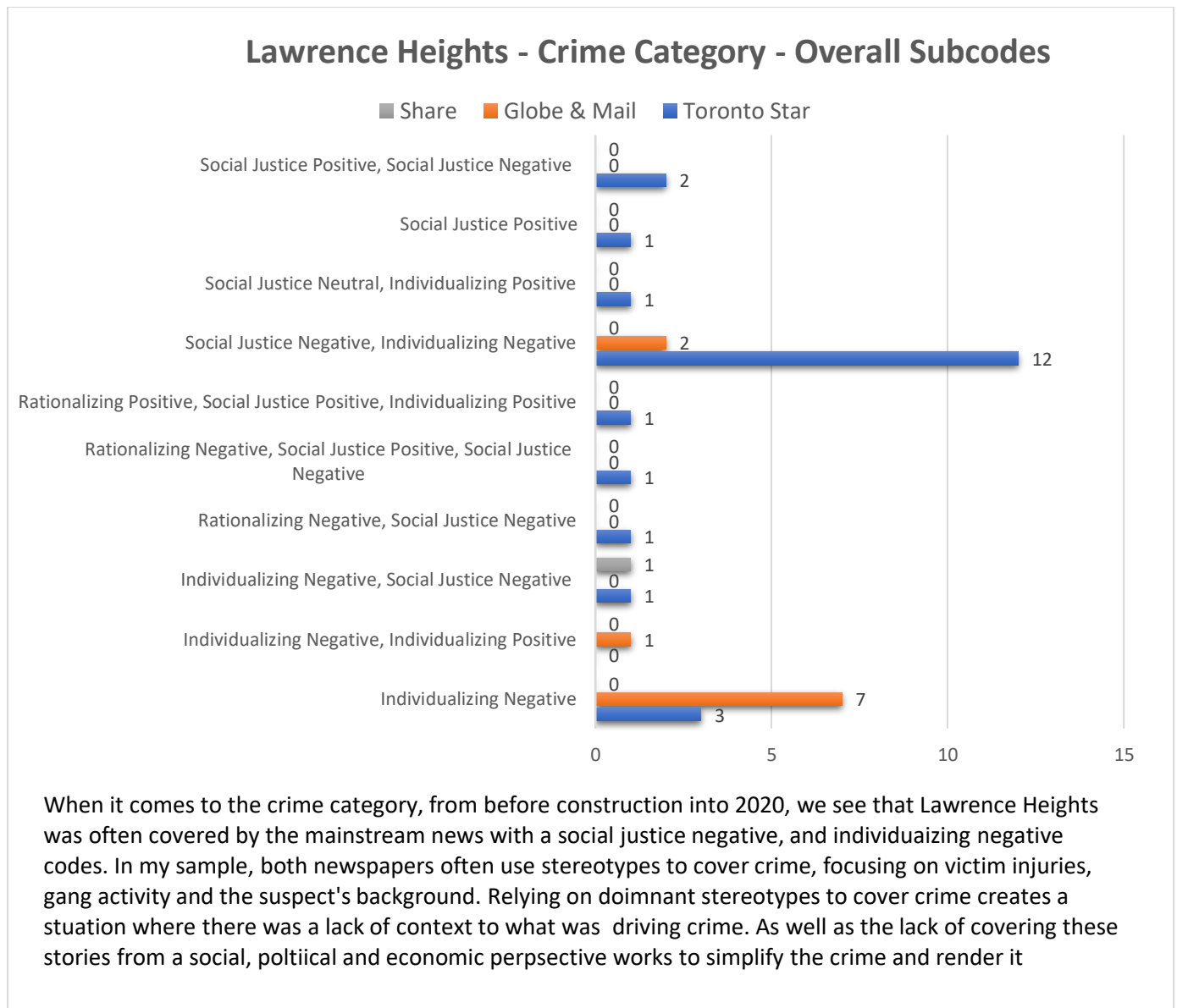
The individualizing negative code and social justice negative code lead in the stories about crime in Lawrence Heights. Redden says in her research the individualizing frames typically show “through the quotes of others” and these types of frames play heavily into stereotypes.³¹² Moreover, Doris Graber finds that news on crime tends to focus on ethnic minorities and people from low socio-economic groups, and argues crime is portrayed as dramatic, isolated events disconnected from politics, policies and social structures.³¹³ In the way crime was covered during these two years, crime was blamed on residents of the area, despite that poor planning had created a situation where crime could thrive.

³¹¹ Redden, “Poverty,” 826.

³¹² Redden, Poverty.

³¹³ Graber, “Crime.”

CHART 5 - LAWRENCE HEIGHTS - CRIME CATEGORY - OVERALL SUBCODES



This propensity to blame the residents was evident in a *Toronto Star* article titled “In North York: Let Moms Police Speeders”, the article wrote about the North York League of Frightened Mothers, a group formed by mothers in the area after a young girl was killed playing on the street. The group came together to petition the local police to do something about speeding in the neighbourhood. The dangerous streets had negatively affected residents and had informed their everyday lives enough that residents created a community group to try to evoke

change. Sundstrom in his writing about space and race argues that “the production of social identities can be seen in the social landscape and there is a relationship between social identity and space.”³¹⁴ Space has affected social identity in the sense that when Lawrence Heights was built, streets were closed off and it was not easy to move through the neighbourhood, which in turn created dangerous streets. There were tragic accidents where children playing were injured or killed by speeding cars. The poor zoning was the reason why community groups came together to pressure the city to do something about the careless driving. In response to these concerns, Toronto Councillor, Irv Paisley said, “if the residents formed a vigilant committee, they could report offenders to the police. If motorists knew they were being watched, they wouldn’t speed so much.”³¹⁵ Moreover, in another article, then Toronto Deputy Police Chief, John Murray criticized the parents and said that parents let their children “run free like bunnies.”³¹⁶ Mothers in Lawrence Heights were stereotyped as irresponsible and absent and that was why their children were being injured when playing, rather than the responsibility lying on the city zoning and the law enforcement of speed limits. Here we see the concept of selective forgetting arise. In his study of framing and the news, Iyengar writes the news “focused on specific individuals and events, when the public was shown this type of news, they were less likely to consider society responsible and more likely to consider individuals responsible. Redden also writes that personalizing a news story and or reducing an issue to an individual provides a means of simplifying and appealing to emotion.”³¹⁷ Individualizing helps to make a vast amount of

³¹⁴ Sundstrom, “Race,” 87.

³¹⁵ “Let Moms Police Speeders,” *Toronto Star*, October 12, 1960.

³¹⁶ “Kids Run Free Like Bunnies,” *Toronto Star*, October 22, 1960

³¹⁷ Redden, “Poverty.”

information on a topic digestible. Moreover, because there was a stereotype associated with the area, this also affected how crime stories were perceived.

In this particular story, covered in several articles, there were clear links being made between the job these mothers were doing as parents to the crime that was occurring in their neighbourhood. The officers argued that if the mothers were better parents, then their children would not be in harms' way. The police chief portrayed all mothers in this area in a negative light. Moreover, his suggestion that they should take on the job of surveillance in their neighbourhood begs the questions of the police's purpose. If it was up to the residents to solve the problem, this puts the onus on the individual. The negative code makes it seem like the residents of Lawrence Heights were careless, and there was no mention of the people who were speeding through the streets and white criminality was ignored.³¹⁸ In my sample, in 1960, when crime was mentioned the race of the criminals was standardly omitted. With crime news, whiteness benefits from invisibility which contributes to the normalization of crimes committed by white people. This connects back to how whiteness has been able to function in Canada as invisible and the marker to which the other races are measured. White crime is not seen as a problem to solve for but treated as one-off cases of delinquency. This changes in 1980 and into the 90s as the face of crime in the news becomes Black, young and male.

Redden, Graber and Iyengar writes how activists express frustration at media coverage that individualizes content at the expense of context³¹⁹ mainly because the challenge is that there is not a larger body of news that covers that area and contextualizes crime as a product of social,

³¹⁸ Lipsitz, Race.

³¹⁹ Redden, *The Mediation*.

economic, and political phenomena.³²⁰ The North York League of Frightened Mothers refused to be stereotyped by public officials and vocalized their dismay in a *Toronto Star* article titled “Mother’s Shudder at Police Criticism”. Mrs. Dudley Marshall, spokesperson for the group was interviewed and said, “we shudder at the thought that we may be branded as adult delinquents, incompetent to fulfill our great job of raising the next generation.”³²¹ She also said that the police chief chose “ill-informed words” and she brought up the fact that there was an existing traffic problem that should have been taken care of by the city. Instead of re-looking at how the closed off streets were causing issues for residents, the crimes were blamed on the parents and children who were playing in the area, going as far to dehumanize them by calling them animals. The social justice positive code was found here because the League of Concerned Mothers refused to let themselves be described as “irresponsible” and “incompetent” by the police and the mainstream media. Moreover, they linked the problem back to the poor planning and traffic congestion that should have been better considered before the area was built. In this example the loss of life in Lawrence Heights was blamed on the residents, however, the residents refused to be stereotyped. The community spoke out to ensure that they were given the same rights as others Canadian citizens in that crime was investigated and taken seriously.

Along with the League of Concerned Mothers, other residents also spoke out about politicians and other city leaders stereotyping and bad mouthing the area. In 1960, a politician, Mr. Tepperman, had called the area a “concentration camp” and a member of the community responded by writing an opinion piece in the *Toronto Star*. In ‘Father Defends Lawrence Heights’

³²⁰ Redden, *The Mediation*.

³²¹ “Mothers ‘Shudder’ At Police Criticism,” *Toronto Star*, October 24, 1960.

J. O'Sullivan talks about the area being decent, modern, and clean which means there was public perception that it was dirty and unclean.³²²

IMAGE 10 - FATHER DEFENDS LAWRENCE HEIGHTS HOUSING

Low-rental housing is for the benefit of the children's mental and physical well-being, not for the parents or re-allocated derelicts as some people seem to think. Toronto needs more low-rental housing projects, not attic dwellers or cellar dwellers.
J. O'SULLIVAN
 Bredonhill Cres.

"Father Defends Lawrence Heights Housing." *Toronto Star* (Toronto, Ontario), April 9, 1960. Toronto Public Library, Toronto Star Historical Newspaper Archive.

Found in the opinion section, the article connected the issue of low-rent housing to being able to find jobs and taking care of big families, rather than blaming individuals for their circumstances. People had different reasons for seeking affordable housing and in this article, we got a glimpse into a person's story and their struggles. Iyengar, Robertson and Bullock et al., write there is the idea in the public that "people are poor because they don't want to work"³²³ and this article shows the complexity of finding stable employment and housing. Having a job does not save one from poverty,³²⁴ moreover, the resident spoke about the lack of job training and the high cost of living. Harvey writes that the failure of employment and residential opportunities to keep in balance with each other has imposed greater accessibility costs on some groups relative to others. There is a class prejudice that emerges when examining the news coverage of crime in Lawrence Heights at this time. Equating children to bunnies and comparing the area to a concentration camp works to dehumanize life there and subsequently the lives lost as well. The

³²² Father Defends Lawrence Heights Housing, *Toronto Star*, April 4, 1960.

³²³ Redden, *The Mediation*.

³²⁴ Alhabah, "Territorialisation," 4.

stigma associates Lawrence Heights with a social narrative of deprivation, immorality and violence, and the focus on victims in this scenario sets the stage for how later crime news was covered.

In 1970 there was a shift in the way that Lawrence Heights was represented in that residents, community activists, and workers received more attention, and the social justice positive code appeared more often. In 1970, the *Toronto Star* published a lengthy series titled “Senator Visit Slums” which included three stories based alone on Lawrence Heights, and others that addressed poverty in different areas of North York, Scarborough and Regent Park. Each article interviewed residents or community advocates who criticized the under resourcing of Lawrence Heights by the municipality, province and feds. These articles argue for or present people advocating for the equal civic participation, political, social and economic rights of Lawrence Heights residents.

The social justice positive code sees public housing and community supports as a matter of the right to a better quality of life.³²⁵ Lefebvre’s right to the city concept is more than just an individual’s liberty to access resources, but also its a “right to change oneself by changing one’s city.”³²⁶ In reference to Lefebvre’s concept of the right to the city, Harvey argues further that urbanization has always been a class phenomenon. Within a city, surplus product creates surplus value leaving control over its disbursement typically in a few hands.³²⁷ Drawing from Lefebvre, Kurt Iveson writes that the “right to the city” is a common cause around which groups of the

³²⁵ Redden, *The Mediation*, 32.

³²⁶ Harvey, “Right to the City,” 23.

³²⁷ Harvey, “Right to the City,” 24.

deprived and alienated mobilise.³²⁸ On the heels of the civil rights movement in the US, the residents and activists of Lawrence Heights came together to create one of the most vocal community groups in Toronto and the surrounding area, bringing up issues of affordable housing to the government and general public.

Drawing from Michael Foucault, in Soja's interpretation of the right to the city, Soja argues space exploits, dominates, and disciplines.³²⁹ The survival of capitalism has depended upon the "occupation of a fragmented, homogenized and hierarchically structured space. Achieved largely through bureaucratically controlled collective consumptions, the differentiation of centers and peripheries at multiple scales and penetration of state power into every day."³³⁰ By naming Lawrence Heights as a periphery, an area that needs government support, different levels of power were interacting. The government can create problems in the proposal and the construction of public housing and then work to try to solve issues the government itself has created. It is difficult, costly and time-consuming to redistribute resources and wealth. The government would need to consult the community along with other powerful groups and not everyone in the room would have the same interests. Long, arduous change cannot be neatly packaged into a newspaper article and the "Senator Series" does a fair job of demonstrating the complexities by showcasing three newspaper pages worth of articles based around housing and poverty.

³²⁸ Iveson, "Social."

³²⁹ Soja, *Post Modern*.

³³⁰ Soja, *Post Modern*.

The *Toronto Star* provided coverage of when Lawrence Heights social worker Harry Zwerver, showed up in front of government committees to tell them about how poverty studies waste tax-payer money rather than actually enacting any change.

IMAGE 11 - POVERTY STUDY: HEARINGS CRITICIZED AS COSTLY

Harry Zwerver, a social worker with the Lawrence Heights Family and Child Service, told four members of the committee they were studying an important problem "but unfortunately you are a very ineffectual tool. I personally question the waste of hundreds of thousands of dollars on these hearings."

Mr. Zwerver said the only effect of the hearings was to draw off criticism of Government inaction. The money would be better spent on direct aid to the poor.

He made the criticism while challenging the federal Government to provide direct financial aid to "community activist groups."

Senator Herbert Sparrow (L., Saskatchewan) said the real value of the study and the committee was the publicity given to such hearings. The committee was bringing the problem of poverty to all the people of Canada who would eventually have to pay the cost and must first "be sold on the fact that the problem exists."

"Poverty Study: Hearings criticized as costly." *Globe and Mail* (Toronto, Ontario), March 11, 1970. Toronto Public Library, *Globe and Mail* Historical Newspaper Archive.

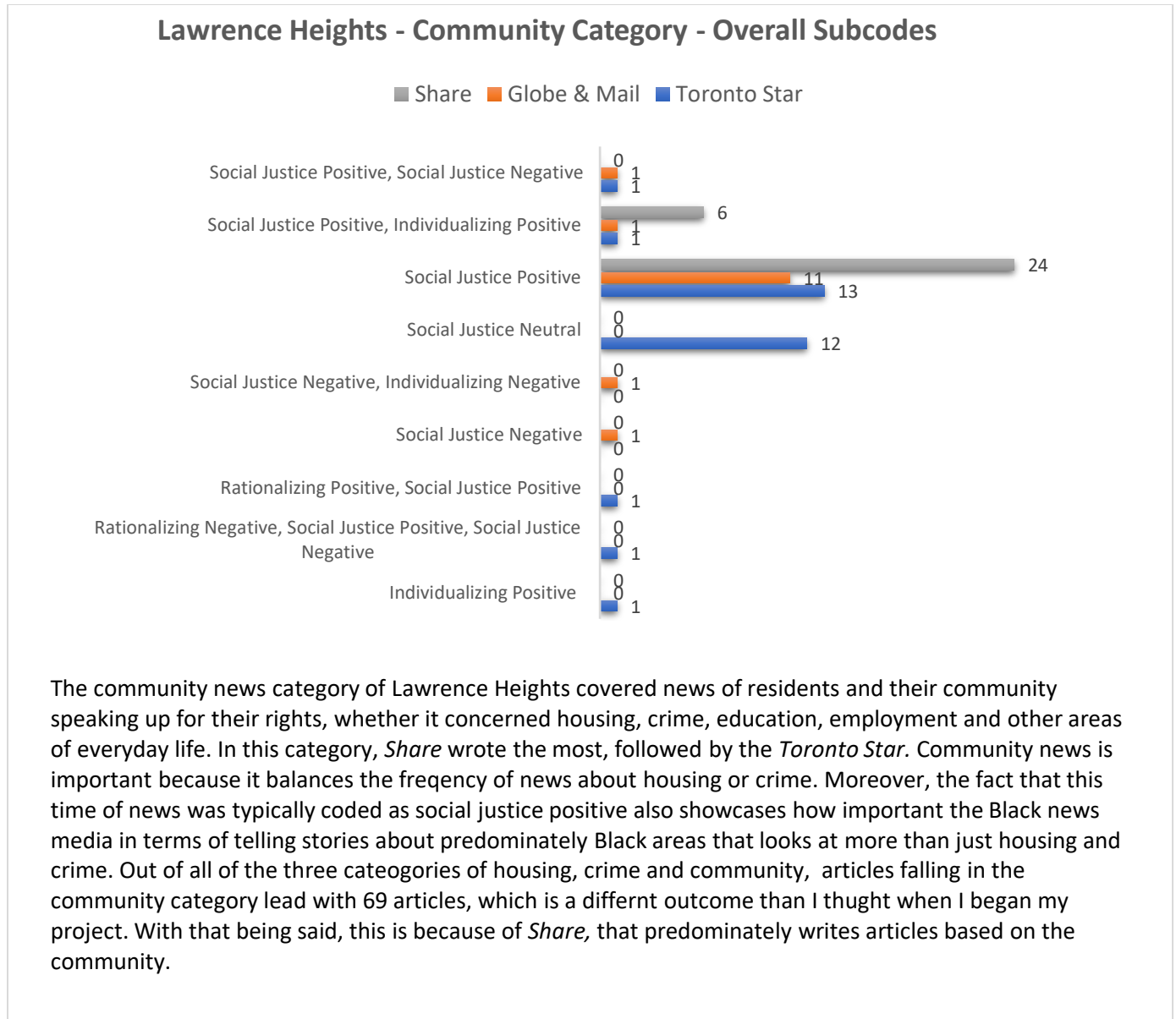
Zwerver's criticism was directed toward a Senate poverty committee that made its way across Canada in 1970 searching for ways to improve the lives of Canadians living in poverty. Zwerver brought to light the way the federal government had maintained power which was by recognizing the oppressive nature of space. Some, if not all of the money spent on the hearings could have been redirected to providing direct aid to the residents of Lawrence Heights. It is a show of talking and not doing and even the Senator leading the committee, Herbert Sparrow, admitted this. This article is coded as social justice positive because the social worker was presented trying to hold those in power accountable. The response from the government official that the hearings brought attention to the issue is fair, but at the same time, what is more important – talking about how to fix housing or actually fixing it? So far until this point the change the residents saw was by their own hand and rarely provided by the local, provincial or federal government. Such as Lawrence Height's first bus route and safer roads at the request of the League of Concerned

Mothers. The government was working to draw national attention to the issue of poverty and affordable housing; however, it was not entirely clear if it was just for political gain because social welfare was a topic that got a lot of attention in 1960 and 1970. Change is not that simple and must include those who are perceived to be lacking power. Soja says that the class struggle must encompass those who are exploited, and peripheralized by the imposed spatial organization of advanced capitalism.³³¹ Zwerver was an example of someone outside the community who actively participated in effecting slow change. Positive social justice coverage is news on the edge of new consciousness and thematic new coverage can help to increase public support of government social policy. In 1970 a new spatial consciousness began to enter public debates as key issues such as human rights, social inclusion, equality, citizenship, and democracy³³² took centre stage.

³³¹ Soja, *Post Modern*.

³³² Soja, *Post Modern*.

CHART 6 - LAWRENCE HEIGHTS - COMMUNITY CATEGORY – OVERALL SUBCODES



In an article titled ‘The poor are afraid to speak up’ a James Montgomerie, principal of the local high school Flemington Public School was interviewed and said, “The worst thing to do was to set up a room with tables and expect poor people to come here and stand up and speak.”³³³ In that particular meeting, only 35 residents from Lawrence Heights were in attendance, as well

³³³ Senator Visit Slums Series: The Poor are afraid to speak up, principal says, *Toronto Star*, March 11, 1970.

as social workers, politicians and counsellors from the area. There were many reasons residents did not show up, whether it was because they did not think anything would change or they were worried about getting evicted. The advocates that showed up on behalf of the residents showed how the community was bonded together and had started to form solidarity. Which we saw before from the creation of groups like the League of Concerned Mothers and residents speaking out against stereotypes or lack of transportation. As spaces are produced so are people, so much so that place can come to inhabit our understanding of human categories and identities.³³⁴ Residents tried to connect their circumstances to the context of social and political conversations and the isolation had for the most part bonded their community tightly together. Community building has been crucial in helping Lawrence Heights residents to improve their quality of life.

In one article in the series, the *Toronto Star* interviewed resident Mrs. Shirley Clark, a 29-year-old single mother of four. To the committee talking about welfare, she said, “You have lost us. To people who are poor these sums mean nothing. We don’t want someone to come to our door with a \$60 cheque. We want help to stand on our own feet.”³³⁵ There was a great sense of pride that emerged from the voice of the people who lived in the community. They were proud of what they had been able to build despite the barriers to employment, transportation, basic necessities and social services. Instead of welfare, they wanted the city to invest in education, employment training and childcare. Moreover, the city would also need to make good-paying jobs accessible to them by creating better-paying work in the surrounding area and providing transportation to get there. These were large tasks for the city to undertake at the time,

³³⁴ Marcuse, “Spatial.”

³³⁵ “Senator Visit Slums Series.”

especially because the community was in a neighbourhood that was already built up and did not want Lawrence Heights there. Where the municipality had failed, the community stepped in. They built their own community centre and created programming at the school for their youth. As Shirley Clark said, “they want[ed] job training so they [could] work.”³³⁶ Some of the articles about Lawrence Heights in the Senator Series shone a light on the major institutions that continued to oppress residents. Through these types of articles “poverty and inequality were put into social, political, economic and historical context.”³³⁷ Poverty was connected back to the structure of the economic system and unequal power systems, rather than just focusing on what public housing was going to be built, how many units, people, and the cost like the articles focused on before.

Now that residents were forming associations to improve their living conditions, they were discredited by governing bodies. However, they continued to write to newspapers, attend planning meetings and vocalize their right to the city. In a *Toronto Star* article written in 1970 titled, “Management of public housing by tenants urged,” resident Donald Davis, attended a meeting with the Association of Ontario Housing Authorities and said the government should be taking steps to “turn management of public housing projects over to tenants but instead [was] offering only positions on housing advisory boards.”³³⁸ In response Mallette, Chairman of the Metro Housing and Social Services Committee said that “most local associations have no legitimate claim to speak for the people they represent.”³³⁹ Public housing in Ontario at this time

³³⁶ “Senator Visit Slums Series.”

³³⁷ Redden, *The Mediation*

³³⁸ “Management of public housing by tenants urged,” *Toronto Star*, Oct 20, 1970, 15.

³³⁹ “Management of public housing.”

was managed by the Ontario Housing Corporation (OHC), which was founded in 1964. In 1970, the OHC unlawfully tried to get people to sign new leases to which the residents protested. The residents drafted their own leases with the help of a lawyer which were considered for review by the Corporation. The new lease gave the tenants more power to decorate and make repairs if the Corporation waited too long and also prevented evictions without a valid reason.³⁴⁰

IMAGE 12 - PUBLIC HOUSING TENANTS PROTEST 'HARASSMENT'

The tenants' proposals, drawn up with the assistance of a team of volunteer lawyers, would allow tenants permission to decorate their apartments and prevent the corporation from evicting them without giving a reason. Tenants would also be allowed to call in contractors to make repairs when the corporation refuses. They would then deduct the cost of repairs from their rent.

