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OUT OF THE CORE: NEGOTIATING EVERYDAY DIFFERENCE AND BELONGING AMONG RACIALIZED YOUTH IN EAST- END TORONTO NEIGHBOURHOODS

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OUT OF THE CORE: NEGOTIATING EVERYDAY DIFFERENCE
AND BELONGING AMONG RACIALIZED YOUTH
IN EAST-END TORONTO NEIGHBOURHOODS

by

Anuppiriya Sriskandarajah

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
through the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminology
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Author's Declaration of Originality

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to examine the way youth negotiate belonging in two priority neighbourhoods - Malvern and Chester Le in Toronto's east-end. It asks how youth experience belonging and negotiate difference in 'priority neighbourhoods'. In what ways does space shape belonging and difference? How do youth reproduce dominant scripts and rupture others in their quest for belonging in their communities? In contrast to the previous studies that are spatially decontextualized, I argue that neighbourhoods are the very sites where youth negotiate differences and connections as they engage with peers, families, friends and residents. The importance of space in studying youth's sense of belonging is particularly valuable in Toronto where neighbourhoods are highly diverse and stratified. Building on prior investigations on belonging that tend to focus on attachment to the nation (Yuval-Davis 2006), in this dissertation I re-scale belonging to understand if and how neighbourhoods matter in the experiences of belonging. Is it possible to simultaneously feel excluded from the nation, but yet forge attachments to sub-national spaces? I use Yuval-Davis's (2006) conceptualization of belonging and the politics of belonging and Bourdieu's (1984) social field, habitus, and symbolic violence. I also draw on the literature that underscores the importance of space in negotiations of difference and experiences of belonging. I braid together a conceptual framework with the aim to achieve a more nuanced understanding of the ways power operates in the everyday context of 'priority neighbourhoods' and how processes of inclusion and exclusion and boundaries of belonging are demarcated. The approach attends to the interpretive dimensions of youth difference and belonging as situated within structural and discursive inequalities that shape their lives. I employ an ethnographic approach to argue that youth's negotiations of difference and experiences of belonging are rooted in neighbourhood contexts. It is important to account for these local realities because they have both policy implications and allow for thinking about intercultural solidarity.

Dedication

To my mother, who made life possible

To my brother, who made life bearable

To my loving husband, who made life believable

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

My interest in the way youth experience belonging and negotiate difference derives in part from my experiences growing up in a marginalized neighbourhood in Toronto's west end. I immigrated to Canada at the age of 8, as a refugee fleeing a war in Sri Lanka. I spent most of my childhood in Rexdale, a west-end neighbourhood of Toronto, which was later officially designated a 'priority' area. 'Priority neighbourhoods' are characterized by high levels of poverty and limited access to social services (Strong Neighbourhood Task Force 2005). My neighbourhood was predominately inhabited by individuals who before their arrival in Canada lived oceans apart: in Somalia, India, and countries throughout the Caribbean. Despite their qualifications before migration, the adults that I encountered in my neighbourhood held low-wage factory and service jobs in Toronto. Irrespective of their past, these residents came to share similar economic realities in their new neighbourhood. In my recollection, Canada's tolerant, multicultural ethos provided reassurance to myself and fellow neighbourhood residents. It provided a sense of inclusion for myself and other ethnically and racially diverse residents. And yet as I came to understand, there were social, cultural, and economic divides that distinguished one neighbourhood in Toronto from another.

Changes to Canada's immigration policies in 1967 eliminated the last overt elements of racially discriminatory barriers to migration. The shift from a 'race' based system to the current point system changed the demography of Canadian society. The change is most evident in major urban centers which are home to most of Canada's immigrant and racialized populations. In the case of Toronto, as neighbourhoods have become more diverse over the last few decades they have also become more inequitable. According to Hulchanski (2010) neighbourhoods where incomes have increased since the 1970s are for the most part found in the city's core. Low-

income areas where neighbourhood incomes have decreased compared to the city average are found mostly in the northeast and northwest parts of Toronto, commonly referred to as the ‘inner suburbs.’ Within the same period (between 1971 and 2006), in the city’s core, the number of foreign-born people declined from 35 percent to 28 percent. In the inner suburbs, the immigrant population almost doubled in the same 35-year period, from 31 percent to 61 percent (Hulchanski 2010, pg. 11). As the core became more wealthy, it also became more White. As the inner-suburbs became more diverse, they became more poor. In fact, the “visible minority” population has increased in poorer neighbourhoods from 20 percent in 1981 to 29.5 percent in 2001 (United Way 2004, pg. 49). Most of the city’s ‘priority neighbourhoods’ are located in the ‘inner suburbs’. Such indicators suggest that ethno-racial groups continue to be systematically marginalized and pushed to the peripheries of the city, despite the promise of inclusion implied in official multiculturalism policies.

The diversification and income differentiation of neighbourhoods beg an examination of how diverse, marginalized local places cultivate the belonging of youth. Given the characterization of priority neighbourhoods as diverse and economically marginal, it is important to understand how youth experience belonging and make sense of the differences that mark their neighbourhoods.

Research Question and Aims of the Study

The objective of this study is to examine the way youth experience belonging and negotiate difference in Malvern and Chester Le, two ‘priority neighbourhoods’ in Toronto’s east-end. In what ways does space shape belonging and negotiations of difference? How do youth reproduce dominant scripts and rupture others in their quest for belonging in their communities? By

belonging I refer to youth's identity, and the experiences of attachments that forge for them a sense of social inclusion in society. Negotiating difference pertains to the ways youth manage, reproduce, internalize, and/or subvert differences between themselves and others, particularly differences that are codified through racial, gendered and class relations. For the purpose of this study, I follow Service Canada's classifications and define youth as individuals ranging from ages 15-29¹ (Service Canada 2014).

I employ an ethnographic lens to examine the lives of youth. I use a multi-method approach that incorporates a media analysis of how 'priority neighbourhoods' are depicted, with interviews, focus groups, observations and a participatory activity to elicit how youth navigate difference in their everyday lives and forge a sense of belonging. The study seeks to elicit valuable insights into the way difference is negotiated, lived, and interpreted in Canadian.

Rationale of Study

In Canada, most studies of ethno-racial difference focus on specific ethnic or racial groups and their interaction with the host society (Jurva and Jaya 2008). At the same time, the interactions between different ethnic groups in specific neighbourhoods are understudied. Also, for the most part, the literature in the Canadian context does not account for socio-spatial differences, with notable exceptions (Byers and Tastsoglou 2008; Gosine and Islam's 2014; Zaami 2015). However, neighbourhoods are the very sites where everyday differences are both practiced and contested. Place is where influences and belongings intersect (Clayton 2004). It is in particular places that youth are both actors and acted upon. Places (as material spaces) foster

¹ Service Canada uses this age range for youth-specific government services (including access to programs offered at community centers)

and even compel negotiation among those who share spaces (Massey 2005). It is through claims to space -- as I argue here, neighbourhoods that youth attempt to forge social identities, experience belonging, and negotiate difference.

Studies show that youth typically have fewer resources than their adult counterparts and are therefore more bounded to their local spaces (Harris 2009; 2013; 2014). Therefore, local neighbourhoods are spaces that figure centrally in their lives. The contribution of this dissertation is to examine the intercultural and racialized dynamics that inform and are produced in the contexts of socio-economic inequality (whereby neighbourhoods take on a class character) and its implications for belonging. By centering neighbourhoods in youth's negotiations of difference, I illustrate the importance of accounting for neighbourhood dynamics in policy considerations and its implications for intercultural solidarity.

Initially, I intended to explore the lives of immigrant and second generation youth in priority neighbourhoods through my doctoral research. After spending time with the participants, however, it became apparent that while many viewed themselves as immigrants or children of immigrants, many also saw themselves as racialized Canadians. In this study, I used both terms, ethno-racial and racialized to refer to the youth in Chester Le and Malvern. I recognized that these terms informed how these participants are defined and self-define. These terms are distinct, yet overlapping and each term reduces heterogeneity within each category and reifies differences. These terms are, as I discuss in Chapter 2, throughout the thesis, and in my conclusion are somewhat problematic ways of depicting or 'classifying' the youth who participated in this study. However, this was a central way in which the youth interpreted and discussed their lives. Thus, I adopt these categories in my dissertation.

Ethnographic Entrance

In late 2012 I moved to the east-end Toronto suburb of Scarborough. Within Scarborough's many neighbourhoods I moved into Malvern. Scarborough is the largest and most rapidly changing of the six 'boroughs' in Toronto. Between 1981 and 2001, the population of Scarborough increased by 31 percent while the number of low-income families grew by 136 percent. In the same period, the number of high and very high-poverty neighbourhoods increased from 4 to 26 (United Way as cited in Smith and Ley 2008, pg. 692). Scarborough receives the largest number of newcomers to Toronto, where more than half of new Canadians settle. Two-thirds of Scarborough's population are racialized groups compared to 40 percent in the rest of the city (Youthlink 2012). These factors made Scarborough an ideal site for my research.

Originally, I envisioned my dissertation to focus on west end neighbourhoods, including my old neighbourhood. However, my original plan became less feasible with my move; with poorly planned transit in the city it would take 2.5 hours on public transit one way to return to my old neighbourhood. Therefore, I chose to focus on my new neighbourhood (Malvern) and another one closer to my new home (Chester Le). I chose to identify the neighbourhoods to allow youth in these spaces to articulate in their own words what their neighbourhoods meant to them and resist the pervasive negative representations that continued to frame their lives and their neighbourhoods.

Although a 'priority neighbourhood', Malvern was a mixed-income community with low and middle-income households. In contrast, the local population of Chester Le was more economically homogenous, and most of them lived in a Toronto Community Housing Corporation complex. I conducted my research at two community centers which offered a location from which I could examine youth who lived in two similar, but distinct

neighbourhoods. I carried out my ethnographic study for 16 months in the field from February 2013 to June 2014.

At these centers I was involved in different programs. I helped with the youth programs in any capacity the staff required. I spent five days of the week in the field, alternating two to three days at each site. I observed, participated, and helped in many different programs, including general after-school drop-ins, tutoring, creative and artistic workshops, and girls' empowerment groups. Working in a community center setting allowed me to engage with youth, service providers, parents, as well as other neighbourhood residents who would come to the centers. I conducted extensive participant observation, 34 semi-structured interviews, seven focus groups, and a photo-voice project. I interviewed youth, community actors, and service providers.

Reflexivity

Every researcher speaks from a distinct interpretative community that influences the research process (Denzin and Lincoln 2005). Researchers need to recognize that they conduct research from particular positions. Positionality exists and matters, and their research practice cannot be separated from their social locations (Martin and Mohanty as cited in Naples 2003). Researchers need to acknowledge how their social location influences what questions are asked, who they approach in the field, how their fieldwork experiences are interpreted, and how they carry out the final data analyses (Smith 1999; Naples 2003). My identity as a 1.5 generation Sri Lankan Tamil female refugee, who grew up in similar socio-economic conditions as the youth I worked with, inevitably shaped my framework, the questions I asked, and how I interpreted the data. And yet, it was important to recognize what distinguished me from them: my age, my education and my academic objectives that placed me in a privileged position in the knowledge

production of their lives. My experience also informed the respect I extended to the participants. I appreciated their time, valued their stories, protected their identities, and believed in their ability and authority to speak on their life experiences. I agree with Naples (2003) that researchers cannot overcome all reservations about research. However, engagement is a reflexive process, one that includes dialogue and respectful interaction with participants. Through a reflexive approach, the dilemmas intrinsic to the process can be exposed and become part of the process. I maintained reflexivity throughout the process, and it guided my research study.

Outline of the Dissertation

Chapter Two outlines the conceptual framework that guides my research question: the importance of studying everyday negotiations of difference and belonging among a particular cluster of racialized youth. My conceptual framework draws on Yuval-Davis's (2006) conceptualization of belonging, centers the importance of space, and draws on Bourdieu (1984) to account for the structural inequalities in these spaces that inform belonging. Chapter Three outlines the different ethnographic methods I used for this research. Methods include interviews, focus groups, participant observation, media analysis, and photo-voice. The following two chapters (Four and Five) outline different aspects of the 'social fields' of these neighbourhoods (Bourdieu 1984). Chapter Four describes the setting -- Scarborough, Malvern and Chester Le — which form the 'social fields' (Bourdieu 1984) in which the participants under study live. Through a detailed description of the two communities, I seek to identify the specific contexts which anchor my research engagement with the participants and which forms an important locus for the participants who comprise this study. Chapter Five employs a media analysis to examine

dominant discursive constructions of the neighbourhoods under study and in particular the depictions of the residents. The chapter illustrates how symbolic power (which informs the social field) is enacted through mass media's framings of youth and their neighbourhoods. Chapter Six examines how the participants navigate everyday difference in their neighbourhoods. The chapter foregrounds how habitus and symbolic violence informs intercultural relationships and its implications for belonging in these neighbourhoods. Chapter Seven examines the generative forces of habitus and how the participants draw on socio-spatial identities to navigate differences. Chapter Eight examines the spaces and the creative ways the participants construct a sense of belonging. Chapter Nine incorporates a participatory research element through the use of photo-voice to encourage youth to articulate what their neighbourhood means to them.

CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

My study aims to explore how youth negotiate difference and experience belonging in two marginalized or ‘priority neighbourhoods,’ that is, how they reproduce dominant scripts and rupture others in their quest for belonging in their communities. I draw on three strands of sociological research: belonging and negotiations of difference; the importance of space; and Bourdieu who foregrounds the material and structural realities that inform youth’s everyday negotiations of difference.

Most studies that examine belonging focus on attachment to the nation (Yuval-Davis 2006). This study diverges and seeks to re-scale belonging to explore the role of neighbourhoods in the experiences of belonging. To explore whether individuals can simultaneously feel exclusion at the national level and attachment to sub-national spaces, I examine different scales of belonging, and how belonging and difference are shaped by habitus and social field at the sub-national level.

Questions of negotiating ethno-racial identities, difference, and belonging have been examined in the Canadian context, including differences in intergenerational expressions of ethnic identities (Byers and Tastsoglou 2008); the role of ethnic organizations for ethnic belonging (Jurkova 2014); the importance of minimizing exclusionary barriers for political participation and sense of belonging (Lenard 2006). Despite this literature, there still exists a dearth in understanding the complex processes of ‘living’ difference and its implications for experiences of belonging as situated in particular spaces. I argue that in the Canadian literature the way difference and belonging are studied for the most part is spatially decontextualized. In the Canadian context, space is either taken for granted or used as the backdrop for studies on

difference and belonging without attending to its analytical significance or social qualities. Less is written on how socio-spatial realities inform negotiations of difference and belonging.

The importance of space in studying youth's sense of belonging is particularly important in the Toronto context whereby neighbourhoods are increasingly stratified. As neighbourhoods become more diverse and simultaneously more unequal, it warrants an analysis of how diverse local places cultivate youth belonging through their discursive, institutional, social, and economic practices.

Different conceptual approaches to research on ethno-racial youth in Canada demonstrates that they are differently positioned in ways that tend to undermine their inclusion, engender discrimination, or disadvantage them in particular social and economic spheres. Macro-level statistical studies for example, illustrates there is discrimination in the labour market (Krahn and Taylor 2005); uneven academic achievement (Abada, Hou, Ram 2009; Codjoe 2007; Smith, Schneider, and Ruck 2005; Thiessen 2009); and over-representation in the criminal justice system (Fitzgerald and Carrington 2011).

Canadian scholarship on ethno-racial youth also focuses on the experiences of second generation immigrants. Tastsoglou's (2008) seminal edited collection of articles in the *Canadian Ethnic Studies* issue on second generation immigrant youth highlights the importance of studying young people as distinct from their first generation immigrant counterparts. The collection also centers the importance of these experiences as situated within particular spaces or cities in Canada. These are some of the few examples in the Canadian literature that address the importance of space in negotiations of ethno-racial identities for young people. Byers and Tastsoglou (2008)'s work (in the collection) examines Greek and Jewish second generation youth in the context of Halifax, a smaller city with less immigrant communities. They postulate

that the “relative homogeneity” of the city might possibly promote feelings of marginality due to ethnic identities being “both too visible and invisible” in this spatial context shaped by low immigrant populations (pg.27). Their study also finds that there isn’t necessarily a decrease in ethnic identity attachments within the second generation but rather different “articulations” and “performances” of these identities compared to the first generation (pg.24).

The second generation literature also examines how youth negotiate difference in relation to Canadian society and their ‘homelands’ (Moosa 2012; Netting 2006; Rajiva 2005). For example, the literature shows that many immigrant and second generation youth are simultaneously attached to both their local environments and to their parents’ homelands in a non-oppositional manner (Herbert, Wilkinson, Ali, Oriola, 2008). Other examples of these studies include the examination of how youth navigate cultural clashes between norms at home and values they receive outside of the home in Canada (Baffoe, 2011; Rajiva 2005); changes in gender expectations upon settlement by parents and youth (Moosa, 2012); and negotiations of marriage expectations, (love, arranged, or some mixture of the two) (Netting 2006).

The scholarship shows that second generation ethno-racial youth experience inclusion and exclusion that are complex and call into question the claims that Canadian discourses of equality and multiculturalism support ethno-racial inclusion. For example, a study by Herbert, Wilkinson, Ali, Mehrunnisa, and Tempitope (2008) examining second generation youth in Calgary, Winnipeg, and Toronto illustrated the inconsistency of official multiculturalism as demonstrated by the difficulties and barriers youth face integrating into Canadian society. Byers and Tastsoglou (2008) in their study of second generation Greek and Jewish youth in Halifax found that both groups shared feelings of otherness and experienced racism. Feelings of alienation contributed to their need to maintain ethnic community ties.

The Canadian ethno-racial youth literature also focuses on the racialization processes which illustrates the particularly marginalized experiences of Black youth. For example, Madibbo's study (2008) demonstrated that racism in the education and criminal justice system gravely informs the integration experiences of Black Francophone immigrant youth in Ontario. Black racialized youth are often negatively stereotyped in ways that limit their social opportunities. Carl James (2012) found that stereotypes construct Black male youth as 'at-risk.' Branded as "immigrant, fatherless, troublemaker, athlete, and underachiever" Black youth are racialized in ways that negatively structures their life opportunities (pg. 464). The literature on racialized youth suggests that immigrant and racialized young people are differently positioned compared to White youth.

The above literature review on ethno-racial youth highlights the different lenses that are used to examine their lives, whether it is statistical studies of discrimination, examinations of subjective understandings of difference and negotiations of belonging of second generation immigrants, or youth experiences and processes of racialization. These studies illustrate how ethno-racial young people are differentially positioned and have distinctive experiences compared to their White counterparts, whether it is the over-surveillance of racialized youth in schools (Salole and Abdulle 2015); youth as a time of racial identity making (Rajiva 2006); stereotyping and racialization of youth by police (Symons 1999); second generation Muslim youth's decreased sense of belonging compared to other second generation youth (Wong and Simon 2009); politicalized racial youth identities as forms of resistance in White spaces (Dei and James 1998). The review demonstrates that young people's racialization has material implications, including discrimination in schools (Kayaalp 2014; Poteet and Simmons 2014), the criminal justice system (Wortley 2003), and the labour market (Lightman and Gingrich 2012).

Racialized youth are situated in a particular way within the Canadian context. They live complex lives shaped by inclusions and exclusions (Creese 2015; Cui 2012; Paragg 2015; Potvin 1999). There is also modest attention to how youth experience inclusion and exclusion and how space shapes their lives as I discuss below in greater detail. The focus of my dissertation, however, is to interrogate how differences are constructed, interrogated, and policed *between* ‘others’ in spaces where there is significant diversity, and its implications for the experiences of belonging. In the following section I outline the conceptual framework that guides this study.

In the section that follows, I begin with a brief theoretical conceptualization of belonging. I then discuss the concept of space, as a material and analytic site where differences and belonging are negotiated and experienced. The social and economic inequalities that exist in these neighbourhoods, moreover, beg attention to the structural relations of power that youth come to inhabit. To examine how belonging is spatialized and structured I draw on Bourdieu's (1984) concepts of habitus and social field which provide a way to ground youth narratives ethnographically, in the places where they live and engage.

Belonging

Yuval-Davis (2006) provides a sociological approach to understanding belonging as a process of attachment, identity, and recognition. She moves the concept of belonging beyond the purview of individual's psychological states and foregrounds the idea of belonging as a process constituted through boundary making--exclusion and inclusion. Moreover, Yuval-Davis (2006) offers analytic distinctions that are useful for unpacking the social and political threads that comprise belonging. I argue that these distinctions direct us to the locally embedded and

interpersonal ways in which belonging may be experienced. Yuval-Davis examines both the individual and structural components of belonging.

According to Yuval-Davis (2006) belonging is constructed along three analytical levels: 1) social locations, 2) identifications and emotional attachments, and 3) ethical and political value systems. Social location refers to belonging to particular social groups. Belonging to social groups inform where individuals exist in the power relations and hierarchies of society, for example along axes of gender, race, and class.

Secondly, Yuval-Davis (2006) argues that belonging indicates “emotional investments and desire for attachments” (pg. 202). Identities are narratives “people tell about who they are and who they are not” (pg. 203). Identity narratives constantly change. These identities are constructed through “repetitive practices” in particular social contexts which create “identity narratives” (pg. 203). Belonging has a performative aspect. Through repetitive practices, individuals reproduce and resist dominant identity narratives. Yuval-Davis (2006) centers the importance of agency in the conceptualization of belonging. Identity narratives are not inherent; instead, they are an outcome of social practice. Identity becomes an expression of investments by people which directs their sense of belonging.

Finally, belonging also entails how social locations and identities are valued. This dimension of belonging is related to how boundaries of who and who does not belong are constructed and who draws these boundaries. Yuval-Davis (2006) refers to the contestation of these boundaries and the ways social locations and identities are used as the “politics of belonging” (pg. 204). In her approach the politics of belonging includes the boundary construction work of those in power but also how boundaries are forged and resisted by individuals. Belonging is about emotional attachment, and the politics of belonging is the

boundary marking of who belongs and who does not. Therefore, belonging is essentially about exclusion and inclusion. Contestations between how boundaries should be drawn and how positions are valued connect belonging to the politics of belonging. Yuval-Davis's (2006) conceptualization of belonging illustrates that it is through everyday practices and contestations of belonging that the practical work of inclusion and exclusion occur.

Yuval-Davis's (2006) work allows us to simultaneously examine how belonging includes affective dimensions and how power figures centrally in shaping youth's sense of belonging. Power differentiates youth along the lines of social locations such as race, gender, class, and other categories. Belonging is intersectional, constructed along multiple axes of difference (Yuval-Davis 2006). People can belong in many ways. Markers of belonging and unbelonging are produced or informed by differences in race, gender and class, that arguably shape encounters between individuals. My work focuses on the racial dimensions of belonging, illustrating that power is racially expressed, lived, and contested as youth cultivate their sense of belonging in their neighbourhoods.

While Yuval-Davis (2006) concentrates on nation and citizenship at the macro-level, I explore the boundaries of belonging constructed in daily encounters between individuals at the neighbourhood level. This is in line with Pettersson (2013) who states the "*intimate* interplay between constructions of belonging and unbelonging" are an important element of belonging (italics added) (pg. 420). Negotiations of belonging change depending on particular contexts (Pettersson 2013). Pettersson's insights enhance Yuval-Davis's (2006) approach by foregrounding everyday belonging in local neighbourhoods. I argue that there is a spatial approach to belonging that complements Yuval-Davis's model. The spatial approach is an important component of the neighbourhood focus in this study.

Neighbourhoods as Sites for the Politics of Belonging for Youth

Scholars have recognized the importance of space in studies of belonging (Youkhana 2015). Belonging as a concept centers relationships people have with others and their surroundings. Belonging is not fixed; it is fluid and informed by different contexts that are continuously negotiated by individuals (Youkhana 2015). While there is increasing attention to globalization, it is important to recognize that locality remains important in people's lives (Hoey 2010; Van 2007). Local communities continue to retain their own heterogeneous cultures, understandings, and identities despite homogenizing economic and cultural world processes (Harris 2014; Leverentz 2012; Van 2007).

Local spaces, however, are not confined or bounded; neighbourhoods are sites where subjectivity connects to global spaces. In my study, I found that many of the youth or their parents migrated from other places in the world. They continued to have transnational connections. Youth are also informed by a global youth culture that is predominately influenced by American culture. Therefore, neighbourhoods are by no means insular.

Neighbourhood spaces shape and are themselves shaped by subjective interpretations. Subjectivity is co-constitutive with spatiality (Gulson 2011). It is in particular places that young people are both actors and acted upon. It is in "place where negotiation is forced upon us" (Massey 2005, pg. 154). Neighbourhoods are where differences are lived out and contested. Space is imbued with power relations that shape subjectivity, practice, and sense of belonging. Space is socially produced, and thus, it should not to be regarded as 'natural' (Lefebvre 1991). Space and place are infused with socially constructed race, class, and gendered meanings. Neighbourhoods are created by inhabitants through their spatial and cultural practices as well as external actors such as media and the government (Soja 2000).

Recently, Canadian ethno-racial youth scholarship recognizes space as an important marker of difference. Gosine and Islam's (2014) investigation of discrimination against youth in Toronto's Regent Park schools found a "strong sense of community." Racial and class oppression enhanced their sense of community. Similarly, Zaami's (2015) work on Ghanaian youth in Toronto's Jane and Finch area found there was a dialectical relationship between social and spatial exclusion. In her study, the youth attributed their limited access to the labour market and increased racial profiling by police as an outcome of living in these spaces. Cairns's (2013) study examined how rural White youth's identities in Southeastern Ontario are constituted through spatialized and racialized understandings. White youth struggling to escape labels such as "dirt," a term used to describe poor, rural youth, displaced this discourse onto racialized others living in urban spaces (pg. 624). This, in turn, allowed them to forge their self-worth.

Belonging comes into existence through material conditions as situated in space (Youkhana 2015). Writing about the Australian context, Harris (2016) argues that youth's "narratives about difference depend on the space of belonging" (pg. 373). Living in multicultural spaces requires constant negotiations of difference which can inform new shared identities or reiterate racial codings (Harris 2016). Youth are at the forefront of negotiating everyday difference due to their 'rootedness' in their communities. Since youth have fewer resources than adults, they are more bounded to their local space (Harris 2013). Therefore, for most youth, everyday life remains to be situated in local environments bounded by home, school, and neighbourhood (Harris 2009). Due to these circumstances youth are often at the forefront of local everyday interactions with difference. An "engagement with cultural difference" (Harris 2013: pg. 584) is central to their participation in these local spaces. Youth 'mix' more with other ethno-

racial groups because they are confined to multicultural local spaces and spend most of their day at school where inter-ethnic mixing is unavoidable (Harris 2013).

Youth are seen as the principal protagonists in debates about social inclusion by both scholars and the public. They are thought of as the “vanguards” of multiculturalism and integration and simultaneously, by contrast, seen as embodying the most “regressive forms of nationalism, fundamentalism and racism” (Butcher and Harris 2010, pg. 449). For these reasons, Harris (2014) writing in the Australian context argues that there is a need to examine how youth live with difference and navigate intercultural relationships in their local neighbourhood spaces (and the implications for their sense of belonging). She calls for a more “empirically grounded” understanding of how youth coexist (Harris 2013, pg. 5). The current youth generation is especially important to study because of their deep engagement in intercultural mixing resulting from globalization (Harris 2013).

Although Harris’s works (2009;2013;2014) focuses on youth in Australia, she provides valuable insights that are relevant to the Canadian context. The dissertation is informed by international works, particularly from Australia and Britain that have centered the importance of space in informing difference and belonging (Amin 2002; Wise 2005). In Canada, less attention is directed at the localized and interpretive understandings of difference. For the most part, as demonstrated above, the literature on ethno-racial youth examines one specific group. When different groups are studied together their experiences are somewhat homogenized. In this dissertation, I aim to contribute to the existing literature by examining how difference is interpreted by youth and negotiated among and between groups situated in specific locations. I interrogate how inter-ethnic and racialized relationships between youth in particular spaces inform their sense of belonging, difference, and social exclusion. Moreover, by focusing on

youth in priority neighbourhoods, I seek to foreground the socio-economic contexts -- the relations of class in which the study's participants live. In contrast to other studies on ethnic diversity or racialization that fail to locate difference in the economic relations of inequality, I make the analysis of economic differentiation central to my analysis.

Belonging and Bourdieu

My efforts to situate everyday difference and belonging in particular places and from a sociological perspective directed me to work by Pierre Bourdieu (1984). I prioritize the spatialized and structured character of habitus that, in my view, is important for exploring youth lives in these neighbourhoods. Bourdieu (1984) provides a sociological orientation which I employ to foreground the material and structural axes that inform youth negotiations of difference in their everyday lives. Bourdieu's attention to social practice and dispositions provides an important link to the ways these negotiations are prefigured.

Bourdieu (1984) conceptualizes social life as relational. These relations take two forms: fields-- objective positions of people that inform how they think and act-- and habitus—the way we “internally experience” the world (Wacquant 2013, pg. 275). Bourdieu suggests that social practice and interaction occur in ‘social fields.’ Society is made up of these fields, and each has values and “regulative principles” (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1991, pg. 17). Fields are actively shaped and continuously constructed. A field has its unique rules and norms that can only be understood by knowing what is valued in the field. Field structures the habitus, which in turn constitutes the field as a world with value that is worth investment (Makoe 2006). In this dissertation, I approach neighbourhood spaces as distinct social fields that inform the habitus of

the participants inhabiting these places. Their social fields and habitus shape how they negotiate difference and experience belonging.

Being from a particular neighbourhood or social field informs one's perspectives and actions. For example, if an individual grew up in a middle-class neighbourhood they might be more likely than others to know how to navigate university life. They might be better prepared with the skills needed for filling out applications, selecting courses, and studying, all of which are required for success at university. However, if they were then displaced into a low-income, crime-ridden neighbourhood, they might not have the necessary set of skills and dispositions that are required to survive on the 'streets' – in other words, their middle-class field will not fit easily within another neighbourhood, or field. The concept of field can help us understand how growing up in marginalized neighbourhoods might shape their sense of belonging. Fields limit what actions can and cannot be done (Sandberg 2008). It is the sphere in which agents compete within for a value that all can agree on (Bourdieu 1991).

Habitus is the way through which the objective outside world or fields becomes internalized, part of the subjective, “embodied experience” (Holt 2008, pg. 233). Habitus directs rather than control action (Bonilla-Silva, Goar, and Embrick 2006). Habitus allows for examining “how social power works through the dispositions that orient people in a particular social position” (Moon 2013, pg. 263). It informs choices and how we relate with others (Illouz and John 2003). Habitus reproduces social structure; however, it is this very “embodiment of social structure” that lets individuals act and transform (Sweetman 2009, pg. 493; Richardson and Skott-Myhre 2012). For Bourdieu structures are reifications of social processes resulting from social relations (King 2000). Bourdieu's emphasis on the relational centers agency. Within these relational contexts individuals have the agency to reproduce, resist, or transform structures.

It is not simply internalization and reproduction of structures whereby youth's existences are determined. The concept of habitus accounts for agency.

Habitus is the embodiment of the habits and dispositions that actors possess (Wacquant, 2013). According to Holt (2008) habitus is a way of being, taste, or tendency. It can be the way the youth in my study dress, the brands they wear, their music preferences, mannerisms, values they hold, or the way they perform their identities. Habitus allows us to navigate our surroundings. Habitus are the frameworks and resources we unconsciously draw on in our everyday lives and practices. For example, an upper-class person might be more inclined to attend an opera because they have been exposed to this form of entertainment and socialized to appreciate it from an early age. Tastes, likes, and dispositions are often seen as natural or taken for granted; however, habitus allows us to see them as culturally informed. The concept of habitus can help us understand how marginalized neighbourhoods construct ways of being, interests, and values that inform participants' sense of belonging.

For Bourdieu and Wacquant (1991), symbolic systems of classifications are at stake in these power struggles between groups. Symbolic power is the ability to control perceptions that constitute the way we understand the world, and it is gained through social conflict. Symbolic power creates symbolic violence by making certain interests and understandings of the world seem universal and natural. Symbolic violence does not happen necessarily through manipulation but rather through processes of dehistoricization of taken-for-granted categories that reinforce the dominant social order (Bourdieu 1991). Symbolic violence is perpetuated when youth are misrecognized and marginalized.

Bourdieu allows us to center a localized, social field orientation to difference and account for agency. The structure-agency focus of Bourdieu compels us to consider a more quotidian,

actor-centered, informal, relationship approach to belonging, particularly amongst youth because of their rootedness. Concepts of social field and habitus permit an understanding of context that informs youth's sense of belonging as being constituted through many socio-economic factors. I approach neighbourhood spaces as distinct social fields that inform the habitus of youth who live in these places. I argue that their social fields and habitus shape how they negotiate difference. Yuval-Davis's (2006) conceptualization of belonging and Bourdieu's (1991) study of social field, habitus, and symbolic power work well together. Both center the importance of power in delineating negotiations of difference and belonging.

It is the iterative nature of qualitative research, as I discuss in the next chapter, which orients me to reflect upon this framework as I bring these approaches to bear on the lives of youth. Through the course of my fieldwork, I came to learn from the youth who participated in this study, that race mattered in their lives. I came to appreciate that habitus, in particular, needs to be racialized, and following Yuval-Davis, informed by an intersectional analysis. Symbolic power is constitutive of habitus.

To summarize, in this dissertation -- I aim to understand the significance of neighbourhoods for how youth experience belonging and negotiate difference. I braid together Yuval Davis's (2006) approach to belonging as a process of attachment, identity, inclusion and exclusion, with the insights of scholars who foreground space so that I can understand the sense of belonging in neighbourhoods. Bourdieu offers conceptual tools of habitus, symbolic violence, and social fields - to render visible the broader forces and everyday practices that permeate these priority neighbourhoods and youth lives. This conceptual framework informs each chapter.

As indicated in Chapter One, Chapter Four describes the setting -- Scarborough, Malvern and Chester Le. I argue that these features of the neighbourhoods constitute a particular social

field. Chapter Five employs a media analysis to examine dominant discursive constructions of the neighbourhoods under study and in particular the depictions of the residents. The chapter illustrates how symbolic power (which informs the social field) is enacted through mass media's framings of youth. The media analysis highlights the structural and discursive framings of Malvern and Chester Le. These framings illustrate the way youth are differently positioned and othered in this urban context. Chapter Six examines how the participants navigate everyday difference in their neighbourhoods. The chapter foregrounds how habitus and symbolic violence informs intercultural relationships and its implications for belonging in these neighbourhoods.

I draw on Yuval-Davis's (2006) analytical levels of belonging to examine youth's social locations in their neighbourhoods and their identifications and emotional attachment. Chapter Seven examines the generative forces of habitus and how the participants draw on socio-spatial identities to navigate differences. These dispositions orient youth to see themselves as excluded from many spaces while simultaneously feeling a great sense of belonging to their immediate neighbourhood. Chapter Eight examines how the social fields of these neighbourhoods and habitus shape creative ways the participants construct a sense of belonging. Chapter Nine incorporates a participatory research element through the use of photo-voice to encourage youth to create a picture of what their neighbourhood means to them. I draw on photo-voice as an 'empowerment technique' for the active negotiation of differences and belonging. In the following chapter, I discuss why an ethnographic approach is best suited for studying how youth negotiate difference and belonging in their neighbourhoods.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

I chose to conduct an ethnographic study because this approach allowed me to examine how youth make sense of their circumstances and neighbourhoods. In this chapter, I briefly define an ethnographic approach and the framework which informed the methods in the study and the way I collected, interpreted, analyzed and represented the data.

An Ethnographic Approach

Ethnography is the examination of people in their natural environment whereby the aim is to understand their social meanings and everyday life. It requires the researcher to be immersed in the specific environment, a method referred to as participant observation (Brewer 2003). It allows for the participation in people's daily lives for an extended period. Researchers watch, listen, and ask questions. They produce rich, detailed field notes which describes and makes sense of social settings and relationships to produce theoretically informed, contextualized accounts (O'Reilly 2005) or thick descriptions (Geertz 1973). In this way, an ethnographic approach seeks to uncover the processes of social life (Herbert 2000) while accounting for the context in which these processes unfold.

Ethnography is iterative, whereby the researcher draws on and often modifies the conceptual framework or key concepts as the research — data collection and analysis for example, proceeds. As a result, research questions may shift and deepen and the research design and process may evolve. An ethnographic approach may draw on several methods that are well suited to continued interactions with participants in their everyday lives (O'Reilly 2009); in this way, the researcher seeks to understand, social relations and interactions and how people draw on shared and contested meanings to engage in social practices. Participant observation, which I

discuss further below, can include various degrees of engagement with research participants. An ethnographic approach allowed me to co-construct knowledge with youth participants. Often an ethnographic approach, as in this case, is a multi-method approach that employs semi-structured interviews, focus groups, participant observations, discourse analysis, and photo-voice. These methods add to the richness of the accounts.

Initially I sought to understand the many ways youth negotiated difference in their neighbourhoods and how they interpreted its diversity. This question begged further probing into their sense of belonging. Did they feel like outsiders? In what ways did they feel they belonged? How did they experience life in their neighbourhoods and within the wider context of the city and the nation? I hoped to learn about each participant's family life, everyday peer relations, experiences at school, how they spent their free time. How did they navigate everyday differences and in what ways did this impact their own sense of belonging?

I was previously aware of the stereotypes and the depictions of youth in these neighbourhoods: as 'at-risk', in need of surveillance and discipline. I sought to capture these depictions through reports and media discourses. I also aimed to examine these depictions critically, to grasp their relationship, possible incongruities with the perceptions of youth participants themselves. An ethnographic approach is an inductive, reflexive methodology that seeks to apprehend, in this case, the way youth negotiate these dominant negative discourses. It asks researchers to situate themselves critically in the research process. My experiences of growing up in a similar neighbourhood, along with my status as a 1.5 generation, university educated Tamil woman informed the research process: from the questions I asked, to the insights that were co-constructed with the youth I sought to learn from and understand.

Ethnography is not restricted to a single paradigmatic orientation. The study and the questions I ask are informed by a critical realist perspective, whereby social inquiry is perceived as a reflexive ethical practice seeking to help those in unfair situations (Tracey 2012). The critical realist perspective (Lloyd 2000) focuses on how structural powers impose on social agents and how they use power to reinforce, subvert, or change structural impositions. According to Kontos, Miller, Mitchell, and Cott (2011) structures do not possess an inherent ability to limit or enable. Structures depend on “material resources” that have a “conditional” effect on agency (pg. 120). It cannot determine agency because agency itself is nascent, which includes the power to change social structures. Agency is employed through “reflexive” dialogue wherein agents negotiate benefits and concerns that inform action (pg. 120).

I have sought to provide an account that conforms to the criteria of good qualitative research as a reflexive, iterative analysis: namely authenticity, credibility and transferability. Authenticity concerns whether the researcher has provided a sufficient level of detail, thick description, and participant voices to make truth claims (Brower, Abolafia, Carr 2000), in ways that are convincing both to the readers and the participants. I accomplished this representation through detailed description of places, people, events, and interactions. I provided details of the questions I asked and whom I asked. By providing large excerpts of the interview and focus group data my intention was to remain as faithful to the words, metaphors, and slang used by youth in these communities.

Credibility according to Tracy (2012) implies the work is trustworthy and seems believable. Credibility is garnered by “thick description, triangulation or crystallization, and multivocality and partiality” (Tracey 2010, pg. 843). Credibility is accomplished by long-time contact with participants and constant observation (Morrow 2005). My 16 months of field

research, spending five days a week with the participants achieved this prolonged engagement. Thick description is achieved through “rich descriptions” of both the “participants’ experiences” and the “context” in which they occur (Morrow 2005, pg. 252). I also strived for transferability. Transferability is accomplished when the researcher gives enough information “about the self”, “research context, process, participants, and researcher-participant relationships” that allow the reader to evaluate how the study can “transfer” to another setting (Morrow 2005; pg. 253; Shenton 2004).

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005), individuals are unable to explain their actions or intentions fully and can only offer partial accounts. No single method can capture all the nuances of human experiences (Denzin and Lincoln 2005). Therefore, I employ multi-interconnected interpretive methods to explore how youth learned, practiced, negotiated, reproduced, and subverted dominant discourses on difference.

Participant Observation in Malvern and Chester Le

I conducted my research at a community center that served each neighbourhood. To conceal the identity of study participants, I have changed the names of the centers to Malvern Community Center and The Hub. Initially, I wanted to incorporate a more explicitly comparative analysis of both neighbourhoods. Once in the field, I realized that despite the fact both spaces were ‘priority neighbourhoods’ they differed. Each neighbourhood had its unique dynamics and socio-economic composition. Conducting a formal comparative analysis would have required the reduction of the complexities that shape these neighbourhoods into comparative criterions. It would have undermined the rich ways personal experiences, media

discourses, neighbourhood realities were intertwined. Moreover, the two neighbourhoods and centers were different in size, social demography, and economic realities.

Rather, these centers formed the starting points to recruit youth in the neighbourhoods, participate in the centers' programs, and observe and engage with youth. To be reflexive, I would characterize my participation and observation as neither fully participant or a detached observer. Throughout the chapters I speak about my experiences during the research process, feeling at times like I belonged and could relate to the participants and many times I felt like an outsider. I introduced myself to the youth participants at the center as a Ph.D. student researcher. I briefly explained my purpose which was to examine youth belonging in their everyday lives in their neighbourhoods. I encouraged the participants to approach me anytime to discuss the project in more details. Most of the participants were not particularly interested at the beginning of my fieldwork. However, after cultivating a stronger relationship with the participants they seemed to take an interest in my research project. I discuss this later when recounting my entry into the field.

I was involved in several youth programs at Malvern Community Center and The Hub. I helped in any capacity the staff required. I spent five days a week in these settings, alternating two to three days per week per site. Programs included general after-school drop-ins, tutoring, art workshops, boys' and girls' leadership groups, and girls' empowerment groups. I spent 2-5 hours a day at the centers depending on program schedules and the number of youth in the space. I also participated alongside the youth in the program activities, including learning to write raps, performing my own spoken word pieces, preparing food for the breakfast programs, going on fieldtrips, discussing current events, and planning community events. Through these interactions, I was able to build relationships with the participants, which was important for the interview,

focus group, and photo-voice project recruitment. I learned about them and their lives through different mediums, whether it was through their podcasts, roundtable style discussions, photography, poetry, music, and sometimes even dance.

I rarely took field notes in front of the participants. After returning home from the centers, I would make notes based on my observations from the day. I then coded and organized these observations thematically while keeping in mind my research question-- how do youth negotiate difference and belonging in two 'priority neighbourhoods'? Many researchers advocate writing notes as they observe (Fontana and Frey 2003). However, I was apprehensive about this method. I thought the participants might modify their behaviour even more if they saw me write notes. The sentiment was particularly heightened because I was working with a population that felt exceedingly surveilled, misjudged, and often misrepresented. I thought taking notes during my interactions would hinder their relationships with each other and particularly with me.

Working in a community center setting allowed for exploring youth, service providers, parents, and other neighbourhood residents who occasionally visited. It also enabled me to observe how youth interacted with their peers; the way gendered performances structured their lives; how they interrogated inter-cultural interactions; and how they negotiated power dynamics with staff and other adults in the community. I observed how hegemonic discourses infiltrate their lives in different ways and how they confronted, reproduced, and ruptured these realities in everyday, innocuous ways. Observations also allowed me to examine how youth navigated their encounters with community centers, school, police, and politicians.

I took note of youth participants in their everyday life at the centers, how they talked, what they talked about, and their peer relations. I developed a good relationship that permitted me to visit some of the participants' homes and meet their families. I looked at the different

ways youth engaged in the neighbourhood and their material realities. The result is what Abu-Lughod (2000) refers to as “ethnography of [the] particular” (pg. 262). It is the idea that ethnography does not provide a generalizable analysis of the entire community, but rather a holistic understanding of particular individuals in the community. My observations were not an analysis of the overall community but rather a more comprehensive exploration of the lives of particular individuals as socially embedded.

Anderson and Jones (2009) argue that the “metaphorical dimension of place” has been centered in the research process; for example, feminist writers’ emphasize the ‘locatedness’ of researchers and respondents (pg. 292). However, the same weight has not been placed on the actual material effect of place on research. One major benefit of conducting observations at local community centers was that it enabled access to youth in a sphere where they felt comfortable and where power inequalities were somewhat minimized. Unlike a school setting constricted by more entrenched institutional boundaries, community centers allowed access to youth in a more relaxed, less rigid environment. In this environment, they had more power to choose if they wanted to participate.

Also, the combination of textual approaches with non-textual approaches allow for the examination of the “performativity of discourse” (Richardson and Jensen 2003, pg. 8), that is how participants through repeated practices act out discursive constructions, for example, whether it is gender, class, or race. In the case of this dissertation, I focused namely on how participants negotiated living with everyday difference and the implications for experiences of belonging. Comparisons of textual and non-textual approaches also permitted the exploration of the relationship between participants’ perceptions and their interactions.

Discourse Analysis

For a comprehensive analysis of how youth negotiate everyday difference and experience belonging it is important to examine the dominant discourses that inform their lived realities. Identities are constructed through different forms of cultural production such as media (Hall 2002). In Chapter Five, I examine media representations of the neighbourhoods and the youth that inhabit these spaces because they illustrate how youth and their neighbourhoods are perceived, which informs their identity constructions. These discourses delineate what is considered 'sensible' which demarcates what is considered 'appropriate' behaviours and social practices. Discourses provide the framework through which we represent ourselves and others. When we take on a position we have a "set of concepts, images, metaphors, ways of speaking, self-narratives, and so on, that we take on" (Murakami 2003, pg. 238). Media both "rigidify" identities "through processes of objectification" and simultaneously allows for reflection and dialogue (Hall 2002, pg. 127).

Habermas (1989) in his work on the public sphere argues that it is in the public space where people can discuss public issues. Discussions in this space help construct public opinion. In a complex and dense society, this is primarily done through newspapers, magazines, radio, and television. It is not an ideal space where everyone can equally express their opinions. Mainstream newspapers carry privileged voices, and popular media does not provide access to all public opinions. However, because of its location in the public as a privileged space of enunciation, the analysis of media allows for the examination of dominant views in society that reinforces the dominant social order and taken-for-granted understandings (Karim 2008). In fact, Fairclough (2003) argues that texts have causal effects on knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, values, and identities. Social life and practices are both discursively produced and produce practices that

shape discourse. Therefore, he argues social analysis should take into consideration the importance of language. Discourse analysis considers discursive practices that contribute to the production and reproduction of unequal power relations between social groups (Baker et al. 2008; Henry and Tator 2000). Examining text can deconstruct ideologies and help detect power relations between groups (Henry and Tator 2000).