"Public housing tenants protest 'harassment'." *Toronto Star* (Toronto, Ontario), September 10, 1970. Toronto Public Library, Toronto Star Historical Newspaper Archive.

In this example, the residents were able to obtain a position of power and demonstrated their claim to space. The government did not want this to happen and wanted the status quo, so they repressed the residents' ideas and used tactics of separation to discredit community involvement in municipal politics. The way that the residents were able to come together to advocate for their rights attracted attention. In an article titled "Toronto's citizens movement called best in nation," the Lawrence Heights Community on the Move and Regent Park Community Improvement Association are highlighted as two groups that made Toronto a "citizens city." Lawrence Heights was a neighbourhood that was/is a leader in community activism and outreach. Seeking the right

³⁴⁰ "Public Housing tenants protest 'harassment'," *Toronto Star*, Sept 10, 1970.

to the city is a continuous and radical effort at spatial reappropriation, it's claiming an active presence in all that takes place in urban life. The residents came together to claim their democratic right to space."³⁴¹ This was also evident when the citizens came together to address the lack of doctors and local hospitals in the area.

When covering the issue of access to healthcare an article wrote about how the community was in a two-fare zone, so it cost extra to go to downtown hospitals, and buses ran only to 6pm on weekdays or not at all on weekends. This meant residents had to walk to Bathurst or Lawrence Ave outside of transportation times if they wanted to use public transit. To solve the lack of access to healthcare at night and on the weekend, residents turned a room of the Flemington Public School into a clinic for two nights a week.³⁴² Again, we see the community coming together in a resident-led initiative supported by community workers to solve the very real issue of lack of healthcare facilities. These articles have social justice positive codes because the rights of the residents were put first. This was also an example of a right to the city because they figured out ways to address the service gaps in the neighbourhood. Space can be both oppressive and liberating. There is a need to intervene in spatial process to transform, redirect and make it more just. Right to the city is not an alternative to the struggle for social justice or human rights but rather are concretizing examples and strategic enhancements made possible by community-led activism. These examples show how the residents came together to claim space.

³⁴¹ Soja, *Post Modern*, 96.

³⁴² Soja, *Post Modern*, 96.

In 1970, one article published in the Senator Series gave a voice to the struggles of Black people in Lawrence Heights. In the mid 1960s into the 1970s, immigrants from the Caribbean had begun entering the country in larger numbers than before and Black people in the area began to claim space. Newcomers, when searching for a place to live often look for the most affordable housing possible. In an article titled "Metro police accused of harassing Blacks," residents speak of mistreatment by officers in the area. Ainsley Vaughan, a member of the Black Youth Organization said, "there [was] an urgent need for a community centre for Metro's Black population because they have few places to go for recreation." He went on to say that "police often pick[ed] up blacks on a "pretext" in the Spadina area and then drove them to the shores of Lake Ontario where they were left without transportation and had to walk back."³⁴³ This was the first story in my sample that spoke to the struggles of Black residents of Lawrence Heights and it showed the fraught relationship between Black community members and the police, which is a relationship previously presented with the issues of speeding, except now race is named. Race is named because there is an existing relationship between crime stereotypes and Blackness. It is named because Blackness does not get to benefit from the same invisibility as whiteness. Moreover, the mainstream media does not necessarily tell the full story of Black victims of police brutality. Ainsley Vaughan was also interviewed in a *Contrast* article that falls outside of my sample, and in the article, he recalled when he was picked up, beaten, assaulted and dropped off far from home when walking down the street with his friends.³⁴⁴ Dropping people off far from their home knowing they do not have a way to get back was a form instilling fear, discipline, and

³⁴³ "Metro police accused of harassing blacks," *Toronto Star*, June 18, 1970.

³⁴⁴ "Police and Black People." *Contrast*. September 16-30, 1970.

control. This article showed how poorly Black people in the area were treated by police and this is a reality that continues to this day with Toronto's long history of racist street check policies.

IMAGE 13 - METRO POLICE ACCUSED OF HARASSING BLACKS

Ainsley Vaughan, a fine arts student and member of the Black Youth Organization, who moved to Toronto six year ago, said there is an urgent need for a community centre for Metro's black population because they have few places to go for recreation.

"How could anybody live here?" *Globe and Mail* (Toronto, Ontario), June 18, 1970. Toronto Public Library, *Globe and Mail* Historical Newspaper Archive.

When Lawrence Heights was conceived in the 1950s as the second public housing project, it was informed by class consciousness and how people understood poverty and public housing at the time. As more Black people moved to Canada, they faced discrimination and started to speak out about mistreatment. As demographics shifted, so did the face of crime and for the first time the race of the criminal was mentioned. The shift in thinking about crime and housing accompanied the increase of immigrants coming into Canada. Class consciousness began to encompass a racialization aspect. Lawrence Heights had a lot of issues when more Black people moved into the neighbourhood, they were marginalized even more and their relationship to the police was more problematic because Black criminality does not have the same invisible cloak as white criminality. As we move to the 1980s, Lawrence Heights becomes a place where race is

manifested, and it becomes a boundary through which citizenship is acted out as eventually over 80 percent of residents eventually identify as racialized.”³⁴⁵

³⁴⁵ Robert Murdie, “Blacks in near-ghettos? Black Visible Minority Population in Metropolitan Toronto Housing Authority Public Housing Units,” *Housing Studies* Vol 9, 4 (1994), 435.

REXDALE

Although Thistletown 1 and 2 were public housing developments in Rexdale, they were not the only communities in this region. Therefore Thistletown 1 and 2 as well as the broader community inform the framing of crime, housing, and community news. In 1960 the majority of news about Rexdale involved crime (drunk driving, robberies, fraud, assault, and murder). The few articles that covered housing used the same rationalizing positive and negative codes as Lawrence Heights, in that Thistletown was also a representation of how the Metropolitan Toronto Council was doing in providing housing. Also similar to Lawrence Heights, there were residents, community groups and advocates who were trying to lay claim to their right to the city. As residents moved into the area, we finally heard their perspective and for the first time the social justice positive code emerges more consistently as the area struggled to keep up with the high density and complex needs of residents.

Crime news about Rexdale in 1960 and 1970 tended to have an individualizing negative code in that the news was presented with little context, linked to drugs, alcohol and people were often blamed for their circumstances. Redden in her work says that “discourses of individual responsibility tap into the master frame of liberal individualism which dominates all news coverage.”³⁴⁶ The individualizing negative code does a “great deal of affective work through drawing on longstanding stereotypes especially when linked to those who are low income.”³⁴⁷ In *Crime News and the Public*, Doris Graber writes how crime news attracts a lot of attention and leads to an exaggerated fear of crime and rising crime rates.³⁴⁸ Graber also says that “crime news

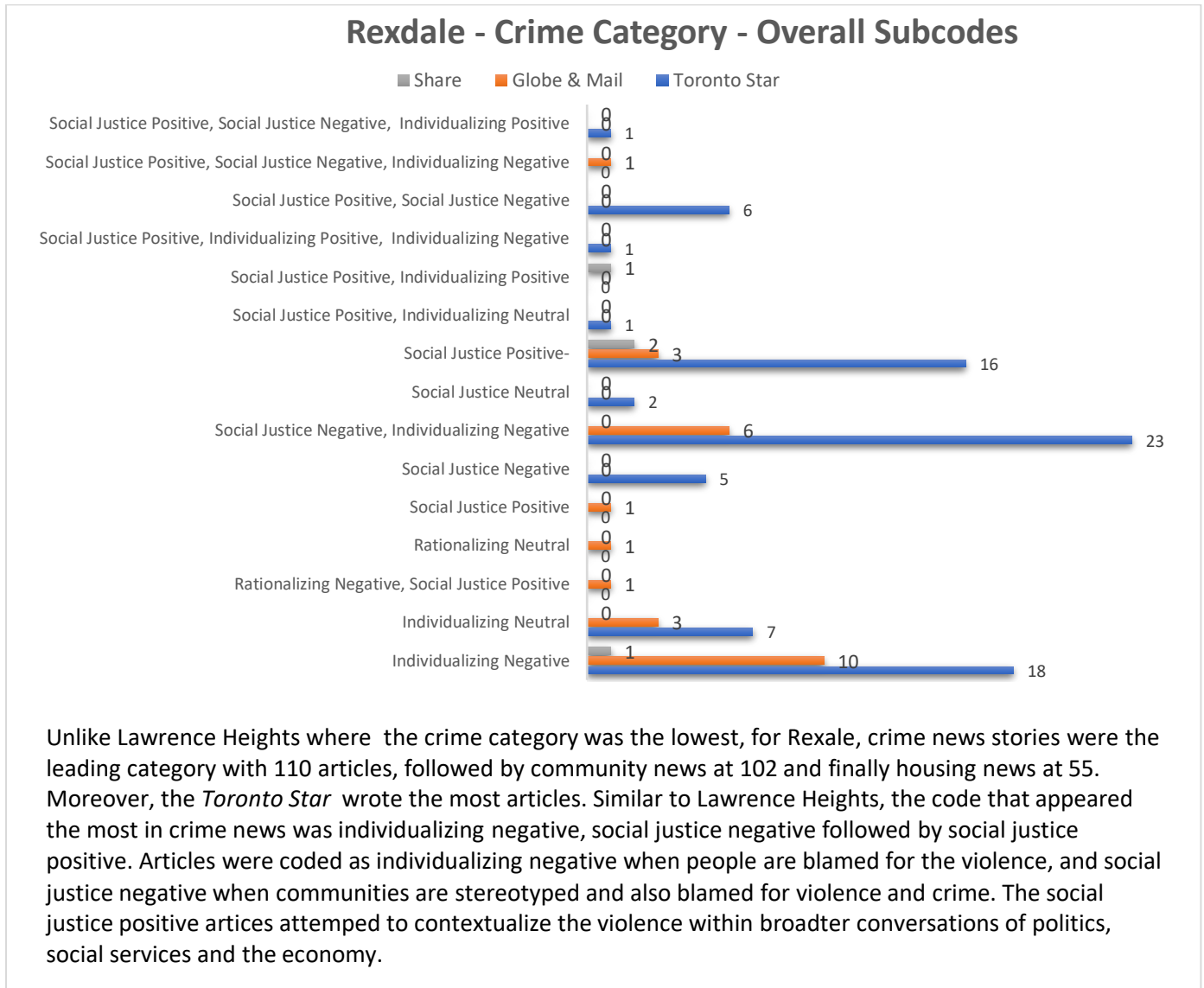
³⁴⁶ Redden, “Poverty in the News.”

³⁴⁷ Redden, “Poverty in the News.”

³⁴⁸ Graber, “Crime News.”

is descriptive rather than analytical and that one rarely finds interpretive analyses that places crime into a historical, sociological or political perspective.”³⁴⁹

CHART 7 - REXDALE - CRIME CATEGORY - OVERALL SUBCODES

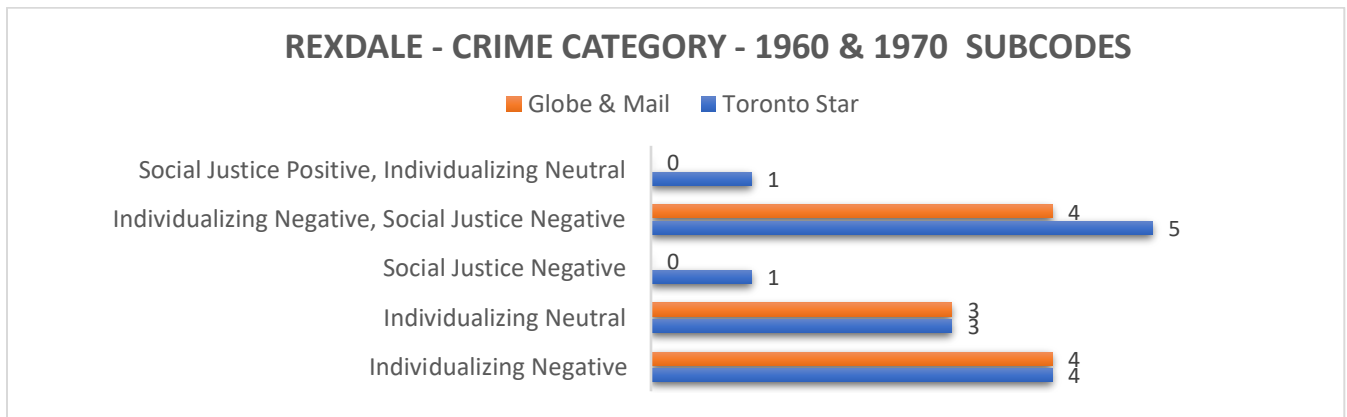


The code of individualizing negative was found in high frequency in the crime news published in the *Globe and Mail* and *Toronto Star* in that relevant socio-economic processes were left out and

³⁴⁹ Graber, "Crime News."

a person's decision-making and behaviour were called into question explicitly or inexplicitly. In 1960, the Thistletown development was not complete, so the area still had a small number of residents and the criminalization of the neighbourhood mainly focused on low-level crimes. Crime was not structured as part of a stereotype tied to race but was tied to one-off incidents of intoxicated people driving vehicles or theft, which was normalized.

CHART 8 - REXDALE - CRIME CATEGORY - 1960 & 1970 SUBCODES



In 1960, the *Toronto Star* published a weekly series called “In the Courts” where different crimes around Toronto were profiled. In one article drawn from the sample, the focus was on a Rexdale man who caused a disturbance at a gas station. The story mentioned that he “stood shoeless at the door” and pounded the window. The shop clerk believed he had been drinking.”³⁵⁰ The journalist interviewed the suspect, shop clerk and police officers. The suspect interviewed said that his car broke down and he had to walk for help and that’s how he lost his shoes. The suspect is quoted as saying he “lost his temper.”³⁵¹ This article was coded as individualizing negative because it was framed as the man’s fault that he was not let into the store because he was intoxicated. The article was published because of its bizarre nature and the

³⁵⁰ “In the Courts: Tax Arrest ‘Scandalous’,” *The Toronto Star*, April 16, 1960, 14.

³⁵¹ “In the Courts, 14.”

fact that the suspect had no shoes was mentioned several times. As Graber mentioned, this story was told because it was sensationalist. Another article that covered the issue of drinking profiled a car accident caused by Dr. Mackinnon Phillips, a member of the Legislative Assembly.³⁵² This article is coded as social justice positive as it attempted to hold Phillips accountable for the fact that he was using his position to bypass the law. The article said “the serious question of impropriety which has been raised by the Phillips’s case was not the human frailty of a 60-year-old man who hit a car and ran away. It is the cold, sober premeditated contempt for the processes of the law.”³⁵³ The article tried to give a voice to the working-class family that was unable to use their car because of this accident. This article is also coded as individualizing negative because the accident was blamed on one man, moreover, it drew attention because it was a public figure who committed the crime. Alcohol was the connection in both of these articles, but the abuse of alcohol was not mentioned in either article as the individualizing negative code does not attempt to place these issues into a broader context of alcohol abuse.

These crimes happened in Rexdale therefore it connected drunk driving and reckless behaviour to the neighbourhood as well as its residents. In 1970, there were crime stories of theft and burglary.³⁵⁴ The focus on crime was unusual lower crime events, moreover, there was never a connection to socio-economic conditions and race was never mentioned. The way that Rexdale was usually mentioned in these stories was that either the person who committed the act was from Rexdale or the victim was from the area. Although these articles were coded individualizing negative, they were not social justice negative because the crime was never attributed to a

³⁵² “The Case of Dr. Philips: The Man Who Flew Away,” *The Toronto Star*, May 12, 1960, 7.

³⁵³ “The Case of Dr. Philips.”

³⁵⁴ “Girl Falls Out of Fleeing Car During Chase,” *The Globe and Mail*, July 25, 1960, 5.

character trait of an entire race or neighbourhood. Crime was typically framed as not much of an issue to solve but a story for entertainment. Race was never implicated in any of these articles and whiteness remained “invisible” and “unmentioned”.³⁵⁵ In early articles that covered crime in Rexdale, crime was not racialized and as Richard Dyer says, whiteness benefited from it never being named.³⁵⁶ The race of suspects and victims was never mentioned, and it can be assumed they are white, whereas starting in 1970s and into the current day, crime news about Rexdale was/is racialized and Black people were stereotyped as “thugs” and “violent.” As immigrants moved into Canada and Rexdale, we see how white criminality continued as violence was geared towards Asian communities, although these articles tried their best to ground the hate in sociological approaches to mixing, they did not present a groundwork for change, action or specifically point to these crimes as being hate motivated.

Although the social-mixed housing model was said to provide positive outcomes to the residents, in the case of Rexdale, there were some key aspects left out of early planning decisions that caused issues for new residents. In an article coded as both social justice positive and negative, we finally heard from residents of the new Thistleton development. In a *Globe and Mail* article titled “Housing, but little living,” the article started with an interview of an unnamed 16-year-old resident. She said “the trouble with Ontario Housing is that that it needs to liberate its mind. They have shovelled people out here in such numbers that what is happening to their souls is nobody’s business.”³⁵⁷ This article was a rare in-depth analysis of Thistleton 1 and 2

³⁵⁵ Justin Smith, “Whiteness and critical white studies in crime and justice,” *Contemporary Justice Review*, 18, no.2 (2015).

³⁵⁶ Lipsitz, *How Race*, 35.

³⁵⁷ “Housing, but little living,” *The Globe and Mail*, April 9, 1970, W1.

since the area had been built. The article called the space “a development with runaway population growth and no priorities given to the provision of services and facilities that bear directly on the quality of human life.”³⁵⁸ The classification of the area in this way was unexpected, considering that in the planning stages, public officials were always interviewed saying the area was going to be serviced with schools, greenspaces, recreation, and retail.

The fast pace in which the area grew did not keep up with services for children and young people. In the area, more than “25 percent of families [were] surviving solely on welfare or family benefits. Moreover, in two years the number of juvenile offenses [had] jumped nearly 250 percent – from 488 in 1967 to 1,162 in 1969.”³⁵⁹ There were assumptions made about the social-mixed community model in that homeowners and public housing residents would socialize, but this was not the case. The majority of the public housing in this large area existed in pockets, and Thistletown which would eventually become known as Jamestown, was only situated on a few streets. The cost to adequately resource the area with proper supports was expensive and the markets adherence to maximizing profit contradicted any intention of inclusivity. Harvey says that “urban design and architectural form do not of themselves constitute a social reformation.”³⁶⁰ The idea that the issues these residents faced would be alleviated with social-mixed housing was idealistic as true change derives from political and civic engagement as well as community mobilization. Moreover, the public services needed were expensive and the Metropolitan Toronto Council did not have the money for maintenance and municipal officials were against the area’s development from the start.

³⁵⁸ “Housing, but little.”

³⁵⁹ “Housing, but little.”

³⁶⁰ Clarke, “The Ideal of Community.”

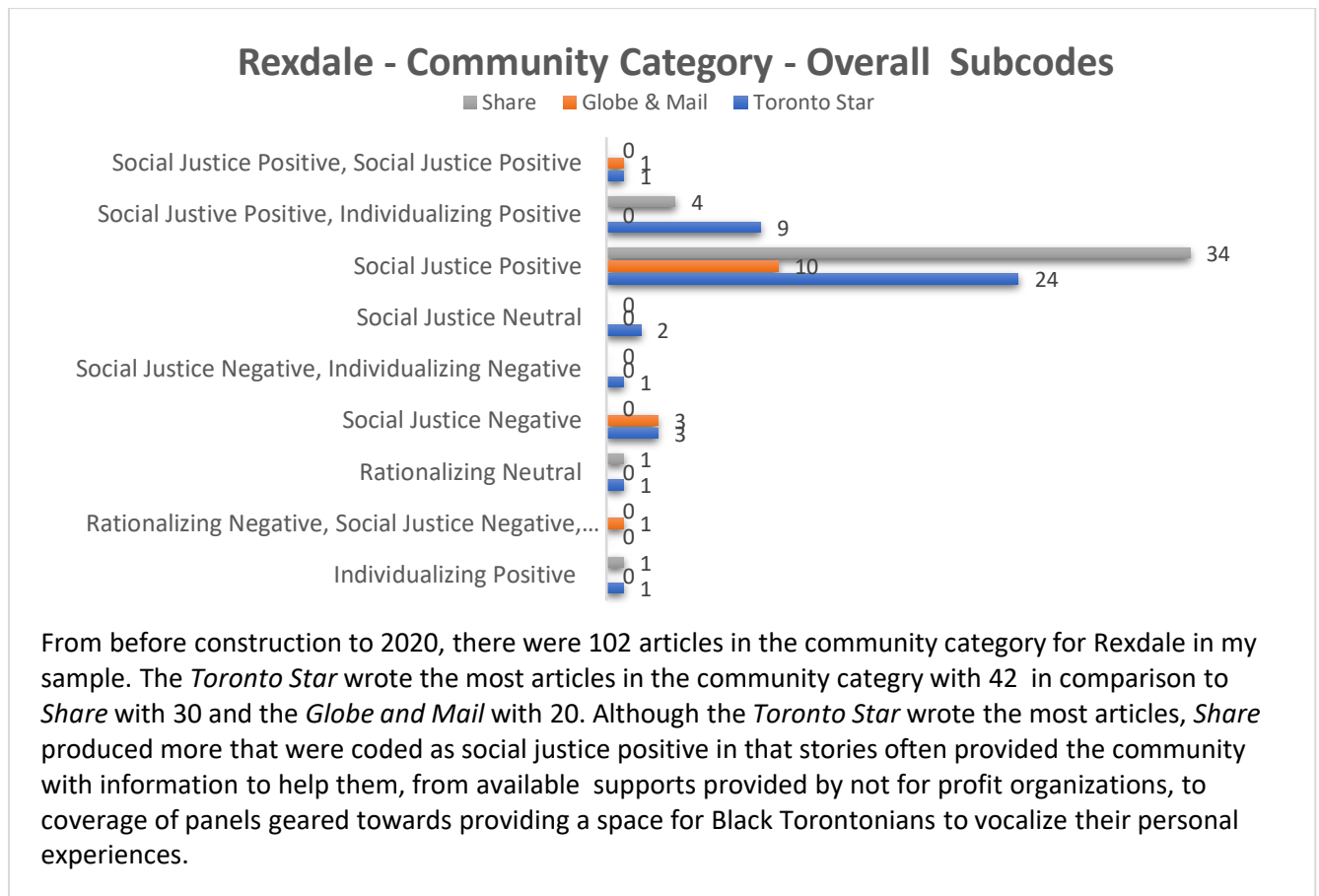
Although the article “Housing, Little Living” was coded as positive, it was also coded as individualizing negative because the article attributed the issues to a ‘lack of men around’.³⁶¹ The stereotype of the welfare queen has become associated with Rexdale, specifically Jamestown, because of the “supposedly high prevalence of young mothers.”³⁶² This racist stereotype is fed by the presumption that mothers in Rexdale just get pregnant to receive social assistance. The welfare queen is a stereotype based on the belief that single mothers are responsible for their own circumstances because they are sexually promiscuous and lazy.³⁶³ The article, by mentioning the lack of men, played into this unfortunate historical trope without providing context and how familial relationships impact civic engagement.

³⁶¹ “Housing, but little.”

³⁶² Jaspreet Kaur, “‘Being Stuck’: Understanding the Health-Related and Everyday Lived Experiences of Young Mothers in Rexdale, Ontario Through a Social Determinants Framework.” The University of Western Ontario Dissertations Publishing (2013).

³⁶³ Ann Cammett, “Deadbeat Dads & Welfare Queens: How Metaphor Shapes Poverty Law.” *Boston College Journal of Law & Social Justice*. 34, 2014.

CHART 9 - REXDALE - COMMUNITY CATEGORY - OVERALL SUBCODES



In 1960 and 1970 Lawrence Heights was revered for its community activism. Rexdale also had outspoken residents trying to help residents better their decision-making ability. In an article titled “New-style social worker helps fight politicians,” Michael Quiggins, a social worker who believed that “people have the right to participate” in community development³⁶⁴ was profiled in a *Toronto Star* article. At the time, he was working in Rexdale where they were organizing “several Ontario Housing Corporation developments.”³⁶⁵ He was holding meetings in Rexdale, speaking about social justice in geography and the people’s right to the city. He was quoted as

³⁶⁴ “New-style social worker helps fight politicians,” *Toronto Star*, October 16, 1970, 59.