I employed a ‘framing analysis’ (Entman 1993) to examine how youth from Malvern and Chester Le were differentially positioned in dominant discourse. The framing analysis investigates “the presence or absence of certain key words, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgment” (Entman 1993, pg. 52) in media reports. Discourse analysis enables an examination of symbolic power and the taken-for-granted understandings that reinforce the dominant social order. I looked at four leading newspapers in the city, *The Globe and Mail*, *National Post*, *Toronto Star*, and *Toronto Sun* to analyze the way youth were framed in Malvern and Chester Le. A discourse analysis of how youth are positioned in their local neighbourhoods enabled an exploration of how they were incorporated into the wider city social imaginary and whether dominant discourse supported the attachment of youth from certain neighbourhoods in the city.

Interviews and Focus Groups

Discourse analysis alone was not suitable for the examination of how youth are differentially positioned within the city and its implications for their sense of belonging. To interrogate practice required the investigation of how youth narrated and interpreted the navigation of difference. It was best done through semi-structured interviews and focus groups. Dominant discourses inform habitus and structural constraints. However, privileging only this

form of analysis creates a false sense that discourses are simply deterministic and does not capture ruptures and possibilities of transformation in everyday realities. To avoid simple determinism Ortner (2005), drawing on Bourdieu, centers agency to understand how individuals can partially internalize, reflect, resist, and respond to structures. The view posits that the examination of subjectivity enables a cultural critique and the exploration of transformative potentials. In this approach, interviews become an important method for the examination of agency and subjectivity. While media analysis examines discourses that inform identities, in-depth interviews explore subjective interpretations of discourses in the formation of identities and practices (Malhi, Boon, and Rogers 2009; Holstein and Gubrium 1995).

I used a semi-structured interview format (found in Chapter Six, Seven, Eight) which drew on an interview guide of themes (see Appendix A and B). The approach enabled individuals to explore issues and themes (Berg 2001) and enabled a dialogical way to encourage youth to produce narratives. I conducted thirty-four semi-structured interviews with youth and several service providers. In the interviews, I asked youth about how they identified themselves; life in their neighbourhoods; the various ways they engaged; o perceptions of their neighbourhoods; and relations with other people in their neighbourhood. Since ethno-racial difference is often framed by multiculturalism in the Canadian context I asked their opinions on Canadian multiculturalism. I wanted to understand how youth talked about their everyday lives in their local spaces and how they negotiated difference and belonging.

I also conducted seven focus groups (each consisting of 4-5 youth) to discuss in a group setting how the participants negotiated everyday difference (found in Chapter Six, Seven, and Eight) (Appendix C). Focus groups enabled participants to express their experiences with the help of their peers, negotiate conflict, and remake meanings within the context of a group in

ways not possible during individual interviews (Kitzinger 1995). Through the focus group, I was able to perceive how participants discussed issues among other youth. At times this varied from how they discussed topics during interviews. In focus groups, they would help each other by providing context, examples, and at times disagreed with each other's points. It showed that participants' negotiations and experiences differed among each other. A group setting allowed for generating deeper discussions and debates because of the variety of perspectives. It is important to note interviews and focus groups were not devoid of context. They were ethnographically rooted in 16 months of participant observations.

The analysis of interviews and focus groups were completed by first transcribing interviews and field notes. The data was analyzed through several steps: in vivo coding (Tracey 2012) (giving a section of data a label) which allowed me to develop themes that were as close as possible to the 'what' and 'how' youth communicated. Notes were then reduced into codes (such as 'space,' 'identity,' 'multiculturalism') and then recombined into themes found across the data set. I used an inductive approach whereby the data was thematically arranged in relation to the framework that initiated this study. The thematic analysis allowed for identifying, analyzing, and reporting themes within the data. However, according to Milne, (2009) thematic coding might not necessarily allow for the identification of the purposes of discourse. To get a better understanding of the purposes of discourses, I drew on an interpretive repertoire analysis which required the examination of contradictions in participants' speech and action (Milne 2009). By exploring contradictions, it was possible to understand the "macro-structures that frame" and were used by participants' to validate their assertions and behaviours (pg. 1013). It enabled the identification of how ideology and power become embedded and legitimated by

participants (Milne 2009). It is in conjunction with the previously mentioned framing analysis which permitted identification of hegemonic discourses in media texts.

I should note at the onset, in this dissertation I drew on and reproduced large excerpts from my collected data. It was with the explicit intention of enabling marginalized youth to tell their stories through their own words, slang, metaphors, and descriptions. I wanted their stories to appear as they were told. At times this can read as choppy and not flow smoothly, but I wanted to stay true to the words of the youth and youth service providers as much as possible. Often these quotes were fraught with conflict, ambiguity, and at times contradictions that framed their lives.

Photo-Voice

I wanted to incorporate a participatory element to my research to both learn about the participants' lives as well as examine whether research could be used more directly as an "empowerment technique" (Gant et al. 2009, pg. 358). It led to my experimentation with photo-voice in Chapter Nine. Research shows the use of visual ethnography foster in youth an active role in the examination of their realities (Moore, Croxford, Adams, Refaee, Cox, and Sharples 2008). Scholars (Moore et al. 2008) identify the emancipatory potential of participatory photo-voice. Photo-voice not only encourages participants to document their realities but also acts as an "agent of change" that encourages participants to reflect and engage with their socio-spatial realities (pg. 50).

I was inspired by Bourdieu who experimented with visual ethnography (see, Schultheis, Holder, and Wagner 2009). For Bourdieu, the use of photographs not only represents the social world visually, but also speaks to the photographer's choices. Photographs illustrate decisions

about judgement and value. How a photo is interpreted is determined “through social relationships between image, the context and those who view it and the circulation of discourses they are used to make meaning” (Back 2009, pg. 482).

For this study, I asked eight participants to take photos with a disposable camera I provided or their personal cameras. I asked them to take pictures of what community meant to them, and what made them feel a sense of belonging. I then used semi-structured interviews to discuss the images they captured. It enabled insight into the way youth perceived, understood and interpreted their neighbourhood and how they imagined life in the city.

Ethical Issues and Reflexivity

The most important ethical issue was ensuring privacy and confidentiality. The participants were guaranteed confidentiality (see Appendix E and F). I informed participants that when information is published their identities will be kept confidential. Pseudonyms will be used, and any potential identifying characteristics will be withheld from the final report to ensure their identities are kept confidential. I allowed participants to choose their pseudonyms. For some participants, I included identifiers in cases where they gave consent to include details. These were usually youth involved in public life who were proud of their accomplishments and involvement and wanted to share their stories. As mentioned above, I also used pseudonyms for the community centers.

I informed the participants that within the focus group setting I could not guarantee other participants would not disclose information. In this setting, I could not guarantee confidentiality. Therefore, I informed the participants they should carefully evaluate what they shared in the group setting. To ensure youth participants spoke freely without fear of repercussions from youth service providers, I conducted the focus groups without the presence of staff as promised in the

ethics forms. The only exception was one focus group whereby a youth worker joined the discussion. I received consent from the youth participants before the youth worker joined the focus group.

For the photo-voice project I attained consent from the participants to use their photos (see Appendix F. Some youth included photos of themselves. The youth that wished to include photographs that revealed their identities signed a separate release form. The participants were made aware that if photos were used in this dissertation they would forgo anonymity. Those participants who choose to reveal their identities saw it as a good opportunity to showcase themselves in a positive light and counter negative dominant representations. I informed participants that at any time during the research process they could ask to omit their conversations from my research project.

According to Kenway and McLeod (2004) for Bourdieu, habitus provides a conceptualization of individuals “as socially embedded, as embodied dispositions, shaped by one’s location within social fields” (pg. 528). Bourdieu extends this relationship between position (social field) and disposition (habitus) to the idea of reflexivity and researchers. Bourdieu argues that a researcher’s point of view is also situated in a particular disposition that is formed by their life history as well as the academic field. As a result of my formal training, I recognize how the academic field structures my own modes of thinking (Kenway and McLeod 2004). To ignore one’s positionality entrenches ruling relations. It is important to acknowledge how one’s social position informs the research project. It is also important to engage in a reflexive research process whereby the researcher is aware of their social position and cognizant of the power imbalances within the research process. It permits for a more equitable research process.

I recognized I had more power compared to the participants because ultimately, I identified the research project and the problems to be defined. I chose the knowers that I deemed credible. As a result of my training, I had more formal theoretical understandings of the issues. I had certain privileges that accompany adulthood, including resources that were more readily accessible to me compared to my youth counterparts. And lastly, I had the power over the final analysis and how I represented the participants and their narratives.

The participants were not the only ones to navigate differences. I constantly negotiated my positionality. Initially, when I told the participants I was a researcher they distanced themselves. The participants did not seem to grasp my role at the centers or the purpose of my research. Those who did understand did not seem particularly interested in my research. At the beginning, many ignored me or regarded me as a 'teacher-like' authority figure they were trying to avoid. It was understandable since youth came to the centers right after school to seek refuge from their overly structured day. At the onset, although they were cordial they did not speak openly to me as I had anticipated. After weeks of participation in the programs, the youth participants began to see me as somewhat relatable. As time passed, I established good relationships with many of the youth. Some even began to share more complex insights and stories about their lives, the girls more so than the boys. The whole experience also unexpectedly forced me to confront my own newer privileges and difference including how my gender and Tamil background informed their initial engagement with me. It made me feel somewhat guilty for having strayed so far from my old 'neighbourhood roots.' I assumed that since I had grown up in a similar neighbourhood with comparable dynamics, I would quite easily be able to relate with the youth participants. However, I did not account for two things. One, I was now older and a university researcher, which came with privileges and its associated social

distance. When I was growing up, I did not confront many of the contemporary issues (especially with the advent of social media) the youth participants encountered. It was hard to convey to them that I had grown up in similar circumstances, which for them was relatively a long time ago.

The second thing that I did not account for was neighbourhood specificities. I came to realize this the most when I was in Malvern. I grew up in a neighbourhood and went to a high school that was predominantly Punjabi Indian and Caribbean. Being a Tamil refugee, I was able to traverse both groups. Being South Asian with similar values and restrictions placed on me by my mother I related to the Punjabi students at school. However, being a refugee, raised by a single mother, and living in the 'less nice' parts of the community meant that I shared similar circumstances with many of the Caribbean youth. My elementary school was predominately Black. Growing up with very few Tamils, I felt somewhat as an outsider around other Tamils with whom I was often presumed to share "natural" affinities. Growing up I often felt I was not Tamil enough, especially not having lived in Scarborough where most Tamils were concentrated. I did not think I spoke the language well enough, or had enough Tamil friends, or spoke Tamil to the few Tamil friends I had, or watched Tamil movies. I grew up with these stereotypical ideas of what it meant to be Tamil. When I came to Malvern, I thought that having grown up with Caribbean youth it would make it easier for me to connect with them. However, I did not account for Malvern's neighbourhood dynamics. Malvern consisted mostly of people of Caribbean and Sri Lankan Tamil origins. As in my high school, the two dominant groups, for the most part, kept to themselves. At my high school, I was a minority among minorities. However, in Malvern, I was now part of a majority group.

For the Caribbean youth that came to Malvern Community Center my self-identity did not seem to matter. They did not know me, and therefore they did not appreciate my sense of connection. There could have been many other reasons why the youth participants might not have been receptive of me at the onset. For example, it could have been my personality, appearance, speech pattern, age. But these initial experiences made me more conscious of the type of negotiations that youth, both consciously and subconsciously engaged in every day. It also helped me think more consciously about the way I negotiated differences in the course of my research.

I was able to cultivate relationships with the participants through concerted attempts to foster connections through shared interests. I was able to connect with the youth participants in my study by constant attempts to prove that I could relate to them. For example, one way was by showcasing my hip hop knowledge. One particular incident illustrates the everyday ways I negotiated my sense of belonging and difference in these spaces. One day some of the youth were discussing the hip hop artist Jay-Z and astrology signs. I asked them what Jay-Z's date of birth in order to determine his astrology sign. I quickly remembered it was on the fourth of December. I remembered this fact because it was the name of one of his less mainstream songs. The youth participants were young children when this song was released. The young boys were in disbelief and expressed how thoroughly impressed they were with my hip hop knowledge. The example illustrates it is in the everyday minute encounters where identities are negotiated, boundaries demarcated, and sense of belonging cultivated. Hip hop was not the only way I established connections. I connected to youth through different means, including shared gendered, raced, or classed experiences, common interests, personality, fashion, or food.

Conclusion

The multi-method approach outlined above attempts to provide a complex or holistic picture of how youth navigate difference, social identities and relations as experienced in two neighbourhoods in Toronto. In the next chapter, I situate the two neighbourhoods in the ‘priority neighbourhood’ discourse. I provide a thick description of the neighbourhoods. I then examine the cultural and social distinctions between Toronto neighbourhoods. The chapter aims through a detailed description of the neighbourhoods to illustrate how they can be considered a ‘social field’-- the objective positions of people that inform how they think and act.

“Listen, on the same intersection where cops be inspecting, and men got protection from wild adolescences, who dress in all black but they all look florescent. Bright future but they lost they direction. I die dissecting all the quest in my question. Where do we find this aggression, is it coded in our Blood like the genes of a Crip” (Rap, Malvern youth).

CHAPTER 4: THE SETTING

Toronto: ‘Diversity Our Strength’

Toronto is home to 2.79 million people (City of Toronto 2016a). There has been a tremendous growth in diversity in the last few decades. In 1971, Toronto’s population was five percent non-European; and by 2000 this number had grown to 40 percent. By 2001, 44 percent of Toronto’s population was born outside Canada (Gaskell and Levin 2011). During the same time, the gap between the poorest and wealthiest neighbourhoods has become more distinct (Gaskell and Levin 2011). Toronto is the main destination for generating wealth in the country. It makes up 44 percent of the province’s GDP and is home to 40 percent of Canada’s head offices. However, it has the widest income gap in the country (United Way 2004 14-15).

As neighbourhoods become more diverse and simultaneously more unequal, it begs an examination of how diverse local places cultivate youth belonging through their discursive, institutional, social, and economic practices. Local realities are especially important for youth. Despite globalization, youth continue for the most part to have less economic resources and more legal age restrictions (Harris and Wyn 2009). Since youth have fewer resources than their adult counterparts they remain fixed in their local environments: their home, school and neighbourhood (Harris 2009). Local places are important sites of young people’s self-making (Harris and Wyn 2009).

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a thick description of the neighbourhoods. I first situate these neighbourhoods within the ‘priority neighbourhood’ discourse. I then examine

the cultural and social distinctions between Toronto neighbourhoods, highlighting in particular Malvern and Chester Le. Neighbourhoods are nested in ‘priority neighbourhood’ discourse and characterizations of neighbourhoods in the city. The chapter aims through a detailed description of these neighbourhoods to illustrate how they can be considered a ‘social field’-- the objective positions of people that inform how they think and act. In line with Yuval-Davis’s (2006) three analytical distinctions of belonging this chapter outlines the social locations in which youth are positioned. Social locations as I demonstrate throughout this dissertation inform how youth negotiate a sense of belonging in their neighbourhoods.

Toronto’s ‘Priority Neighbourhoods’

Toronto is often described as a “city of neighbourhoods” (Hulchanski 2010, pg. 3). Although most cosmopolitan cities are made up of neighbourhoods, the description is intended to indicate that Toronto’s neighbourhoods are especially distinctive (Hulchanski 2010). Many neighbourhoods have distinct names: The Annex, Forest Hill, Rexdale, Roncesvalles, and The Beaches that separate them from other areas in the city. Many of the wealthier neighbourhoods strategically market themselves as unique and draw local tourism based on these identifiers. Street signs installed by the city indicate neighbourhood names, which reify the boundaries of these neighbourhoods. For example, ‘The Beaches’ is known for its small specialty stores and its international jazz festival. Rosedale (one of the richest neighbourhoods in Canada) was named by *Toronto Life* as the best neighbourhood to live in; the average home was \$951, 300 and the average household income was \$386, 076 in 2013 (D’Cruz 2013). The same magazine characterized Scarborough as crime-ridden and plagued with ethnic gang violence, captured in one of their more damning article entitled “‘The Scarborough Curse’- How did boring, white-

bread Scarberia become Scarlem—a mess of street gangs, firebombings and stabbings? Portrait of Toronto’s unluckiest suburb (Gillmor 2007).” Characterized by low-income housing, low property values, sparse access to social services, Scarborough neighbourhoods are seen as ‘ethnic spaces.’ However, when you walk through these neighbourhoods, outsiders might be confused since it doesn’t always reflect popular negative representations.

The 2004 report by United Way “Poverty by Postal Code” found poverty has become concentrated by neighbourhood areas more so than was the case 20 years ago (United Way 2004). It coincided with Toronto becoming increasingly diverse. The report went on to have great influence on city policies. It led to the creation of the Strong Neighbourhood Taskforce, which informed the ‘priority neighbourhood’ designation whereby originally 13 neighbourhoods were identified as being underserved. Resources were set aside to target these neighbourhoods.

The second seminal study on Toronto neighbourhoods is the 2010 “The Three Cities within Toronto” report by J. David Hulchanski. Hulchanski (2010) argues Toronto has three cities within its borders, demarcated by income disparities among Toronto’s neighbourhoods. Neighbourhoods where incomes have increased since the 1970s are for the most part found in the city’s core, close to the city’s subway lines, which he refers to as City #1. City #3 is the low-income areas where neighbourhood incomes have decreased compared to the city average. They are found mostly in the northeast and northwest parts of Toronto, commonly referred to as the ‘inner suburbs.’ This also happens to be where most of the ‘priority neighbourhoods’ are located. Lower-income neighbourhoods in Toronto are mostly concentrated in the outer layers of the city, as urban development sprawled outwards where land and housing was cheaper. The white middle-class flight went either out of Toronto or towards the core.

City #2 is comprised of middle-income areas that for the most part have remained in the same geographic locations since the 1970s. Neighbourhoods are changing at different rates and have become increasingly polarized. From 1970 to 2005 the middle-income areas of the city decreased and the high-income areas have expanded very little. Low-income areas have grown by large amounts. Both reports confirm poverty has moved from the core to the inner suburbs of the city. According to Hulchanski (2010) changes to income can be partly attributed to shifts in the economy, an increase in precarious work, difficulties new immigrants face when they look for work, and changes in government taxes and income transfers. The average income for individuals in City #1 in 2005 was \$88, 400, for City # 3 it was \$26, 900 (pg. 6). In 1970 the portion of low-income neighbourhoods in Toronto was 19 percent and by 2005 it increased to 53 percent (pg.6). Both Malvern and Chester Le fall within City #3. There are pockets of the core that are socio-economically similar to neighbourhoods in the ‘periphery,’ for example, Parkdale, Regent Park, St. Jamestown, and Sherbourne. However, recently many of these neighbourhoods have been gentrified. Despite these pockets, the core remains mostly ‘City #1’ or socio-economically more privileged than those in the northwest and northeast sections of the city.

Profile of City #3: “Life in ‘Third City’: Nasty, Brutish and Short” (Black 2011).

According to Hulchanski’s (2010) study renters are common in City #3 where they make up almost half of the households. Renters spend more of their income on housing than owners. Regarding immigration, in City #1 the number of foreign-born people declined from 35 percent to 28 percent between 1971 and 2006, whereas in City #3 the number of immigrants almost doubled in the 35-year period from 31 percent to 61 percent (pg. 11). The “visible minority” population has increased in poorer neighbourhoods from 20 percent in 1981 to 29.5 percent in

2001 (United Way 2004, pg. 49-50). City # 3 has a higher percentage of single parent households compared to City #1. For the purpose of our study City #3 also has a higher percentage of children and youth: 33 percent versus 26 percent (Hulchanski 2010, pg. 10). Residents of City #3 have to travel the farthest to find employment but have the poorest access to transit; of the 68 subway stations, only 19 are near or within City #3 neighbourhoods (Hulchanski 2010).

According to United Way (2004), twenty years ago 'poor' families in Toronto mostly lived in mixed-income neighbourhoods. Now they are more concentrated. One of the reasons the inner-suburbs have been marginalized is because social infrastructure and services have historically been in the city center. However, as housing became more expensive in the center, marginalized populations moved outwards. In spite of this, the social infrastructure investments have not kept pace with this movement (United Way 2004). One reason is that financial, political, and media power remains concentrated in the core. When low-income areas were in the core, they had better access to transit and services. As neighbourhoods in the core become gentrified, marginalized groups are priced out and move further away from where services and transit are even less accessible.

Profile: Scarborough: S. Borough, Scarberia, Scarlem

Scarborough makes up one of the six 'boroughs' of the City of Toronto. Scarborough in its entirety is large; it encompasses 187.70 km² of land (Statistics Canada 2013). Older parts of Scarborough date back to the 19th century, with newer parts developed as recently as the 1970s. Scarborough is bordered by Lake Ontario on its south end and the Rouge River on its east end. It is home to one of Toronto's most popular natural enticements: The Scarborough Bluffs and

Rouge Park. In 2016, Rouge Park became Canada's first urban national park. But for most people, Scarborough does not conjure up images of greenery. In popular parlance, people refer to Scarborough as 'Scarberia' which signifies both its physical distance and socio-economic disconnect from downtown Toronto or 'Scarlem' which connotes its supposed socio-economic similarities to Harlem, New York. Scarborough is home to many beautiful mosques, churches, temples, and cultural centers that visibly mark its landscape. Distinctive neighbourhoods are associated with certain ethno-racial groups. Scarborough neighbourhoods are often associated with Caribbean, Tamil, and Chinese Canadians. Similarly, Rexdale and Dixon Road are home to many Somalis; Forest Hill is considered a Jewish enclave; Italians are concentrated in Woodbridge. These associations are not fixed and historically have been subject to change. One of the most common visual feature of Scarborough is its strip plazas that are home to its many independently owned shops. These plazas contain many diverse stores that cater to different demographics: Hindu Pooja shops, Pakistani clothing stores, Jamaican jerk houses and Tamil kottu roti shops. Recently *The Economist* named Scarborough the "best ethnic food suburb." Economist Tyler Cowen stated, "I concluded Scarborough is the best ethnic food suburb I have seen in my life, ever, and by an order of magnitude" (Pelley 2015).

Incorporated in 1967 as a borough and later a city in 1983, Scarborough now forms the eastern portion of the City of Toronto after amalgamation in 1998. Between 1981 and 2001 the population of Scarborough increased by 33.8 percent. Low-income families increased by 136.6 percent during this same period (United Way 2004, pg. 36). Between 1981 and 2001 there was an increase in the number of high and very high poverty neighbourhoods, from 4 to 26 in the same period in this area (Smith and Ley 2008). Scarborough is the most rapidly changing area in Toronto. It receives the largest number of newcomers to Toronto where more than half of new

Canadians settle. Two-thirds of the population are racialized groups, compared to 40 percent of the rest of the city (Youthlink 2012). Much of Scarborough qualifies as ‘City #3.’ Malvern and Chester Le are both located in this area of Toronto.

Profile: Malvern: “[I]s Like this Big Pot of Gumbo, Jambalaya that Tastes so Good.”-Manuela, Malvern Youth

Malvern is a large sprawling neighbourhood interspersed with a lot of greenery. The neighbourhood has been able to preserve many elements of its rural past; mature trees, ravines, and parks are all common throughout the neighbourhood. My initial impressions made it hard to imagine it as a low-income ‘priority neighbourhood’. Parts of it look like an idyllic suburban neighbourhood with its rows and rows of single-family detached homes. Malvern consists of a mixture of homes, public housing, privately owned homes, and rental apartments. It has a diverse mix of young and old, renters and owners. Low-income and lower-to-middle-class individuals live near each other. Apartment complexes are located next to residential homes. With major construction beginning in the 1970s, the neighbourhood looks fairly new and remains well-maintained.