³⁶⁵ “New-style social worker helps fight politicians,” *Toronto Star*, October 16, 1970, 59.

saying that “when citizens go to council meetings, they become aware of the decision-making process, of the irrational reactions, of the arrogance”³⁶⁶ What Quiggins was trying to do was similar to what many of the advocates like Zwerver were doing in Lawrence Heights. In 1970, Thistletown 1 and 2 were only a couple of years old, therefore the area was in a growing pain stage as community members began to claim space and non-profit groups began to at work for resident interests.

Rexdale benefitted from a community centre, which the “Housing, but little living” article called “the liveliest spot in northern Etobicoke” and it was primarily financed by the “YMCA (Young Men s Christian Association) and the Northern Etobicoke Community Action Group (NECAG).”³⁶⁷ In an interview with Bryan Gero, Department Head of Family Services, Catholic Children’s Aid, he said, “the whole problem centres on the fact that in 10 years the population of northern Etobicoke went from 15,000 to 60,000.”³⁶⁸ From 1960 to 1970 Rexdale grew faster than it could keep up and organizations like the NECAG and the Rexdale Ecumenical Social Action Group (RESG) started to create programs and services to fill some of the gaps, such as a used clothing department store. Moreover, the Etobicoke Social Planning Council, the NECAG, as well as the Canadian Mental Health Association and Metro’s Children’s Aid Society came together to argue that a site close to Thistletown 1 and 2 should be rezoned and developed as a multi-social service centre. Unfortunately, this did not happen. Many residents who moved to Thistletown 1 and 2 came from the urban core where health and social services were readily available. The

³⁶⁶ “New-style social worker.”

³⁶⁷ “Housing, but little.”

³⁶⁸ “Housing, but little.”

unprecedented increase in density exasperated the lack of social services and transportation, and these were early signs the community was seriously under resourced.

Similar to Lawrence Heights, Rexdale also was affected by a lack of transportation systems. The “Housing but little living article” highlighted this issue and wrote, “there [was] no bus service into the Braeburn development. Buses – scheduled at long intervals – drop customers on the main road, a considerable distance for the sick or elderly and a nightmare distance for a mother hauling several children.”³⁶⁹ In another article published in the *Toronto Star* titled “Double Fare to Malton,” the article examined how in the northwest suburb of Etobicoke “a difference of a few blocks [could] double the bus fare.”³⁷⁰ Transportation in the area before the public housing development was subpar and this continued after the project was finished. This article showed how difficult it was for residents of Rexdale to work downtown where good paying jobs were located. Easy access to downtown was limited for Rexdale residents unless they owned a vehicle³⁷¹ or had the time and money to afford the TTC. Jobs that were found in the area were typically in manufacturing or retail which did not provide residents with living wage, thereby trapping them in a cycle where they could not make much money because the good jobs were too far away. These early articles were coded as individualizing negative because they did not construct it as an issue with the system that could be changed but just how the TTC worked.

In 1960 and 1970 the news that was published about Rexdale in the categories of crime, housing and community had predominately individualizing negative and social justice positive codes. In terms of crime, the individualizing negative code was found in articles that examined

³⁶⁹ “Housing, but little.”

³⁷⁰ “Double Fare to Malton,” *Toronto Star*, October 31, 1960, 7.

³⁷¹ “He drives his car because it’s faster,” *Toronto Star*, June 20, 1970, C15.

behaviour like drunk driving, theft, and assault. These crimes were not ascribed to race and were normalized. Rexdale at this time was not stereotyped through crime in a major way because residents were predominately white. Moreover, criminal behaviour was not presented as part of a larger issue such as alcohol abuse. In terms of housing there was not a lot of news printed in 1960 because there was a major stall because of government bureaucracy. However, in 1970, community and housing news overlapped in that the *Toronto Star* and the *Globe and Mail* focused although rarely, primarily on Thistletown 1 and 2 and the social issues faced by new residents. This was also the first time we heard from the residents who had moved into the area as well as groups who were trying to advocate for them.

CHAPTER 4: IMMIGRATION, CRIME AND THE EMERGENCE OF TORONTO'S BLACK PRESS

INTRODUCTION

For Canada, if the 1950s and 1960s marked a period of investing in social welfare programs, the 1980s marked the beginning of cutbacks. Government support for public housing was being cut at the same time that immigrants were moving to these spaces in large numbers. Starting in the late 1960s, when White Policy in immigration was removed more people from the Global South came to Canada and settled in urban centers like Toronto. In 1980 and 1990, there was a transformation of demographics in both Lawrence Heights and Rexdale as more racialized people move to these spaces and white residents moved out. Moreover, the media's coverage of these spaces changed as the image of poverty shifted from poor white dustbowl farmers to immigrant and racialized. In 1950 and 1960, the *Globe and Mail* and *Toronto Star* supported the construction of public housing, however, in 1980 and 1980, the media framed public housing as negative and needing this type of support became constructed as the sum of negative life choices. Moreover, the face of crime went from raceless and unnamed to racialized and Black and told in high frequency.

With more immigrants entering Canada also came the creation of Black and ethnic newspapers such as *Share* which started in 1978. The Black media in Toronto has been crucial to the creation of more nuanced images of Lawrence Heights, Rexdale and Black communities in Toronto as a whole. These papers provided counter narratives to the stereotypical portrayal presented by the mainstream news and they called out how whiteness continued to benefit

from invisibility when it came to crime. *Share* and *Contrast* spoke openly about hate crimes committed by white people against South Asian and Black residents in both Rexdale and Lawrence Heights as well as police abuse of power. The news coverage in 1980 and 1990 showed how despite the creation of multicultural policy, Canada was not ready to cope with hate crimes and racism. Counter narratives provided by *Share* and *Contrast* and others Black newspapers were important in disrupting the continuation of stereotype usage in mainstream news coverage.

1980 AND 1990

LAWRENCE HEIGHTS

In 1961, over 95 percent of Canada's population was of European heritage. In the 1970s, Canada began to lift restrictive immigration laws and the country saw an increase in the number of people arriving from Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America.³⁷² From 1968 to 1992, Canada admitted 3.7 million immigrants, moreover, it is estimated that 48 percent of the 3.7 million were people of colour.³⁷³ Racialized immigrants typically settle in concentrated urban centres and develop areas like Toronto³⁷⁴ into diverse cultural centres. In the early 1970s, the majority of people who lived in Lawrence Heights were of white European descent, and as more racialized immigrants started to move in, there was a rise in the mention of race in articles, specifically the connection between crime and Blackness. For Canada, if the 1960s marked a period of investing in social welfare programs, the 1980s marked the beginning of cutbacks on social housing and neighbourhood improvement programs.³⁷⁵ At this time, the Metropolitan Toronto Council was nearing its final years and still shaping municipal politics in the five boroughs it governed. Moreover, there were many public housing developments built in Scarborough, Etobicoke, North York, and Toronto, who were all managed by the OHC. In the 1980s neo-liberalism was still in its infancy and the Canadian Liberal and Conservative governments were still investing in social housing because of public pressure. Thus, between 1985 and 1990, there

³⁷² Grace-Edward Galabuzi, *Canada's Economic Apartheid: The Social Exclusion of Racialized Groups in the New Century* (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 2006), 62; Gilens, *Why Americans*.

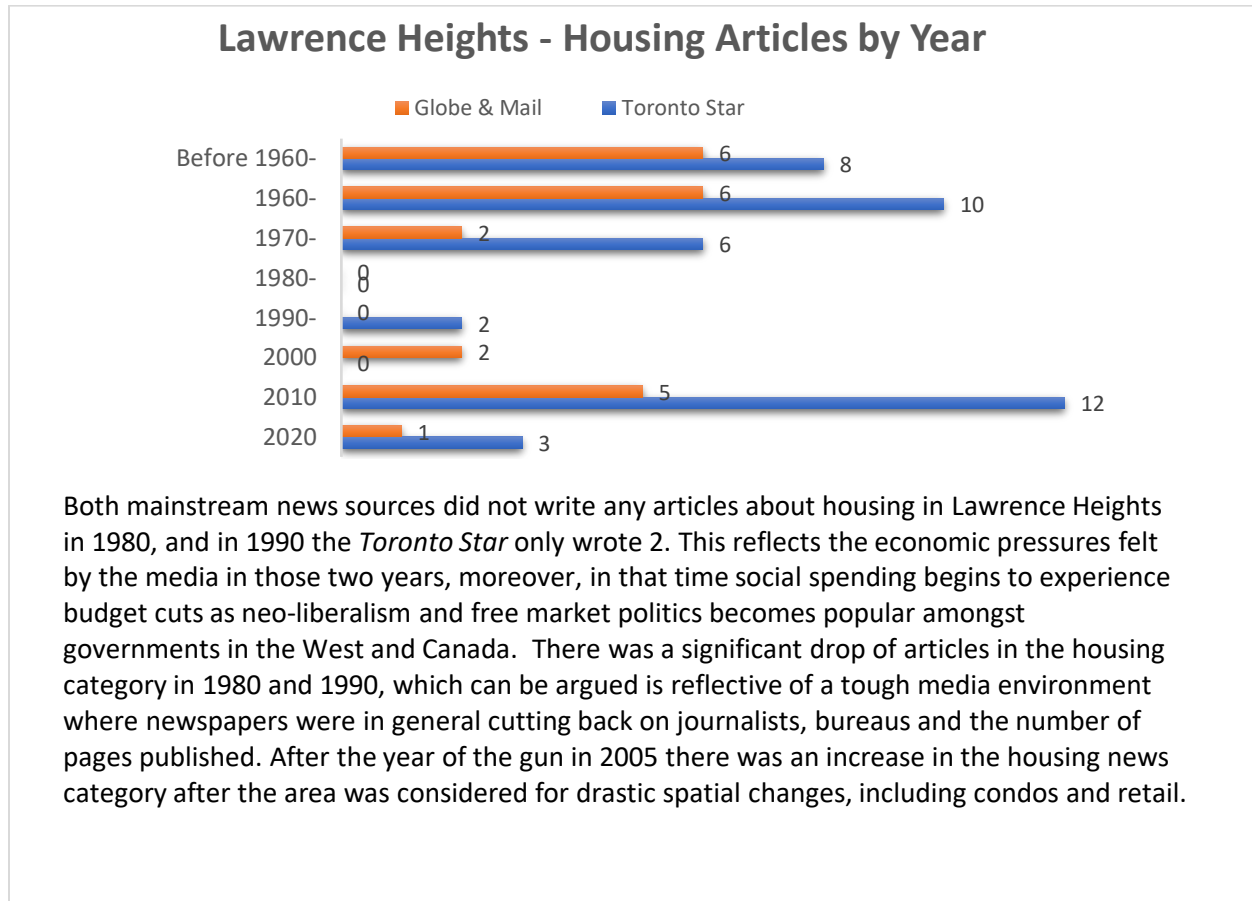
³⁷³ Galabuzi, *Canada's Economic*, 62.

³⁷⁴ Murdie, "Welfare State."

³⁷⁵ Murdie, "Welfare State."

was growth in affordable housing.³⁷⁶ At the same time, Toronto was also entering a recession which then subsequently fast forwarded neo-liberal reform at the provincial and federal level which saw both governments no longer financing any new affordable housing programs and then later the sharp reduction of social assistance.”³⁷⁷

CHART 10 - LAWRENCE HEIGHTS - HOUSING ARTICLES BY YEAR



In the 1990s Canada along with many countries in the West, were undergoing an economic downturn. During this time unemployment was as high as 12% and the Conservative Party led by Mike Harris made a radical shift in Ontario. Welfare was cut by 21.6 percent and all

³⁷⁶ Green, Jonathan. “Urban Restructuring, Homelessness, and Collective Action in Toronto, 1980–2003.” *Urban History Review*. Vol 34(1) 21-37.

³⁷⁷ Green, “Urban.”

provincially financed affordable housing was frozen.³⁷⁸ The media did not escape the effects of the downturn of the economy in the 1980s and 90s either. In 1990, the *Globe and Mail* only published one article about the area. Government movement toward neoliberalism and negative public sentiment toward social welfare programs took media attention away from affordable housing. The image of affordable housing in areas like Lawrence Heights and Rexdale were positive in 1960 and 1970 as they solved a problem people felt like they had a responsibility for helping to fix, but this changed in 1980 and 1990 as public housing lost its “privileged position as a solution to social problems and becomes marginal, both representationally and physically.”³⁷⁹

In the 1980 and 1990, along with economic recession, drop in social spending and cuts by media companies comes the emergence of ethnic media in Canada. The rise of Black media in Canada accelerated when Canada opened up immigration. When the point system was introduced in 1967 for the first-time ever the Canadian government began accepting immigration applications based on education and professional skills rather than race and ethnicity.³⁸⁰ From 1961 to 1996 the percentage of European immigrants to Canada went down from 74.2 percent to 17.3 percent.³⁸¹ Immigrants that came to Canada from different countries quickly began to form their own niche media companies, and the Black community was no different. Sherry Yu argues that ethnic media are a key part of immigrants’ integration and their ability to negotiate everyday life in their new place of residence.

³⁷⁸ Green, “Urban.”

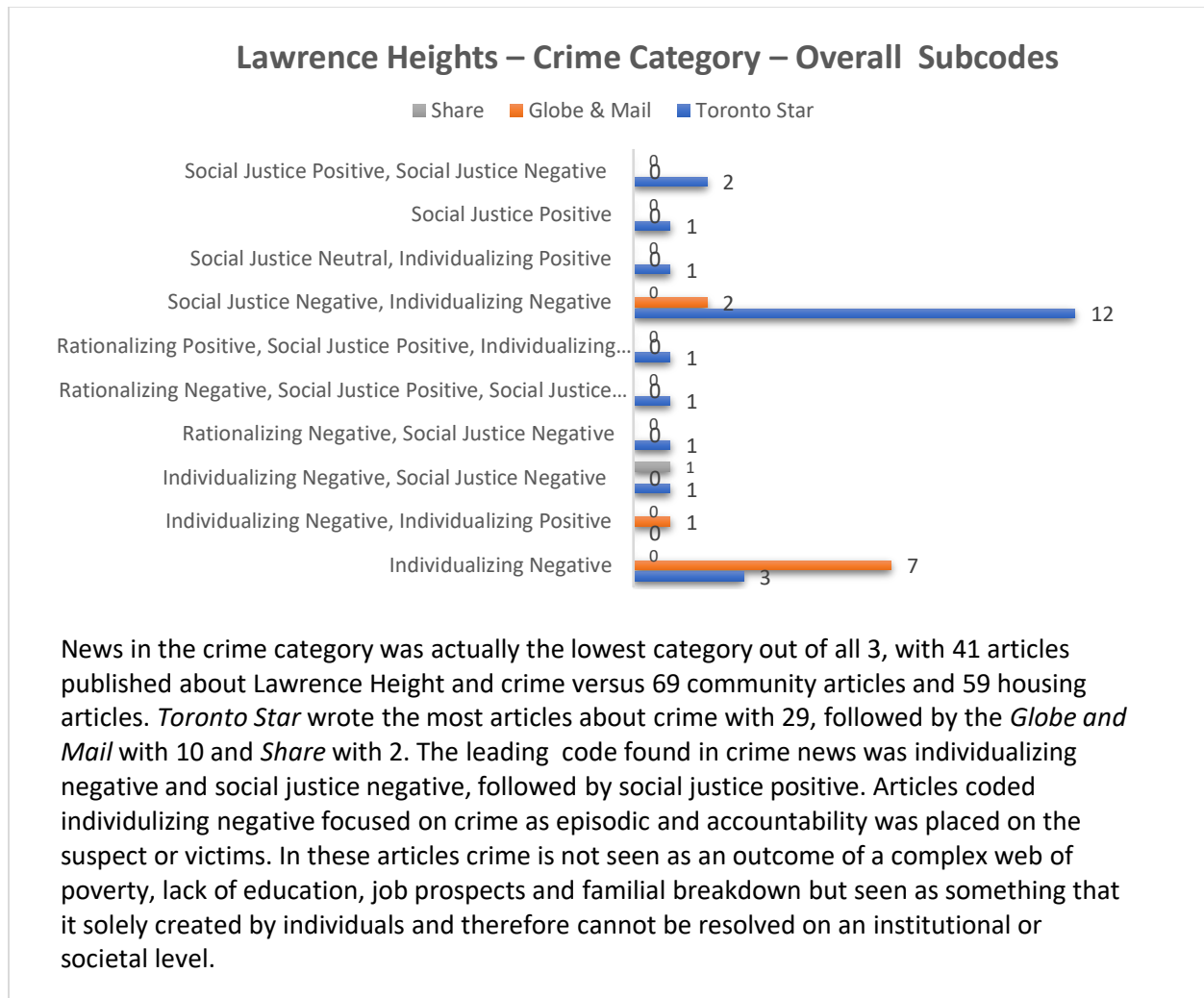
³⁷⁹ Veronis, “Exploring the Margin. ”

³⁸⁰ Joseph Mensah, *Black Canadians: History, Experiences, Social conditions* (Fernwood Publishing, 2002).

³⁸¹ Mensah, *Black Canadians*.

The Black press in 1980 and 1990 was the voice for some Black immigrants who were moving to Toronto and struggled to find media that told their stories and provided ways to help them navigate their new country and all that came with it. This type of news also provided balance to the mainstream news as well as Black journalists and editors with jobs in a journalism work environment that was hostile to Black workers. A magazine like *Share* was created with a standing mandate to empower the Black diasporic community in Canada and abroad. Its mandate focuses mainly on stories of Black Canadians from the Caribbean and Africa. In *Share*, articles that mentioned Lawrence Heights often did so to provide awareness of services and events that could help readers and residents like literacy, scholarships, and recreational programs for youth. The paper also argued for the need for better social supports, education, and job programs for Black people in the city, as well as providing sports, culture, and entertainment news. *Share* was also a space where Black businesses could find affordable advertising space. The magazine took a different approach to the coverage of crime and wrote about the over policing of Black people in Toronto which stood in opposition to how crime was covered in the two mainstream news sources. *Share's* editorial position was similar to *Contrast*, which was a magazine born out of the *West Indian Observer* that often wrote about police brutality and prejudice and how Black people could navigate the material effects of racism. The stark difference between the two was that *Share* remained focused on telling stories that 'uplifted' the community from a more neutral or friendlier tone, whereas *Contrast* operated from a more unabashed and politically-driven perspective. The Black media in Toronto has been crucial to the creation of more nuanced images of Lawrence Heights and Rexdale and Black communities in Toronto as a whole.

CHART 11 - LAWRENCE HEIGHTS – CRIME CATEGORY – OVERALL SUBCODES

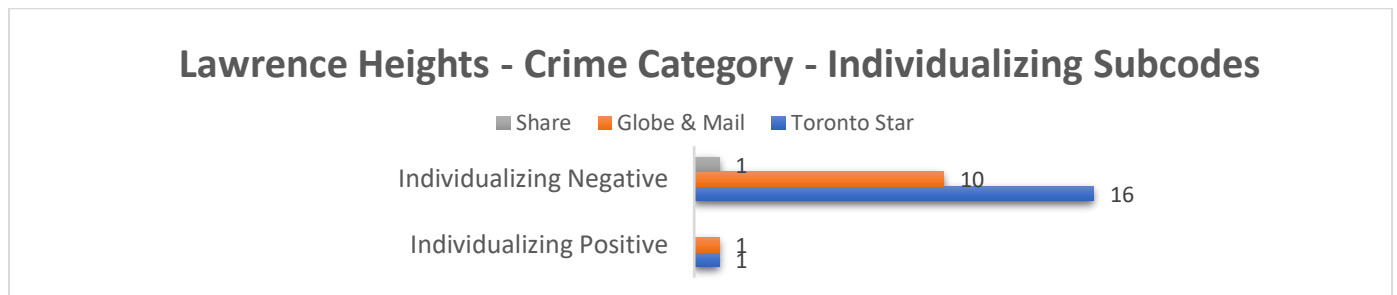


The federal Conservatives won the election in 1984, implemented the free trade agreement and increased taxes to cover social welfare expenditure.³⁸² There was little support for social welfare programs because it was raising taxes, and this can be argued as the reason we see very little news covering housing in Lawrence Heights in 1980 and 1990. This is why many argue that the news media is a function of those in power, because when housing issues are unpopular in the public domain, housing news disappears from the front pages. And the idea

³⁸² Murdie, "Welfare State."

became that being poor was the sum of negative life choices, rather than generational poverty and systemic civic, political, and economic disenfranchisement. In Canada, the image of the poor in the 1950s and 1960s was white and European, and 1980 and 1990 it was changing to immigrant and Black. The image of the poor changed from dust-bowl farmers to Black and brown immigrants who were moving into the city. Therefore, needing public housing, being a victim of a crime or being involved crime was seen as the result of bad choices. People's circumstances, good or bad were attributed to their choices and there was little responsibility put on to government or community officials, the way we saw in the Senator Series article in 1970. The changing images of the poor in the news can tell us how the media thought about the poor at different times, as well as what sorts of images of poverty the public was being exposed to through the mass media.³⁸³

CHART 12 - LAWRENCE HEIGHTS - CRIME CATEGORY - INDIVIDUALIZING SUBCODES



Crime news coverage of Lawrence Heights was presented with mainly individualizing negative and social justice negative subcodes. The rationalizing and individualizing codes appear when the idea of “gang violence” was introduced. In 1970, there was only one article in my sample that mentioned Black people specifically; by in 1980 this had increased. The *Toronto Star*

³⁸³ Gilens, *Why Americans*, 111.

and the *Globe and Mail* in 1980 and 1990 both started bringing up race when reporting on a crime story, which they had not done previously. When Black people began moving into Lawrence Heights and taking up space this became a problem for white residents and the media. Lipsitz points out that there is a correlation between criminality and Black occupancy.³⁸⁴ He argues that Black people moving into a white neighbourhood is seen as a criminal transgression that provokes anger.³⁸⁵ For example, anger was displayed in acts of violence when Black people migrated to the suburban areas of the United States in the 1970s and this is also true as Black people and other racialized people moved into the inner suburbs in Toronto.

In 1980, the *Globe and Mail* and the *Toronto Star* both covered a fight between Black and white youth in Lawrence Heights. The *Globe and Mail* article titled “‘Jungle’ warfare: Black youths say they’re set to strike back” writes about how fights between Black and white residents based on race were happening frequently in the neighbourhood. The article interviewed a Black teenager not named out of fear of reprisal. They said, “their neighbourhood [was] ‘dominated by whites’ and that they [were] afraid to go out at night.”³⁸⁶ The resident went on to say that “it [was] only since this year that blacks have started to fight back.”³⁸⁷

³⁸⁴ Lipsitz, *Race*, 25.

³⁸⁵ Lipsitz, *Race*, 37.

³⁸⁶ “‘Jungle’ warfare: Black youths say they’re set to strike back,” *Globe and Mail*, June 30, 1980.

³⁸⁷ “‘Jungle’ warfare.”

IMAGE 14 - JUNGLE WARFARE: BLACK YOUTHS SAY THEY'RE SET TO STRIKE BACK

"I can't understand how this thing got so big. These things have been happening for years," said 22-year-old Louise.

The youths live in an Ontario Housing Corp. complex in an area bounded by Bathurst Street, Highway 401, Eglinton Avenue and Dufferin Street, popularly known as "the jungle."

They said that their neighborhood is "dominated by whites" and that they are afraid to go out at nights.

"It is only since this year that blacks have started to fight back," one girl said. "We have to fight back. Some of the

blackies are scared of the whities because they are bigger than them and they know boxing and self-defence. Black kids don't usually get into those things.

"Jungle' warfare: Black youths say they're set to strike back." *Globe and Mail* (Toronto, Ontario), June 30, 1980. Toronto Public Library, *Globe and Mail* Historical Newspaper Archive.

The *Globe and Mail* approached the story from the perspective of Black residents who were experiencing violence. They shed light on how "these things have been happening for years"³⁸⁸ and how it had been a normal occurrence. The *Globe and Mail* article also mentioned the term "white people" which helps to stop the erasure that white criminality benefits from which leads to its normalization. In the *Toronto Star* article about the same situation, titled "Outsiders blamed for racial attack" the only person interviewed was a brother of the white teenager who was hospitalized as well as a police inspector. No Black youth involved were interviewed, moreover, the violence was rationalized by blaming it on "outsiders" from "gangs" rather than white residents resorting to violence when they perceived their space was being eroded. The *Toronto Star* article leaned into the rationalizing negative and social justice negative subcodes and attached accountability of the violence to a mythical group that existed outside of the community rather than tackling the issue of racism that was occurring. Moreover, the tensions between Black and white people living together in the same neighbourhood which was

³⁸⁸ "Jungle' warfare."

a newer occurrence was largely dismissed. White criminality was ignored, and Black criminality was highlighted in the sense that it was Black people from outside of Lawrence Heights who came to start violence. Black people cannot be of the neighbourhood and commit crime the same way that the white youth were of the neighbourhood and committing crime – it was not insinuated that the people who came from the outside were white.

Lipsitz writes that the shameful history of white violence in defense of white neighbourhoods remains a protected secret³⁸⁹ and the selective coverage of the *Toronto Star* article is an example of the silencing. This story shows how despite not being the aggressor, Black residents in Lawrence Heights were focused on in a negative light. Blackness becomes associated to crime and transgression was represented as part of an identity or mindset ascribed to a large group of people, while also aligning Blackness with an ‘outsider’ status which made it easier to create and maintain stereotype like Furniss was writing about in relation to whiteness and Indigeneity. In the mainstream news White transgression was accepted as part of the community whereas Black transgression is othered, whereas in Black newspapers the racial tensions was covered from the perspective of the racism Black communities were experiencing.

In 1980, a *Contrast* article highlighted a Regent Park recreational centre called the Central Neighbourhood House that created a program that tried to ease the racial tension in the area by holding an open forum group. The paper interviewed highly regarded York professor, and then Senior Teen Worker at the centre, Carl James, who said of the program that a separate forum group had to be set up for the Black teens “because of hostility against Black teenagers, caused by ignorance of West Indian culture.” This action in turn made the white teens feel “threatened”

³⁸⁹ Lipsitz, *Race*, 26.

and many withdrew from the program leaving it predominately Black despite the fact that “the program was not geared for Blacks only.”³⁹⁰ This perspective on the racial tension from *Contrast* shows how Black teenagers in Toronto were subject to racism and had difficulty when it came to them expressing their ideas on how they were being treated. The Black press covered these instances by giving a voice to the Black teens which in turns helped to give them more power and agency in the community. Crime and violence were contextualized, rather than sensationalized and therefore avoided stereotypical portrayal of the Black teenagers, and rather constructed the transgression of the White teenagers who did not want Black people moving into their neighbourhoods and taking up space. Whether Regent Park, or Lawrence Heights, the increase in public housing residents from Caribbean and then later African countries created racial tension that was framed in the mainstream news as caused by the newcomers, whereas *Contrast* framed it as caused by racism and xenophobia fueled by white supremacy.

Poor planning decisions made in the 1950s had material effects. Lawrence Heights was highly dense, cordoned off with only four ways in and out and a wire fence that blocked it from surrounding neighbourhoods.³⁹¹ In 2012, then area Councillor Josh Colle, argued, “the planning behind this community resulted in an island-effect due to its isolation, marginalization, and segregation.”³⁹² In this article residents were trying to fight the stigma of Lawrence Heights being a lawless place, however, for these residents living there in some ways was analogous to living in a community with its own set of rules. Lawrence Heights got its nickname of “the jungle” in 1975.

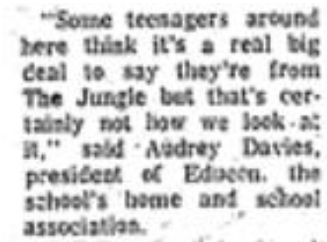
³⁹⁰ “Neighbourhood program to ease tension.” *Contrast*. January 4, 1980.

³⁹¹ Webster, “Deconstructing.”

³⁹² Webster, “Deconstructing.”

This nickname first appeared in my sample in a *Toronto Star* article. The article reads, “the Jungle – [is] the name given the area by teenagers – and it worries the parents in the development.”³⁹³

IMAGE 15 - RESIDENTS FIGHT STIGMA OF AN ‘OHC JUNGLE’



Residents fight stigma of an ‘OHC Jungle,’ *Globe and Mail*, October 15, 1975, B1. Toronto Public Library, *Globe and Mail* Historical Newspaper Archive.

In a *Toronto Star* article, titled “High-rise residents fear teenage hallway gangs” the article covered the complaints of residents who were worried about ‘teenage gangs’ who hung out in the hallways of apartments. The article interviewed Moscoe again, which had been a common trend of the individualizing code in both mainstream news sources in telling the story from the perspective of a government official. He was quoted as saying that some of the issues were that residents use[d] the hallways as a “private clubhouse” where they engaged in “pot smoking and dope dealing, vandalism and general harassment.”³⁹⁴ The biggest issue was that Black youth trying to find space were criminalized and there was a correlation made between space, Blackness, drugs and crime. It became a situation where stereotypes made people scared of encountering these “hallway gangs.” The article also highlighted that the teenagers in the hallways was a recent problem because before, Lawrence Heights was typically seen as one of the “most stable public housing projects in Metro.”³⁹⁵ The article interviewed Jean Lance, the

³⁹³ “Residents fight stigma of an ‘OHC Jungle,’” *Toronto Star*, Oct 15, 1975, B1.

³⁹⁴ “High-rise residents fear teenage hallway gang,” *Toronto Star*, December 8, 1980.

³⁹⁵ “High-rise residents fear.”

president of the Lawrence Heights Resident's Association who brought up immigration and said that "part of the problem [was] that it may be acceptable to people from other cultures to play cards or hang around in stairways."³⁹⁶ This article is coded as individualizing negative because the problems were blamed on the people that lived there. There was a public perception of the right way to use common elements of a building, like stairs, and a transgression or perceived non-normative behaviour of the Black teens in Lawrence Heights became tied to another place, outside of Canada, which destabilized these ways of claiming space as normal Canadian behaviour. Which in and of itself is ironic because Indigenous peoples have the stake in the land. There is an erasure of Indigenous right to land that has happened in Canada, so if the Black teens are tied to another place, the white teens are also, because the first peoples on the land were Indigenous. However selective tradition and the ontology of forgetting makes more visible Black immigration and placemaking than white. The sometimes explicit but always implicit message underlying these negative representations in the media is that some immigrants, namely those identified as high-skilled and white, provide an economic benefit to Canada while others pose a 'burden.' There is a script written for newcomers to follow and the mainstream news media becomes a place to create constructions of the ideal immigrant, where they come from, where they live, and how long their family has been in Canada.

Focusing on American welfare systems, Gilens writes that "gradual demographic changes in residential patterns and welfare receipt by African Americans laid the groundwork for the changes to come in how Americans viewed the poor."³⁹⁷ By connecting crime to immigrants, and

³⁹⁶ "High-rise residents fear."

³⁹⁷ Gilens, *Why Americans*, 107.

immigrants to Lawrence Heights, Lawrence Heights becomes stereotyped as a place where gang violence and activity occurs because of immigrants who do not follow the Canadian way of life. It creates a dichotomy of Lawrence Heights gang members and gang members “outside of the area” in search of them. The framing of violence caused by “gangs” and people “outside of the neighbourhood” has many effects. First it makes people scared of gangs and overexaggerates their presence, second it places the resolution of serious violence in a vague place where solutions seem impossible, which makes the violence rendered unsolvable and unable to change. By saying “outsiders” the articles were not referring to outsider white residents but Black residents living in other well-known public housing in areas such as Jane-Finch, Scarborough, and Jamestown in Rexdale. They were pointing to areas in which the public knows, but the descriptions are still vague enough that the stereotyping is discrete. The word “gangs” evokes a level of apathy towards the issue and those experiencing violence were constructed as a result of negative life choices. Moreover, because the violence is concentrated to a Black space, anyone who experienced violence in the area was stereotyped. This then lends to many residents who’ve never been involved in crime a day in their lives being murdered, and their deaths not eliciting major public outcry, or increased proper civil and social services, rather over policing and increased surveillance of Blackness.

This article was also coded as social justice negative code because it did not create awareness of programs or services for these teenagers in terms of community integration, after-school activities, recreational spaces, and career help. With the government emphasis on individuality and neoliberalism, came a hands-off approach, and Lawrence Heights was not properly funded at a time when new immigrants needed the support. In the 1980 and 1990

samples, the individualizing negative subcode was often found in mainstream news about Lawrence Heights, and there were more articles written about crime and less of a focus on community and housing. Moreover, in the mainstream news crime was always connected back to race and stereotypes were reinforced that created connections between fear, Black people, and Lawrence Heights

In 1990 there was clear division between the community and police and it only continued to widen. As more Black people moved into the area searching for affordable housing this also led an increased frequency in the stories about Black people in relation to crime. Most of the crime articles in 1960 focused on speeding, assault, and drunk driving and most of the perpetrators were white although race was never named. In 1980 and 1990, we see crime connected to Blackness and blamed on individuals as well as a whole community with a focus on crime, drugs, gangs, and fights. Both *Globe and Mail* and the *Toronto Star*, published a very low number of articles on Lawrence Heights, and the only ones it did were about crime. In Toronto, Lindgren in her study, and Jahiu and Cinnamon in theirs also found it revealing that police and crime related matters received the most focus, and that "several neighbourhoods have received disproportionate attention, particularly in the North York and Downtown areas."³⁹⁸ In the mainstream news the relationship between the Black community and the police was not brought up in any articles, despite it being a very popular topic in the Black press.

³⁹⁸ Lindgren, April. "13. Aiding And Abetting: How Police Media-Information Units Shape Local News Coverage" In *Covering Canadian Crime: What Journalists Should Know and the Public Should Question*. 193-216. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016.

Share and other Black media created the possibility and space for socially contextualized crime reporting. In 1990, an article in *Share* offered a different perspective on crime and looked at how Black people were over policed in their neighbourhoods. The police were presented as making the lives of Black people in Lawrence Heights difficult. Titled “Community group says: Cops terrorizing Blacks,” Akua Benjamin, a professor of Social Work and member of the Black Action Defence Committee was interviewed. She said that “Blacks in communities like Jane/Finch, Regent Park, Flemington Park (Lawrence Heights) [were] harassed and brutalized by the police because of the racist stereotype that all Black men [were] drug dealers, and these communities [were] drug havens.”³⁹⁹ The conference in which these remarks were spoken was organized by the Jamaican Canadian Association to “explore the painful issues that affected the community and the police.”⁴⁰⁰ Although *Share* wrote about the police, they did not do this often, because of their mandate. *Contrast* also wrote heavily about the police relations with the Black community often calling out unjust and prejudice practices in which Black people were “beaten, held incommunicado and then released or asked to answer charges that were fabricated.”⁴⁰¹ The paper echoed Akua Benjamin’s remarks that “Black people in Toronto were being terrorized by the police.” The media is a conduit for representation, it is a powerful tool that can be used to stoke feelings of resentment and intolerance towards racialized people as well as provide a platform for raising awareness about the lived experiences of people from racialized communities. This counter image of Black people being a victim at the hands of unjust policing is framed as common and constant, which showcased how when Black people descended on

³⁹⁹ “Community group says: Cops terrorizing Blacks,” *Share*, May 3, 1990.

⁴⁰⁰ “Community group says: Cops.”

⁴⁰¹ “Police and Black people” *Contrast*.

Toronto their actions, movements and behaviours were immediately surveilled and regulated. The Black press called policing into question and public officials were held accountable. Although *share* rarely covered crime, when they did, they gave the residents the chance to see themselves through a different lens. *Share* not only made its focus on uplift because of negative mainstream media coverage, but also because competition for Black audiences as well. When *Share* was created in 1979 about ten years after *Contrast*, they started with the goal of being less political than *Contrast*, however, with that being said, they still wrote about political issues affecting the Black community such as unjust policing.

In *Share*, Lawrence Heights and other predominate Black areas were not seen as a place of violence but rather communities that could help residents attain a better standard of life. *Share* wrote the most articles in my sample in the community category. The first articles seen in *Share* about Lawrence Heights reported on the local library, Bathurst Heights, that offered an Adult Literacy program that helped newcomers learn how to speak English.⁴⁰² Moreover, the magazine brought attention to different mental health supports available to Black men through community ads such as that shown below. *Share*, unlike the mainstream media offered articles that helped people to obtain skills or inform them of programs that could assist them in their life, especially with relevant information that may be difficult to access otherwise. *Share* did not criminalize the space by only seeing it through the lens of violence or the police but showed an area that was providing support for its community through skills training and recreation hubs. Citizens were presented taking up space and offering educational resources whether it be about confronting family violence as new immigrants or embracing and owning one's Blackness.

⁴⁰² "Reading Classes for Metro Adults," *Share*, May 19, 1980.

IMAGE 16 - GROUP WANTS MORE MEN



Group wants more men, *Share*, October 11, 1980. Toronto Public Library, Share Archive.

Without *Share* news, there would be a lack of positive and nuanced representation in my sample, and it demonstrates just how important alternative independent news was and continues to be in countering negative representations often found in the mainstream news. In Susan Ruddick's discussion of race, scale, and place in Toronto and Canada, she outlines how Blackness can be "comfortably" forgotten because Canadian racism effectively denies the Black community any geographic relevancy.⁴⁰³ Space is typically only seen as Black in relation to crime; however, *Share* sees it as Black in relation to community, togetherness, and activism.

In 1980, and 1990 Canada was undergoing two major shifts as it became a prime destination for immigrants from many parts of the global South, coupled with the proliferation of free market politics and the North American Free Trade Agreement. In the 1980s, fueled by Multicultural policies, independent ethnic media started to grow in Canada; we saw the creation of many local community newspapers that served the Black community in Toronto and its diaspora. In my sample, after the creation of *Share* there was an increase in frequency of articles in the community category, as well as articles with a social justice positive subcode. These

⁴⁰³ McKittrick, *Demonic*, 132.

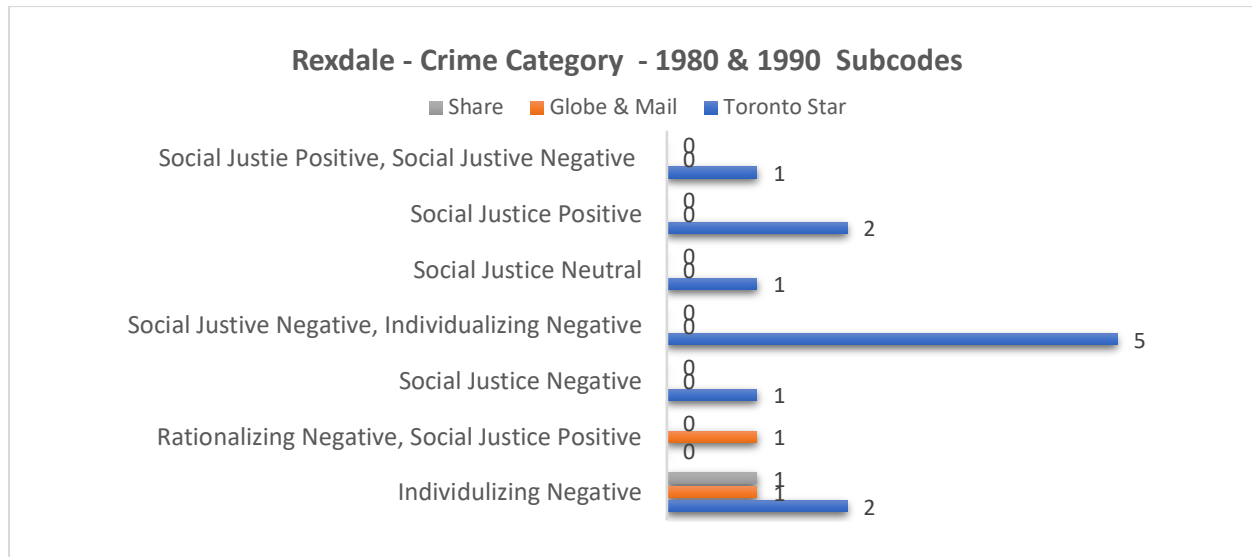
counterimages were important to disrupt the continuation of stereotype usage in the mainstream news crime coverage, which were told in high frequency because of crime's profitability for media companies during an economic downturn.

REXDALE

Beginning in the 1970s and then blooming in the 80s and 90s large volumes of immigrant families gravitated to public housing in Toronto. This occurred for a few reasons – the units were low-cost; the apartments were family-friendly and there was ok proximity to work and ethnic institutions.”⁴⁰⁴ As racialized communities increased in Rexdale public housing, this created a new set of issues similar to that of Lawrence Heights where white residents clashed with newcomers. Rexdale saw a large increase in the population of residents from the South Asian community, particularly India and Pakistan and they settled mostly in Thistletown 1 and 2 as well as newer public housing buildings that went up in the 70s and 80s. As South Asian people settled into the community, there were clashes between white residents and South Asian residents because of racism. White residents did not like that South Asians were moving into the neighbourhood and there were hate crimes committed against the South Asian community. In 1980, the majority of news that was published by the *Globe and Mail* and the *Toronto Star* covered instances of racial violence against Asian people in the area.

⁴⁰⁴ Sutama Ghosh, “Everyday Lives in Vertical Neighbourhoods: Exploring Bangladeshi Residential Spaces in Toronto’s Inner Suburbs,” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 38, no. 6 (October 2014).

CHART 13 - REXDALE - CRIME CATEGORY - 1980 & 1990 SUBCODES



In an article titled “Racial tensions spread by press” the article interviewed Metro Toronto Police Chief, Jack Ackroyd, who said that the city’s newspapers were “[doing] more to stir things up than anything else.”⁴⁰⁵ Although Ackroyd admitted there was racially-motivated violence, he wondered how much the news had exacerbated the issue. The incident that occurred was when OHC resident “Amir Din and his family were attacked in the lobby of their apartment building by a group of white youth.”⁴⁰⁶ After this attack, the Pakistani community took justice into their own hands and retaliated against the group of youth who committed the assault which ended up with Din with broken jaw and head injuries.⁴⁰⁷ Moreover, some of the white youth⁴⁰⁸ were beaten with hockey sticks and one was stabbed. Ackroyd was correct in that this one event was heavily covered and was the main topic of most mainstream articles about crime in Rexdale in 1980. The articles presented mostly a rationalizing negative and individualizing negative subcodes because

⁴⁰⁵ “Racial tensions spread by press, Ackroyd says,” *The Globe and Mail*, May 21, 1980.

⁴⁰⁶ “Racial tensions spread.”

⁴⁰⁷ “Godfrey urges calm after new race violence,” *Toronto Star*, 1980.

⁴⁰⁸ “Immigrants start fighting back,” *Toronto Star*, May 18, 1980.

racism and xenophobia were rarely brought up as a way to contextualize the violence. Moreover, the mainstream news did not criticize the Metro Police for not pursuing the crime as racially motivated hate. However, because of the public outcry by the Pakistani community there was more pressure on the police and government to act.

Starting in the mid 1970s, Canada went through its second wave of racist activity which targeted Black people, Asians, Indigenous Catholic and Canada's French communities. The rise of multicultural policy made an impact on public and police policy which eventually informed discourse about hate crime.⁴⁰⁹ As a result of the violence on their property the Ontario Housing Corporation (OHC) promised to do a security review that was covered in a *Globe and Mail* article titled "OHC security review promised by Bennet." In this article it was revealed that the OHC spent about 20 times as much for security services in Metro Toronto than it did in Ottawa, Sudbury and Hamilton combined."⁴¹⁰ The article accused the OHC of not doing enough to prevent racially-motivated attacks on their property. The Housing Minister at the time Claude Bennett responded by saying "there [was] a limit on the number of dollars this Government [could] commit to in putting guard services at work."⁴¹¹ To try to deal with the racial tension, the focus became on individuals within the building, rather than looking at broader racial tensions in the country.⁴¹² The article was coded as social justice negative, because the violence was framed as if it could have been prevented with more surveillance, however the root cause of white

⁴⁰⁹ T, Bryan. *Race, Diversity, and the Politics of Hate Crime: An Analysis of Police Response to Racially Motivated Hate Crimes in the Greater Toronto Area*. 2019.

⁴¹⁰ "OHC security review promised by Bennett," *The Globe and Mail*, May 16, 1980, 5.

⁴¹¹ "OHC security review."

⁴¹² Clause to evict racists is urged for all leases," *The Globe and Mail*, May 1, 1980, 1.

supremacy was not addressed. The city was undergoing tension between newcomers and white residents, and the activity of the KKK in the region was also apparent.

The *Toronto Star* also reported on the same instance of violence, however, unlike the *Globe and Mail*, it connected the attack to existing cultural tensions. This is different than the fight between Black and white residents in Lawrence Heights, where the *Globe and Mail* presented a more nuanced perspective than the *Toronto Star*. An article titled “Violence is not the answer” wrote that “the incidents [served] to remind us that we cannot be complacent about the tensions that [existed] in Metro as people of different cultural and racial backgrounds [attempted] to live in harmony with one another. At present time, such tensions were heightened by economic hard times and high unemployment, especially among young people.”⁴¹³ The *Toronto Star* tried to connect high unemployment and the economy to the hate crime which was fair but not necessarily the entire cause of the tension. South Asians were trying to claim space in a predominately white neighbourhood and experienced violence because of this. However, this issue of racism and xenophobia was avoided in the mainstream news. The *Toronto Star* did get it right when it wrote that “racial tolerance and harmony among neighbours can only be achieved through changing attitudes and discarding old prejudice,”⁴¹⁴ but they did not provide any tangible ways for this to happen. *Contrast* also covered this violent incident with an article headline that read “Rexdale couple racially attacked.” This article unlike the ones by the *Globe and Mail* and *Toronto Star*, framed the violence as caused by racist white youth, and highlighted how the police felt there were “insufficient groups for a racial hatred charge.”⁴¹⁵ In the 80s and

⁴¹³ “Violence is not the answer,” *Toronto Star*, May 18, 1980, B2.

⁴¹⁴ “Violence is not.”

⁴¹⁵ “Rexdale couple racially attacked.” *Contrast*. May 15, 1980.

90s Canada was undergoing more racial tension than it ever had in the past and it was struggling with how to reconcile Multicultural policy with hate and a downturn in the economy.

This was the only event in my entire sample that all three sources covered. A *Share* article titled “Concern for our youth” also wrote about how a Pakistani resident (Din) of Rexdale was attacked and hospitalized because of his race. The article provided some context about how the attack occurred and highlighted that “it [was] disturbing to think that a crowd gathered and no one from that crowd made an attempt to subdue these vicious and misguided youths.”⁴¹⁶ The article groups this issue with another act of racism during a robbery at Albion Mall. This is one of the rare times a *Share* article was coded as social justice negative because the youth who assaulted Amir Din and his family were not highlighted as being white, but those involved with the bank robbery at the mall were highlighted as being Black. Which was a theme we saw in the 1960s news, in that whiteness benefits from invisibility. Moreover, the brief nature of the article which covered two incidents of violence seemed more like a fluff piece than a real article examining racism.

The South Asian community disagreed with the media coverage and police handling of the case. In a *Toronto Star* article titled “Metro’s Asians cool to latest racism suggestions,” the article wrote how a “a report outlining way of combating racism in Metro [was] being called a “Band Aid’ treatment by Metro’s Asian community.”⁴¹⁷ Jhaiman Gosal, the general secretary of the East India Worker’s Association was interviewed and said, “if this [was] a report to cool the East Indian community down they [were] making a big mistake.” He went on to add that “very

⁴¹⁶ “Concern for our Youth,” *Share*, Jan 19, 1980.

⁴¹⁷ “Metro’s Asians cool to latest racism suggestions,” *Toronto Star*, May 31, 1980, A11.

few of the [number of recommendations] had been implemented by the province or city.”⁴¹⁸ By interviewing Gosal, the *Toronto Star* showed someone from the community speaking out about a deep-rooted problem that was being ignored by city officials. He continued to say that “people were sick of reports,”⁴¹⁹ which was true as the different levels of government and the OHC had yet to take action. With the increase of immigrant communities moving to the inner suburbs in search of affordable housing came the tension wound with a neighbourhood’s changing demographics. Moreover, Canada’s downturn in the economic also meant that the new immigrants that arrived were in a tough job environment. For a long time, South Asian people were prevented from coming to Canada because of racism. When they came to Canada, and tried to make space for themselves, their existence was threatened by people who wanted to continue to control their movements.