Other than employment, there is little reason for Malvernites to leave Malvern since it has a local mall (although young people go to the larger mega mall, Scarborough Town Center for trendier clothes), office spaces, medical buildings, and community centers. Large streets along with small roads connect disparate parts of the community. The mall (with the neighbourhood’s major grocery store) acts as the central point of the community. Malvern has two high schools, one public and one Catholic located on each side of the mall. Students from both schools go to the mall on their lunch breaks and after school. Far removed from the downtown core, Malvern has several busy bus routes running through the neighbourhood

connecting people to the rest of the city. On the one hand, it remains physically and socially on the periphery; on the other, there is a heart and soul here, where service, housing, and commerce flourish.

According to City of Toronto (2016b), Malvern's population is 45, 086, with an increase in the population of 1.7 percent from 2006 to 2011. Youth make up 15 percent of the population, higher than the city's average. Children make up 20 percent, also higher than the city's average (15 percent). Fifty-one percent of the population's first language is English and 48 percent non-official languages (1 percent French). It is higher than the city's rate for non-official mother tongue at 46 percent. Tamil is the most commonly spoken non-official language at home, followed by Urdu and Tagalog. Top birth countries are Sri Lanka, Philippines, India, Jamaica, and Guyana. Top "visible minority" groups are South Asian, Caribbean Black, followed by Filipino and Chinese. "Visible minority" as a percent of the population make up 87 percent while the city's average is 49 percent. The low-income rate for the city is 19 percent whereas in Malvern is at 21 percent (City of Toronto 2016b).

Profile: Chester Le: "Dominos No Longer Delivers in Chester Le" Toronto Observer (Jeysman 2006)

Malvern encompasses a large area with its own demographic profile in the City of Toronto's online database. Chester Le, while much smaller, views itself as a cohesive neighbourhood. Chester Le is situated in the wider Scarborough community of L'Amoreaux. It is also located in the northeast part of the city. Unlike Malvern, Chester Le is much smaller, and because of its physical layout, it is spatially a more insular community. Because of its physical layout, it functions as a somewhat autonomous community. It is a smaller neighbourhood within a larger community. Chester Le is a small area composed mostly of townhouses owned by

Toronto Community Housing Corporation. These townhouses are located in three places in the neighbourhood, all within walking distance from each other. The houses face away from the main road and inwards and towards each other. It has a long street that runs down the middle of the community composed of public housing located on both sides of the road. There are also a few privately owned townhouses and detached homes. On the end of the street, there is an apartment building. But the bulk of the neighbourhood is public housing. Right beside the small street is a strip plaza with a Subway restaurant, a beauty shop that specializes in Black beauty supplies, a Caribbean-owned electronic shop that plays reggae music onto the street on most sunny summer afternoons, and a Caribbean grocery store. Most days you will see children playing outside by themselves, and in the summer you will see women (many wearing hijabs) with their young children at the park. Unlike in Malvern where most amenities are within its neighbourhood boundaries, youth in Chester Le have to leave their immediate neighbourhood for high school or the mall. Chester Le was constructed in the early 1970s, but unlike Malvern, the physical deterioration of the houses was evident. Repairs and physical maintenance were lacking largely due to inadequate funds and investments by the Toronto Community Housing Corporation that oversees upkeep.

The community was built in 1973 and mainly consists of 210 single-family townhouse units with a total of 968 residents (Qi 2014). Youth and children make up 67 percent of the tenants (Qi 2014), much higher than the city average. The population is a mix of Afro-Caribbean, Arab Muslim, Chinese, and Somali. Chester Le is smaller than Malvern, so the city does not provide specific demographic statistics. However, TCHC in their annual report revealed that more than three-quarters of TCHC households make less than \$20,000 per year (Toronto Community Housing Corporation 2014). Twenty-five percent of the population is 59 years and

older, and 29 percent of households have a member with a disability (Toronto Community Housing Corporation 2014). Although the report is not specific to Chester Le, it provides a statistical composite of TCHC residents. Though Malvern is a priority neighbourhood, it is a mixed community composed of very low, low, and middle-income households. Chester Le is a more economically homogenous community.

I chose my two neighbourhoods for both personal and pragmatic reasons. I sent out many requests for research sites. However, most community centers, especially the more established and bureaucratized, were apprehensive. Fortunately, my request was approved at two community centers. I refer to the centers as Malvern Community Center and The Hub (pseudonyms). Malvern Community Center is one of several community centers located in Malvern. The Hub is situated in the L'Amoreaux community and serves youth from Chester Le. The Hub is one of several small community spaces available to residents of Chester Le in the L'Amoreaux area. Originally, I saw the community centers mainly as starting points of recruitment to access youth participants. I came to realize youth's engagement in these spaces provided a lens through which to reflect on their social engagement. Community centers represent spaces that cultivate social and civic engagement and embed communities into a socio-economic framework of service and support.

Malvern Community Center

The Malvern Community Center (pseudonym) was a joint venture between the City of Toronto and the Youth Challenge Fund (United Way), who continue to be the main funders. On average there would be 20-30 youth in the space. Each program typically attracted 5-10 youth. In Malvern most of the youth that came to the community center were of Caribbean origins.

Almost all were of Afro-Caribbean background, specifically Jamaican. On occasion, other youth did come to the community center. Ethnographic inquiry requires great amounts of flexibility, and the researcher is frequently required to revisit her assumptions. My desire to examine a cross-section of the community was not possible in this space alone since it was mostly Caribbean youth that frequented the community center. Since people of Tamil and Caribbean origins constituted a large part of the neighbourhood, I wanted to ensure I would be able to speak to some Tamil youth to understand how they interrogated difference in their neighbourhood. So, against my initial expectations, in line with an emergent approach to research, I sought out Tamil youth from the neighbourhood. I approached a nearby Tamil organization that catered largely to youth in Scarborough, most of whom lived in Malvern. With this group, I was able to conduct interviews and focus groups. At Malvern Community Center I interviewed many participants from diverse backgrounds who self-identified as Filipino, Latina, Ethiopian, Ghanaian, Caribbean. All the youth participants in Malvern were 1.5 or second generation, with three youth being third generation.

The Hub

The Hub (pseudonym) had been in operation for at least ten years when I began my fieldwork. Since the center was small, youth were not encouraged to be in the space unless they were in a program. They were not able to use it as a place to ‘hang-out’, unlike Malvern Community Center. Many of the other older service users that shared the space were uncomfortable with the youth’s presence. They found them unruly and intimidating. For this reason, youth were usually escorted out of the building if they were not in a program or if they could not demonstrate that they were doing work in the computer lab.

The Hub was funded by all three levels of government as part of a larger community funding structure that services other community centers in Scarborough. They also depended on private donors including United Way. They offered several programs that catered to all ages, including a civics program for pre-teens, a leadership program, and after school tutoring for younger children. The Hub also had programs for adults and seniors, including a gardening class; physical exercise class for women; parenting class; and a sewing class. There would usually be 10-20 people in the space for various programs. Programs would often run simultaneously, unlike at Malvern Community Center. During my time at the center, there were about 6-10 workers.

The Hub's demographic was much more mixed. The youth I worked with were mostly Jamaican, Arab Muslim, East Asian, Somali, Yemeni, Mixed Raced (Black and White). At the Hub, I received the ethno-racial diversity that reflected the community. However, there I encountered a different obstacle. Boys frequented The Hub more than girls, and therefore I needed to devise new strategies to recruit female participants for my study. Fortunately, at The Hub, a few of the youth workers also led a girls' empowerment group in another close-by center. The girls' empowerment group targeted girls from several neighbourhoods including Chester Le. However, after the program started, I came to realize that this location also catered to a different demographic group, mostly East Asian (both mainland Chinese and Hong Chinese) girls. Chester Le girls did not come to the program as they had in the previous year (participants changed from year to year). All the Chester Le youth participants were 1.5 or second generation. Overall, including both Chester Le and Malvern, interviews and focus groups included 34 girls and 22 boys.

Community Center Programs

I began my research at the field sites in February 2013. At both centers, I was given a lot of freedom to carry out my research. At the centers, I attended an array of programs catered to youth. There were three broad categories of the types of programs offered, 1) hobbies/interest which included rapping, slam poetry, photography, 2) leadership/empowerment groups that focused specifically on civic engagement, which included group discussion circles, group-focused civic projects, and a podcast program fashioned after political radio shows, and 3) educational and tutoring programs.

Some mandates of the programs overlapped; for example, the rap program was also a literacy program. There were programs I did not participate in because the timings coincided with other programs, some of which were dance, videography, studio recording, deejaying, and physical exercise classes. In Table 1 I have comprised a list of programs that were available for youth at the community centers. I participated in the programs and in some cases helped deliver them. The staff appreciated the free help since it alleviated some of their work pressure, especially in under-resourced conditions. At The Hub I led a tutorial program for children under 12 years of age. It consisted mostly of helping students with their homework and one large cumulative project I co-designed with the students.

Table 3: Summary of Youth Programs	
Malvern Community Center	The Hub
<u>Photography</u> - Youth learned photography skills.	<u>Leadership</u> - Youth planned community events, discussed community issues and local current events.

<u>Videography</u> - Youth learned videography skills. They learned how to conceptualize film ideas, film, and edit videos.	<u>After School Drop-Ins</u> - Designated time for youth to speak with a youth worker about personal issues without an appointment.
<u>Dance</u> -Youth learned different dance styles.	<u>Girls' Empowerment</u> -Girls created weekly presentations on women's issues, such as anti-drug campaign, self-esteem issues, media awareness, etc.
<u>Slam Poetry</u> -Youth learned to write spoken word, poetry, rap lyrics.	<u>Physical Work Out</u> -Boys learned to exercise in the neighbourhood using everyday items in lieu of a gym.
<u>Rap Literacy</u> -Youth learned the history of rap, the art of rap, how to write raps.	<u>Breakfast Program</u> -Free before school breakfast for children and youth.
<u>'Cypher'</u> –Roundtable discussions about everyday issues, with an emphasis on spirituality.	
<u>Girls' Empowerment</u> -Girls discussed women's issues in the community with an art focus. Guest women artists came and taught different forms of art.	
<u>Podcast Program</u> -Similar to a radio program, youth discussed current events which was uploaded online for others in the community.	

The participants accessed the community centers for a variety of reasons. They came to acquire skills training, volunteer opportunities, food, friendship, and mentorship. According to service providers, youth came to find a “sense of belonging” and be “valued” which can often be missing in other parts of their lives. They came to find “camaraderie”, a sense of safety, escape boredom and isolation. The following excerpts illustrate service providers’ opinions on why

youth frequent the centers:

Anu: Why do you think youth come to the Center?

Esquire: For a number of reasons because of the camaraderie for one, because they know that they can see people that look just like them. People that have been in the community for a number of years. I think they appreciate the fact that there is that sense of belonging that they can get from the Center that in a lot of cases they cannot get anywhere, feels. That there is finally a place for them to feel safe. Somewhere where they are worth, it is valued, through the different programs that are there.

Helmer: Um, I think they are bored, they are isolated in their houses, they are looking for something to do that is different. Um, I think they are curious, look what is happening in the Center. I don't think we have enough opportunity for them, that is basically a resource thing.

Conclusion

Physical and statistical depictions reveal that both neighbourhoods are very diverse compared to the rest of the city. As Scarborough has become diverse, poverty has simultaneously increased. In the following chapter, I ask how this policy-related construction of Scarborough, Malvern, and Chester Le is reflected in dominant cultural depictions of these places and the people that inhabit these spaces.

“See, my biggest fears, not that I am a failure, but more than I will fail my unborn children causing them to live in the same conditions I am. See my biggest fear is that I will have this garden, raise beautiful roses but my two lips, my stupid two lips will bring forth destruction, destructing everything. See my biggest fear is I will have this garden, that I will love it and cherish it but just one day just forget to water it like my insides when my father left. See my biggest fear is re-enacting events that have already happened. See I am scared, I am scared I am not good enough” (Spoken word, Malvern youth).

CHAPTER 5: THE POLITICS OF INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION IN DOMINANT DISCOURSES

In this chapter, I examine media depictions of Malvern and Chester Le. I argue that these cultural constructions illustrate the dominant discourses in which youth in these spaces are positioned which inform their social location. Yuval-Davis (2006) centers the importance of social location for belonging. Social location positions youth in relation to power hierarchies in society. Through a media analysis, I aim to understand the ways in which neighbourhoods in Toronto are shaped by dominant social and cultural narratives and their implications for youth’s sense of belonging. Hall (1998) argues that mass media is an important site for production, reproduction, and transformation of ideologies. Media creates representations, explanations, and frames for understanding the world. It classifies the world into categories. Therefore, in line with Yuval-Davis’s conceptualization of belonging, media acts as a site for producing and reproducing dominant ethical and political value systems (how social locations and identities are valued). Media demarcates the boundaries of belonging.

To examine the sociological context in which belonging unfolds the media analysis aims to highlight the social fields of the two neighbourhoods. Fields are continuously constructed and structure habitus which informs the field (Makoe 2006). When examining subjectivity, it is important to recognize it is constituted together with space (Gulson 2011). It is in specific

spaces that youth are “actors and acted upon”- or ‘neighbourhood informed habitus’ (Raffo 2011, pg. 9).

Dominant Media Framings of Youth in ‘Priority Neighbourhoods’

Media plays an important role in constructing neighbourhoods as places. Local media fosters a sense of belonging to a place (Buchanan 2009). It draws the boundaries, mapping out who belongs and who does not belong in particular local spaces (Finney and Robinson 2008). Although there is Canadian scholarship on the way media represents racialized others (Bauder 2008; Jiwani 2009; Mahtani 2001) little research exists on the way media constitutes neighbourhood identities and the implications for young people’s sense of belonging. Using discourse analysis, I examine how youth and their neighbourhoods get incorporated into the wider city social imaginary, and whether media supports the attachment of youth from these neighbourhoods in the city.

Media is an important site of recognition. Social identities are constructed through media (Villenas 2013). According to Hall (1998) media constructs dominant “regimes of representation” (Pg. 233). Identity constructions in these regimes of representation are an exercise of power. Elites have more power to reinforce through these representations what they consider desirable, often excluding the ‘other.’ Not only do dominant regimes of representation have the power to construct racialized individuals as the ‘other’, but they also possess the power to make racialized people see themselves as the ‘other’ (Hall 1998, p. 225). Media contributes to the creation of the reality it describes by the construction of a media-oriented vision of truth (Champagne 1999). Research shows that news media inform youth’s identity construction and their perceptions. For example, Wilson and Sparks’s (1999) work on the framing of Black

athletes and people's internalization of these images shows that media depictions, in fact, do inform youth's experiences of race in everyday life.

In Canada, the research reveals that media representations of racialized minorities and immigrants continue to be negative (Mahtani 2001). Despite media's stated goal of objectivity it continues to misrepresent those who diverge from the normative White, Eurocentric ideal (Fleras 2012). Media reinforces or supports moral panics through its negative discursive constructions of immigrants. Adeyanju and Neverson's (2007) study showed that immigrants from Congo were presented as posing health risks; racist discourses are coded in "non-race terms" (pg. 79), in this case, health concerns. Coded language refers to the obscuring of "racial signification in benign discourse" which allows for expressing "race" in a more tolerable manner in accordance with the principles of a liberal society (Li 2001, pg. 78). For Tator and Henry (2000), media through "the repertoires of representation and representational practices" signify racialized minorities (pg. 120). Social inequality is created through media representations.

I use a critical framing analysis to examine the way media discourses frame Chester Le and Malvern and the youth that inhabit these spaces. According to Nielsen (2008), the critical framing analysis aims to illustrate the participatory aspect of media by illustrating how the news picks and emphasizes certain matters and supports certain constructions. A framing analysis examines whether the "moral terms" promote dominant narratives or provides a critical narrative (Nielsen 2008, pg. 607).

According to Entman (1993) media emphasizes some parts of "perceived reality" which then support a certain way of expressing the issue or 'framing' (pg. 52). The frame is the "imprint of power"; what it produced is an exercise of power in which hegemonic social groups choose how and what is represented (pg. 55). The framing analysis allows for examining how

news media represent certain stories. It is accomplished by analyzing for “the presence or absence of certain key words, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgment” (pg. 52). The frame in a news text for Entman (1993) can exhibit homogenous framing because it is produced through power relations whereby dominant actors and interests have the power to shape representations.

I analyzed the *Toronto Star*, *Toronto Sun*, *National Post*, and *Globe and Mail* for a five-year period examining articles from 2009-2013. Selected media outlets were chosen based on ideological leanings of the papers and geographic considerations. The *National Post* is nationally circulated and considered a right-wing paper that caters to the nation’s corporate and political elite. The *Toronto Star* is Canada’s largest circulated newspaper and considered more left of center. *The Globe and Mail* situates itself as centrist. The *Toronto Sun* is thought to be right wing and carries a populist conservative slant. The *Toronto Sun* only had articles archived online from 2012. Therefore, the *Toronto Sun* analysis was conducted based on a two-year period, 2012-2013. ‘Malvern’ yielded 350 articles in total, *Toronto Star* 210, *Toronto Sun* 57, *National Post* 37, and *The Globe and Mail* 57. Given its smaller size, it was not a surprise that Chester Le warranted much less media coverage. The five-year search yielded only 22 articles and the two national papers only produced five articles. Therefore, I extended the search to a ten-year period to get a larger sample size. The ten-year period search yielded a total of 79 articles, with 32 in the national papers.

Paterson and Marshall (2011) who undertook a framing analysis in their work advocate for beginning the analysis with an in-depth reading. In line with their recommendation I read the articles for content. I looked for repeated words, the context in which these words were situated,

and the ideas implicit in the articles. I conducted an interpretive analysis to explore the assumed propositions; who were represented as the authorities on the topic; and who were relegated to the margins. I coded each article and counted each frame to see which were the most popular frames. I selected the emerging narrative themes from the articles. I attended to the ideological assumptions underlying the framing as a way to understand the social and cultural constructions of these neighbourhoods and the youth that reside in these spaces. Five prominent news frames emerged from the sample, 1) Malvern as a dangerous place, 2) Malvern as a racialized space, 3) inner suburbs as markedly different from the core of the city, 4) criminalization of Chester Le and its residents, 5) Chester Le differentially marked as home to the ‘unproductive’ and ‘dependent’ ‘other’ that lives in public housing. The themes that I found conveyed that these neighbourhoods were poor and dangerous places where ‘ethno-racial others’ lived. The ‘ethno-racial other’ was portrayed as perpetuating violence. The framings were mostly negative and one-dimensional. There was little representation of the positive aspects of the neighbourhoods or the youth in these spaces. There was no discussion of young people’s attachments to these places.

Malvern as a dangerous place

All four papers primarily framed Malvern as a place filled with crime, gun violence, drugs, and gang turf war. Regardless of ideological leanings, every paper shared similar framings of Malvern. Headlines like the following were common,

[Headline] Man killed in shooting at Malvern barber shop (The Globe and Mail 2012).

[Headline] High-rise clash deadly-35-year-old man faces murder rap (Doucette 2012b).

There was a pervasive idea that crime only happened in certain ‘pockets of the city,’ in places like Malvern. These spaces were represented as a stain on an otherwise peaceful and safe Toronto.

“It's not a huge number of people, but there are young guys who just want to be the baddest guy, in the baddest neighbourhood, carrying the baddest gun belonging to the baddest gang. That's their ambition, that's what they want to do," says Chief Blair, reflecting on the violence that plagues pockets of the city” (Alcoba 2012).

Issues of gun violence, drugs, and crimes were framed as isolated, neighbourhood specific incidences that were confined to Malvern and similar spaces. These communities were represented as dangerous places to be avoided. *“The city is safer than it's been in decades, but it helps if you live in the right part of town” (Paperny 2012).* Malvern was framed as a community under siege by its residents who lived in constant fear.

[Headline] “Life in ‘Third City’: Nasty, brutish and short: How can we accept teens being gunned down outside their homes as normal?” (Black 2011).

These neighbourhoods were depicted as having little architectural, cultural, or social importance. For example, in the quote that follows the writer makes grand assumptions that people in Malvern were unhealthy because they walk less. According to her, residents in Malvern walk less because the neighbourhood was too dangerous, but also because it does not offer any visual enticement. The only landmark for her was the highway, suggesting that these spaces are bedroom communities whose main purpose was to serve the core. For the author, nothing of interest exist in these places.

“It takes only 30 minutes of walking or moderate exercise, combined with a healthy diet, to cut the risk of diabetes in half. But a walk through a bleak or potentially dangerous neighbourhood is hardly inspiring, especially if the only nearby landmark is a highway” (Rochon 2011).

Youth in Malvern were framed as being held hostage in their neighbourhood and wanting to escape if the opportunity arose. [Headline] “*Camp Widji brings out best in kids: Malvern community youth **escape** the city*” (Ferenc 2012) [Bold added]. The articles did not discuss the personal longing and attachments youth had to their neighbourhoods. The importance of these spaces to youth’s sense of being and engagement were completely ignored.

Residents who confirmed dominant framings were given space for direct speech.

“A woman named Karina tweeted: “Another life lost to something foolish in Malvern. This has to stop for real” (Yuen and Lamberti 2012).

The *Toronto Star* and to a lesser degree *The Globe and Mail* had few counter voices that resisted discourses of Malvern as a crime-ridden place. Articles like “*Think you know the ‘burbs? Think again*” (Morrow 2011) attempted to break stereotypical representations of Malvern.

Malvern residents have troubles, gangs, violence, unemployment, bad neighbours. Problems at work. Impatience when standing in line at stores. Worry over money, bills and jobs. Just like the rest of the supposedly Trouble-Free Toronto.

Martie Prinsloo, Scarborough (Toronto Star 2009).

“[W] ant people from outside the area to see there's a lot of different stories in the community, a history earlier than the first houses that were built here, and interesting things going on around urban food production. There's more to Malvern than guns and gangs” (Micallef 2013).

Malvern’s priority neighbourhood status was highlighted in all four papers. Very few articles contested narratives that represented the community as more than a ‘priority neighbourhood.’ The richness and complexities that constituted Malvern residents were replaced by unidimensional representations of the neighbourhood as impoverished and in need of intervention. There were few instances of contesting narratives, for example, one community resident reprimanded politicians for reifying stereotypes of the residents’ as needy.

Later Tuesday evening, when politicians including MPs John McKay and Rathika Sitsabaiesan addressed a press conference in the area calling for more support for youth,

residents were angered by the rhetoric. One woman drew applause when she called out, "You call us low income but we all work" (Appleby 2012).

Malvern was constantly framed as in need of surveillance. The police were the most represented voice in the sample.

[Headline] "Brothers face barber murder rap-One of the accused had run-in with victim, cop say" (Godfrey 2012a).

[Headline] "Man killed at Scarborough party had links to street gang, police say" (Coutts 2009).

Most police officers constructed and reproduced dominant framings of Malvern as crime-ridden and in need of police intervention, with one exception,

"The primarily white power-brokers in places like Toronto don't have to care about what's happening on the fringes of their city, the kind of people who don't generally get out to vote. "Let's face it, most people will say: 'As long as they're killing each other, who gives a s--t,' "Detective Sergeant Dean Burks told me after the trial ended" (Powell, 2012).