Much like the League of Frightened Mothers, and Black residents in Lawrence Heights, South Asian immigrants in Rexdale were attacked and felt like they had to defend themselves, rather than getting support of the police. Charges were eventually pressed against those who attacked Din and his family, however the Metro Police felt there was “insufficient evidence for police and the Crown attorney to lay charges of inciting hatred.”⁴²⁰ In 1980, Canada did not have the laws in place to support the charge of hate crime. Finally, in 1993 with Bill C-90 the federal Canada “introduced a new framework for sentencing hate crime and section 718.2 outlined the framework that determined enhanced sentencing of bias, prejudice, and hate.”⁴²¹

⁴¹⁸ “Metro’s Asians cool.”

⁴¹⁹ “Metro’s Asians cool.”

⁴²⁰ Clause to evict racists is urged for all leases Keddy, Barbara. *The Globe and Mail* (1936-); Toronto, Ont. [Toronto, Ont]. 15 May 1980: 1.

⁴²¹ Bryan, Timothy. “Race, Diversity, and the Politics of hate crime: An analysis of police response to racially motivated hate crimes in the greater Toronto Area.” *Socio-legal Studies*. York University, 2019.

Eventually Din expressed his desire to move to another OHC apartment because of the lack of safety. At this point the discussion turned to extra security and adding a clause in OHC contracts that required tenants who “practiced racial discrimination be evicted.”⁴²² This article was coded as social justice positive because it provided a voice to Dr. Bhanusaheb Ubale, who explained how “racial attacks were physical and psychological” in that they “create[d] a feeling of insecurity and that [was] not a desirable way for a person to live.”⁴²³ The article showcased the larger implications of racist attacks on OHC property because it made residents feel unsafe. Although the call for extra security was a common theme, interviewing a psychologist who brought in the concept of psychological safety was a move towards seeing safety and crime reduction as a matter of public health. These incidents in Rexdale showed how Canada was really not ready to cope with racism despite the creation of multicultural policy.

The push towards free-market politics meant that Canada was no longer investing as much money into social welfare programs. The news on housing focused on a new shopping centre and the OHC wanting to move families who were in public housing into privately owned buildings. In 1980 and 1990 the news on housing in Rexdale was the smallest category out of the three. The *Globe and Mail* included eight articles, the *Toronto Star* contained three articles and *Share* did not publish any. Most of the articles that examined housing were about the maintenance or sale of aging public housing buildings, a new mall slated to be built in Rexdale and the area’s growth as a business and industrial hub. In the 1980s in Europe, the US and other

⁴²² Clause to evict racists is urged for all leases Keddy, Barbara. *The Globe and Mail* (1936-); Toronto, Ont. [Toronto, Ont]. 15 May 1980: 1.

⁴²³ Clause to evict racists is urged for all leases Keddy, Barbara. *The Globe and Mail* (1936-); Toronto, Ont. [Toronto, Ont]. 15 May 1980: 1

parts of the world “advanced democracies were reversing the growth of the welfare state by eliminating or shrinking welfare programs at all levels.”⁴²⁴ In Canada, government funding for affordable housing was pulled back, which meant that it was difficult to find the money to perform much needed renovations. The OHC began to think of other ways to fund the construction of new public housing as well as its expensive maintenance. They turned to the idea of renting out apartments at market-rate and selling buildings they deemed could not be fixed for a reasonable sum of money.

In a *Globe and Mail* column titled “Harsh Words on Housing” written by Dick Beddoes, he examined a speech and a report by then Housing Minister Claude Bennett. Bennett had been quoted as saying the government “was looking at some way of reducing the number of public tenants in various projects across Ontario.” Moreover, a report titled “Options for the Future” argued for the sale of public housing buildings and instead of building new ones, tenants would be placed in private housing and would get a subsidy in return.”⁴²⁵ In the late 1980s, early 90s the OHC was trying to sell off some rental units in Etobicoke. Beddoes in his article noted that, there was “less attention directed to 'saving' and improving the quality and affordability of existing rental stock.”⁴²⁶ The government had been actively trying to sell more public housing buildings, and the article quoted Donald Richmond, the deputy commissioner of Metro Planning, and George Coleman of the Metro Housing Council, who both said that “the government did not need to build any additional social housing because the private and non-profit sector could meet

⁴²⁴ John Fere. “Changes in Welfare Policy in the 1980s.” National Bureau of Economic Research. January 1991.

⁴²⁵ “Harsh words on housing,” *The Globe and Mail*, March 5, 1980, 8.

⁴²⁶ Murray, *Housing*.

the demand.⁴²⁷ There were many people who disagreed with this plan including the Social Housing Action Coalition who argued that moving previously publicly housed families into private buildings would be costly to the government. Moreover, this non-profit organization also noted in the report that laid out these plans, that the OHC showed little respect for tenants throughout the document as there were many references to tenants causing “high costs, vandalism and violence, and that they weren’t upwardly mobile.”⁴²⁸ This article was coded as social justice positive because it provided information about the OHC’s future plans of selling public-housing buildings, as well news that the management of housing was moving to the Metro Toronto Non-Profit Housing Corporation, which would eventually become the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC).

Former Housing Minister Claude Bennett responded to the article written by Beddoes in his own article titled “Tenants need not fear” published in the *Globe and Mail*. He wrote that Beddoes’s article had “needlessly upset thousands of Metro Toronto residents” and made them feel that they would be evicted to make room for higher-income families.”⁴²⁹ Bennett said that statements by “politically-motivated third parties [were] continuing to play on the fears, they themselves have aroused.”⁴³⁰ Despite saying that these claims were not true, in this article Bennet did confirm that the “Options for the Future” report showcased a “mixed-income” concept, where tenants paid rent according to their incomes within private buildings. He said

⁴²⁷ “Harsh words on housing,” 8.

⁴²⁸ “Harsh words on housing,” 8.

⁴²⁹ “Tenants need not fear Bennett,” *The Globe and Mail*, March 8 198, 7.

⁴³⁰ “Tenants need not fear.”

that if this option came to light, current OHC tenants would not have to leave their homes. Which was not always true especially when the sale of the Bergamot building happened later that year.

During the expansion of the OHC outside of the Thistletown developments in Rexdale, the government purchased a building to “meet mushrooming demand.”⁴³¹ The building was purchased in 1965 for \$1.69 million but sold less than four years later for \$1.25 million to a private company. At first, the OHC was going to do a renovation, but instead chose to sell when renovation costs became too high.⁴³² Unfortunately, the tenants in the building were evicted with the promise of being able to move back after renovations were complete, but then the OHC sold the building. In a *Globe and Mail* article titled, “Repairs too costly, OHC sells housing at \$437,000 loss,” the article interviewed an activist from Social Housing Action Coalition who said that the “OHC misled tenants and wasted taxpayer money by buying an obviously inadequate property and then failing to maintain it.”⁴³³ This example showed that in the 60s, the OHC was unable to keep up with the need for public housing, which caused missteps that later affected residents in the 80s. Moreover, in this article we did not hear about what happened to the tenants who would now have to find new homes. In 1980 and 1990, the overall maintenance of OHC housing was called into question.⁴³⁴ In an in-depth article titled “Suburbs face crisis, Metro warned” published in the *Globe and Mail*, covered how the Toronto Metro area faced a crisis of neglected problems transplanted from the inner city to the inner suburbs. The report highlighted changes in family structure, pointing out that single parents and workers mothers were more

⁴³¹ “Repairs too costly OHC sells housing at \$437,000 loss,” *The Globe and Mail*, May 8, 1980.

⁴³² “Repairs too costly.”

⁴³³ “Repairs too costly.”

⁴³⁴ “Boy hurt, window screens called unsafe,” *The Globe and Mail*, July 7, 1980, 5.

common, and that subsidized daycare had to come along with public housing. The movement by the government towards privatizing public housing began at time when there was a lack of government funding, and the mainstream media published more nuanced dialogue questioning the federal government's actions and policies through opinion pieces, which was different that how the paper's covered housing during the creation of Rexdale in the 60s when it typically only criticized the municipality.

Share published most of the stories that were coded as social justice positive in the community category not just in 1980 and 1990 but for the entire sample. In 1990 the newspaper covered the rarely addressed issue of family violence in an article titled "End Family Violence". The article reported on a three-day-long conference on family violence organized by the Harambee Centres of Canada. The conference was put together by racialized groups and the Indigenous community as well as the police. The relationship between these two groups and the police had historically been tense and conference organizers hoped to bring the two sides together to "provide a bridge"⁴³⁵ said Dr. Al Harris the Director of Clinical Services at Harambee. The article interviewed one of the conference panelists, community worker Rita Kohli, who explained immigrant women did not want to talk to the police. She said, "there was a lot of community pressure on the woman to not report their husband to a police officer force they assumed [was] racist, she also added that "ethnic communities often discouraged women from reporting behaviour that might give the community a bad name."⁴³⁶ The issue of family violence within public housing units has been rarely discussed up to this point. Although it happened in

⁴³⁵ "Community told: End family violence," *Share*, March 19, 1990.

⁴³⁶ "Community told."

every neighbourhood including public housing complexes, the article here connected it to the Rexdale community because *Share* tried to bring awareness and options for readers who were dealing tension surrounding domestic violence, stereotypes, stigmas, and the police. The *Toronto Star* also covered this issue a decade earlier in 1980 in an article titled “Family violence: Fastest growing crime”. The article mentioned how violence had increasingly become a family affair and that the government had spent \$371 million annually on children’s services. Unlike the article in *Share*, the *Toronto Star* simply just mentioned the numbers, but *Share* took a deeper look and explicitly examined the cultural, ethnic, and religious nuances around this sensitive issue. Moreover, in their article, community associations took a stand to help to educate the public.

The Harambee program that put on the conference about family violence also showed up in another *Share* article. Then Premier, David Peterson, congratulated the Harambee Centre and Foundation during a fundraising dinner for the association that *Share* later wrote about. The goal of the Harambee Centre was to deliver “professional, culturally sensitive counselling on social and educational matters to the minority community.”⁴³⁷ The work that associations like this did in communities like Rexdale were examples of advocates trying to claim their right to the city. They were providing important services that residents did not have easy access to and *Share’s* coverage brought awareness to their important work. *Share* wrote 34 social justice positive articles in the community category in my Rexdale sample. This was the highest number of articles written that were coded as social justice positive and shows how important their mandate of telling positive stories was, because without *Share* rationalizing positive, individualizing negative, and social justice negative codes would lead. The community newspaper presents programs and

⁴³⁷ “Premier praises Harambee,” *Share*, March 1, 1990.

groups who are making a difference as a source of awareness and a way to show racialized people who were making a difference. The social justice positive subcode was also found in another *Share* article titled “Making the difference” which interviewed Angela McCormack who ran the West Indian Volunteers Youth Program. The goal of the program was to help families work through the cultural tensions that came from being of two cultures (Canadian and Caribbean). McCormack said, “the problem [was] that it [was] a difference culture here, and the expectations of parents and daughters [were] different. The parents still want[ed] to maintain their West Indian culture and [did] not make allowances for Canadian Culture and vice versa.”⁴³⁸ McCormack ran a Big Brother or Special Friend program with over twenty volunteers who offered tutorial, social and recreation programs. McCormack also ran her volunteer training in community centres in neighbourhoods that used their services like the North Kipling Community Centre in Rexdale. Finally *Share* also covered the Canadian Reggae Awards⁴³⁹ that took place in Rexdale in 1990. The 6th annual Canadian Reggae Music Awards were held at what was once the Skyline Hotel on Dixon Road and featured international and reggae super stars. Coverage of events like this that took place in Rexdale diverged from what we usually saw in mainstream news. It was an event that brought the whole community together through music, and it was not covered in the other two mainstream newspapers.

In 1980 and 1990 there was a change in the landscape as more immigrants moved to Toronto. As Asian people moved to Rexdale, white residents retaliated out of hate to make them

⁴³⁸ “Making the Difference,” *Share*, February 1, 1990, 1.

⁴³⁹ “Reggae awards set for Sunday,” *Share*, February 8, 1990.

scared to take up space. The majority of codes found in crime news were individualizing negative and rationalizing negative. In terms of housing, the subcodes were mostly rationalizing positive and negative because the OHC could not keep up with the demand or the maintenance of buildings. In my sample crime was rarely coded as social justice positive, but that code was found more in housing and community news, especially when examining *Share* articles. In the category of community news, the social justice positive code led as programs and associations that helped people were profiled in *Share* as the paper tried to inform people of the resources and social services available to them. Like with Lawrence Height, the introduction of independent, racialized news meant that the ways that Black people were represented in Rexdale changed for the better, and stories did not rely of stereotype or crime to highlight what was happening in the Black community in the Toronto.

CHAPTER 5: FRAMING VIOLENCE AND COMMUNITY IN THE WAKE OF 13

INTRODUCTION

In 2000, both the *Globe and Mail* and the *Toronto Star* published 6 articles altogether about Rexdale and Lawrence Heights, which was a continuation of the low numbers published 1980 and 1990. From 2000 to 2010 there was an upshot in news about these two areas mainly because of what happened in 2005 dubbed the year of the gun which saw Lawrence Heights, Rexdale and 11 other neighbourhoods classified priority. In the early 2000s, most of the stories published by the *Globe and Mail* focused on crime. Moreover, the way they framed crime and violence blamed the individual, gangs, and/or countries the individual immigrated from. Wendy Chan writes how the news coverage at this time drew an image of indiscriminately threatening Jamaican criminals who had no respect for Canadian values.⁴⁴⁰ The mainstream news's overpowering images of Black deviance were impossible to ignore in 2000, 2010 and 2020, as Black men were always framed as the suspect and never the victim. For instance, despite the fact that 40 Black young men lost their lives in 2005 to gun violence, it was only after the death of Jane Creba that the government acted and created sweeping changes to social policy and injected millions into proactive and reactive solutions like 13 and Toronto Anti-Violence Strategy (TAVIS). There was a high frequency of stories that framed crime and violence in both neighbourhoods as an individual and neighbourhood problem, moreover, crime articles conflated many murders and violence into one article, rarely connecting it to gun

⁴⁴⁰ Chan, *Racialization*, 58.

policy or economic and social barriers that continued to exclude neighbourhoods from active participation in civic life.

It can be argued that 2005 got the ball rolling on the major development changes to Regent Park and then Lawrence Heights. After the year of the gun there was a renewed focus on housing and many calls to redevelop Lawrence Heights so it would be less isolated. In 2010, the redevelopment was framed as a positive change, but many were worried it would disconnect the neighbourhood. The main opposition was that the city was only undertaking the plan because of the area's prime location near Yorkdale and the subway system. In 2010, although the frequency of crime stories remained high in both of the mainstream papers, the *Globe and Mail* and the *Toronto Star*, did write more stories about community and began to frame violence as a product of a complex web of issues rather than simply blaming one person and gangs.

The role of *Share* in my sample provided balance because they told stories about community and connected Lawrence Heights and Rexdale to events, programs and people who were actively trying to better the situation of the residents. *Share* often wrote news that benefitted the community and when focusing on individuals, told stories of how they were able to overcome barriers and live a better quality of life. Although *Share* rarely covered Lawrence Heights and Rexdale specifically, when they did write about social issues affecting the Black community in Toronto, they wrote long, detailed, well-researched pieces that looked at intertwining aspects of what created and maintained crime and poverty.

In 2020 the Covid-19 pandemic changed the entire world and shone a light on majority Black neighbourhoods because people there were dying of Covid-19 more. The pandemic

opened the conversation to alternative approaches to addressing gun violence, like paying students to finish high school and paying ex-gang members to mentor current gang members on how to transition out of organized crime. Moreover, there was a call for gun violence to be seen as a public health epidemic as the Covid-19 pandemic showed that preventative healthcare for those at risk of death was not just morally right but beneficial to all of society.

2000, 2010, 2020

LAWRENCE HEIGHTS

The Metropolitan Toronto Council was officially disbanded in 1998 after a campaign by the Conservative Harris government of Ontario to reduce levels of government in Toronto and eliminate a two-tier government system. A one-tier system was developed that amalgamated the six municipalities of Toronto, Etobicoke, North York, East York, Scarborough, and York. There was much resistance to this new form of government and public objection to what seemed like a megacity, however because the province had typically been more powerful than the municipality, the Harris government pushed along with the plan.⁴⁴¹ It can be argued that the new City of Toronto and the change to the Metropolitan Toronto Council, along with drastic changes in social spending started to shift the understanding of Lawrence Heights in the media.

In 2000, of the six articles we saw from mainstream media, three focused on crime solely, and two on crime and community in an attempt to contextualize stereotypes of space and race. In 2000 and 2010, the frequency of resident interviews increased, but rarely were victims or suspects interviewed, and rarely were perspectives offered that considered the complexities of the relationship between crime, neighbourhood, and race.

In 2010 we saw an upshot of news about Lawrence Heights because of what happened in 2005, dubbed the year of the gun. Following this year, Lawrence Heights, Rexdale and eleven other neighborhoods were classified as priority. In the early 2000s, the stereotype of Black thugs

⁴⁴¹ Tom Carter and Ann McAfee, "The Municipal Role in Housing the Homeless and Poor," *Housing the homeless poor: New partnerships among the private, public, and third sectors* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 123.

in gangs, violence and Lawrence Heights all became analogous to each other. In 2000 and 2010, *Share* did not publish any articles focusing on crime in Lawrence Heights because of its mandate to tell alternative stories. *Share* expected that readers can find these types of articles in mainstream sources and when *Share* referenced violence, it chose to connect it to a group actively helping the youth in the area or highlighted over policing. Moreover, *Share* was only published weekly so it was difficult to keep up with daily news stories.

All three of the media organizations published news in the community category coded as individualizing positive. *Share* and the *Toronto Star* wrote about local community advocates who visited Lawrence Heights to create recreational programs or speak at schools. The individualizing code can be positive or negative, as it can be used to positively highlight residents who have been able to lift themselves out of poverty and attain middle to upper class status through employment and education. With that being said, Black people should be profiled regardless of talent and wealth. Showing Black people only through two lenses – wealth or poverty – creates a dichotomy where there was lack of representation for those in the middle. Moreover, it was also a display of racialized class consciousness where Black people were seen through their value within the means of production. This type of news was a contradiction because although it was necessary to make up for past inequity, it pushed forth the myth of wealth attainment through ‘hard work.’

Showcasing community stories helped to offer a narrative of the space that counteracted the high frequency of crime stories which had individualizing negative and social justice negative subcodes. If a Black person in Toronto is murdered or injured by violent crime, rarely do we see a surge in positive stories published about their lives the same way we do when a white person

usually a middle-upper class woman, is a victim of crime. In 2000 and 2010 with an increase of gun violence also came an increase in the news published about community and social justice initiatives. All three sources published articles about local advocates and community support groups, but *Share* published the most. In 2000, there were no articles in the housing category across all three sources, but this changed in 2010 as the city began to eye the area for 'redevelopment'.

In 2000, there was not much news written about Lawrence Heights, but the news that garnered attention drew up images from a case that did a lot to cement the "criminalblackman" symbol as an active figure in Lawrence Heights and Toronto at large. In 1980 and 1990 this symbol began with the talk of teenage gangs, and the area being called 'the jungle' and in 2000 this image became seared into Toronto collective consciousness with the Just Desserts case.⁴⁴² The case attracted national media attention and was often the focus of attention of both the *Toronto Star* and the *Globe and Mail*.⁴⁴³ The articles written by these two sources and other media added to the perception that crime in Toronto was "violent, Black and male," which Katheryn Russel says comes together to create the racialized criminal symbol of the "criminalblackman". Both news sources reported on a suspect in the 'Just Desserts' trial that attracted widespread public attention. In this tragic shooting that happened in 1994 with the trial in 1999, 3 armed men were convicted of robbing a popular café on Davenport Street in Toronto named Just Desserts. The Just Desserts case garnered so much attention because a young white woman lost her life in an affluent area. In her book, *Racialization, crime and criminal justice in Canada*, Wendy Chan writes

⁴⁴² Katheryn Russel, "White Crime," *The Colour of Crime* (NYU Press, 2021).

⁴⁴³ Wendy Chan, *Racialization, Crime, and Criminal Justice in Canada* (University of Toronto Press, 2014),

that “the fact that the men accused were Black and the victim was white, as well as the sheer randomness of her death generated a state of intense and escalating anxiety” among Toronto residents.⁴⁴⁴ The fear it struck in the hearts of Torontonians brought increased attention to the idea that the streets of Toronto were declining in safety. Chan argues that the city’s news media also contributed to these fears by drawing a hard line between an image of “an innocent, young woman” and the ‘indiscriminately threatening’ Jamaican criminals who had no respect for Canadian values and ways of life.”⁴⁴⁵ Linking these men to another country worked to place them as “other” despite the fact that from a young age they all lived in Toronto. The fear justified the gross negligence in the court system that saw the four men sit in jail for 3 to 5 years waiting for a trial which happened in 1999. Four men from the Lawrence Heights neighbourhood were charged with crimes ranging from manslaughter to robbery. Only 3 were convicted and this story is about the 1, named Emile Mark Jones who had charges dropped because he did not actively participate in the crime.

The articles written in 2000 profiled Jones as he was on trial for aggravated assault of an acquaintance in Lawrence Heights in 1999. Both the *Toronto Star* and the *Globe and Mail* speculated about the cause of the assault. The *Toronto Star* wrote that “the victim accused Jones of spreading rumours that he – the victim – was an informant in the Just Desserts café slaying case.”⁴⁴⁶ The *Globe and Mail* wrote that, “Mr. Jones had heard rumours that the victim had implicated him in the Just Desserts robbery.”⁴⁴⁷ In both articles the victim was not named out of

⁴⁴⁴ Chan, *Racialization*, 59.

⁴⁴⁵ Chan, *Racialization*, 58.

⁴⁴⁶ “Former suspect in café.”

⁴⁴⁷ “Man freed in Just Desserts case sentenced to a year in jail,” *Globe and Mail*, May 11, 2000.

fear for his safety, yet the violence he encountered was detailed. There was a sensationalist element of detailing the specifics because as always “if it bleeds it leads.” Reading this traumatic event was easier because the victim was not named which dehumanized him. Both articles focused on the specifics of the crime, the weapon used and its location in Lawrence Heights and Jones’ connection to the Just Desserts case, rather than offering a contextualized narrative of the story. Moreover, they were not reflexive in their coverage as the papers did not address how their previous coverage of the Just Desserts case was problematic.

Jones’s previous jail time was taken into consideration in his second case, which resulted in a conviction of one year for the assault. This article also shows the devaluation of Black life as the victim had permanent disfigurement from the crime but because of government mismanagement of the initial case, Jones did not have to spend the typical amount of jail time for aggravated assault. Russel argues that the media’s overpowering images of Black deviance are impossible to ignore, and it has led many people to believe that Black people are responsible for committing the majority of crimes, which is untrue as most Black men are law-abiding citizens.⁴⁴⁸ Black on white crime receives more attention than Black on Black crime and white on white crime.⁴⁴⁹ This contributes to the widespread belief that “authorities view Black life as cheap, and hardly worth their attention.”⁴⁵⁰ Moreover, there is an over emphasis on street crime which is seen as Black, whereas white-collar crime is seen as white. White crime is associated with violence and imposes moral damage on society; however, it is downplayed because of our

⁴⁴⁸ Russel, “White Crime.”

⁴⁴⁹ James Short, “The role of unsupervised youth groups in violence,” *Poverty, ethnicity and violence crime* (Routledge, 1997), 64.

⁴⁵⁰ Short, “The role of unsupervised,” 65.

perception of who the real criminals are⁴⁵¹ as murder is a “staple” of popular tabloid media.”⁴⁵² The way crime is perceived can shape how people think about a certain group, and what is a “threat to societal values.”⁴⁵³ In the early 2000s, young Black men were stereotyped in the news as a threat to the safety of Toronto streets.

2005

The news published about Lawrence Heights in 2000 and 2010 cannot be understood without taking a look at the year 2005 and the change it brought in the coverage of crime and poverty in low-income neighbourhoods in Toronto. With the influx of gun violence in the late 90s leading up to 2005, residents of Lawrence Heights experienced many violent events in their community. In the media, we saw the stereotype of Lawrence Heights painted as a place where crime happened, and gangs lived. Journalists called 2005 the “Year of the Gun”.⁴⁵⁴ It was a year where of the “78 homicides recorded, 52 were gun-related and 40 of those murdered were of Black men.”⁴⁵⁵ The last shooting death of the year, of Jane Creba, who died near Yonge and Dundas shifted the “character and intensity of the ‘public’ reaction to gun violence in Toronto.”⁴⁵⁶ The public outcry to her tragic death was a continuation of the trend set during the Just Desserts trial. The death of an innocent white woman in such a tragic, random way started a new wave of attention towards young, Black men in Toronto and the neighbourhoods they came from. During 2005, mainstream media representation of racialized and immigrant groups presented them as

⁴⁵¹ Russel, “White Crime.”

⁴⁵² Chan, *Racialization*, 54.

⁴⁵³ Chan, *Racialization*, 58.

⁴⁵⁴ Chan, *Racialization*, 59.

⁴⁵⁵ Chan, *Racialization*, 59.

⁴⁵⁶ Chan, *Racialization*, 59.

perpetrators, rather than victims of crime.⁴⁵⁷ It can be argued that because crime against Black men happened in specific neighbourhoods, they were not considered to be “real victims” and therefore those deaths alone did not justify the same great change that came after the murder of Creba. In 2005, the media construction of young, Black men as “un-Canadian” and dangerous began a political campaign to bolster law and order. Then Liberal Premier, Dalton McGuinty set forth a Strong Neighbourhood Strategy, which designated 13 neighbourhoods as priority including Lawrence Heights and Jamestown (Thistleton) in Rexdale. The neighbourhoods were measured using key socio-economic indicators such as libraries, schools, settlement services and community centres as well as median household and education.⁴⁵⁸ They were identified by the city council and the United Way with the aim of reducing crime and poverty, as well as increasing opportunities for young people and families. Unfortunately, the categorization as a priority neighbourhood gave way to the continued over-representation of crime media coverage of Lawrence Heights as the neighbourhood received a “disproportionate attention from the media which contributed to its stigma.”⁴⁵⁹ Along with 13, also came The Toronto Anti-Violence Intervention Strategy (TAVIS), that argued that “intelligence-led policing initiatives in neighbourhoods with high-crime rates would reduce overall crime and violence.”⁴⁶⁰ This place-based approach to policing caused even greater tensions between the Toronto police and Black communities, especially because of racist carding practices and eventually the program ended in 2017.

⁴⁵⁷ Chan, *Racialization*, 59.

⁴⁵⁸ Chan, *Racialization*, 59

⁴⁵⁹ Jahiu & Jonathan Cinnamon, “Media Coverage.”

⁴⁶⁰ Clancy, R. 2019. *Summer Of the Gun - Part 2: The City of Toronto’s Approach to Addressing Gun Violence*. Master’s Thesis. York University.

The representation of the area during the 'year of the gun' created a symbolic spatial metaphor of Lawrence Heights where it was inexorably aligned with crime and degeneracy. In the same way that "Regent Park became a stand-in for poverty and crime" and Parkdale "as a dumping ground."⁴⁶¹ Conceiving of space as a symbol for the people who live there is detrimental because it lowers our concern for those who experience violence within and outside of the neighbourhood. Sundstrom writes that "place inhabit our understanding of human categories and even our identities."⁴⁶² In this sense, the frequency of stories in the crime category with an individualized negative subcode created a situation where when Black men were victims; they were rendered invisible and when they were suspects they were hyper visible. Which was similar to the way white Settlers attempted to erase Indigenous struggles and people, but then make them highly visible in representations of poverty and addiction. The construction of a binary where who was a victim depended on skin colour meant that Black young men in the GTA did not often get this title, and a lack of being able to be seen like a victim meant that there was less public attention or care to their deaths.

In 2005, the *Toronto Star* and the *Globe and Mail* primarily covered the violence that happened in Lawrence Heights and the response from residents and members of the larger community. The articles delved into the reasons for the uptake in violence such as fewer social supports, youth joblessness, poverty, and a lack of access to education but at the same time the articles reinforced stereotypes. The articles often connected the victim's personal history with gangs and crime, and focused on the victim's actions that may or may not have gotten them

⁴⁶¹ Jahiu & Cinnamon, "Media Coverage."

⁴⁶² Sundstrom, "Race." 87.

killed. This perspective relinquished the government from any responsibility as events were constructed as episodic rather than thematic. Moreover, the overuse of the word 'gang' played into stereotypes because while the term was applicable to all racial groups, when used in the *Toronto Star* and the *Globe and Mail* it was often associated to groups of young Black men. Leaving out context and shying away from the many layered causes of violence and the focus on individuals moved attention away from the institutions that have had a hand in the violence, moreover, it also makes for an easier case of neighborhood redevelopment.⁴⁶³

News that fell into the community category in 2000 and 2010 reflected the continued advocacy of residents, past and current. Although for the most part, the *Toronto Star* actively covered Lawrence Heights in relation to gun violence, in 2005 there were articles that tried to provide some context or address the upshot in violence. One article entitled, "Caught in the crossfire: On the streets of Lawrence Heights" called the area the 'epicentre of deadly shootings this summer'⁴⁶⁴ and said that "poverty and isolation had done as much to draw people tight as pull them apart."⁴⁶⁵ Moreover, the paper also highlighted multiple shootings in a detailed article that covered separate tragic incidents in which three people were shot and killed in Lawrence Heights and the surrounding area in less than a week. These articles focused in on the stories of young men killed in a rash of what was called gang violence. Despite that three young men were killed by gun violence within days of each other in the small neighbourhood, these three shootings did not do much to stir up public attention like that of Creba. The focus on so many deaths in one article worked to frame the violence as episodic and thus promoted individual

⁴⁶³ Jahiu & Cinnamon, "Media Coverage."

⁴⁶⁴ "Caught in the crossfire: On the streets of Lawrence Heights," *Toronto Star*, August 13, 2005.

⁴⁶⁵ "Caught in the crossfire."

responsibility versus societal or governmental responsibility. Gun violence was rarely connected to gun policy or the economic and social barriers that continue to exclude neighbourhoods like Lawrence Heights from active participation in civic life. 'Gangs'⁴⁶⁶ were blamed for the violence. It seems easy to put the blame on unknowable groups and mythical figures who were not really 'Canadian'.

The coverage of the year of the gun continues a stark image in the mind of the dangerous Toronto Black gangster, and this image became very hard to shake and exists to this day. Moreover, it's not just the threat of this shadowy figure, but the threat of him and the space that he comes from and lives in. Chan writes how "gang" violence recurrently becomes the focus of media attention over time," and that media stories typically name the "territorial base of the gang along with unflattering pictures of suspects such as police mug shots."⁴⁶⁷ Moreover, the articles usually say that the victim was "known to the police" or "targeted." Chan writes how these aspects of representation subtly reinforce the image of racialized offenders as being unaccountable for their crimes.⁴⁶⁸ Black men in general become hyper visible in relation to crime but the details of their names and lives are withheld which also evokes invisibility at the same time. Using stereotypes worked to place in the mind an image of a scary person, however, because he was not named, where he lived and or where the crime occurred became a stand in symbol for personhood. This in turn left a vague sense of fear and mistrust but there was a sense of relief because at least the audience knew where he resided.

⁴⁶⁶ "Gang war raging, says police Chief," *Toronto Star*, Friday August 5, 2005; "It's time 'to take back our street,'" *Toronto Star*, September 20, 2005.

⁴⁶⁷ Chan, *Racialization*, 58.

⁴⁶⁸ Chan, *Racialization*, 58.

2005 and the summer of the gun will always be situated in Toronto history. The year called for drastic changes to priority neighbourhoods, and the policies created a lot of change, however it also stigmatized spaces and created the image of the criminal blackman and his home(s). Violence has been occurring in Lawrence Heights at high levels almost since the area was built and after the year of the gun it becomes more political and different levels of government eye the area. After the year of the gun there were many new policies introduced and money given to non-profit and community groups, but ultimately the change that ended up occurring would be the destruction of the area as it was built back in the 1950s. 2005 was the spark that eventually led to the justification of the neighbourhood's redevelopment which was a theme that led the news coverage of 2010.

As mentioned previously, in my entire sample, *Share* wrote the most news in the community category with a social justice positive subcode. Second was the *Toronto Star* followed by the *Globe and Mail*. When it came to community-based news, the *Globe and Mail* and the *Toronto Star* did an adequate job of presenting the complicated nature of community development. The news organizations highlighted community and non-profit groups at work in the neighbourhood trying to make a difference by starting recreational programs or addressing un- and underemployment and lack of access to services.

The community articles written by *Share* in 2000, cover a beauty supply store opening in the Lawrence Square Mall, community groups in search of support, and Caribana events. An article titled "Store aims to reflect diversity" profiled new beauty store KNL Beauty Supply, which catered to clients across a broad ethnic spectrum. The owners opened the store because they realized a lot of people in Toronto were "travelling to Buffalo, New York to buy their hair and

beauty products.”⁴⁶⁹ This article showed how resourceful residents were in filling gaps in their community when it came to products and services the market was not fulfilling like Black hair care.⁴⁷⁰ In her work, Cheryl Thompson writes how it was in the late nineties that white-owned firms began to venture into the Black hair and beauty space.⁴⁷¹ With this article, *Share* brought publicity to a new small business, letting the community know that Black-owned stores like this existed locally. *Share* gave a voice to those who were supporting the community, and we see this as well with their focus on advocacy groups.⁴⁷² In the article, “Struggling youth group needs help,” the Caledonia Youth Group spoke about holding their first Black History Showcase. Running for three nights, the non-profit group provided a space for recreational activities for young people. However, their funding had been lost, which was an example of the market failure that came after the year of the gun funds started to dwindle, and community groups had to actively fundraise in order to continue with their programming. In these articles *Share* wrote about who was at work in the community making a difference.

Despite not writing many articles about Lawrence Heights after 2000, in 2005, the *Globe and Mail* profiled former Lawrence Heights resident Rodrigo Moreno, who started a photography club to provide a space of recreation for the youth in the area. The article reports on how early

⁴⁶⁹ “Store aims to reflect diversity,” *Share*, July 13, 2000.

⁴⁶⁹ Cheryl Thompson. *Beauty in a box: Detangling the roots of Canada’s Black Beauty Culture*. Wilfrid Laurier University Press (2019).

in his life, Moreno lost a friend to gun violence and how this close proximity to tragedy had motivated him to give back to a community he had moved away from. In my sample we can see that historically, finding space for youth activities in Lawrence Heights has been difficult. In 1960 and 1970 Lawrence Heights residents and advocates provided recreational space for young people and this continued into the early 2000s and today. Moreno continued the tradition of residents taking community building into their own hands by providing a safe space for young adults in Lawrence Heights to learn a hobby. Through the photography club, Moreno offered a recreational space for the youth in the area looking for free and safe activities. Moreover, it showed how residents had continued to take responsibility for helping to resolve some of the issues in their neighbourhood, without the support of the government, just like back when they got the TTC to put a bus stop in the neighbourhood. This article was coded as social justice positive because it was acknowledged that there was more to these areas than the violence typically shown in the media. Moreover, in a rare moment of self-reflexivity, the *Globe and Mail*, mentioned how usually Lawrence Heights “only made the news after deadly incidents of gang violence or drug arrests.”⁴⁷³ This quote shows the *Globe and Mail* acknowledging that the media (including itself) tended to only cover the area through one perspective, and now in 2005 they were actively trying to find other ways to showcase the space through community news.

The *Toronto Star* in 2005 also focused on publishing more community-based news. The article, “Youth joblessness feeds gun violence,” profiled an annual report undertaken by the Toronto Community Foundation (TCF) called *Vital Signs*. The TCF is a non-profit that focuses on

the city's social, economic, educational, and cultural health. Similar to citizen participation initiatives, groups like the TCF undertake research that no one wants to do, which is trying to get to the root causes of the increased violence in the city. *Vital Signs* was first published in 2005 and in that year found that "gun violence [had] risen on a dark cloud of youth unemployment and inactivity."⁴⁷⁴ The report went on to note that in 2005 "youth unemployment in Toronto hit a 10-year high, climbing to 17 per cent, double the overall average for the city."⁴⁷⁵ This high unemployment and shortage of recreational programs for older teens and young adults meant that "too many young men had nothing to do and no place to go."⁴⁷⁶ In another community article coded as social justice positive, *Toronto Star* wrote, in trying to understand the violence it was clear there were "two broad solutions – more and better policing or more economic opportunities for young people so they weren't lured by the easy drug money that comes with the gangster life."⁴⁷⁷ These articles showcase the pervasive problems in the area that stem from under and unemployment, lack of recreation and community spaces. These were not issues that could be resolved alone by the community, or by over policing, because access to space involves resources the community may not necessarily have. Providing youth with job opportunities and recreational spaces would give them a chance to rejoin the broader community in which they have been shut out. Russel writes that "white criminality is seen as society's problem, but Black criminality is seen as Black people's problems."⁴⁷⁸ Although labelling Lawrence Heights as a priority neighbourhood meant the area received extra funding, the lack of oversight and true

⁴⁷⁴ "Youth joblessness feeds gun violence," October 17, 2005.

⁴⁷⁵ "Youth joblessness."

⁴⁷⁶ "Youth joblessness."

⁴⁷⁷ "Caught in the crossfire."

⁴⁷⁸ Russel, "White Crime," 147.

willingness to see the space outside of its economic generating activity meant that despite the injection of money, when it dried up the same issues were still there. These articles helped to showcase the gaps that exist, but at the same time gave voice to the people who were changing the shape of their neighbourhood with what they had. During 2005 there were articles written that tried to understand how to address the multilayered root cause of violence. These articles showed that those creating the most change were everyday citizens who started non-profits or organizations like the TCF. Articles coded as social justice positive indirectly held the government responsible, while at the same time showcasing that change could be done without their involvement.

In 2002 the city of Toronto launched the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC). It came together from a merger of the Metropolitan Toronto Housing Corporation and the Toronto Housing Company. It was and still is the largest public housing agency in Canada with over 58,000 units and 2,100 buildings and 105,000 residents. It is a municipal corporation of Toronto.⁴⁷⁹ TCHC took charge of administering all public housing within Toronto. In 2000, public housing was at a standstill. Lack of funding, declining buildings and increasing violence put a spotlight on TCHC management. An article in the mixed category of community and crime in the *Toronto Star* titled "Housing agency fights violence," brought up the role of TCHC and what they had been doing to combat the violence on TCHC properties. The article wrote how the corporation was "spending more than \$9 million on building improvements and security in the wake of shootings at public housing complexes."⁴⁸⁰ This article also covered how a large number

⁴⁸⁰ Housing agency fights violence," *Toronto Star*, September 14, 2005.

of shootings that took place in the summer of 2005 occurred on public housing property, and the City of Toronto's response to this was to put more money into building security. Of the money earmarked for upgrades, president of the TCHC at the time Derek Ballantyne said "9.3 million [would] go to repairing doors and windows, graffiti removal, pruning trees and bushes to improve lighting and camera surveillance. Of that amount \$2.7 million [would] go towards purchasing more surveillance cameras and \$1.5 million toward upgrading existing camera and monitoring technology."⁴⁸¹ More surveillance and security were reactionary actions that addressed the current events rather than establishing a long-term strategy. In comparison to the \$9.3 million on security the program only earmarked \$95,000 for "three pilot programs aimed at providing teens with safe spaces in their communities, bolstering leadership skills and encouraging them to become entrepreneurs."⁴⁸² More money should have been spent on programs that helped to keep teenagers and young adults away from crime rather than into security, which was reactive.

2010

In 2010 after the year of the gun, articles written about Lawrence Heights continued to increase from the low numbers in the 80s and 90s. Although the articles written in 2010 fall into all of the categories of housing, crime, and community, housing was the main one because that year a proposal was tabled and approved for the 'revitalization' of the area. The plans were to increase the area's density with the addition of condominiums, which also meant some of the older public housing buildings were going to be torn down to make way for the new

⁴⁸¹ "Housing agency."

⁴⁸² "Housing agency."

development. Moreover, all of the subcodes in my sample, rationalizing positive and negative, individualizing positive and negative and social justice positive and negative were present.

There was not as much of a focus on crime in 2010 as there was in 2005. However, individualizing negative and social justice negative codes appeared at higher frequency as crime news continued to be episodic, focusing on specific situations, rather than thematic context. James Short in his book *Poverty, ethnicity, and violent crime*, writes that there are several community-level factors that contribute to violence and concentrated poverty, including family disruption, population density and low participation in community organizations to name a few.⁴⁸³ Few articles in 2010 offered an in-depth analysis that elaborated on how the above factors contributed to the violence in the area. Articles with a narrow focus on the cause of crime, coupled with general over representation, created a situation where crime became synonymous with the area despite there being more than that, as we see from the news published by *Share*.

At times when the mainstream news sources covered crime, harsh words were used that made it seem like a life was not lost. In the article titled “16-year-old fatally shot in north Toronto” the article recalled a resident shaking their head “at the gunfire that snuffed out the life of one of the city’s youngest homicide victims.”⁴⁸⁴ “Snuff” is usually a word used to talk about blowing out a candle or a fire, using the word here to describe a life, works to demean the life that was lost. Similarly, the intricate details of the violence with lack of information about the victim, leads to desensitization. Profiled in the article was a 16-year-old, who lost his life after moving to Lawrence Heights after being displaced by the Regent Park redevelopment. The murder of this

⁴⁸³ James Short, “Community and Neighbourhood,” *Poverty, ethnicity and violence crime* (Routledge , 1997), 64.

⁴⁸⁴ “16-year-old fatally shot in north Toronto,” *The Globe and Mail*, 2010.

teenager was also cloaked around talk of “gang violence.” The article interviewed an unnamed resident who said that “there’s gangs, five or six blocks away, beefing, for no reason, representing the neighbourhood.”⁴⁸⁵ The articles did not name the gangs, provide any information on how they started and what they did, and why they were alluring for teenagers to join. Moreover, the articles did not address how for young men who needed money and belonging, joining a neighbourhood gang could potentially provide a sense of identity and economic stability. Ironically, the creation of priority neighbourhood reinforced the idea of tying one’s identity to a location because it increased existing neighbourhood territorialization between existing organized criminal groups.

This article made it seem as though the young man’s murder could be attributed to his involvement in gangs, which was a simplistic explanation. There was no public outcry, and no one was held accountable, despite the fact that he was only 16 years old. Moreover, although this young teenager did not die in Lawrence Heights, the neighbourhood he lived in is highlighted to help support the gangster’s homeplace stereotype. The same article also mentioned the murders of 3 other young men from Lawrence Heights. Again, by conflating these four murders together and connecting it to Lawrence Heights, they become a “stand in” for connections between violence, Blackness, and neighbourhood.

The *Toronto Star* wrote two other community and crime articles that attempted to place the violence within a social, political, and economic context. One is titled “13” and another “Some forces prefer local cops”. “13” is a reflection on how the campaign to uplift priority neighbourhoods had progressed four years after it was launched. The article opened with an

⁴⁸⁵ “16-year-old.”

interview of two youth outreach workers in Scarborough speaking to young residents about finding work, which connects back to the earlier article on the *Vital Signs* report that argued providing young people with jobs was a way to steer them away from crime. The article also interviewed the CEO of the United Way, Frances Lankin, who said that “in 2001, 77 percent of high-poverty neighbourhoods were located in the “inner suburbs” of Etobicoke, East York, York North York, and Scarborough. Instead of poor families being widely dispersed in mixed-income neighbourhoods, they were now bunched together in poor neighbourhoods.”⁴⁸⁶ The article stated that in 2010, “13 involved so many different programs, projects and partners that even people in charge of keeping track of the whole thing say it [was] difficult to track.”⁴⁸⁷ The article detailed the difficulty to keep programs active because of funding issues. Moreover, it became an even more political issue when David Miller, then Toronto Mayor and strong proponent of the thirteen priority neighbourhoods left office. After the year of the gun, the government spent a lot of money on programs aimed at preventing gun violence, however, many of them were reactionary rather than a blend between reactionary and proactive methods. Moreover, the government could not keep track of all the programs and where the money was going. Spatial justice is about decision-making and redistribution and although the designation of 13 priority neighbourhoods was trying to redistribute funds, there remained a lack of residents of Lawrence Heights at the decision-making table, which became the reason why when a new mayor, premier or Prime Minister had different priorities, funding dried up while the original issues remained.

⁴⁸⁶ “13,” *Toronto Star*, January 16, 2010.

⁴⁸⁷ “13.”

In the second article, “Some forces prefer local cops,” the article talks about how the police service had not been hiring people from neighbourhoods like Lawrence Heights. The article reads, “The police made no hires the whole decade from one postal code in the Jane St. and Sheppard Ave. W. area. The force hired only four people from Lawrence Heights.”⁴⁸⁸ The article argued that police would value the well-being of the area they were policing if they had some stake in it. This article analyzed why people from low-income communities were not hired as police officers, whether it was because they were not applying, or because they were experiencing bias in the hiring process. The article’s codes are a mix of social justice positive and negative because although the focus shifts to the “systems and structures leading to inequality, and not to individuals as objects to blame,”⁴⁸⁹ it still leaned into the idea that the problems faced by the residents of Lawrence Heights could be fixed with more or better policing.

Of community news in 2010, the *Toronto Star* published only a few articles and they were typically stories that interwove aspects of community and crime. In the article “The united nation of shinny” we learn the story of 18-year-old Jamar Brown who was tragically shot 10 times when walking home from school through Lawrence Heights in a case of mistaken identity. Brown attended the local Lawrence Heights Highschool Sir Sanford Fleming Academy and after he recovered from his injuries started to play hockey. The article talked about how playing hockey had changed Brown’s life and he was quoted as saying “I come to school more often, actually pay attention to what I’m doing to get a good education.”⁴⁹⁰ This article made the connection between how youth participation in sports or activities that were typically out of reach can help

⁴⁸⁸ “Some forces prefer local cops” *Toronto Star*, September 4, 2010.

⁴⁸⁹ Redden, *Mediation*.

⁴⁹⁰ The united nation of shinny,” *Toronto Star*, April 1, 2010.

give a sense of purpose and belonging. This was an example of the right to the city in action because the program gave youth the right to participation.⁴⁹¹ This article showed how the activities that were considered for white Canadian youth can also be done by Black and Brown kids as well. In the article the reader meets a person on the other side of violent crime, and we hear his story, as well as a program that has helped him reintegrate. The unfortunate aspect of this story is that Jamar only started participating in the program after the tragic events that had a profound effect on his life. The non-profit that helped to provide the equipment and ice time for Lawrence Heights teenagers to play hockey were active in the redistribution of resources in a community that was often overlooked for funding. Moreover, the *Toronto Star's* coverage of this story also showed that there were not only crime stories coming out of the organization, but community stories too.

In 2000 and 2010, the difference between the news told by mainstream media and the news told by alternative media was that mainstream media focused on crime first and community second. *Share* only focused on the community and left out crime. *Share* as alternative source, does a better job of focusing on community news and presenting a positive social perspective. *Share* wrote an article about Chris Spence and a conference he spoke at. In an article titled "Students urged to turn challenges into opportunities" the article covers a one-day student conference where Spence, a former Lawrence Heights resident,⁴⁹² spoke to Black Canadian youth from 31 high schools. The aim of the event was to get a "better sense from the students what the Toronto School Board could do to enhance their learning opportunities and enable them to

⁴⁹¹ Dikec, "Justice."

attain successful outcomes both academically and in life.”⁴⁹³ This was an example of a social justice positive subcode because *Share* covered a story about young people and the barriers they faced in their education at that time. Education is one of the paths out of poverty, however, schools in under resourced areas are not built the same as schools in middle to higher income areas. The article shifted the focus from individuals to institutions and talked about how “it’s about how [schools] teach you and how we engage you.”⁴⁹⁴ This article presented an event that was created to help Black youth and showed the perspective a person who grew up in Lawrence Heights and was able to obtain a position where he could make political decisions that would affect the neighbourhood. It is an example of the right to the city in action. *Share* connects Lawrence Heights to events, programs or people who are actively trying to better the situation of the residents.

After the year of the gun there was renewed focus on housing, and it comes back to levels that were only seen in the late 1950s. There was a plan to redevelop Lawrence Heights in 2010 so that the neighbourhood could become less isolated. In the news coverage many people were interviewed from politicians to community activists and residents. The redevelopment was framed as a change that would help the residents, however, most of the communities interviewed did not want the redevelopment to take place and worried that it would disconnect the neighbourhood. In 1959, Lawrence Heights was finished and in 2010 a redevelopment plan was approved to completely change the shape of the area. It took only 50 years for the area to be rebuilt under the pretense of building degradation, violence, and revitalization through mixed

⁴⁹³ “Students urged to turn challenges into opportunities,” *Share*, February 25, 2010.