One dimensional representation of Malvern justifies increased police intervention despite actual need. For example, Lindgren's (2009) study mapping *Toronto Star* newspaper coverage found that most of it focused on the core. However, the content of the coverage differed when the focus was on 'priority neighbourhoods'. While sports, arts, entertainment dominated news coverage of the core (38.4 percent of all downtown coverage), the police-related news was most common in 'priority neighbourhoods', 31.15 percent of all coverage (pg. 87). Police-related coverage was only 11.3 percent in the core and 15.5 percent in non-core but not priority (p. 87). It was despite the fact that analysis of calls for police service in the same period found that the highest volume of calls came from the downtown core. Calls in 'priority' areas were in the low-to-medium range, therefore despite high numbers of police-related news coverage actual incidences were in the downtown core (Lindgren 2009).

Malvern as a racialized space

Youth in Malvern were framed as “misguided,” “reckless,” and in need of discipline.

“It’s basically troubled, misguided, reckless young people choosing negative opportunities.” He says that legitimizing them as gangsters is doing a disservice to our society. They are irresponsible youth “who we need to engage and put back on track” (Learn 2012).

In keeping with the kid theme, I’d slap a curfew on Kingston-Galloway and Malvern until things settle down, and enforce it (Strobel 2012).

Violence and ‘reckless’ behaviour was considered a result of the increase in the diversity of youth in Toronto neighbourhoods.

*I grew up in Scarborough, specifically Malvern. But that was the Malvern of the 1980s, which isn’t the Malvern of now. Back in the day, there wasn’t the trade in guns or drugs like there is currently. I had never seen a gun in person until I joined the militia. Growing up, the worst we had to fear was that someone was going to try to beat you up.... The circle of violence is widening and the young men involved are **getting more diverse**, more desperate and harder to reach (Bold added) (Sutherland 2009).*

Youth occasionally were given minute space to counter dominant framings.

The violence reflects a failure of adults in positions of power to connect with youth. Be it parents, politicians, police officers or teachers - somewhere along the line there’s been a disconnect and our communities are paying the price. -Kassandra Cruciano, 21-Ajax, Ont. (Appleby, Mills, and Mackrael 2012).

Both the *Toronto Star* and more so the *Toronto Sun* explicitly linked violence and other social ills in Malvern directly to immigration; youth were bringing ‘homeland’ values antithetical to the Canadian way of life.

[Headline] “Gangster sent back to Jamaica” (Godfrey 2012c).

[Headline] “‘Fell in with the wrong crowd’-Danzig St. shooting accused had come to Canada for a better life, border officials say” (Godfrey 2012b).

It could be over something as simple as a snarky Facebook post. “Back home [Sri Lanka], that’s how you deal with things,” said J. “Some people think they’re still back home” [Parenthesis added] (Doolittle and Javed 2009).

[T]he group is believed to have sprung up mostly from immigrants who settled in government housing developments in Malvern in the 1980s and soon became involved in the crack cocaine industry' (Doucette 2013).

Blackness in Malvern was associated with broken families and those in need of social assistance.

Youth workers and residents that confirmed dominant tropes were given space in the coverage:

"I believe Jamaicans need help," Perry says. "We have a background where our fathers don't really know how to be men. They're still boys" (Royson et al. 2012).

"Lewis [person known to shooting victim] said the province needs to invest money in the Malvern community to form a liaison group composed of black men to work with schools and prisons, "so these young men will see a father figure even though they didn't have a father. Most of these (violence) problems come from absenteeism. This is something we all have to solve" (Yuen 2012).

The examples show that structural issues were reduced to common stereotypical tropes, in this case, the Black absentee father. Stereotypes were used to explain the 'problem with diversity'.

There were few counter-narratives, for example, one report highlighted positive stories about Black fatherhood. *[Headline] "Black fathers are telling their stories" (Mills 2012).* The association of Blackness with disorder was sometimes contested in dominant discourse.

"They are all part of a Jamaican community that's an integral part of Toronto's human infrastructure yet often eclipsed by news coverage of crime and violence. The narrative of the Jamaican gangsta is an oft-repeated tale, fed by frequent news accounts of dysfunction among youths of Jamaican descent. Yet the vast majority of Jamaicans in the Toronto area abhor violence, support law and order and work hard to provide for their families and to make Toronto a better place to live" (Royson et al. 2012).

Blackness was highlighted while Tamils who were also a sizeable group in the neighbourhood were largely absent from media discourses. When they were discussed, they were similarly framed as gang members.

'Far too many deaths'; Tamil youths participate in gangs just 'to be tough,' insider says as violence claims another victim (Doolittle and Javad 2009).

Whiteness was not associated with Malvern although 13 percent of the population was White (City of Toronto 2016b). Whiteness was erased when associated with negative stories. For

example, in an article looking at different gangs in Toronto, Asian, Jamaican, and White gangs were highlighted. However, when White gangs were discussed, they were ‘deethnicized’ and ‘de-racialized’, and other characteristics of the gangs were emphasized. For example, the article framed ‘biker gangs’ not in terms of their Whiteness or ethnicity, but rather the primary signifier of their gang was their hobby (Toronto Star 2010). It was one way through which Whiteness was normalized. The framing of disorder, lack of civility helped racialize this space as distinct from White normative spaces.

Inner suburb versus core

The third prominent theme found in the analysis was the framing of the inner suburbs as antithetical to the core. Malvern and other neighbourhoods in ‘fringe areas’ were framed as dangerous and comparable to American ghettos. Simultaneously, they were contrasted with ‘safe’ areas of the city. It reified both the undesirability of Malvern and affirmed the superiority of the core.

In an article titled “*Isolation on the outskirts*” Rochon (2011) wrote:

People who live in the northern, unwalkable fringes of low-income Toronto, or across the border in the marginalized, dehumanized neighbourhoods of New York's East Harlem and South Bronx will live about 20 fewer years than those in downtown, vibrant neighbourhoods, according to a 2007 report by the City University of New York's Campaign Against Diabetes and the Public Health Association of New York City. But in the northeast and northwest quadrants of Toronto, in neighbourhoods such as Malvern and Rexdale that have few sidewalks and no sensory enticements such as the Art Gallery of Ontario or the dramatically lit CN Tower, there's little reason to engage in the outside world. We used to call them ugly, but now social geographers and medical practitioners label the disconnected sections of the city "obesogenic," meaning environments that promote obesity. My friends and I live in a healthy neighbourhood of affluence while, about eight kilometres north, other parts of the population are being increasingly doomed by urban wastelands.

The quote exemplifies common framings of communities in the inner suburbs by mainstream media. In this article, the author self-identified as living in the core, where most opinion makers and news creators live. The American context is quite different, informed by greater income disparities and inadequate healthcare. Yet, this author conflated Toronto neighbourhoods in the inner suburbs to American low-income neighbourhoods and their health outcomes. Presumably because they are both home to high numbers of racialized people. The author called Malvern “ugly”. She situated herself as living in a “healthy neighbourhood of affluence” while only a short distance away people were living in “urban wastelands”. The writer stated Malvern was visually and socially unappealing. However, she provided no context as to why these neighbourhoods have not been invested in; why the core gets to house major art galleries and other attractions. At the same time, there was no discussion of artists, community activists, cultural centers and the vibrancy that existed in Malvern. Those in positions of power dictate what is deemed appropriate cultural “enticements” or legitimate, while the cultural capital that exists in the inner suburb is delegitimized by being seen as too ‘ethnic.’ Cultural centers that are not associated with ‘Whiteness’ are ethnicized and therefore dismissed. No mention was made of local cultural centers (Malvern is home to a large Chinese cultural center), temples, churches, mosques. Malvern was framed as a space filled with decay, where life is short, undesirable, unexciting, and devoid of any real culture. According to Li (2003), Canada supports multiculturalism at the ideological level but simultaneously overlooks cultural particularities. Racialized and multicultural others are deemed incapable of producing a culture deemed valuable to the mainstream (Li 2003).

Violence in Malvern was seen as an everyday accepted reality. When crimes occurred in affluent places like Forest Hill, it was seen as an anomalous occurrence. Even when crimes were committed in affluent parts of City #1, Malvern was arbitrarily used to contrast these realities.

*Forest Hill residents were stunned to learn a man was gunned down in the wee hours Wednesday in a sprawling park in their upscale neighbourhood...Meanwhile, gunfire rang out **again** on the other side of town in Malvern Wednesday night (bold added) (Doucette 2012a).*

Fear of social ills spilling out from the boundaries of these neighbourhoods into White spaces into City #1 was a constant trope. In the above example, acts of violence with no connections to Malvern were indirectly linked to reiterate this fear.

This violence isn't localized any more, and it's not just criminals killing criminals, as some of the voices on the call-in radio shows would have us believe. It isn't staying in places like Malvern or Rexdale. Or on Gottingen St. if you happen to live in Halifax. Or in Surrey if you live in Vancouver. It's all over. It's in the 905. It's in the Annex. It reaches the Rosedales and the Forest Hills through murders like Dylan Ellis and Oliver Martin (Sutherland 2009).

Crime was something that happened in 'racialized periphery' areas and "reaches" Forest Hills. It was not inherent to Forest Hill as it was in other neighbourhoods. It was also of interest to note the only victims that were identified by name were those in City #1. Those killed in the inner suburb areas of the city were dehumanized; their names did not warrant mention. Rarely were unfair representations and treatment of neighbourhoods in City #3 discussed. Few examples stood out:

"In the last four or five years I've attended 14, 15 funerals. And not once have I seen a politician from any level of government come out and make a statement," he said. "Incidents of gun violence happen in inner-city communities all the time. It's a shame that we don't rally the same way as when it happens on Yonge Street." [Major Street downtown] [Parenthesis added] (Paperny 2012).

The divide was entrenched and affected formal city politics. [Headline] "Toronto's Great Divide: On Oct. 25, when voters choose their next mayor, their decision will likely be rooted in

where they live” (Doolittle 2010). Difference was reiterated through cultural aesthetics, for example how people dressed and where they bought their clothing.

“Too bad the two Torontos don't see eye to eye, but I guess that's life in the big city. We dress differently in the two Torontos. Downtown, Guess means designer denim. In Malvern or Mimico, it means "Guess what I paid for these at Zellers?" [Zellers former large discount department store] [Parenthesis added] (Strobel 2012b).

The ‘core’ versus ‘inner suburb’ divide was as much about differentiating those on the margins as it was about the construction of the idea of a superior place through the containment and representation of the ‘other’s’ place.

Criminalization of Chester Le and its residents

Chester Le, similar to Malvern in all four papers was framed as a violent and dangerous neighbourhood filled with criminals. The emphasis on these spaces as dangerous is a process of racialization where difference is associated with something that is undesirable and to be feared. Crime and violence was seen as a way of life for Chester Le residents and all TCHC residents in the city:

“Residents on the short Scarborough street of Chester Le are all too familiar with the sound of gunfire” (Goddard 2005).

“The corporation provides social housing to about 164,000 tenants across Toronto. So far this year, the city has had 36 shooting deaths with a number of the killings taking place in public housing complexes” (Teotonio 2005).

Voices that agreed with these framings were highlighted while those that did not were completely absent, *“It's like a graveyard around here now, and “one woman said at midday yesterday as shocked neighbours congregated. “This is the wild, wild west”” (Goodard 2005).*

Chester Le was framed as a war zone overrun by gangsters who had taken over the public housing complex.

"Benjamin Allen, now 28, chose to treat the Chester Le community "as his personal fiefdom," allowing only those he approved of to live there, Crown prosecutor Sean Hickey told Superior Court yesterday... Justice David McCombs condemned thugs who "take public areas of the city and make them their own with handguns they are so ready to use" (Small 2008).

A city neighbourhood was turned into a military-like search-and-destroy mission. I'm sure residents would be forgiven if they thought they had woken up in Iraq (Small 2004).

The criminalization of residents of TCHC housing was reinforced by funding strategies that directed money towards surveillance as opposed to social investment.

The Toronto Community Housing Corporation is spending more than \$9 million on building improvements and security in the wake of shootings at public housing complexes... About \$9.3 million will go into repairing doors and windows, graffiti removal and pruning trees and bushes to improve lighting and camera surveillance. Of that amount, \$2.7 million will go toward purchasing more surveillance cameras and \$1.5 million toward upgrading existing camera and monitoring technology (Teotonio 2005).

Young people were framed as particularly threatening and predisposed to crime, especially Black youth.

It is after 7:30 p.m. when members of the new Toronto police anti-violence team venture into a rough patch of Scarborough for the first time. Patrolling in an unmarked van, Staff Sergeant Brian Redick watches as four black youths creep from the dimly lit porch of Chester Le "They can't be up to any good, standing out at night," he says (Alcoba 2006).

The article demonstrated that a group of Black youth outside their homes at 7:30 pm was considered a cause of concern by police and required their intervention.

"There are people who have every legitimate reason to be there and usually, a police officer can determine that very quickly and thank them for their co-operation and send them on their way. But until you know who the people are in a neighbourhood, sometimes you're going to stop the good ones as well as the bad ones" (Alcoba 2006).

The over-policing of Chester Le was not questioned in dominant discourses but rather was justified. When communities and the youth that live in these neighbourhoods are represented as dangerous, the increased police surveillance and intervention is welcomed. Police voices dominated media coverage of these neighbourhoods. Police officers were framed as protecting the neighbourhood. Through constant surveillance the police formulated opinions on who belonged in this neighbourhood and who did not belong and it was their job to regulate these boundaries.

TCHC: home to the 'unproductive' and the 'dependent'

Chester Le was framed mainly as a public housing complex whose residents were viewed as over-dependent on the state. They were represented as far removed from the ideal neo-liberal citizen who was necessary for the well-being of the city. They were depicted as unproductive and overly dependent. Male youth were framed as prone to violence and in need of police intervention. Women were framed as having children they were not able to afford and therefore reliant on the state. Chester Le received particular media attention when the budget chief of the city, Mike Del Grande framed the residents, in particular youth, as unproductive denizens incapable of making valuable contributions to society and dependent on societal aid.

"We had three organizations, not one - three - on the same block dealing with the same populace - youth. The Hub, [name of organizations withheld]- three, on top of the church that's going in there and bringing busloads of school supplies, etc., etc., etc. The violence has not decreased, nothing has changed. We keep giving people fish; people aren't fishing on their own. I don't support the way that's funded because if we're going to do breakfast in schools, to me personally, if you have children you're responsible for children" (parenthesis added) (Toronto Star 2012).

Del Grande confirmed narratives of 'us' versus 'them' that proliferated in the coverage of the inner suburbs. Those who were 'productive' citizens were contrasted against those who

‘cheated’ the system. Those living in TCHC housing were framed as being there because they lacked self-control. Blame was individualized and culturalized.

"The nation is not supposed to be in the bedrooms of the people. But then when you come out of the bedroom and you have children, why is it the state's responsibility to look after your children? I didn't tell you to wear a condom or not wear a condom or how many children - you made that decision." "The violence has not decreased, nothing has changed," he said. "People come out there with, I hate to generalize, but they've all got cellphones, okay . . . I don't have a BlackBerry personally. I operate on a \$23-a-month phone - for business. They come out there with BlackBerrys, iPhones, \$200, \$300 running shoes, etc. Like the priorities are all mixed up" (Toronto Star 2012).

Residents were represented as hypersexual and irresponsible.

"I know a lady that's on social assistance. She has three kids with two different fathers, getting social assistance... The two boys and her have cellphones. Now \$50, \$50, \$50 - that's \$150 a month for cellphones when you should be thinking, 'Is this my priority? Maybe I need to feed my family or pay my rent instead of three cellphones for \$150.' You've made lifestyle choices. Why then do you ask me to subsidize you when you're not prepared to make those choices?" (Toronto Star 2012).

It should be noted women and girls were not proportionally represented in media coverage of these neighbourhoods. When they were represented, it was usually as hypersexual dependent beings or victims of crime. These spaces were mostly associated with the Black (and to a lesser extent Brown) male youth body which was to be feared, surveilled, and disciplined.

The residents were represented as unemployed and troublesome.

*"Piratheep Tharmakulasingam was walking home, unaware someone lay in wait. He tried to run, but a man in a car chased the frightened **unemployed** factory worker down a quiet Scarborough street around 10 a.m. Sunday" [Bold added] (Duncanson 2006). Residents were infantilized, seen as in need of disciplining by responsible citizens, "I think sometimes you have to have tough love, not because you hate people but because they need the support" (Toronto Star 2012).*

The differentiation of those seen as unproductive and dependent versus those seen as productive and not dependent was drawn along racial lines. It was most clearly evident in the 2005 coverage of an assault case in Chester Le. In this case, Ms. Monast, was attacked by her

neighbour with a machete, cutting off her hand. The attack was allegedly provoked when the neighbour had her children taken away and suspected Monast had called Children's Aid. The framing of this case highlighted some of the tensions in the coverage of White victims versus 'others' in Chester Le. The case received a lot of media attention. Not one single paper mentioned that Monast, a White woman, was living in public housing. Chester Le was simply referred to as a community despite coverage that usually highlighted Chester Le as a public housing community. The victim got extensive space to discuss her suffering and her family was also given space to air their grievances. No other victims of crimes in Chester Le were given similar media space. She was represented as clean and responsible while her neighbour was presented as an erratic, irresponsible, and dirty ethnic 'other.' Association of Whiteness with cleanliness and respectability reinforced the inferiority of the 'other.' Despite Monast living in public housing with five children without a partner, she was not framed as reliant on the government.

Monast, a divorced mother of five, is known as the "neighbourhood sweetheart" to residents of the gritty townhouse complex of Chester Le. A painted folk art heart greets visitors to Monast's tidy townhouse. It bears the words: "The world is full of beauty when the heart is full of joy." It stands in stark contrast to the unit next door, whose windows are shrouded by Ethiopia's flag and pictures of its dead king, Haile Selassie. Doors have the Star of David in applied blue tape over the colours of the Jamaican flag- yellow, green and black- and a wall is chalked with the words: "Jesus Christ, God of Israel." Neighbours said the woman who lives there began acting erratically about three years ago when her husband died. They said she started following the Rastafarian faith and began holding prayer meetings in her basement for young people. The behaviour caused neighbours to nickname her the Dread Lady...Neighbours said Monast frequently babysat for mothers in the complex and did volunteer work at Chester Le Public School (Wilkes 2003).

It was also the first time where Chester Le was framed as a place people wanted to live, with good community ties. It was not portrayed as a place of urban decay.

Ms. Irwin [sister of Monast] says that despite the painful memories, Ms. Monast was upset that she had to leave the area she called home but thought it best for safety reasons [Parenthesis added] (Larkin 2003).

There was great outpour of moral and material support for Monast,

"She's got a lot of support around her," Ms. Irwin said. " She's had a lot of material things donated, like someone came in and completely painted her house. A large furniture department came in and moved her free of charge" (Larkin 2003).

Victims of crime in Chester Le did not receive this kind of response because they were viewed as undeserving and somehow complicit in the crimes against them. It should be noted that unlike Malvern, there were no contesting representations in the coverage of Chester Le. It can be attributed to several factors. For example, Malvern was a larger space, so it received more news coverage. Therefore, there was more space for contesting voices. Also, most Toronto residents, have heard of Malvern. Many in Toronto, including Scarborough residents have not heard of Chester Le. Also, since Chester Le residents were much more socio-economically marginalized than residents of the mixed-income neighbourhood of Malvern, they perhaps did not possess the same social and cultural capital to send in contesting opinion pieces.

It is important to note, youth were aware of the negative framings of their neighbourhoods and at times how it structured their lives and their opportunities.

Angela: At least media wise the most stigma with Malvern is that it is a Black community with Black violence.

Isabella: Scarborough you think Brown people, especially Tamil people and I know. I know Scarborough has a lot of Tamil people but that is the perception that other people have and like when I got downtown and like I just talk to random people when they hear the word I am from Scarborough, they are like shock mode, oh my god, do you have a bigger, older brother that is a part of a gang, and it is just, it is ridiculous. It is so funny that is the perception they have of Scarborough and I think that goes back to um media, like media literally puts everything out there and makes everything look so bad...

Deque: I think the media thinks Malvern is always changing so it is like, at one point we are very much in the news with crime, all these things, the only thing that will be good in Malvern is ball or sports so they... But now it, there is more, there is more positive things happening. But, I don't, I don't believe that they are getting the recognition. The media is not the best, the media is that outlet that we look at all the time, but it is the media sucks. They don't, they don't show the positive things all the time. It is, it is more the negative...

Anu: So what do you think other people think about your neighbourhood and why?

Jay: I guess how news portrays information or. I don't know. I always had this idea how news, the media always control how people think. So whatever feedback they get they will force it in a certain way. So. I guess Scarborough's reputation of being a bad place to live.

Arthur: That is another reason why like [pause] we define young Black men, or young Black women that are kind of lining up to be in these roles. There may be something different. [Inaudible] just because once again those predispositions, you know, but you know they just like they all come from media.

Arthur stated media created identity categories or “roles” that Black youth felt pressure to conform to in order to cultivate a sense of belonging. The participants recognized these framings and how they shaped their social fields and habitus. These tropes became “predispositions” that informed how youth lived their lives. The participants were aware of the structuring effects of dominant discourses that circulated through media. For example, the youth spoke about how negative media framings impacted how others outside their community viewed them. It informed opportunities, for example, discrimination in employment as a result of their area of residence. I will discuss this more in Chapter 7 where I examine how participants negotiate neighbourhood identities, difference, and its implications for their sense of belonging. Through a discourse analysis, I was able to illustrate elements of the social fields that informed the youth participants’ lives. These representations captured dominant discourses that circulated through society and potentially became part of young people’s habitus. For some youth, this might happen through direct contact with media, through the government, schools or service providers who often reproduce these tropes.

Conclusion

The above analysis laid out elements of the social fields of the two neighbourhoods. Fields are continuously constructed and structure habitus which informs the field (Makoe 2006). Gulson (2011) advocates looking at subjectivity as constituted together with space. Space is central in constituting social life and informs habitus (Raffo 2011). The media constructs certain identities as ‘other’-unfit, dangerous, in need of discipline/surveillance. The representation of some cultures as inherently inferior and different, being part of alien cultures and conflicts that they bring to Canada shapes residents’ identity/sense of self. It also demonstrated how the neighbourhood can be both the site for the production and contestation of dominant discourses.

Through a media framing analysis, I found the five most prominent ways social fields and the youth living in them were discursively constructed, 1) Malvern was a dangerous place, 2) Malvern was a racialized space, 3) the inner suburbs (and its residents) was markedly different from the core of the city, 4) criminalization of the residents of Chester Le, and 5) Chester Le as home to the ‘other’ who was socially dependent on the state, living in public housing. Chester Le and Malvern for the most part were constructed as poor, dangerous, where the unknown ‘other’ lived, plagued by gun violence and gang activity, antithetical to the ‘core’ of the city. Despite the fact very few youth were involved in gangs, residents in these neighbourhoods were constantly framed in wider discourse as being members of gangs. These distortive discursive constructions of youth’s involvement inform their social identities in these neighbourhoods.

Through a media discourse analysis, I demonstrated how Malvern and Chester Le and the youth that inhabit these spaces are located within the social hierarchies of society. Media analysis revealed that despite Canada’s commitment to social equality, ethno-racial youth continue to be marked primarily as different. They are ‘othered’, racialized, and their differences

are exaggerated and essentialized. Later in this dissertation I examine how despite their marginalization by dominant discourses these neighbourhood identities and the emotional attachments youth have to these spaces informs their sense of belonging to the city.

One of the most problematic findings in this chapter was the particularly racial tone of media framings. Often racial framings were not explicit. Race was coded in what appeared to be neutral language. Tropes of absentee fathers, promiscuous single mothers, dependency on social assistance was coded for Blackness. Race did not have to be explicitly stated. Malvern was framed as a ‘Black neighbourhood,’ directly and indirectly linking Blackness with gun violence and gang activity. The Black or Brown youth body was depicted as something to fear, justifying surveillance and state intervention.

Racial or ethnic framing neglects other axes of differences such as class and gender. It also essentializes differences without accounting for the many components that constitute young people’s identities. As I will explore further in Chapter Six, Black as an identity category is multifaceted and is not without its problems. Youth use Black interchangeably to describe people who are a part of the wider African-diaspora. Within this category some differentiate along lines of geography, Caribbean, West African, East African or by nationalities Eritrean, Somali. Even within these categories there are many complexities, for example markers of religion.

In the current and the previous chapter, I examined the structural and discursive framings of Malvern and Chester Le. I looked at how youth are differentially positioned as illustrated by hegemonic media framings and the dominant ethical and political value systems (how social locations and identities are valued) that governs their existence. I found that there was a homogenizing force in media depictions that framed the youth as racialized ‘others’ (and

gendered differently-men as dangerous; and women as ‘welfare queens’). I now turn to how youth position themselves in these othering discourses. The nature of stereotypes is that they reduce differences. However, youth voices can challenge and unsettle them. What is missing is the interpretive dimensions; namely how youth in these neighbourhoods navigate, reproduce, and subvert these constructions. I ask how do youth contest these boundary makings, or rather the politics of belonging? The question that I develop in this dissertation is how these structural indicators of social and economic inequality and culturalist constructions that differentiate these neighbourhoods as marginal, bear on the lives of youth who frequent two community centers in the neighbourhoods and its implications for their sense of belonging. In the next chapter, I interrogate how youth navigate ethno-racial differences in their everyday lives as it unfolds in these spaces and its wider implications for belonging.

“I said it is hard being Black, tough them up a little. It is either you can rap or you can take a ball and dribble, grip and hold a pistol, quick to shoot if they diss you. Rob you kicks is an issue. So tell me how it feels, only three options is shoot, run and steal, and I am not talking basketball” (Spoken word, Malvern youth).

CHAPTER 6: RACIALIZED POSITIONALITIES AND EVERYDAY NEGOTIATIONS OF DIFFERENCE

In conversation with Lavan, a second generation Tamil youth from Malvern, the discussion turned to why he “hates” when he is mistaken for being West Indian. This “hate” is fueled by West Indian youths’ (some of whom are his friends) tendency to “make fun” of Tamils. According to Lavan, this tension was mainly due to people of Guyanese background feeling they were not readily accepted as “Indian” compared to Tamil people because of their Caribbean connection. Because of this, Lavan preferred people of Trinidadian background because they “hate” Tamils less. According to him, this was mainly due to their own tensions within their community between “Indian Trinidadians” and “Black Trinidadians”, which made them less judgmental of Tamils. His overall conclusion was that West Indian people were simply “jealous” of Tamils. Lavan was not the only Tamil youth to share similar experiences. Many shared their stories of being teased by non-Tamils, especially by their Caribbean-Canadian peers (Field note excerpt, 7/7/14).

I share this story not because I think Lavan was laying claim to a general truth. Rather, what is important is Lavan’s perception of his reality. He spoke to the tensions of living in a multicultural setting and the many different identities that are negotiated among multiple diasporas that live in close proximity. Identity was a constant marker of difference that informed everyday peer relationships.

The previous chapter demonstrated that Malvern and Chester Le were cast as marginal neighbourhoods and as problems in need of attention: places plagued with violence, class disparities, and poverty. They were also depicted as racialized spaces where racialized ‘others’ live and the racialization was simplified in ways that submerged the complex composition of Malvern and Chester Le youth-as second generation, ethno-racial, and immigrant residents.

The previous chapters illustrated that the neighbourhood social fields and the youth in these spaces are situated physically, socially, politically, economically, and culturally on the

periphery of the city. In this chapter, I examine the complex ways youth negotiate ethno-racial identity construction and everyday differences as situated in their neighbourhoods. I also incorporate the voices of youth service providers. I aim to show that youth are socio-spatially situated, and these spaces structure a particular disposition or habitus that is ethno-racially inflected and that should be examined to understand the implications for belonging. In accordance with Yuval-Davis's (2006) analytical levels of belonging this chapter examines both youth's social locations in these neighbourhoods and their identifications and emotional attachments. Practices in particular spaces are important for the "construction and reproduction of identity narratives and constructions of attachment" (Yuval-Davis 2006, pg.203). Therefore, I argue that it begs attention to these identity narratives in local neighbourhood spaces. These identity narratives are expressions of belonging.

I have organized the insights of youth into the following themes which emerged from the interviews and focus groups I conducted with youth and service providers: 1) youth negotiate complex ethno-racial identity making in their everyday lives, 2) youth navigate everyday differences and intercultural relations in their neighbourhood, 3) importance of space for the negotiations of everyday difference, and 4) everyday negotiations of difference and sense of belonging to the polity.

I begin with a brief overview of the participants to identify a range of dynamics and dispositions I found in the neighbourhoods. I modified and omitted certain characteristics to ensure participants are not identifiable. To ensure confidentiality of the participants (who shared intimate details and opinions) I have not included detailed descriptions about their lives. I have chosen to indicate the age and cultural, ethnic, national connections that the participants make as an identifier. It is not intended to essentialize their identity, but rather to highlight another layer

of identification. The participants speak from particular locations, informed by their ethnic, racial, immigrant, and transnational connections. These identity markers are complex, ‘messy’, and contextual. Youth identify in many different ways, often in the same interaction. For example, Canadian Tamil youth might identify simultaneously with their ethnic identity, national identity (Sri Lankan Tamil), religious identity (Hindu), racial identity (Brown) or geographic identity (South Asian). Therefore, the descriptors I use are chosen by the participants. These markers should not be taken as their only identity or even their most dominant. It is how they have chosen to identify in particular interactions. I understand the complexity of these identities and recognize my decision to use these markers might continue to reify some of these identities. I should also note I choose not to identify the ethnicities or national connections of the service providers. Since there were not many front line youth service providers they could potentially be more readily identified. Therefore, personal details were omitted.

Youth in Malvern and Chester Le

Youth in Malvern and Chester Le were proud of their heritage and shared many interesting facts about both their neighbourhood and ethnic communities. Family life for the participants varied. Some lived in homes with, both parents, single-parent, extended families, or divorced families. Some had been placed in Scarborough by the Toronto Community Housing Corporation, and had little choice in moving to these neighbourhoods. Some contrasted the conditions in their neighbourhoods and Scarborough to other areas of the city (often reproducing dominant discourses).

Angela: I call North York my life then was Pleasantville² the movie. Everything was nice, the streets were clean, there were trees everywhere, roses just growing, it was very aesthetically beautiful and it had a more like um suburban feel to it. Um, even though we

² 1998 movie about an idyllic suburb

didn't live in the suburb. Scarborough was more like, I needed to be, at least, at least what I was taught, I need to be more on guard, more alert. My mom was scared all the time. Whereas in North York she would send me to the grocery by myself, we knew everyone there. We knew the guy that cleaned the street; we would talk to him for a minute. In Scarborough we didn't talk to anybody. (Ethiopia, 24)

Youth participants' ages varied from 16-29 years old. Some attended high school, college, or university; others worked or were on leave from studies to pursue their passions, whether it was photography or a career in entertainment. They dealt with a range of everyday issues, from parent's mental health, siblings with special needs, parent's illegal migration status and precarious work; death of family or friends to due gang violence. Some spoke of their mental health issues and their disabilities. I witnessed many of their amazing feats, including athletic, artistic, and academic achievements. They discussed their amazing friendships and supportive families. I saw firsthand their resilience in spite of adversities and their continued optimism.

I asked the youth participants about their lives in Malvern and Chester Le, their thoughts on multiculturalism (ethno-racial difference has most often been framed through multiculturalism discourses in the Canadian context); experiences with cultural diversity; relationships with others in their neighbourhood; the different ways they engaged with their community; and what they thought about formal avenues of civic engagement. The following is a presentation of the most prominent themes.

“When Ethiopians Were in Ethiopia No One Said You Were Black”: Negotiating Identity Making

One of the most important themes that emerged was the everyday negotiations of ethno-racial identity-making among the participants. Ethno-racial identities were important for the participants in the study and was a great source of pride. Marking out specificities of their identity was a way to challenge the reduction of their differences. All participants acknowledged

their strong ethno-racial attachments and its importance in their daily lives. For example, for Angela, her sense of belonging was rooted in her ethno-racial identity.

Angela: That is where my sense of, sense of belonging lies, that is where I feel the most community um, the most relatability, the most, um, like similar shared experiences, um. (Ethiopia, 24)

Egypt's parents (especially her father) instilled in her a strong pan-African identity. Her ethno-racial identity provided her with a foundation and guided her life choices.

Egypt: I feel like, having a foundation is the most important thing to know. You can be lost if you know if you don't have one path you will do every path. It is important to have a foundation. (Jamaica, 20)

Many participants stated that it was their cultural identities that gave them guidelines for who they were and who they can become. For Clint being Tamil meant there was a certain level of expectation of success that was placed on him. It propelled him to achieve higher goals.

Clint: I like the pride we have. Like, like we have expectations and I like that. Like they want you somewhere in life. (Tamil, 17)

'They' in this context referred to the Tamil community. Success was tied to his ethnic community's expectations.

The findings in the study suggested ethno-racial identities were also racialized. Race permeated through and structured everyday minute interactions. As I try to capture here, race was interwoven with ethnic identities and the complex circumstances of young people who have diverse immigrant and ethnic family backgrounds. These identity constructions were fluid and constantly negotiated. An example of this was the complex negotiation of 'Blackness' by the youth participants. I found that Blackness was a localized identity mediated by migration to Canada, and informed by diasporic politics. For example, Angela, a second generation Ethiopian

youth shared how she navigated both her own and her mother's views on Blackness. Many East African participants in the study discussed their parents' refusal to identify as Black and how they relayed this message to their children. Angela shared that her mother struggled with negotiating her transnational migration and was not able to identify with the prescribed racial category she experienced upon arrival in Canada. In Ethiopia, her mother was not considered 'Black.' In Canada, her mother was labelled as Black despite her not identifying with this prescribed category. Her mother's reluctance to associate herself with 'Blackness' and its negative connotations were reproduced in her child rearing and the expectations she placed on Angela's choices in friends. Angela was warned at an early age she should not make Jamaican friends because her mother viewed them as "trouble-makers".

The distancing by Angela's mother from 'Blackness' was heightened in a neighbourhood context where Black was mostly associated with Jamaican. Unlike her mother, Angela identified as Black (and Ethiopian). Angela identified as Black partially because society prescribed this racial category. From an early age, she was told by Canadian society she was Black. It was a racial category that she recognized does not exist in Ethiopia. In the process, she recognized it was an artificial, socially constructed category. The category was so pervasive that she could not escape it in its entirety, nor did she desire to completely resist it. She drew on the resources that accompanied the identity marker of Black for belonging. For example, whereby Ethiopian identity was not represented in media, Black identity was, whether it was in movies or music. Therefore, she was able to forge a sense of belonging and connection through her racialized identity. For Angela, due to the heavy association of 'Blackness' with Jamaican in her neighbourhood, there was less space to be 'Ethiopian'. In a racialized society such as Canada,

cultural specificity is often erased and particular identity labels are constructed and made available.

Angela: A little information, when, when Ethiopians were in Ethiopia no one said you were Black, gang violence related to you, you are a thief. They all looked the same. And then they come here and all of a sudden, all they see is Jamaican this, Jamaican that, Black this, Black that, and so you know in their mind they associated Black with Jamaican. So being Tamil is being Indian. All Black people were Jamaican and then furthermore there is like. They are dangerous, you know, you don't want your kids to be influenced by them. Furthermore they [parents] too were being identified as. It was something they were rejecting, oh I am not Black, I am not like that, I am Ethiopian, we don't do that. Um. So. There was that thing. So like my mom didn't want me to hang around with the Black kids...It is definitely chilled down. There was a lot worse because again they were new, they were still learning, their parents have met Jamaican people, they realize, it is not everybody, they understand they got the shorter end of the stick. So the thing. There is definitely more understanding than before. But um. Yea now. Now people. Like, you know how many. People are getting married to Jamaican in our community... Our parents are still apprehensive. They are still I don't know. Once you get over the violence piece, there is the absent father piece. There are so many things to get through. (Ethiopia, 24)

Alias, of Somali background, spoke about her cousin who married a Jamaican man. Despite her cousin having a child with her husband, he was not allowed at his in-laws' house. Her mother would not be happy if she married a person of Jamaican background. It was particularly problematic for Alias since she did not want to marry a Somali man. Her past boyfriend, in fact, had been Tamil. It should also be noted girls in the study admitted their sexualities were policed more by their parents than their male counterparts.

Despite the many ways youth navigated their identity construction they all agreed that living with diverse groups of people allowed them a level of connection that made them comfortable and more accepting of difference. For some of the participants living with diversity cultivated their ability to simultaneously traverse different groups. Tina spoke to her abilities to

‘code-switch’ when she was with her South Asian friends’ parents versus her Caribbean friends’ parents.

Tina: I just feel like I have been around too many different people I am just subconsciously able to turn from how I should behave I just feel like it is subconscious now. I don’t even have to think about it anymore. (Latin America, 20)

Despite co-existence however, for the most part, participants in my study continued to interact most intimately with co-ethnics as illustrated in the second theme I discuss below: intercultural mixing. I draw on Australian scholars Guo and Dalli’s (2012) definition of intercultural relations as “interactional phenomena such as language and other social practices that enable the co-existence of different cultures and cultural tools within a given setting.” I argue neighbourhood spaces perform an important role in mediating intercultural relations.

“Like Different Groups of People Look at Different Groups Differently”: Intercultural Mixing

While the first theme focused on identity, the second theme examines intra and inter-group connections and disconnections. It was another important element that informed the relational aspect of identity. For the most part, the impression the participants gave was that different groups got along in their neighbourhoods. There were no major overt tensions or clashes that over-rode or dominated my interaction with them. However, there was less deep interaction between youth from different ethno-racial groups. It was reflected in the indifferent tone participants used when I asked whether people got along in their neighbourhood. For example, when I asked Jay, “do people of different cultures get along in your neighbourhood?” he simply stated “yea I guess so.” It was a common answer I received throughout my study.

Inter-cultural relations and conflict

Youth and youth service providers stated that immigrant (and second generation) youth were particularly good at mixing with other immigrants (and second generation). It was attributed to their shared experiences of migration. However, when challenges arose youth continued to construct boundaries around ethno-racial markers.

Mike: Um the merging of cultures, especially young people, young people accept each other's cultures quite easily, because so many people are immigrants, they are, they are, they see, they have a bond with fellow immigrants and they share quite well. Where the challenge that comes in is when there is a conflict, once there is a conflict people draw the lines um ethnically. So then it appears almost racial issue or ethnic conflict when it is not. Um but most of the time it is great (youth service provider).

Negative encounters with individuals can easily become a group issue. Intra-group negative perceptions of others shaped youth's opinions of ethnic groups.

Deque: Because at the end of the day it is like you see a group of people move and then you take that judgment by the collective you are in. (Ghana, 21)

Service providers also recognized this reality.

Tommy: You might have one friend, has an issue with this group and if the group defines the problem as a group then the other friend wants to back up their friend, then now you have created two human personal things, you have just now created a [pause] a diasporic issue...

Youth culture often relies on peer groups to sanction friendships. Tommy's comments illustrated that personal issues could become problems between 'diasporas'. His use of the word diaspora is important. It highlighted issues between immigrant groups and spoke to different ways they attempted to find belonging within a racialized nation-building process that rendered them perennial outsiders. For youth who longed to carve out space within this nation-building

process, their ethno-racial collective identity was often the only place where they found this belonging. The evidence showed this can also have conflictual consequences.

For example, differences often came to the fore in times of conflict.

Hadja: [I] was in a parking lot and I was backing up and then this Jamaican woman I am assuming because of her accent right, whipped past me and she almost hit my car. So I was so whatever, I was driving out of the plaza and she happens to be beside me and start cursing me and saying stupid Somali, you learn how to f'ing drive, so and so. Like I experienced when you get into arguments [with someone from] another culture, they always, the first thing they do is talk about your skin, or your colour... (Somalia, 29)

Tamil youth in Malvern discussed some of the derogative comments they received from Black youth, such as “Tamils smell,” they are “terrorists.”

Tharan: It can be anybody. It can be a Black girl too. Yea at [a community organization that caters to both Blacks and Tamils] a couple of Black girls, they just, they will be like Tamils smell and stuff like that. Yea that happens at school and stuff too. (Tamil, 16)

Adults in the study recognized that youth were more open with their prejudice. Adults were perceived as being able to disguise their thoughts better. Nish, a service provider, reflected on his childhood in Scarborough and recalled that children were more forthright in their racism. Racism became more subtle as individuals aged.

Nish: When you are very young it is very direct and in your face. I think, now it is a very um it is a very subtle and insidious form of racism.

Most Tamil participants stated that despite the fact that people tolerated others in their neighbourhood, there were some inter-ethnic tensions. It was most evident in robberies whereby Black youth targeted Tamil youth (and others including other Black youth). Youth workers recognized this reality.

George: A lot of South Asian youth were getting robbed around this center for their electronic equipment, of the most part it was a lot of Black youth that were doing it. There were a lot of tensions, fear, um so there is a lot of those things have happened

throughout the years but you know through the work of the community, work through a lot of people these tensions have decreased and a lot of those incidents have gone down.

For some of the Tamil participants, these robberies confirmed common racist tropes about Black youth as lazy, unwilling to find employment, and resorting to crime.

Pragash: Because in Malvern they are lazy to work. (Tamil 17)

Tharan: It is cheap, it is an easy way to getting stuff, it is easy money, it is just. (Tamil 16)

Abalash: It is just easier for them to do that than go find a job. (Tamil 16)

One day in line at the grocery store in Malvern I overheard a conversation amongst a group of Tamil high school boys. They were plotting a prank on their friends who were waiting for them. They planned on telling their friends that the food they bought for the party was robbed by “a bunch of Black guys.” The premise of the prank was based on something they thought was probable and that their friends would believe. These everyday incidences captured the racialized reality of young people’s lives, and the way race permeated mundane everyday interactions. It also demonstrated their active racialization of each other.

Some youth participants navigated these tensions by withdrawing from the neighbourhood. For example, Arya discussed an incident whereby she was approached by a group of Black youth who were trying to rob her while she was escorting her brother to his tutorial classes.

Arya: I went to drop my brother off at class, I think it was Malvern Mall, yea it was Malvern Mall, so these uh Black kids they came up to me and my cousin was with me too and they were like can I have 2 dollars I said I don’t have any money, and then they are like is that why you have a Guess purse, and a cellphone, and everything so I got scared, I just walked away. [I] was like this is not my neighbourhood, I am not coming back here again. I didn’t tell my parents though, they would never give me the car again... I kind of felt scared, it is full of Tamil people and Black people, this is not my neighbourhood. (Tamil 19)

Arya was a second generation Tamil youth I met through the Tamil organization. She lived in Scarborough but not Malvern. She came to Malvern for after-school programs like many other Tamil youths who came for dance, instrumental music, Tamil language, or extra tutorial classes. Arya's father was very strict and rarely let her go out without parental supervision. He viewed both Tamil and Black male youth in a negative light mainly due to media stories about youth gangs and violence. So when the incident at the mall happened, she did not tell her parents. She thought the incident would confirm her parents' negative views about Black youth. It would lead to a loss of her car privileges. She had to navigate inter-ethnic relations as well as intergenerational power inequalities. Arya was uncomfortable in Malvern because she did not know the internal dynamics. It was not only Black youth who caused her discomfort but also Tamil youth. Despite the fact that Arya was Tamil, she felt uneasy because she had not grown up in a neighbourhood with many Tamil people. Her discomfort was also a result of the negative impressions of young Tamil males she received from her family. It is important to note that these everyday encounters often go unexamined. Often the response, as we saw in this example, was not conflict but withdrawal from these places and animosity towards these spaces because they were perceived to be restricted (Wise 2005).

It should also be noted Arya's fear to tell her parents about the incident at the mall stemmed from a deeper issue of not being allowed to be at the mall. The regulation of young Tamil women's movements in their neighbourhoods was much more common than their male counterparts. Many of the Tamil girls discussed the pressure to measure up to the hegemonic ideals held by the Tamil community of what was considered appropriate behaviour for young Tamil females. Appropriate behaviour often meant not being seen in public spaces without adult supervision. For example, Tharmini, one of the young women I met, discussed her having to live

a secret life away from the gaze of the Tamil community which often circumvented her ability to venture freely into public spaces.

Tharmini: So if you see an uncle on the side they are going to be thinking she is an 'ooru soohththu' [running around town] so that impact how we are. So if we see someone we know we literally run. (Tamil, 16)

Although some youth like Arya withdrew, many other young people used their neighbourhoods as a resource to protect themselves from racism. Many participants preferred staying in their neighbourhoods because they felt safe being with people of similar ethno-racial identities. Being in these neighbourhoods dispelled the fear of discrimination they experienced outside these neighbourhoods.

It is also important to note that the Tamil participants did not question the structural reasons that lead some Black youths to rob or steal. For example, discrimination which often barred many Black youths from finding gainful employment. In fact, one of the Tamil youth that shared his negative impressions of Black youth had been forced to transfer schools due to misconduct. However, he viewed this an anomaly, a courtesy he did not extend to Black youth. The Tamil youth also did not highlight violence or crime committed by fellow Tamil youth. It should also be noted that Black youth were less likely to disclose negative opinions about Tamil youth. I think my positionality as a Tamil female prevented non-Tamil youth from openly sharing negative sentiments. Therefore, I most often learned about the stereotypes of Tamils held by Blacks from Tamil youth.

Adults also faced similar inter-ethnic dynamics. Prudent, a second generation Jamaican woman, who worked as a youth service provider shared her experiences. She felt that her South Asian co-workers minimized her abilities and accomplishments due to her ethno-racial identity.

Prudent: You know different ways trying to um minimize our, my accomplishments, yea so that is and it is not only White people, I also find it from South Asian, some of my South Asian colleagues where no matter what you try to do there is always a road block, there is a always a reason why they can't do it and it is, it is uncomfortable and it is uncomfortable and I am not saying all South Asian.

Intercultural distancing: locating themselves in the racial hierarchy

Intercultural relations were viewed in a positive light, but for the most part remained on a somewhat superficial level that did not necessarily mean friendships or inter-family ties. For some of the Tamil participants, there was a fear that inter-cultural mixing, more specifically friendships with Black youth would have negative consequences. The fear came from stereotypical associations of Black youth with “crime”, “drugs”, and “failing school”.

Tharan: It is always good to talk to different kind of people, it is always good to know other people. (Tamil 16)

Abalash: The bad is basically you might be chilling with the wrong crowd. (Tamil 17)

Simultaneously, some Tamil parents removed their children from ‘Tamil’ areas and schools in fear that their children would focus more on peer relations than academic achievement or get involved in gangs. Social distancing was not just between Black and Tamil youth. An East Asian youth in the girls’ empowerment program explained her parent’s rationale for moving to Markham (a suburb North of Toronto) was to distance her from “Brown” (Tamil) youth. It demonstrated the relative hierarchies between racialized groups.

Inter-cultural relationships were especially hard for youth who did not fit into either of the dominant groups in the neighbourhood. For example, Jude felt like an outcast in her school. She at times felt isolated because she was Indian in a school that was predominately Tamil. At times she felt that she could not relate.