⁴⁹⁴ “Students urged to turn.”

development. 50 years is a short time for an area to exist. It can be argued Lawrence Heights was redeveloped because of poor early planning, land value (right next to Yorkdale Mall, TTC Subway station) and high crime rates. In 2010, the *Globe and Mail* and the *Toronto Star* were the only two sources in my sample that covered the ‘revitalization’ of Lawrence Heights. There were many arguments used to justify the redevelopment. One argument was that it would help deter crime and another argument was focused on providing better housing for residents. The main argument in opposition to the development was that the city was only undertaking the plan because of the area’s prime location. Unlike the codes found when the area was being built, the codes that appeared in 2010 were rationalizing negative, individualizing positive and social justice positive and negative. Moreover, the categories of crime, community and housing overlapped more within articles.

The *Toronto Star*’s first article written about the revitalization was titled “Just fix some of the old buildings” and reported on how Lawrence Heights was built as a “model neighbourhood” that eventually fostered “isolation and crime.”⁴⁹⁵ The article concluded, writing that the project was an “attempt to improve neighbourhood conditions by setting public housing alongside higher-income housing.”⁴⁹⁶ The idea that residents benefitted from mixed-income housing came from the concept that being close to people were ‘behaving correctly’ would have a positive effect on the lives of public housing residents. The mixed housing model is complex. In it are assumptions about what the ideal community looks like and its aims are towards idealistic and normative values.⁴⁹⁷ In the same article a resident was interviewed who believed the

⁴⁹⁵ “Just fix some of the old buildings,” *Toronto Star*, February 26, 2010.

⁴⁹⁶ “Just fix.”

⁴⁹⁷ Harvey, *Social*.

revitalization project was a “city ploy” to reap benefits from the neighbourhood’s desirable location.⁴⁹⁸ The *Globe and Mail*’s coverage of the redevelopment was more slanted towards the negative frames because of the words used to portray the neighbourhood and who they interviewed. In an article titled ‘City to announce massive overhaul of low-income Lawrence Heights’ the area is called a “notoriously poor subsidized housing complex” with “neglected parkland” and “hellish intersections.”⁴⁹⁹ The word choice used for this article created an image of Lawrence Heights as a ‘bad place’ that must be redeveloped but the article did not discuss the vibrancy of the diverse cultures or the community centre or the high school. This article comes across as paternalistic and bias was justified by interviewing a resident who wanted the redevelopment to go ahead. Moreover, the article did not give space to any opposing side of the redevelopment. The only article the *Globe and Mail* published that talked actively about the opposition was when they interviewed resident Janet Corey-Skobac who said, “We’re not against redevelopment of Lawrence Heights; we think the city’s doing it irresponsibly.”⁵⁰⁰

In contrast, the *Toronto Star* presented the different arguments opposed to the redevelopment. Moreover, the news source added some important facts about the cost. In an article titled “Project too big, neighbours say,” the paper outlined that “to replace 1208 units, built in the 1950s, would cost \$350 million. To raise the money, the TCHC planned to add 4,792 market-rent units to the 26-hectare site. A grand total of 7,500 new homes would be built over 20 years”.⁵⁰¹ In a meeting to express their views, around sixty people from the community

⁴⁹⁸ “Just fix.”

⁴⁹⁹ “City to announce massive overhaul of low-income Lawrence Heights,” *The Globe and Mail*, February 10, 2005.

⁵⁰⁰ “Opposition grows to Lawrence Heights redevelopment, *Globe and Mail*, June 12, 2010.

⁵⁰¹ ‘Project too big, neighbours say, *Toronto Star*, June 23, 2010.

gathered say that the project was just too big. Alongside the new development also comes a lot of changes to transportation in the area. Two new road bridges were built over the Allen Expressway. When the area was being built, there was staunch rejection to adding more roads, and they even closed roads to make it difficult to get in and out. Only when they were going to change the shape of the neighbourhood and inject 16,000 more residents did the city consider making it more accessible. Overall, it can be argued Lawrence Heights had this revitalization coming because it was so poorly planned from the beginning. It is also ironic that this large redevelopment was proposed after the year of the gun and after the area was labelled priority. Before the Lawrence Heights Project started, the Regent Heights redevelopment was on its way, which was also another priority neighbourhood. There were many residents who agreed and disagreed with the Lawrence Heights redevelopment, and the *Globe and Mail* focused on those who agreed with the changes while the *Toronto Star* presented a more nuanced look. *Share* did not cover the redevelopment of the area at all. This is partly because they only publish once a week and are more focused on uplift and what programs or groups are helping the community. This is one situation though, where they could have given the Black community in Toronto and the GTA a view into changes that were directly impacting Black residents.

2020

2020 was the year that the world changed drastically because of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was also the year that the world became witness (again) to the systemic racism and oppression of Black people in the United States when George Floyd was murdered by a white police officer. Key themes arise in the way Lawrence Heights was covered in 2020. The *Globe and Mail*

continued a pattern of rarely mentioning the area, and as a whole, the news outlet started to move toward more national coverage rather than local news starting in 1990. Out of the three sources, the *Toronto Star* published the majority of articles about Lawrence Heights in 2020, and they fell into the category of crime and the COVID-19 pandemic's effect on Black people in Toronto. *Share* covered stories around young entrepreneurs, embedded Lawrence Heights in its conversation about COVID-19, as well as talked briefly about the effects of gun violence in racialized communities and how to combat racism. In 2020, the mainstream conversation about Lawrence Heights was dominated by violence, COVID-19 or not covered at all, which was different from 2010 when housing news was front and center. As the Lawrence Heights redevelopment progressed, less attention was paid to housing. With respect to subcodes, individualizing negative continued to lead when it came to issues of crime, and the rationalizing positive and negative subcodes were found in articles about housing. Moreover, *Share*, as usual, presented mostly social justice positive and individualizing positive subcodes.

"If you kill someone with a gun in Toronto, you have a three in five chance of getting away with murder"⁵⁰² noted a *Toronto Star* article published in 2020, which was also the same year Toronto recorded a "5-year low for people fatally shot with a total of 38."⁵⁰³ The same article also reported on how most violent crime in the city had a video element because much of the violence occurred on TCHC property and the organization invested in increased surveillance in the 1980s and beyond. Moreover, generally, the city as well as private businesses and homes have increased the use of security cameras. It can be argued that the majority of articles written about

⁵⁰² "From 12 years old to 95: Toronto's victims of homicide in another year dominated by gun violence," *Toronto Star*, 2020 December 31.

⁵⁰³ "From 12 years old to 95."

Lawrence Heights in 2020 follow the trend that was started after the year of the gun. In 2010, we saw a decrease in crime news coverage because news on the redevelopment took center stage. However, now that the redevelopment was in progress, the mainstream media shifted to a topic easier to cover and garner clicks: crime, gangs, and gun violence. The difference with the news published in 2020 was that the social justice positive code was used to cover gun violence rather than only individualizing negative because of the events that happened after the murder of George Floyd and the sensitivity to writing about Black death. Previous articles in my sample have analyzed the fraught relationship between Black Torontonians and the police, and the 2020 protests put this tension back in the spotlight.

In a *Toronto Star* article titled “How Toronto can rethink its fight against near-record gun violence – with our without defunding the police,” the article focused on community leaders and their thoughts on the recent calls to defund the police. They interviewed Marcell Wilson, founder of One By One, an organization of former criminals dedicated to creating safer communities. He said, the city should adopt “alternative approaches to addressing gun violence, at least until society fixes the underlying conditions giving rise to it – such as poverty and the unwinnable drug war.”⁵⁰⁴ Quoting a study released by the institute of justice, the article reads “most violence is not just a matter of individual pathology – it is created. Poverty drives violence. Inequity drives violence. Lack of opportunity drives violence. Shame and isolation drive violence (and) violence itself drives violence.”⁵⁰⁵ The study called for violence and racism to be seen as public health epidemics. The COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately affected Black communities and because

⁵⁰⁴ “How Toronto can rethink its fight against near-record gun violence – with our without defunding the police,” *Toronto Star*, December 13, 2020.

⁵⁰⁵ “How Toronto can rethink.”

of increased attention on why more Black people were contracting and dying of the virus, attention was also brought to the skewed number of Black people dying from gun violence. The COVID-19 pandemic showed that providing preventative healthcare for those at risk of death was not just morally right but beneficial to all of society.⁵⁰⁶

The article, “How Toronto can rethink its fight” shone a light to the underlying causes of violence. Instead of looking only at a particular event it drew on themes and interviewed members of community groups to holistically cover the issue. This was positive because it moved away from the stereotype of gangs and unsolvable issues but rather refocused on policy, budget, education, health care and mental health. This article considered why it was a good idea for the government to invest in social and community programs by framing it as a matter of public health. The government puts money into smoking prevention or impaired driving prevention, and other health epidemics like cancer and heart disease. The question became why violent crime was not funded in the same way to curb the strain on the healthcare system. The *Globe and Mail* and *Toronto Star* have not framed gun violence in this way before. Crime in this way was seen as a result of mental health issues, joblessness, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and substance abuse to name a few causes. The article also profiled a program in the United States where long-term gang members were paid to put down their firearms and mentor others to do the same. “A 2019 study found that the program was associated with 55 percent reduction in fire-arm related deaths and hospital visits.”⁵⁰⁷ This article showcased how when gun violence

⁵⁰⁶K, Bellware. “Calls to declare racism a public health crisis grow louder amid pandemic, police brutality.” *Washington Post*, 2020.

⁵⁰⁷ “How Toronto can rethink.”

was seen as a matter of healthcare prevention, there could be positive outcomes. Moreover, reducing gun violence may require a different perspective where the war on drugs is ended and there is both a focus on prevention, rehabilitation, and reintegration. Seeing violence as a public health issue, opens up the ways that can reduce violent crime.

Another *Toronto Star* article titled, “Lawrence Heights resident group seeks support to end gun violence” also addressed the continuing violence in the area. The article interviewed resident Dejamatch James who lost friends to gun violence and had members of his family shot and wounded. He said he [was] always living in fear “having to constantly look over [his] shoulder and worrying that anything could happen any time.”⁵⁰⁸ James was a member of a newly formed resident-led group called the Lawrence Heights Change Makers that were “determined to change the narrative of the community.”⁵⁰⁹ The article discussed how out of 37 shootings (as of Sep 27, 2020) in the 32 Division, most had been in Lawrence Heights. In response to the violence the members of the Changemakers program held a safety walk alongside the Lawrence Heights Parents’ association and Councillor Mike Colle. It is important to consider that this violence was happening after the redevelopment was finished, therefore the theory that redevelopment would help to make the neighbourhood safer did not really hold up. 14 years after the year of the gun, gun violence was/is still occurring. Those who were/are actively making the neighbourhood safer were/are long-term residents, which is a trend seen in other areas like Jane and Finch too.⁵¹⁰ There are so many community groups in Lawrence Heights continuing the work

⁵⁰⁸ “Lawrence Heights resident group seeks support to end gun violence,” *Toronto Star*, September 30, 2020.

⁵⁰⁹ “Lawrence Heights resident.”

⁵¹⁰ Carl James. *Life at the Intersection: Community, Class and Schooling*. Winnipeg: Fernwood, 2012.

of those in the past. From Zwerver to James, Lawrence Heights has always been an area where active change started from residents as they are the ones who have consistently promoted and implemented necessary programs or services. The frequency of the social justice positive code shows that it has always been the residents at the forefront of trying to improve their community.

In 2020, *Share* had to cut down on its publications because of the effect of COVID-19 on its small business. It moved to a monthly model and the articles published focused mainly on the positive impacts made by community members. An article titled “United effort needed to solve crime, forum told” the article focuses on a meeting between politicians, senior police officers, religious leaders and community members who came together to talk about solving gun violence in the city. This was a rare *Share* article where Lawrence Heights was mentioned alongside crime and gun violence. The article reported on a meeting organized by a collaborative group who wanted to address the crime happening every day in Toronto. The conference speakers agreed there must be solutions to resolving the issues and to recognize the different roles played. This was another example of the community coming together where the different levels of government seem to be failing. In another article with a social justice positive code titled “Black men giving advice to Black men on coping” we learn about a new book titled *Knew Me: 10 Men 10 Stories of Perseverance* that offered advice on coping. It took the same perspective we saw earlier in terms of seeing gun violence as a health epidemic and a reaction to not being able to cope with environmental, social, and economic circumstances. The article interviewed one of the

co-authors of the book, Jeff A.D. Martin, who said, “the mission [was] to provide boys and men with mental and emotional support to them through the ups and downs of life.”⁵¹¹

The final shift in the way that Lawrence Heights was covered were the events of 2005, the year of the gun. Before this year, there was a low frequency in general of news about Lawrence Heights. The year of the gun cemented Lawrence Heights into history and brought attention to it, so much it changed the shape of the place and became a catalyst for the redevelopment. In 2010 into 2020, the conversation opens up about how to solve the violence by seeing it as a matter of public health, but as always still, the advocates are there. What has always remained steadfast during these key changes is a community that has never given up on itself, so yes there have been shifts, but what has remained constant is a community ready to make change.

Can the metaphor of Lawrence Heights as “the jungle” be changed? It can change in the sense that when we go back and look at the early development of the area, we can see that there was a classicism that was built into the structure that continues to have grave effects. Then there was racism and racially motivated violence that continues. However, by shining a light on the early Black press and the voice they gave to the community, we see that there are more nuanced ways that Black people in Toronto have been represented. There has been a tight community and very loud voices who have stood up for change and tried to change their circumstances from the start. These voices created a pathway for the community groups that exist today and still try to help residents claim their right to the city. Without the inclusion of *Share* most of the articles in my sample would have fallen into the category of crime. As much as it is important for racialized

⁵¹¹ “Black men giving advice to Black men on coping,” *Share*, January-February 2020.

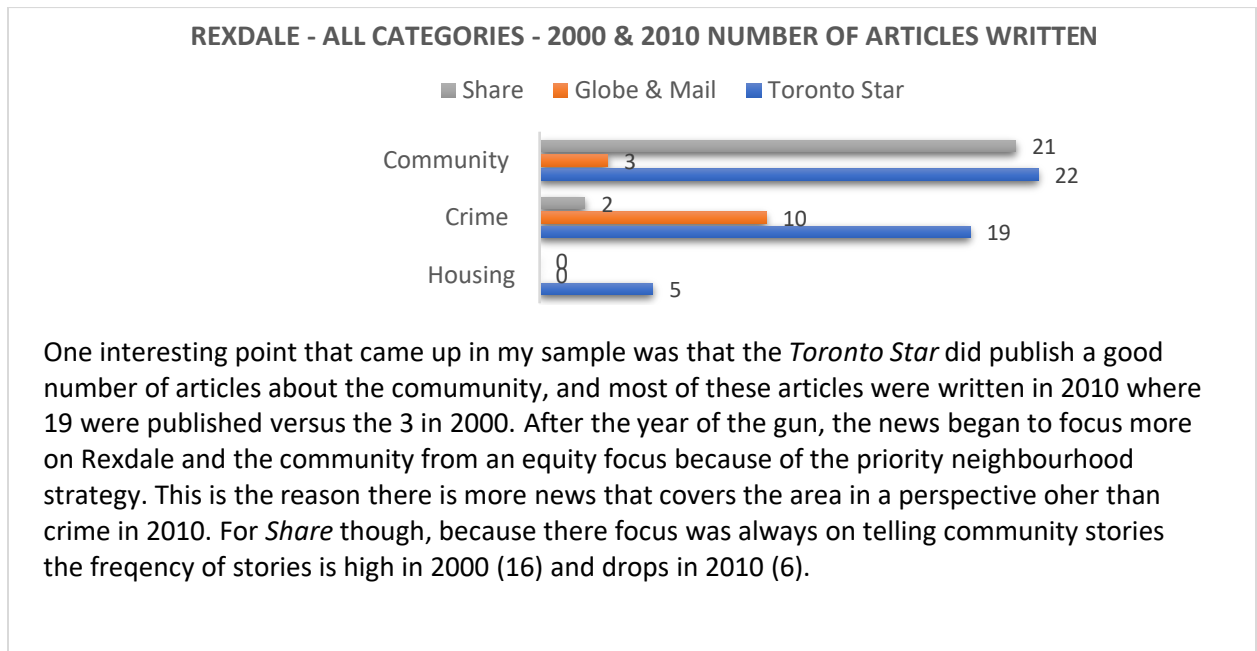
people to show up at the table, it is just as important for us to tell our own stories. The Black press in Toronto has been vital in creating counter-images that present the struggle and joy experienced by Black people in the city. Remembering the area and creating new definitions may take time because of how closely the area is tied with violence in the public imaginary. However, with persistence, the remembrance and creation of Black-owned publications, we can create new metaphors, while honoring the past – metaphors that see Lawrence Heights and its residents as trailblazers and people who have never and will never give up on their community.

REXDALE

2000 & 2010

Most of the news about Rexdale in 2000 and 2010 was about young, racialized men who were either innocent bystanders in the wrong place at the wrong time, or residents who were stated to be involved in criminal activity. There were few articles written about housing in Rexdale during 2000 and 2005 as crime was front and center because as with Lawrence Heights, Rexdale was also labelled a priority neighbourhood after the year of the gun. The few articles on housing continued the theme of adding extra security and police presence to OHC properties to help make the areas safer.

CHART 14 - REXDALE - ALL CATEGORIES - 2000 & 2010 NUMBER OF ARTICLES WRITTEN



Along with family violence we also have increased gun violence that occurred at the time.

In 2000, starting in April and ending October, 6 teenagers and young men lost their lives within a

two-kilometer radius on Rexdale streets. In an article in the *Globe and Mail*, titled “Unsolved shootings take toll on families” the story notes how only one of the six killers were arrested by the end of October of that year. The article interviewed family members of one of the deceased. “He was only 16 before his life was taken away from him,” says Susan Othman whose brother was shot in a busy plaza.⁵¹² The article goes on to say, “some reports have indicated that gang activity [linked] all of the Rexdale shootings, but the detective leading the task force said that so far, the only definite link [was] geography.”⁵¹³ The lead Inspector, Tony Warr, did not rush to blame gang violence but highlighted the location of the murders. Unfortunately, in some of the articles that covered these tragic shootings the community was blamed for the violence. Moreover, in one article also published in the *Globe and Mail* titled “Chief urges Rexdale to pitch in” then Toronto Police Chief Julian Fantino tells the community that it had to “roll up its sleeves if it [wanted] to stop a wave of violence that [had] claimed the lives of seven young men in the past six months.”⁵¹⁴ This article was coded as individualizing negative and social justice negative because space was given to a now disgraced Police Chief who seemed to think the root of the problem lied with individual circumstances rather the intricate complexities of poverty, education, job prospects, belonging and mental health. Fantino said this to a crowd of 300 people who were asking for more help to prevent crime in the neighbourhood. In a trend like with the speeders in Lawrence Heights, and violence against South Asians in the 1980s, we have another

⁵¹² “Unsolved shootings take toll on families: Public asked to help police bring killers of six young Rexdale men to justice,” *The Globe and Mail*, Dec 8, 2000.

⁵¹³ “Unsolved shootings.”

⁵¹⁴ “Chief urges Rexdale to pitch in,” *The Globe and Mail*, Nov 4, 2000, A28.

situation where the police were making it seem as though the residents had to solve the issues that were happening in their neighbourhood.

Moreover, this also showcased a trend of many murders that happened within a week or so all being conflated into one or two articles. Similar to the media framing that came after the tragic shooting of Jordan Manners in 2007, the first at a Toronto school, violence and murder was framed as if the tragedies had its roots in the very nature of Toronto's Black community.⁵¹⁵ Like with Manners and many others, deaths were framed as gang-related, despite the individual never being involved in crime, but the area or where they were murdered became a symbol for the gang and gun activity.

Included in these seven deaths were innocent victims like a 16-year-old who lost his life named Hani Othman. Othman's mom said in an interview that "from what we understand, it was not intended for him."⁵¹⁶ What really stuck out in this article was that the violence was isolated and approached as just a one-off problem that did not have tangible solutions. A *Globe and Mail* article titled "City far from a violence-free haven: Immigrant family struggles to deal with loss of illusions after teenage son shot dead" focused on how Othman's the family thought they were coming to a safe place when they immigrated to Canada, and never expected for their son to die in the way that he did. This article pokes major holes in the 'Canadian dream' illusion as a truer

⁵¹⁵ O'Grady, W., Parnaby, P. F., & Schickschneit, J. Guns, Gangs, and the Underclass: A Constructionist Analysis of Gun Violence in a Toronto High School. *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 52(1), 55–77.

⁵¹⁶ "City far from a violence-free haven: Immigrant family struggles to deal with loss of illusions after teenage son shot dead," *The Globe and Mail*, December 21, 2000.

picture of life in Canada was depicted. Many newcomers came to Canada thinking it would be safe for them and their children. However, at the time Canada changed its immigration policy, enacted multicultural policy, the country was also dismantling social services at a time when many people needed them. Public housing areas turned into places of frequent criminal activity because of not only how they were built, but also how they were maintained.

In a couple of opinion pieces published in the *Toronto Star* residents reflected on the rash of violence affecting Jamestown. Heather Emme wrote in "Try walking in our shoes" that "there has been a media glut lately of stories focusing on the "gang problem" in Rexdale. Reporters have discussed the recent deaths, demonizing both the victims and culprits with that one title: gang member."⁵¹⁷ As mentioned before the minute we say "gang" it is almost as if the person deserved it. This label does not take into consider that person's human dignity and right to be safe in their neighbourhood. Emme tried to argue that instead of labelling everyone as a gang member, we needed to look at the environment that created situations where people ended up in violent situations and criminal activity. This sentiment was also captured in an opinion piece published right beside the one mentioned above, titled "Poverty the root of street violence." In that article the author wrote, "I want to respond to the fallacious suggestion that kids need sports or other after-school programs to keep them out of gangs." "Gangs are a response to the social and economic circumstances of the lives of their members." He goes on to write that the "answer is in better social programs in Canada." Canada's lack of investment in social programs had consequences, which showcased itself in the increased crime because of difficult social and economic pathways for young first and second-generation immigrants. Moreover, the media's

⁵¹⁷ "Try walking in our shoes," *Toronto Star*, Dec 31, 2000, A12.

depiction of these spaces as and depiction of the violence worked to devalue the land and the bodies which live there, which made it more difficult to engage real policy or social change.

Let's go back to when Thistletown 1 and 2 were built and the fact that again, it was one of the first experiments in public housing in Canada. Mixed-income housing was supposed to lead to better outcomes than spaces like Lawrence Heights and although it is hard to compare the two, one thing that is clear is that being isolated kind of helped Lawrence Heights in that the neighbourhood banded together and spoke up about what they needed and advocated for services. Being spread out maybe hampered Rexdale from being able to do this. Whether mixed or isolated though, they both experience the same issue of high levels of crime and gun violence.

In a *Toronto Star* article titled "Neighbourhood redesign earns whole lot of respect" the article interviewed a resident who recalled how it was difficult to even get a pizza delivery person to come to her home. The plan to redesign the York Woods neighbourhood (in the Jane and Finch area, which is right beside Thistletown 1 and 2) was spearheaded by then Councillor for Black Creek, Maria Augimeri, who was fighting to get more lighting through the complexes, landscaping and new roads built so that housing units would have proper street addresses rather than laneway addresses. The plan faced opposition by councillors who were "cost-conscious" and in reply Augimeri said, "councillors have to understand that if we start to change the hard infrastructure of this community at Jane and Finch, it will go Scarborough, or Rexdale next."⁵¹⁸ The idea that change to one public housing unit would be applied to others shows how a lot of them have the same architectural similarities and thereby similar safety concerns.

⁵¹⁸ "Neighbourhood redesign earns whole lot of respect," *Toronto Star*, July 28, 2000, A16.