Jude: Yea the positive is you get to learn from them like any traditions they have but um like negative for me is like. Like at my school they are all Tamil and I am Indian also like, it is sort of bit like separate sort of thing, so half the time they are always talking about some Tamil thing and I am just like yea. (India 16)

Intercultural distancing did not just occur between two visibly different groups. It also happened within race categories. For example, according to some of the African Black youth, Caribbean Black youth made them feel they were not 'Black' enough. According to both Alias and Randy 'Blackness' in Toronto was associated with being Caribbean. When they were younger, being from Africa made them less 'Black', or not the 'right' kind of Black in their neighbourhood.

Alias: I guess because, I can give you a story, when I remember in elementary school and middle school there was this idea that being Somali wasn't Black, wasn't being Black and I remember one of my friends had said you are not Black you are Somali there is a difference. Um and I didn't understand it, especially with my skin tone you can't, you can't say I am not Black. Um, so I think with that there was that inter-race thing going on too with not only Somalis but um the Caribbean community too. Assuming because we came, both communities came to Canada around the same time. Um, maybe there was a misunderstanding of cultures. Because before now when would we ever see each other you know? We lived way too far apart for Somalis to understand Caribbean culture and vice versa. Um, so I guess with that experience that I had I can reason that Somalis didn't consider themselves Black which didn't make sense. And that there was that identity issue, where do you fall in, what does it mean to be Somalian when you are growing up in Canada. What does it mean to be Somali and have a visible minority skin tone and have someone tell them you are not of that minority. You are not of that race. You are not Black. (Somalia, 22)

Randy: Like it was my own people [Caribbean Black] that used to make fun of me when I used to say I am African. My own people. So. I, we don't know enough about ourselves, we are so hurt. (Ghana, 21)

Intercultural relations in school: negotiating Blackness

Within the school, a different power structure with its own hierarchies existed that affected peer relations. Not having access to the school limited my study. However, since most

of the participants came to the centers directly after school, it was always a topic of discussion. School played a central role in the lives of the participants. It was expressed through their many conversations about their classes, practices for school concerts, or homework help. Through their stories, it soon became clear that in the school context, Black youth ranked high in terms of “coolness.” Black culture in particular, due to the popular appeal of African-American hip hop, allowed Black youth to carve out a unique space within the hierarchies of their local school. These hierarchies often times marginalized other groups. For example, during inter-ethnic interactions, Tamil youth were perceived as outside this subculture. When they attempted to engage, they were viewed as “trying to be Black.” Tasha, a second generation Middle Eastern youth, saw herself as an outsider and someone who got along with everyone. She summed up the tensions succinctly when she stated:

Tasha: It is more I guess I will tell you, the Blacks look at them you guys are trying to be like us. And the Tamils are like yo we are doing our own shit, we dress like you, we smoke weed, but we don't speak your language you know, we have other interests. And that is pretty much what it is. I have chilled with everyone. (Middle Eastern 18)

Conflict arose when negotiating these power structures. Tharmini captured this dilemma in a focus group with Tamil youth.

Tharmini: Like different groups of people look at different groups differently. Tamils are looked down upon by other groups of people. That is the only racism...It will be like, seeing Tamil kid at school, the Black kid, or they are just there, they are Brown kids, they feel like they are on top, they are just looking [down] at the Brown kid like. (Tamil, 16)

Schools were racialized spaces where ‘Blackness’ was a viable alternative to hegemonic identities represented by teachers. Black hip hop culture was a form of resistance to the establishment and adult power. It was especially powerful in school settings where young people negotiated their relationships with teachers and the administration. According to Black

Magic from Malvern social hierarchies based on race were inverted in school and informed how Black youth viewed others.

Black Magic: At school I wouldn't say the youth because nobody wanted to be racist toward Black kids, if anything Black kids were most discriminating against...

Anu: So why do you think Black kids were the discriminators, why?

Black Magic: Oppressed people become the oppressors. (Jamaica, 21)

In a context where Black style was the embodiment of a particular resistant identity, Black youth were at the top of the school social hierarchy in terms of peer relations. Deque captured this reality when he discussed his high school experience.

Deque: I think um, I did have other friends but I am saying like amongst, amongst those groups of people like that, that cool, quote on quote, we were mostly African or Caribbean um. Why I didn't have those friends, I guess, I guess, I guess there was a boundary type thing, where we were just not that open that time. I remember in grade 10, grade 11, I became more open. I started talking to more people that were outside my culture (Ghana, 21).

Deque was also perceived as “cool” because his brother had ‘street credibility’ due to his involvement in street crime.

Deque: It wasn't as big as these guys are the Bloods, these guys are the Crips, it was more like it was like these guys are cool and they are, their older siblings had history type of thing.

Here “history” referred to being recognized in the neighbourhood for criminal activities or being ‘tough’. These identities were deployed by the boys to perform a particular form of masculinity associated with their racial identities, one that emphasized ‘toughness’ and ‘street smarts.’ I witnessed this in Chester Le as well, where young Black men were perceived to have more street capital. Street subcultures emerged as a way to reclaim the local environment in response to youth who faced unemployment and racism. In this setting, youth with limited opportunities for

conventional social mobility created a street culture with its own ethno-racial hierarchies. For example, according to Rick and Donte, Chinese young people, for the most part, feared Jamaican youth in the neighbourhood. Only if they were really “comfortable”, meaning that they possessed their own form of street power i.e. being in a gang, would they be able to exert power.

Rick: The Chinese, you have to be really comfortable to talk. (Jamaica, 19)

Donte: Yea. You have to be real comfortable to talk shit. (Jamaica, 19)

In this context, “talk shit” meant to speak in a disrespectful manner.

In this neighbourhood space, Black youth who were marginalized in the 'mainstream' reaped social capital and had power over other youth. It should be noted the young girls did not have the same pressure to be ‘tough’ as the boys.

Chester Le had slightly different dynamics. Youth in Chester Le were more likely to have mixed friendship groups. There were several possible reasons: firstly, because Malvern had two large dominant groups it was easier to interact with one’s own ethno-racial group. The demographic was more mixed in Chester Le. There was not one dominant group, and therefore there was more of a need to mix. Secondly, youth in Chester Le lived in more confined quarters and shared a similar socio-economic status. These factors also informed their school experiences. Youth in Chester Le were not able to translate their street power to the school setting in the same way as the youth in Malvern. It was most likely because of the relatively small size of their neighbourhood and because they attended a high school outside their immediate neighbourhood. Malvern was a larger area and had two high schools. Youth in Chester Le also faced more neighbourhood discrimination at school because they attended high school outside their immediate neighbourhood. The boundaries between school and neighbourhood were more distinct than was the case in Malvern.

Some of the participants were cognizant of the inter-ethnic separations. Deque connected ethno-racial tensions to Canada's history of racial violence.

Deque: There is a history behind this, like, when um the settlers came into Canada and all these things happened with the Aboriginal people and that fight type of thing based off of trade and all these other minor issues it just kind of trickled down. It just trickling and trickling. (Ghana, 21)

Intercultural alliances

Inter-ethnic alliances can be a challenge in the context where there are hierarchies attached to racial difference and the desire for Whiteness.

Manuela: Even when we were talking about how we identify, and it is always, for me it is always White supremacist thing, seeing White as something to compare ourselves to. Um, so with that is comes the idea of um certain cultures being less than or greater than and these are all people who are people of colour or people you know what I mean. And not necessary because of us but because what we have been indoctrinated with, so I think that is a challenge, very very huge challenge. (Afro-Latin Caribbean, 25)

Deque attributed the difficulties of inter-ethnic alliances to people's busy work lives. According to Deque, this was another major reason why intercultural dialogue was not possible. People were just simply too tired to engage.

Deque: In elementary social studies they kind of brushed that on you. Oh you know we are just a collage of cultures and it is great you know you could learn so much from all these people. When you actually go out and you actually talk to someone from a different descent it is like you get shut off real quick, it is like, ok. But from their aspect they are probably like you know I am coming from where I work 24/7, like I don't have no life so I am not sharing that with you. (Ghana, 21)

Some participants discussed the structural reasons for conflicts. Deque, particularly insightful, stated that conflict was due to competition for scarce resources, which was part of the founding ideologies of Canada. These tensions between groups were a by-product of colonialism whereby

a whole system was built on competition for resources. Despite these tensions, youth and youth service providers recognized the need for ethnic organizing. According to Tommy, a youth service provider, both Black and Tamil youth in Malvern shared more similarities than they thought and this was grounds for solidarity.

Tommy: Now I see police officers pulling over Tamil guys, while Black guys are going by. A few years ago they are the new Black. I don't know what the next group is.

The example he provided was the type of moments that allowed for solidarity building. It also highlighted that racial positionings are not static, but rather continuously shift. Tommy, in his work, actively engaged in intercultural mixing. For example, one strategy he drew on was continuously learning about others, which he found made people more receptive.

Tommy: I have had teachers from other cultures, mentors, what I usually do in situations like that I make sure I know enough about their culture, even greet them in their language or, or some of their customs, that sort of thing. When they see that then they know I have taken the time to do something on them so now they might take the time to listen to what I am saying. When you cut down to the bones of everything it is still the same, ankle, chin, femur. If, if that is what it is. And in communication if you answer the person or address the person from the angle from where they are coming from then they can never ever say that you are coming from your perspective...

George, a youth service provider, spoke both about the need to invest in local 'cultural bridgers' who could mediate intercultural relationships as well his role as a cultural mediator.

George: [W]ithout those bridges, without like I had a great relationship with most of the Tamil youth let's say at Pearson because I had a resource, I had Nathan, Theeps that brought me to the community. I used to go to all the events, I know these guys [are] great but like without that there may have been that divide, that oh we don't need to talk to this person on my behalf I don't need to go to this because I already have a set group of guys so you know. Um, yea those bridges are very important.

It is important to note ethno-racial identities were not the only basis for friendships. Youth that engaged in meaningful inter-ethno-racial group friendships stated that ultimately common or

shared interests were what bind them. For example, for some youth musical interests or being on the same sports team was a major determining basis for friendship. Common interests could foster cross-cultural friendships.

Policing identity boundaries

Youth also policed categorical boundaries in minute ways. Inter/intra-identity disciplining started at a young age. Over the course of my project, I developed and conducted a tutorial program for Chester Le children. During one of my classes, I told one of the Black students that if he worked hard, he could become one of the smartest students in his class. Another Black student quickly exclaimed “no” and explained that the boy could not be among the top students in his class because only Asian students could be the “smartest in the class”. So, we see that boundary making begins at a very young age.

I witnessed an incident in Malvern that was indicative of the ways race permeated everyday interactions and how these identities were policed by youth. One day at the center in Malvern Jermaine, one of the Black youth was excitedly telling some of the other boys in the program that he wanted to join the “Asian” break dance crew. Shaquille, another Black youth, however, was quick to tell Jermaine that he would not be as good as the break dancers in the group. Shaquille explained that since break dancing required mathematical abilities, Asians, who were more capable of making mathematical calculations, would be superior to Jermaine. Prasanth, a Tamil youth, agreed with Shaquille’s argument. The example illustrated the minute ways youth policed each other’s identities and what they deemed possible based on racial thinking in everyday interactions. The irony lied in the fact that breakdancing emerged out of Black/Latin hip hop culture in urban America. I should also note it spoke to larger issues of appropriation of Black culture whereby other ‘model minority’ youth have the privilege of

identifying with Black youth culture without experiencing the consequences of a shared racial politics (Maira 1998).

My findings showed that youth spent most of their time with groups similar to themselves. Those who cut across these imaginary barriers were viewed as different. According to Tasha, even the school staff thought she was strange for having friendships with different ethno-racial and interest-oriented groups.

Tasha: Like at school, even the hall monitors would look at me like I was crazy. They would be like honestly you are the only one in the school that can hang in any cliques and hang. I have hung out with the Tamils, Blacks, the sports people, even though I don't do sports, you will never find me in the gym, the nerds, everyone. (Middle Eastern, 18)

Youth workers recognized that youth saw those who had inter-ethnic friendships as different and not belonging anywhere.

Michelle: Because I think um folks can be real like this is, this is my people, this is your people, you don't mix. Especially, working with young people, you see young people who just have that, I call it the United Nations of friends right and you see how the folks don't have that how they look at them and how they treat them, right. Um, and that is too bad because you should have whoever you want as your friend. You should be learning, and seeing, and understanding and you should have arguments about the differences and the similarities, that is just amazing. Right, um and I don't think I see that from adults and I don't think. And you see, you see how that is passed down through younger generations.

Intercultural relations and parental socialization

One of the main ways cultural continuity was formed was through intergenerational transmission (Dimitrova, Ferrer-Wreder, and Trost 2015). Some parents started monitoring young people's friendships more as they entered high school. Wendy and Sarah spoke about their experiences as Tamil females. The process also had a gendered dimension.

Wendy: I think at this point their parents are like don't talk to other people, especially other cultures, stay with people I know, that I can recognize, that I can trust. And especially in high school [youth] tries to go against what they do. So I think parents feel more comfortable when people are like their own culture. (Tamil, 23)

Sarah: Especially we are South Asians, we have totally different values passed on by our parents. So I feel sometimes when you go into other, like when you have other diverse ethnic groups you might learn values that you can't really, you want to relate to but you can't and that is when things start stirring the pot and things at home gets very difficult to handle. I feel our parents don't know too much of the Western, they didn't grow up here like as we did...I feel when we get to know other people and their values, and how they are, how they live their lives, it, something just might conflict will conflict with ours, I feel like, some people can decide to live according to live their values. Some people like to test our home values and I think that is where people, that is where we come into different conflicts within the house. (Tamil 17)

Parents attempted to pre-empt these value conflicts by policing young people's peer groups.

Tommy, a youth service provider, had great insights on parental influence on inter-ethnic relationships.

Tommy: Here is one of the funny dynamic. We have the African African- Caribbean American Canadian community. And you have the South Asian community. They are all fine in grade 7 and 8. And then by grade 9 and 10...it is like night and day.

Anu: Why do you think that is?

Tommy: It is they are culturally finding themselves. I think the stigma attached to either side, nobody wants to be associated with it, and it's not worth the friendship...you are getting culture at home whether your parents say it's a cultural lesson or not...I know when I came to Canada in '78 'Paki' was a term around in '78. I know that language is not coming from that child, that is coming from somebody older...so you know that teaching is coming from somebody else. It is not the child alone, that is just rote learning... Well you know what the South Asian culture, the Brown culture you [can] call it, there is certain restriction and values of who you are marrying. Now if I know I can't marry you then at the time I am pursuing you [I] won't be on [your] list even though I like you. Now if your brother and I were cool and he knows I like you but the values saying that you can't, then your brother is not going to be cool [with me]. You understand. So now I am not as a good as a friend as I thought I was...I see it in parents' eyes when they come to drop of their children and their children say hi to me and you can see 'who is that' because their daughter is attractive, or their son may be misguided.

Because there is tons of adults who are around that misguide younger folks anyway. And for good reasons, and for good reasons, their parents want to know who I am. Except their reaction is not as neutral if I was from the same culture... To be truthful I heard some parents say don't hang out with those guys and then you have the African American [Canadian] community say I need to be I am tough and let people know what it is, so all the association, so in order to associate power now I need to do rough part.

According to Tommy, cultural enclosures were pronounced for South Asians in his neighbourhood. It was predominately due to high pressures for marrying within their “own cultures.” Youth’s inter-ethnic friendships became more complicated as sexual attraction developed. South Asian parents told their children not to associate with Black youth who were entangled in a web of power relations and marginalization. Many of the Black youth were embedded in subcultures whereby power was garnered through being perceived as ‘tough’ by other young people in the neighbourhood; such cultural dynamics made South Asian parents wary of inter-ethnic friendships. There was a gendered element to the way in which parents monitored and maintained intercultural boundaries. Female sexualities were regulated more, presumably because they were seen as the cultural bearers of their communities. The boys did not face the same strict regulation regarding their sexualities.

Intercultural economic comparisons

Intercultural relations were informed by economic comparisons. Apart from sexual and gendered dimensions of intercultural mixing, participants also recognized that groups differed even if slightly, in terms of economic success. It fostered some resentment. By sharing their neighbourhoods with other ethno-racial groups, youth saw that some groups fared better. Participants in the study perceived groups to be differentially favoured. It was most pronounced in terms of which groups received public or corporate funds.

MP: Certain cultures are accepted more than others due to classism right. It's it's just that, you see that a little more prevalent.

Randy: Like the Chinese and Indian community they have huge support. I am not saying from the government, I am saying from corporations. It would be nice to see more cultures supported, we have a Chinese cultural center, Jewish centers, I don't really see Ghanaian centers, specific to Ghanaian or even African one. (Ghana, 21)

According to Randy, corporations gave more support to the Chinese and Indian community because they were perceived to have more economic capital which was beneficial to corporations. The participants recognized that not all groups were treated the same. Their cultures were not valued the same, nor had all groups made inroads into the mainstream at the same rate. These comparisons were relative. For example, while Randy compared the African community to the Chinese and Indian; Sarah compared Tamils to what she perceived as a more established Chinese community. She also recognized other communities had it “worse”.

Sarah: I think some cultures have it bad, probably had it worse than Tamils did. Like, but [pause] I just feel like, we are there but we are not there in terms of expressing who we are as people, as cultures. I don't think we are there yet. I know Chinese New Year's is a big deal, I feel like we are getting there, progressively. Like even right now, I think in Quebec they are making it a big deal for kids to play with turbans. Like I said they have it a bit worse for the hijab and the turban and all that stuff. For us it is not as bad as that. (Tami, 23)

Hadja stated that it saddened both her and her father when they compared their Somali community with what they perceived as the more successful Tamil community. For Hadja, the Tamil community was economically and professionally more successful. For her, it was particularly perplexing because both communities had arrived in Canada at the same time and under similar circumstances as refugees.

Hadja: I think we are different [compared to Tamils] in terms of, we haven't built a certain establishment we haven't been successful, it has actually been deteriorating to be honest in Toronto, and it has been sad. (Somalia, 29)

These everyday comparisons structured youth's lives and what they deemed possible. It was especially true in spaces where different groups were exposed to each other in their everyday lives. For example, Hadja was constantly reminded of this differentiation every time she went to her local Tamil grocery store or walked by Tamil take-out stores and clothing shops found in her neighbourhood. She lamented that there were not many Somali stores. Similarly, Alias stated she did not know of a "rich" Somali person, but knew of many "rich" people in other ethno-racial communities in her neighbourhood. Youth's negotiation of everyday difference was rooted in space.

Group relations varied in different spaces depending on local dynamics. Earlier I illustrated how Tamils and Blacks viewed each other in a space where encountering those different from them was unavoidable. It was in these spaces of inter-cultural mixing where it was possible to evaluate the relational aspects of difference. For example, Hadja evaluated Somalis in relation to Tamils because of the composition of her neighbourhood. The experiences of inter-ethnic relations in particular neighbourhood spaces led to the next main theme that I discuss, difference as a spatialized lived reality.

"When you Go to a White Area, I Feel Like I Don't Belong There": Space, Difference, and Belonging

Many of the participants recognized that despite Canada's claim as being a multicultural nation it was only major metropolitan centers like Toronto that were multicultural. Outside of these spaces Canada remained for the most part White.

Arthur, a youth in Malvern, had volunteered in different areas of the country as part of his religious upbringing. As part of his church services he was exposed to many realities of life outside Toronto. He very quickly learned, outside big cities Canada remained White.

Arthur: [I] will say Toronto culture, which is very eclectic, it is very multicultural, um, it is very celebratory um... It is very, to expand that to Canadian culture, what I like about that as a whole is Canadian culture is more, more, I guess, speaking from my own perspective, although I haven't [been] to the Maritimes, or what have you, so, what I garner from people who have, said it is one, very White. North Bay, I have been to North Bay, it is very White... (Jamaica, 22)

Alias conveyed a similar impression.

Alias: I think what being a Torontonians means you know there is this whole idea that Toronto is so multicultural and yea sure Toronto is multicultural but step outside of Toronto, just for a second and it is not so multicultural anymore. (Somalia, 22)

Participants also spoke of White spaces in Toronto. For some of the youth, spatial mobility was heavily restricted primarily due to their ethnicity/race. Some youth discussed experiences of unease when they ventured to non-diverse or “White areas.”

Monroe: When you go to a White area, I feel like I don't belong there. (Jamaica, 16)

The sense of unease was one of the reasons youth enjoyed living in ethnic enclaves. There was a deep sense of security living with others who were similar. Hadja spoke about her positive experiences in her early years growing up in Dixon in the west end (a predominately Somali area). There she felt a sense of protection and homeliness that accompanied living in ethnic enclaves. However, when she moved to the more ethnically mixed Chester Le, she felt more vulnerable to discrimination.

Hadja: One is home, so everything seems comfortable over there. Over here we were wholly, we were made fun of what you wore, what you ate, what you smelled liked...My mom wears the garment, the Somalian garment and they used to say Paki and say all these words and then they used to say, we were bullied when we moved here you know what I am saying. It was different. So it was a, you go from similar to people around you, to not similar of the people around you, the stigma attached to that, yea. (Somalia, 29)

Similarly, Tina who was of Latin American descent felt somewhat misplaced when she moved to Malvern. It wasn't a complete culture shock because she had been raised around Caribbean

Latinos in her old neighbourhood. Because of those experiences, she was accustomed to people from the Caribbean. However, in Malvern she missed the mentorship she used to receive from elders of Latin American background in her old neighbourhood.

Tina: I mean when I got here it was a little bit sad to me because you don't have a lot of people to identify yourself, so how the youth around here have someone older to go to, to talk to about their history and stuff. (Latin America, 20)

Youth associated certain spaces with certain ethno-racial groups. Spaces acted as bases for both inclusion and exclusion. They recognized different spaces constituted different identities. They might have been different if they had grown up in other parts of Canada. For example, for Manuela, Halifax was a place of inclusion for people of African descent. Halifax had a strong African-Canadian identity. She felt that Halifax would have allowed her to understand her African identity better than other spaces in Canada, including Toronto.

Manuela: Uh, I think if I had grown up in Halifax I would have had a better understanding, a better understanding of Africanness, at a much earlier age. Just from the Nova Scotians that I know there but I also know that I wouldn't have been exposed to as many cultures as I have had living in Toronto because over there it is not as, it is not as quote on quote as multicultural as it is here. Uh, wow, it really, I would have to compare it with different places that I have lived or been to, um, there are some places where I feel like, of course my understanding of things would have been different. (Afro-Latin Caribbean, 25)

For Manuela, spaces could be places of inclusion, but they could also be used to draw exclusionary boundaries. For example, when I told some of the Tamil youth I was working at Malvern Community Center many questioned why I worked in what they deemed a 'Black space.' One of the Tamil youth urged that I stay and work at their program because this was a Tamil space and therefore more suited for me.

Gobi: [N]o one really goes to Malvern Community Center, no one knows about [it] except Black guys. (Tamil, 16)

Abalash: Because it is a bunch of Black kids. They didn't really promote it, and it is not. There is nothing that interests us. There are different things like, rapping, dancing stuff like that, that is cool and stuff but like Black people already took over, so you know it is their turf, like [another community center] is our turf and that is their turf. (Tamil, 17)

The example showed the participants associated certain spaces with certain ethno-racial groups. Youth's everyday negotiations of difference in their local spaces informed their sense of belonging, which led to the final theme.

"We See it in the White Faces that Dominate the Real Centers of Power": Everyday Difference and a Sense of Belonging to the Polity.

Both youth service providers and youth participants shared similar views on understandings of belonging when I asked them what it meant to be Canadian. Both youth participants and service providers had a racialized understanding of it meant to be Canadian.