In 2010 the *Toronto Star* wrote the majority of articles that covered the Rexdale area. The *Toronto Star* wrote 29 articles, which was more than the *Globe and Mail* and *Share* put together, as they both only had 5 each that year. The *Toronto Star* wrote articles that covered community events in the Ghanaian community located in Rexdale in an attempt to give voice to the residents and different aspects of their culture. In a *Toronto Star* article titled, "Police jobs give teens new insight" the West Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Rexdale was covered and their family day workshop where teens learned about the application process for 150 jobs within the Toronto Police Service. The article wrote how the teenagers were ""from a target group that has had an uneasy relationship with the police."⁵¹⁹ Again, here we see a pattern of community groups organizing events to bridge the gap between young community members in Rexdale and the Toronto police. We also see the continued theme that better policing is the solution to the community's issues, which is highly contested. The program titled the "Youth in Policing initiative" had helped "450 teens through police headquarters and divisions."⁵²⁰ It was started in 2006 by then Police Chief Keith Forde following the Year of the Gun. He "approached Mary Anne Chambers, then Children and Youth Services Minister, to find 50 kids in a program to connect police and youth on the police home turf."⁵²¹ The program ended up funding 150 students through this initiative, and this program still exists today. Which is a different trajectory than a lot of programs that were created after the Year of the Gun funding dried up. This article was sub coded as social justice positive because it covered a workshop that tried help young

⁵¹⁹ "Police Jobs Give teens new insight," *Toronto Star*, February 16, 2010, GT2.

⁵²⁰ "Police Jobs Give teens."

⁵²¹ "Police Jobs Give teens."

residents find summer work while attempting to address the historical mistrust between racialized communities and the police.

There were many articles written in 2010 that highlighted programs and services geared towards youth recreation and education. In a *Toronto Star* under the category of community, the retirement of the President and CEO of the United Way was profiled. The United Way was a partner of the City of Toronto and Ontario in developing strategies to help reduce crime on OHC properties that were labelled as priority. The article wrote about how the non-profit was able to build the city's first "Community Hub in mid-Scarborough, and invested in two more in Rexdale and North York."⁵²² Both Premier of Ontario, Dalton McGuinty and Mayor of Toronto, David Miller were interviewed in the article and said that The United Way under Frances Lankin helped Toronto to create programs for under resourced neighbourhood that enacted space-based change.⁵²³ Another program highlighted in a *Toronto Star* article titled "Tuition plan opens doors for students" reported on two friends who joined a grassroots mentoring and tutoring program called Pathways to Education that offered free tutoring, mentoring, bus tickets and scholarships. The program paid students \$1000 towards a tuition "scholarship for every high school grade they passed." Which came up to a total of \$4000 by the time they graduated high school which helped to cover first year tuition of college or university. The program was offered in "the most troubled spots in Toronto – Regent Park, Lawrence Heights and Rexdale's Jamestown."⁵²⁴ About 30 percent of the costs for the program were paid for by Queen's Park and the rest was funded largely by donations. The program had been linked to positive outcomes and cut the dropout

⁵²² "Passionate advocate moving on," *Toronto Star*, February 18, 2010, GT1. –

⁵²³ "Passionate advocate."

⁵²⁴ "Tuition plan opens doors for students," *Toronto Star*, February 16, 2010.

rate down from "56 percent to 10 percent."⁵²⁵ The idea of taking different approaches to solving crime, through solving issues such as a high school drop-out rate compares to the program highlighted in Lawrence Heights that paid gang members to turn in their guns and mentor youth on staying away from a life of crime. Programs that address the financial reason young teenagers drop out of high school or join a gang effect change in the above examples.

In 2000 and 2010 we saw an increased number of residents, former residents and community advocates starting programs for youth in Rexdale. They were addressing gaps in their neighbourhood they felt only they could fill. Many articles were written in the *Toronto Star* which profiled different programs and founders. The *Toronto Star* featured community programs like Bright Future Alliance, Join the Dance⁵²⁶ and Iron John⁵²⁷ as well as successful people such as K'naan and PK Subban who "made it out" of Rexdale.⁵²⁸ The Bright Future Alliance's Cooking for Change program ran twice a week and helped at-risk youth in the area learn basic cooking skills. The goal and vision for the organization was to provide practical programming for at-risk youth. The article profiled a group founder Segun Akinsanya who spent many years in jail before turning his life around and starting a program to help young people in his Rexdale neighbourhood. Another article titled, "Summer program inspires future MDs" profiled a summer mentorship program run by a partnership between the Faculty of Medicine at U of T in partnership with the Association of the Advancement of Blacks in Health Sciences and First Nations House. The program aimed to encourage African Canadian and Indigenous students to consider a career in

⁵²⁵ "Tuition plan opens doors for students," *Toronto Star*, February 16, 2010.

⁵²⁶ "Tuition plan opens doors."

⁵²⁷ "Boys' outlook brighter with 'Iron John'," *Toronto Star*, July 10, 2010, GT2.

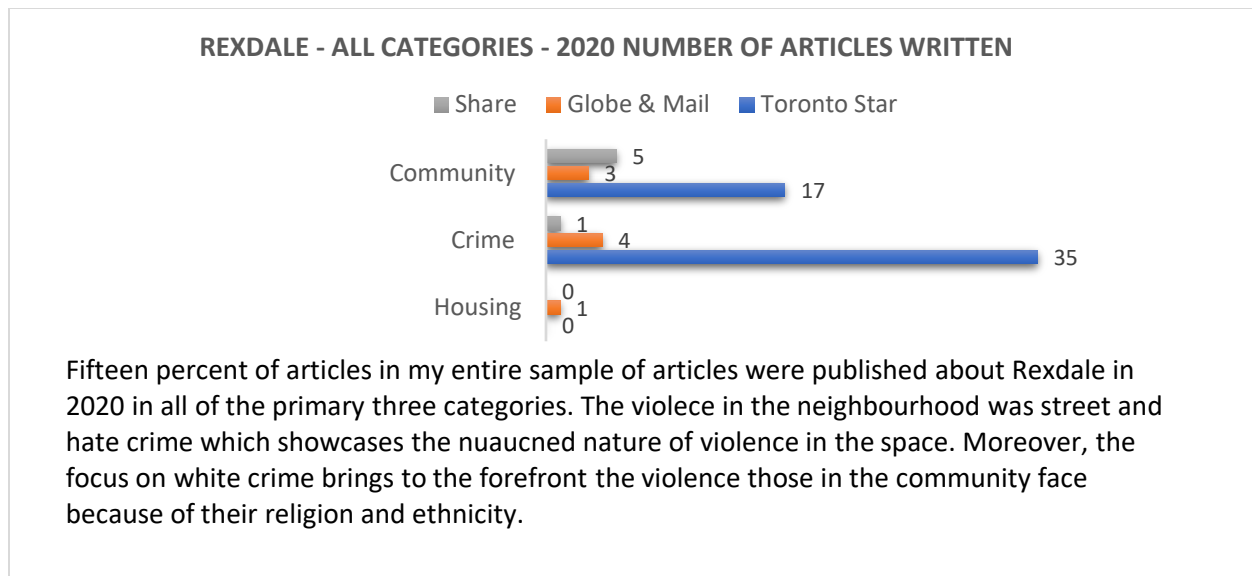
⁵²⁸ P.K. Subban's debut 'a victory for us all,' *Toronto Star*, April 28, 2010, S3.

healthcare through a summer internship. The program was important because it brought like-minded students together and gave them a chance to see people who looked like them pursue a career in healthcare.⁵²⁹ Media representation of community-building through programs and services created to support youth transition from high school to college/university to work, not only provided counter images to violence and gangs, but also showed how community members have been instrumental in helping to change the stigma. Thistletown 1 and 2 were developed as the answer to isolated developments and was a way to do public housing differently. However, the area experienced issues from the start because of extreme population growth and lack of social services that enabled community success. Now Rexdale is undergoing the beginning of space changing development changes, like the redevelopment of 2200 Islington which will see 50,000 square meters turned into a new sprawling retail space, and the looming sale of Rexdale Mall, which has been eyed as a location for multi-residential development, bringing more condos in the neighbourhood. In 10, 20 years Rexdale will look very different to how it does today, however, like Lawrence Heights, it's difficult to say whether this will bring any decrease to the violence. The year 2000 changes the shape of the news about Rexdale because the area becomes aligned very closely to violence. So much so that residents are writing opinion pieces in order to bring attention to the issue. With that being said, in 2010 mainstream news started to broaden the ways in which it discussed the space, as it focused on highlighting groups and advocates making a change.

⁵²⁹ "Summer program inspires future MDs," *Toronto Star*, July 15, 2010, GT5.

2020

CHART 15 - REXDALE - ALL CATEGORIES - 2020 NUMBER OF ARTICLES WRITTEN



In 2020 the world changed with the COVID-19 pandemic and the racial reckoning that followed afterwards. Again, the sample revealed the *Toronto Star* wrote more articles than *Share* and the *Globe and Mail* combined. Toronto's crime continued to go up in 2020. In an article published in the *Toronto Star* titled "Toronto sees record number of shootings in 2019, but fewer deaths," the article highlighted that in 2019 there were 490 shootings in Toronto, and 2020 also set the record for shooting-related injuries which resulted in 48 deaths. In comparison, the year of the gun saw 53 deaths with 262 shootings.⁵³⁰ Despite the federal government putting money into combating gun violence, it still remained/remains a problem. The article interviewed Antonius Clarke, a community organizer and founder of Friends in Toronto Community Service who said, "people in Jane and Finches, the Rexdale's and the Regent Parks, they're used to it."⁵³¹

⁵³⁰ "Toronto sees record number of shootings in 2019, but fewer deaths," *Toronto Star*, January 1, 2020.

⁵³¹ "Toronto sees record."

Neighbourhood and violence have become so conflated that no one, including residents, seem to blink twice because it has become common place.

In 2020 in the category of crime, there were attacks similar to the racialized crime that happened in 1980 with the South Asian community but this time the hate was directed towards Muslim people in Rexdale. In September 2020, a member of the International Muslim Organization was attacked and killed in a racist and Islamophobic attack. In an article titled “Toronto Mosque ‘deeply saddened’ after man stabbed to death outside.” Similar to its coverage of the attack on Amir Din and his family in 1980, the *Globe and Mail* at first did not want to mention racism and xenophobia and said the motive of the attack was unclear as the police had not finished their investigation. They framed this incident as isolated at first and tried to connect it to the suspect’s mental health, which typically benefits white murderers. The *Toronto Star* and the *Globe and Mail* report on this attack and only after the suspect was caught and his racist history was revealed did the tone in the mainstream news change. The news covering this event was coded as individualizing negative and social justice negative as the conversation became about surveillance and security rather than covering growing Islamophobia in Canada. The article wrote, “under the Security Infrastructure Program, mosques and synagogues could apply for funding for alarm systems, fences, gates, lighting, security cameras and motion detectors.”⁵³² This article made it seem like making the space harder to access would make it safer, but really there needed to be a dialogue about hatred towards Muslim people in a country that claims to be multicultural. In an article, the Chief Executive of National Coalition of Canadian Muslims, Mr.

⁵³² “Toronto mosque where volunteer was stabbed was applying for federal security funding,” *The Globe and Mail*, September 13, 2020

Farooq was interviewed and said that “Canada needed to take stronger steps to dismantle white-supremacist organizations.”⁵³³

The *Toronto Star* wrote more articles coded as social justice positive because crime was linked to what it meant to live in poverty. In an article titled “I didn’t expect to live past 25’: The Toronto man with the most famous tattoo in Canadian jurisprudence on life after prison” Warren Abbey was interviewed who served time for committing murder at the age of 19. In the article he talked about his past in that he was a good kid but got caught with bad people. He managed to turn his life around and became a peer support worker helping ex-cons and incarcerated men to find jobs and meaningful work.⁵³⁴ This was one rare article that gave a voice to a convicted felon. The article framed justice in a different light and brought to the surface the perspective of perpetrators which was something we never got to see in the mainstream media up to this point.

There was very little news in the housing category in 2020, housing was only discussed in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Rexdale was one of the hardest hit neighbourhoods. The residents tried to band together to provide for themselves and fill some of the gaps such as elderly people accessing food. The *Toronto Star* highlighted Adair Roberts who started a venture through the Toronto Rexdale Community Hub to provide cultural meals to people who had no access to a kitchen space or were too frail to cook. Roberts said in an interview “Let’s show this works and then let’s share it with the city.”⁵³⁵ This was another

⁵³³ Growing call for hate-crime charges in Toronto Mosque murder, *The Globe and Mail*, September 20, 2020.

⁵³⁴ “I didn’t expect to live past 25’: The Toronto man with the most famous tattoo in Canadian jurisprudence on life after prison,” *Toronto Star*, February 10, 2020.

⁵³⁵ “Pitching in: Launching a fundraising initiative for food delivery,” *The Globe and Mail*, August 21, 2020.

example of people coming together to help each other and fundraise to help the community, which showed active engagement and the right to the city.

The province became more actively involved in helping people from Rexdale through funding and programs after the tragic murder George Floyd at the hand of the police. Premier Doug Ford launched a new “equality of opportunity” task force which earmarked 1.5 million to Black community groups.⁵³⁶ In this announcement Ford mentioned his own community of Rexdale, where he grew up. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic and the racial reckoning forced the city to declare anti-Black racism a public health crisis. COVID-19 laid bare the economic inequalities between majority white and majority Black neighbourhoods as Black neighbourhoods, specifically Rexdale were affected very negatively. Toronto’s medical officer of health Dr. Eileen de Villa recognized that the problems that led to Covid spreading in public housing and predominately Black neighbourhoods had been festering and growing. In a *Toronto Star* article titled “Toronto’s COVID-19 divide: The city’s northwest corner has been ‘failed by the system” she said, ““all levels of government [had] a responsibility for the continued health inequities that [had] long plagued certain neighbourhoods.” She continued to say that “and all levels of government [had] failed to do enough. And COVID has made that painfully visible for everyone to see.”⁵³⁷

The COVID-19 pandemic and the racial reckoning that came after the murder of George Floyd caused the provincial government to start putting more money into programs that helped Rexdale residents. Programs like the Rexdale Youth Mentorship that was created to help youth

⁵³⁶ “Doug Ford launches anti-racism panel to help vulnerable,” *Toronto Star*, June 4, 2020.

⁵³⁷ “Toronto’s COVID-19 divide: The city’s northwest corner has been ‘failed by the system’,” *Toronto Star*, June 28, 2020.

in Rexdale between the age of 12-21. In a *Toronto Star* article titled “Rexdale program helps racialized youth realize ‘their full potential’” founder Kwaku Agyeman was interviewed who said, “our hope is that youth access supportive, loving and caring mentors, who are able to assist them in realizing their full potential.” A lot of youth, even adults, don’t realize their potential. We’ve seen youth step up and be leaders in this community, which is so powerful.”⁵³⁸

Rexdale was the Metropolitan Toronto Council’s third attempt at public housing, and the first at social-mixed housing. From proposal to completion, it did not seem like the area was going to be built but eventually it started to take shape. The mainstream news mostly wrote about housing news in relation to Rexdale in 1960 and 1970. Unfortunately, the area was under resourced and grew faster than the services that could support residents. In the media, violence was often blamed on suspects and perpetrators rather than being contextualized as a symptom of poverty, mental health, lack of education and poor social supports. *Share* published more nuanced and positive images of residents and community in almost all of their articles, and without this community newspaper Rexdale would typically be told through crime with individualizing negative subcodes. With *Share* we see how the neighbourhood although at times splintered has always had advocates and groups working to improve the lives of residents and community members. Rexdale has a lot of work to do to change its metaphor, but alongside negative images are positive images of community members trying to make a difference in the lives of current and future residents.

⁵³⁸ “Rexdale program helps racialized youth realize ‘their full potential’,” *Toronto Star*, October 7, 2020.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Why is there such a lack of action, media coverage and empathy shown for the lives lost in Lawrence Heights, Rexdale, Jane Finch, Malvern, and Alexandra Park? I started my dissertation in search of answers as to why violence and death in some Toronto neighbourhoods seem to mean less and activate less public reaction. Every day on CP24 or another Toronto-based news source we hear of a shooting, a stabbing, a murder and yet nothing changes. I asked myself why was there the assumption that lives lost in these spaces were part of criminal activity and how history may have played a part in their current circumstances. By studying the intersection of media, neighbourhood, housing, community, and crime my dissertation shed light on how mainstream and alternative news sources contribute to our understanding of stereotypes and metaphors that have dominated public imagination about Lawrence Heights and Rexdale. My research examined over 400 articles from the *Toronto Star*, *Globe and Mail*, and *Share* archives to gain a better understanding of how the representation of racialized space function and how they can contribute to the way space exists physically and mentally within our imagination. Although dominant images have shown public housing spaces in stereotypical ways, my research has shown that sometimes they do present more nuanced and complicated articles. Moreover, the presence of independent sources like *Share* are vital as counternarratives because they give a voice to the community, and how residents, community groups and activists are coming together to not only reclaim their right to the city but provide pathways out of generational poverty. News sources like *Share* along with sometimes the *Toronto Star* and the *Globe and Mail* show that although there are leading

images, there are other stories that deconstruct the hegemony and show how since moving in residents have been actively fighting for their rights and their communities.

I argue there are three key moments that shape and change the way Lawrence Heights and Rexdale have been perceived in the media. By uncovering the public sentiment that existed before these spaces were built, it became clear that in the 1950s, Toronto started a project that the nation had never seen before. The federal, provincial, and municipal governments had to figure out who was in charge of what, who had approval and who had the final say. Moreover, along with changes at the municipal level with the creation of the Metropolitan Toronto Council, public housing was caught up in a government still trying to figure out how to build a welfare state and what that meant. With the National Housing Act swaths of land owned by the federal government were sold to municipalities to build public housing. Canada leaned on the model from Europe and the US and tried to do good by providing affordable housing but unfortunately during the proposal phase the voices of the people who would be moving into public housing was often left out. Moreover, each new public housing area had to carry the weight of the mistakes of the one previous. The news coverage of the *Toronto Star* and the *Globe and Mail* during this time tended to support the different levels of government. Often the people interviewed were government officials, or there was an argument made that public housing was the right thing to do and could show us just how well the new Metropolitan Toronto Council was working for its citizens.

Providing subsidized housing was seen as a government responsibility and there was a lot of public attention on the issue. One of the themes uncovered in my work was that when public attention was being heavily paid to affordable housing, this was when the government

acted the most and we saw the proposal and construction of many new buildings. When public attention to housing started to wane, then the government tended to act less and did not put as much money into public housing and we see this happen in the late 80s and early 90s. The unwavering group that always worked to make the lives of residents better or advocated for better housing tended to be the residents themselves, or activists and social groups who are working for the benefit of the community.

My findings uncovered that residents who were going to move into Lawrence Heights and Rexdale did not get a voice when it came to the proposal phase of both projects, moreover, there was staunch rejection of both of these developments by municipal governments, local community associations as well as private industry. Both of these spaces had several amendments made to their initial proposal that decreased the number of units that would be built, accessibility and transportation. Moreover, planning amendments like lack of streets or only building bachelor or one-bedroom apartments had negative effects for residents as the decades moved on. The media representation of the proposal and construction of these units rarely criticized the lack of involvement of future residents. The media supported the federal and provincial government actions in that public housing was good for everyone and a benefit. This is something that people may not think the media would do, which shows that even though they later contributed to the stereotype they were initially supportive of affordable housing.

In 1980 and 1990, the rise of neo-liberalism increases reliance of individuality and focus on crime in the *Globe and Mail* and the *Toronto Star*. People were moving into public housing faster than the government could handle or afford, and public housing struggled to keep up

security, maintenance, and growth. There was a second shift in the news media coverage of Lawrence Heights and Rexdale as changes to immigration policy allowed people from the global South to move to Canada. In this time, we saw the creation of ethnic, and Black independent news such as *Share* which started to change the way Black communities were represented. *Share* shows how the area advocates called out police violence and shared resources and resisted stereotypes. Community news is the leading category because of *Share*.

My research also uncovered the racially motivated hate that residents of both Lawrence Heights and Rexdale faced when they began to move into the neighbourhood. Black residents in Lawrence Heights encountered violence as well as South Asian and Muslim residents of Rexdale. Taking up space as a racialized person in a white space is often accompanied by violence and this history is often brushed under the rug. In the 1980s, Canada was proclaiming itself as a multicultural country but at the same time white supremacy was enacting violence that was covered in the media using individualizing negative and social justice negative codes. In the 1970s and 1980s was when we started to see the media usage of race when describing people, however, whiteness continued to be normalized and benefited from invisibility. The governance of public housing moved to the OHC and instead of investing money into community-violence intervention programs we see an increase of security and surveillance. Moreover, white supremacy was rarely addressed or tangible ways to address the racially-motivated violence. Although the stereotype existed before this, starting in the 80s in the *Globe and Mail* and the *Toronto Star* we started to see the development of the 'criminalblackman' stereotype, and the 'outsider-non-Canadian' label begin to be attached to young Black men in Toronto.

The final shift in the media representation happened in 2000 when crime began to take over mainstream media coverage. Often the cause of violence was attributed to ‘gangs’ and there was a prevalence of the individualizing negative subcode, because it helped to explain the violence as episodic and contained to neighbourhood and doing this made it seem too big of an issue to solve. Young Black men were not represented as victims in the same way that a white young woman would be. “Community violence in Toronto is racialized; it disproportionately affects young Black males, in particular young Somali Canadians who mostly reside in Lawrence Heights and other public housing areas.”⁵³⁹ In the media, young, Black male victims of crime are not given the same humanity as others, which contributes to the lack of empathy and public outrage. Moreover, the blanket of “gang activity” that is thrown over all victims of crimes that happens in Lawrence Heights and Rexdale contributes to the lack of empathy and action shown when innocent bystanders lose their lives or are injured because they were in the wrong place at the wrong time. Instead of the media contextualizing the crime or mixing in longer in-depth analysis amongst the short descriptions of crime, all we tend to see are short descriptions of crime and violence, which unfortunately contribute to its normalization.

Without the inclusion of *Share* in my sample, most of the codes covering these two neighbourhoods would have been individualizing negative and most of the stories would have been in the crime category. My research highlights the importance of alternative Black-owned news sources to provide balanced representation that shows racialized people in a positive light. With a mandate to report on positive stories meant that *Share* articles often used an

⁵³⁹ Board of Health. Community Violence in Toronto: A Public Health Approach. October 23, 2019.

individualizing positive code to highlight people who came from a difficult past in Lawrence Heights or Rexdale and how they were able to navigate and move into a position of success. Moreover, *Share* often presented the social justice positive code by sharing community programs and initiatives that were actively trying to provide support whether in recreation, education, job support, healthcare, day care, or cultural integration services. The *Toronto Star* is the second source in my sample that published the highest number of community articles with a social justice code by sharing community programs that were making a difference, but they usually only did this in large numbers after the year of the gun whereas *Share* was always doing this work. Highlighting active advocates and programs started by residents either who were victims of violence or perpetrators of violence or simply residents, shows the active change that has been and is always occurring in these two neighbourhoods.

The right to the city remains in action because the residents were engaging, participating, and coming together to help one another improve their conditions and providing space to connect. It goes against the isolation and disengagement that contributes to the violence. To me, that was the biggest learning that came out of my research. My research shows that there are other metaphors that have always existed and provides space for these stories to live. With the increase in more Black-owned media sources there can be changes in how these spaces are represented, moreover, maybe it does not matter how the public views these spaces as long as the residents see the connectedness and the community. Without a doubt, violence is still very much an issue in Lawrence Heights despite the 'revitalization' and in Rexdale with a looming 'revitalization' in sight. However, because of the prevalence of Black death caused by Covid-19, violence is being constructed as a public health issue, which allows

for all the complexities and intricacies to be seen together (social determinants of health) rather than simply blaming it on “gangs”. Seeing violence as a public health issue helps to see the ways in which neighbourhoods and communities have been under resourced and allows for new and different ways of addressing the violence to take shape – like paying gang members to turn in their guns and paying students to finish high school. I end with the question I started with. Is there a way we can reimagine Rexdale and Lawrence Heights past the stereotypes they are often presented through in the mainstream media? And the answer that I came to through my research is yes. Yes, there is a way, and this is through a thriving Black media in Toronto and community groups that have been dedicated to telling the important work of the community and highlighting those doing the important work. Although they may not get as much public attention, what they started has led the way for Black media companies that exist today like byblacks, NOW and Flow 98.7. The mainstream news tends to focus on what is popular in the public, and what is attracting attention from the government. When Lawrence Heights and Rexdale were the focus of any government attention or crime, mainstream media attention increased. However, the Black independent press has been dedicated to telling stories about Black communities before these areas were constructed, during and now, in all sorts of different aspects of daily life, not just crime. These enduring voices must continue be highlighted to showcase how Black people have and are defining their own spaces with their own voices to reclaim their right to the city.

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