When I asked Isabella what it meant to be Canadian she stated:

Isabella: Honestly the first thing that comes to mind is White people. That is the first thing. (Tamil,23)

Hadja similarly stated:

Hadja: Because I wasn't born here and because I didn't feel enough Canadian to say I am Canadian. I feel like Canadians don't, like when you are a different culture then, like if you are not White you can't, I just feel like you shouldn't say you are Canadian. (Somalia, 29)

Mike, a service provider, discussed feelings of Canadianness and its implications for the relationship with the larger polity.

Mike: So historically, I think, um, I think kids don't identify, and citizenship because there is still an exclusion of identity for people that are not White. So it is very hard for you to conceive of you being a citizen, when just because of your physical appearance people make judgment.

Participants stated that Whites were favoured for positions of power and employment. The continued criticism of Canada's promise of equality was a persistent theme in their narratives.

Tina echoed these sentiments:

Tina: Yea they do express multiculturalism but I mean I guess Canada needs to look at, although it was Natives that founded it first, I feel like a lot of White people are favoured more than the majority peoples. That is what they [anti-racist activists] calling it now, so I feel that is definitely an issue. We are able to express ourselves, but when it comes to professional settings, we are probably not the first pick. (Latin American, 20)

Channel, a second generation Indian Trinidadian youth had recently moved to a predominately White neighbourhood in South Scarborough. She discussed the subtle nature of racism she experienced in her new neighbourhood:

Channel: I never really, I never had a racist time there [her new neighbourhood]. Oh, like something directly racist, but then there are sub tones, indirectly as well, very subtle, that is very common in Canada, that I have experienced as well. It is not something you can put your figure on, it is something you feel in a sense. Like a lot of the times I went to different work spaces you know, I would realize that the White kind of privilege kind of thing, oh I am better than you, or I know more than you type of thing and it is just like, it is so hard to explain that you know. (Trinidad and Tobago, 23)

Very few participants stated that they faced overt racial slurs, although it did happen. Rick and Donte discussed some of the more overt incidences of racism they experienced as perpetuated by White people.

Rick: Like White people came to my country stole my shit and still be acting wack. (Jamaica, 19)

Donte: You know what is so funny. This White guy looked at me and said go back to your country. Like muthafucker you brought me here, now you want me to go back. What the fuck. (Jamaica, 19)

Donte expressed confusion when White people told him to 'go back where he came from' since it was White people that brought his ancestors from Africa to the Americas. He did not

understand why they brought his ancestors here against their will and then expected him to ‘go back where he came from’. I asked Rick to specify when he faced racism, and he stated “every day.” For Rick and many other participants, racism was not necessarily direct in nature but rather experienced in the subtle looks they received that were not as easily identifiable.

MP: In high school, right after I got my license. I would say maybe like 5-6 times a week I would get stopped by the police saying whose car is this. I literally had to drive around with a bill of sale. They didn’t believe it was my car.

Both youth and youth service providers acknowledged these subtle experiences were symptomatic of larger institutional racism. Priya and Isabella stated that certain cultures that were associated with Whiteness were valued over others. It was most evident in the immigration and criminal justice system. For example, in Priya’s and Isabella’s view, those from Europe who came for school or work were more readily admitted into the country compared to refugees.

There was recognition of class differences.

Priya: You can be coming from a different country from Europe, [for] the education system. Then you have people fleeing war, people coming from Sri Lanka, they just want normal, basic shelter and stuff like that...some people are sent way, terminated and sent back to their country because of whatever situation it may be. It is sad to say, some people are sent away based on such curricular [sic] factors while some people are able to stay because they get to go to school, or go to work, whereas people that are fleeing from their country because they can’t stay in their country because they are going through so many issues they can’t because it might be a breach, a security issue. Tamil, 24)

Isabella: So say there is a Tamil person gets committed for some kind of thing they do, fraud, or some kind of crime related.

Priya: They can be deported.

Isabella: Right automatically they will look for things they can be deported. But what if it, I was a Caucasian person that was born and raised here and this is where their whole ancestry from, where are they going to be deported. They can commit the same crime but where are they going to be deported. That is not fair. (Tamil, 23)

Youth service providers recognized White privilege and its larger political implications.

Nish: And also we see it in the White faces that dominate the real centers of power in political parties and government. Often times we equate seeing newscasters who are really news readers as opposed to the opinion makers and the pundits as being representative of having a non-racist environment...

Participants acknowledged institutional racism was pervasive. They discussed their experiences of racism in their schools. Priya believed she received lower marks compared to her classmates due to her ethnicity. It was despite the fact that she helped her classmates learn the subject material.

Priya: There was times, quite a few times like for both males and females where they would be more racist or marks would be different and like. For example, let's say I am in a class with her and I am, I helped her, I tutored her, she had no idea what the material was but when we gave the project in I would get such a lower mark, she would get a higher mark based on her race and ongoing stereotype the teacher had. A lot of things were identified, it is like okay it is not based on my school work, it is based on what they are judging. It is sort of like a stereotype, it is not something that you can address, it is not something you can prove, it is something you have to work around, there is only so much you can do. You can complain but obviously teachers have teachers' back, right. (Tamil, 24)

Priya expressed a sense of helplessness in the face of racist encounters. Big recalled an incident during a classroom conflict, where a teacher called him a member of the Taliban in reference to his Arab background. These experiences of both institutional and everyday racism affected youth's sense of belonging.

The participants realized that all citizens were not equal, especially those that lived in marginalized spaces of the city. They acknowledged that outside their neighbourhoods racialized people were not treated the same.

Tina: I mean in an area like this I guess it is most apparent. I mean if you were a Caucasian they would probably say yes, but um just being able to seeing the way, the way people around here are treated by the police. Even store owners, not particularly in this area, but in other places than I would say a lot of people are not, they are not treated equal and people are helped by more of what they are look like then by what the law is... (Latin America, 20)

The participants recognized that despite the fact that officially everyone was equal, people continued to get treated differently according to their identity markers. Because of this, youth felt safer in their neighbourhoods. In the above case, Tina gave the example of treatment by shop owners. She mentioned that in other areas shop owners treated racialized youth unfavourably compared to shop owners in Malvern. It only reconfirmed to the participants that they did not belong in certain places.

Angela shared her experiences of inequality in Canada. When I asked her if she thought all citizens were equal she stated:

Angela: No, cause the country, White people are actually the minority in Canada but they are the majority in parliament or any positions of power um. So, I don't think that there is equality, I don't think it is equal, but I mean. I think it is. [Pause] I think it is a higher hill to climb for us because on the one hand, um, in like government there is, the way people who have gone there they have been great and fought it and they had the background of generations of, kind of history building to kind of build them to be where they are. So they already have a head start over us and then, then, so like in a way they earned it right. On the other hand who looks like us that are running for parliament, even me the first thing I think of it is sad, when someone is running for office [who is a racialized minority], I like, I am more skeptical. And I am like how are you qualified, what do you know and then once I get over the racism, that just happened in my brain, I think like [pause] what is the odds of you really getting in, even if you are the right person you know. You are coloured. You know. You are Brown or Asian or Black so what are the odds really and then yea and then even once you get to that seat like that position what is the odd of you actually climbing up getting anywhere else. (Ethiopia, 24)

Angela unintentionally internalized racism. She questioned racialized minorities' capabilities more than their White counterparts. The example she provided illustrated that even when

racialized minorities were elected; she questioned whether they were capable, whether they would be able to reach higher office, or would they have real power to make changes.

Discussion

Bourdieu's concepts of symbolic violence and habitus can show how power is constructed and challenged in human interaction (Olsen 1995). Scholars have drawn on concepts of symbolic power and habitus to examine inter-cultural relations in multicultural settings. For example, Philippe Bourgois and Jeff Schonberg (2007) used the concept of 'ethnicized habitus' to examine divisions among heroin users based on skin colour and how they were imposed through everyday interactions. For example, the way the drug was used (injection methods) and how drug users generated income differed along ethnic lines in relation to wider socio-economic realities. By looking at the "generative forces" of ethnicized habitus, it is possible to see how macro-power relations construct ways of being that "become inscribed on bodies and routinized in behaviours" (pg. 7).

So far in this dissertation, I showed how the configuration of spatial location, inclusion and exclusion, family socialization (including parents' desire to retain group boundaries in fear of losing their culture in a diverse society) informed young people's ways of being. Youth's strong ties to their ethno-racial identity and their recognition of the marginalization of their spatial location and identities by dominant discourses oriented their disposition to one that viewed themselves as the 'other.' The lack of access to resources, racism, poverty, exposure to crime and gang activity all compounded to inform the way they saw the world, how they interacted with others, and subsequently how they negotiated belonging. Youth engaged in everyday negotiations required for living in diverse neighbourhoods. It informed their understanding of a more permeable idea of belonging founded in the unthreatening everydayness

of diversity and through ethno-racial distancing. We saw how youth reproduced dominant discourses that informed their dispositions and values. For example, many admitted that Canadianness was still associated with Whiteness. Whiteness was the norm against which everyone was assessed, even if it was done subconsciously.

The participants also conveyed that their neighbourhoods created a unique way of being which made them comfortable to live and interact with different groups. Some spoke of their abilities to subconsciously navigate between groups. Despite a general sense of ‘getting along’ with others, participants, for the most, part maintained their closest peer relations with those of the same ethno-racial background. Because there were larger homogenous pockets in Malvern, there were more intra-ethno-racial friendships. Participants from each group had internalized many stereotypes about others. Despite this, they all had internalized the idea that getting along was good and a central component of Canadian identity.

My findings support the literature that illustrates that second generation ethno-racial youth experience inclusion and exclusion in complex ways. Byers and Tastsoglou (2008)’s study of second generation Greek and Jewish youth in Halifax demonstrated that feelings of ‘otherness’ were heightened by experiences of difference and racism. My findings also confirm the literature that demonstrates ‘youthhood’ is an important time of racial identity making (Rajiva 2006). I found that youth are in fact at the forefront of negotiating everyday difference (Harris 2013). My research differs by focusing on how differences are constructed, interrogated, and policed *between* ‘others’ in spaces where there is significant diversity, and its implications for the experiences of belonging.

Thomas (2011) writing in the American context found that youth drew on national discourses of multiculturalism that preached tolerance. However, at the local level, when asked

what they thought about multiculturalism they simply said everyone ‘gets along’ for the most part. However, she found that ethnographic observation illustrated this was not always the case. A ‘separate togetherness’ often meant solidarity across different groups was not found (Driskell, Fox, and Kudva 2008). For Thomas (2011), the ‘get along’ discourse precluded looking at racism and hegemonic Whiteness. It was evident in the way youth reproduced negative discourses cemented in ideas perpetuated by White ideals. To only see resistance and deny internalized discourses overlooks concerns about the “workings of power” (Abu-Lughod 1990, pg. 42). The youth spoke about everyone ‘getting along’, which corresponded with the celebration of diversity model. However, their everyday practices as informed by neighbourhood dynamics indicated, for the most part, they were still most intimately connected with those of similar ethno-racial identities. To limit understandings of difference to just celebratory programs indicates the failure to provide critical education that contextualizes racism and economic marginalization.

The chapter demonstrated the importance of ethno-racial identities for youth in these neighbourhoods. For these youth ethno-racial identities were not simply essentialized characteristics, representational framings of their social locations, or strategic concepts they drew on at will, but rather these identities were constitutive of their experiences. The chapter showed that their ethno-racial identities are continuously negotiated and revealed they are a "process of becoming rather than being" (Hall 1996, pg. 4). Youth’s processes of identification and racialization are never finished or determined but always “‘in process’” (Hall 1996 pg.2). Racialization, therefore, is reproduced at the everyday level hence, where the neighbourhood figured as an important, although often understudied aspect of everyday racialization.

Race also became part of the youth's interpretive repertoires which permeated their interaction. Race structured their lives and was spatially organized. Youth drew on race to navigate relationships with others. At times youth drew strategically on race to garner benefits. It was also a marker of difference that made them feel marginalized, viewed as the 'other', or created a sense of not belonging. The more authentic you were to the space and the identities that existed there, the more power you possessed. Normative identities for youth were often marked along the lines of ethno-racial identities. It informed how they related to each other. For some, distancing was the only way to relate to their own normative identity. For example, for Asian youth in the study, it was cool to be 'nerdy.' It distanced themselves from the 'street tough' Black youth stereotype which reaffirmed both their position in the racial hierarchy and connection to their fellow ethno-racial peers. For the Tamil youth, focusing on academic success and cultural activities was one way they distanced themselves. We also saw the multiple ways Black youth distanced themselves from other groups, whether it was by viewing them as less cool, nerdy, or physically weak. These stereotypes stemmed from interactions situated in particular spaces.

The discourses youth drew on to both interact and distance themselves was not simply a case of picking and choosing discourses, but rather were perpetuated through their everyday practices (Thomas 2011). There are gaps in the literature on inter-cultural mixing as they happen in local neighbourhoods. The emerging literature that speaks to these realities is mostly about Black and Latino relations in America (Capetillo-Ponce 2010; Morales 2012). Inter-cultural research usually concerns Whites versus 'other' as if 'other' is a homogenous group (Valentine 2008). Less is known about the intergroup dynamics of youth. In a stratified racial system youth are situated in various ways which inform their relations. To only focus on White-other

relationships does not account for the intricate ways racialized systems work and locate different groups (Watkins, Larson, Sullivan 2007). It is important to examine inter-ethnic conflict and social distancing based on race/ethnicity because it has implications for a sense of belonging. According to Capetillo-Ponce (2010) due to misconceptions about each other, racialized communities are not able to build solidarity which prevents their growth within White power structures. Inter-ethnic tensions need to be understood within wider structures determined by White hegemony, whereby others are often in conflict for scarce resources available to them (Capetillo-Ponce 2010). Colonial, stigmatized, and stereotypical views are transferred to groups when judging other groups.

I argued that in a racialized context, ethno-racial groups often other ‘others’ as they struggle to find their place within the wider racialized nation-building project. Similarly, de Finney (2010) in her study found that racialized girls “take up hegemonic white (vertical) and/or interethnic (lateral) racial ideologies within and across their communities” (pg. 474). These ideologies heighten racism and promote social exclusion. However, there are moments of solidarity in these shared spaces that needs cultivation. It is in the everyday, social power is exercised and maintained, and simultaneously it is in these experiences where new forms of resistance can take place (Latham 2002).

Inter-ethnic solidarity is important. If conflict is the norm as opposed to co-operation, coalitions are more difficult to form (Besco 2015). According to de Finney (2010) policies that focus on superficial aspects of integration overlook the structural inequities that promote youth’s social exclusion. They also affect relationships between groups and the potential for “multicultural engagement and civic solidarity” (de Finney 2010, pg. 484).

In everyday interaction, structural racism or economic inequalities are understood as essentialized characteristics of groups (Bourgois and Schonberg 2007). For example, in my study I found that non-Black youth rarely interrogated the structural reasons that disproportionately affected Black youth's employment opportunities and education. Nor did non-Tamil youth question why it was problematic to call Tamil youth 'terrorists.'

Gender informed how youth navigated differences and inter-ethnic relations. Often women's sexualities became sites for the assertion, protection, and discipling of ethno-racial identities. Young women's bodies became the site for intra-ethnic solidarity. Young men's bodies and their dating preferences were not monitored in the same manner as their female counterparts.

These relations unfold within the context of a particular class as reflected by the neighbourhood in which the youth are situated. Young people's negotiations of difference and belonging are informed by the differential way in which they are economically situated within the city. They have varied ideas about the future, economic success, and each other. The character of the neighbourhood and the economic struggles embedded in these spaces play a constitutive role in how the participants see themselves.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I examined how participants interrogated difference and belonging in their neighbourhoods. Access to opportunities, family socialization, ethno-racial identities, marginalization by hegemonic discourses, available resources and activities, poverty, exposure to crime all cultivated a particular form of habitus for youth. In the following chapter, I argue that youth's social locations in lower socio-economic neighbourhoods inform their emotional

attachments and identities to these social locations and in particular neighbourhood spaces. I examine how these neighbourhood spaces themselves cultivate particular habitus which informs their identities and sense of belonging to their neighbourhoods.

“They call it ADD but I do not agree, there is nothing wrong with me. And really to be honest fuck your policies and your bureaucracies. When I was back in school instead of mending my psychology they had labeled me an anomaly. But whatever I was probably skipping my curricular” (Rap, Malvern youth).

CHAPTER 7: NEIGHBOURHOOD BELONGING: NEGOTIATING THE POLITICS OF BELONGING IN RACIALIZED SPACES

While sitting with Michelle and Black Magic in Malvern one day, I spotted Lexus in the courtyard. Lexus was with her friends and a baby in a stroller. Presumably, it was her sibling or the child of one of her friends. Her friends were playing with the baby while she smoked a cigarette. I quickly exclaimed “is she really gonna smoke in front of the baby?” As a university educated researcher, I knew the dangers of second-hand smoking. Therefore, my disposition oriented me to quick negative judgment when I saw Lexus smoke so casually in front of the baby. To my question, both Black Magic and Michelle replied: “yup that is Malvern behaviour for you.” The exchange elucidated that there was a sense that these neighbourhoods as social fields structure a particular way of being or behaviour. The use of ‘neighbourhood’ identity as an explanation of behaviours was a common occurrence in both neighbourhoods. The centrality of neighbourhood identity and the social and emotional attachments to these spaces informed a sense of belonging for the participants and were demonstrated virtually every day. For example, in the slam poetry class youth often shared poems about life in Malvern. For instance, one of their tasks was to write an acrostic poem for Malvern. Words like “multiculturalism” and “money” were used by many of the youth, illustrating the centrality of both in their lives.

For Yuval-Davis (2006) belonging encompasses three analytical levels, social locations, identifications and emotional attachments, and ethical and political value systems. In this chapter, I examine identifications and emotional attachments, linked to youth’s social locations. Social locations are belongings to social groups who are positioned in society by power relations

and social hierarchies, for example, gender, race, and class. Belonging is an expression of emotional attachments and identities. Identity becomes an expression of investments by people which dictate their sense of belonging. I argue that youth's social locations in lower socio-economic neighbourhoods inform their emotional attachments and identities to these social locations and in particular these neighbourhood spaces. I argue in this chapter that youth are not just articulating identity - but a sense of belonging in relation to exclusion and inclusion in their neighbourhoods. Despite marginalization as demonstrated in the media analysis youth cultivate attachment to their stigmatized neighbourhood spaces. As demonstrated earlier, Canadian literature often omits the importance of space when interrogating difference. In the previous chapter, we saw how ethno-racial difference is spatialized; unfolding in local neighbourhood contexts. Building on previous findings, this chapter centers the importance of neighbourhoods for racialized youth's sense of belonging. I argue that the micro-territories of young people's neighbourhoods cultivate a particular habitus which informs their sense of identity and belonging.

I illustrate that emotional attachment is cultivated through neighbourhood identities. The importance of emotional attachments to neighbourhood identities for experiences of belonging was reflected in daily conversations, social interactions I observed, and in interviews and focus groups. I begin the chapter by examining how youth recognize, internalize, and reproduce negative dominant discursive constructions of their neighbourhoods. I focus in particular on four factors that 'other' these neighbourhoods and mark them as different. These factors marginalize these neighbourhoods and simultaneously informs youth's identities and sense of belonging, 1) the 'priority neighbourhood' label, 2) stigmatization of Toronto Community Housing Corporation residents, 3) indifference by local politicians, and 4) the inner suburb and core

divide. I then illustrate that despite these impositions and marginalization youth cultivate strong neighbourhood attachment and identities which inform their sense of belonging.

Many people both inside and outside (reporters, teachers, service providers, investors, and government officials) these neighbourhoods reproduce and internalize negative discursive constructions while others resist. These discursive constructions have material implications. However, despite negative perceptions, I illustrate youth's sense of pride, feelings of comfort, familiarity, safety, and acceptance in their neighbourhoods reinforce their sense of belonging.

Recognizing, Internalizing, and Reproducing Negative Dominant Discourses

Like many residents of Chester Le and Malvern, Ann was aware of the stereotypes associated with her neighbourhood. Like other residents, she recognized that despite the positive characteristics of Chester Le, media continued to highlight and exaggerate negative aspects. She often contested the negative framings of her neighbourhood. However, she would also reproduce these negative frames. Despite her defense of her neighbourhood, she had an ambiguous relationship with it. She often talked about moving out after she finds employment.

Ann: They think it is not a good neighbourhood because of its reputation. I have family or friends that don't want to come to the neighbourhood. They really don't. Some of them don't like some of the behaviours of my neighbours. And so they don't want to come so I have to go to them. They won't come unless they have to... Well they print this stuff and there is a lot of good things that happen here and you don't hear much about it, not even on the internet or so you find it. But it is a very good neighborhood. And but it is also true that what I find that people in the neighbourhood talk bad about the neighbourhood, so that is maybe frustrating so that is about. Like I am saying, I think people get too involved in wrong things and they don't try to build the positives.

These negative perceptions had material implications. For example, Hadja stated that teachers viewed students from Chester Le through these negative discursive frames which informed the unequal treatment they experienced at school.

Hadja: I remember going to school, my teacher in high school was like where do you live Hadja? And I then I am like I live in Chester Le, and then they used to be like, I used to teach one of the gangsters there. It is like what?! There is good people there, not everyone is a gangster... You are stigmatized. You are, you are judged by where you live to be honest and how you look like especially where I lived in Scarborough, especially there. Like when you see what people used to do, like especially the cops and stuff and you are like this is out of control, like bullying the kids, harassing the kids, it is just really sad. Like there are so many other problems that cops should be worried about instead of just kids in the basketball, kids playing in the basketball court. Like innocent 13 years old, 15 years old, cops will stop them and be like what do you guys have in your pockets and stuff like that. I saw a lot of racism there... (Somalia, 29)

Both service providers and youth recognized that popular representations of their neighbourhoods usually consisted of two dichotomized framings. Those living in these neighbourhoods were presented as either agents of violence and/or victims of violence and in need of community support.

MP: I think [pause] the media creates a synopsis of Malvern based on things that have been in the media. So, um a lot of attention in the media regarding Malvern on two fronts, those from a negative perspective or positive perspective. There isn't a medium or a happy medium in terms of a general approach on how the media news corporations look at Malvern. So it is either they are writing a story about violence or they are writing a story about community support.

Despite the positive elements of living in Malvern, the participants recognized youth often internalized negative perceptions.

Manuela: Malvern is a very exciting community to live in. Malvern is like this big pot of gumbo, jambalaya that tastes so good. Malvern like any other community has its ups and downs. Its pros and cons, its challenges and its beauties and joys. Uh, Malvern is just so vibrant you know. Like it is, I love, I love walking through Malvern in the summer time and just seeing and coming into connect with everybody around the globe and it is beautiful and I love Malvern for that, I really do. Uh, one of the things that pains me about Malvern is obviously the perception of Malvern, and the subsequent police presence in Malvern uh and even us Malvernites taking that on, or embodying that because maybe we feel we have to live the way we are perceived. (Afro-Latina Caribbean identified, 25)

Participants often engaged in a form of posturing to ensure their survival in these spaces. These spaces informed their habitus which shaped how they conducted themselves. There was also a sense of power that came from saying they are from these spaces.

Mike: I think one of the big challenges is that young people in this neighbourhood have to, even when they are good, when I say good I don't mean the kids are bad. When they are law-abiding, they are trying to strive for success they still have to walk the walk of the neighbourhood which means they have to still look like they are tough just to survive...I think some of them feel a sense of power saying they are from Malvern, you better not mess with me because I am from Malvern. And it is. In the absence of the positive reinforcement then you take things that are left right. (youth service provider)

Esquire: I think there is a lot of pride with being from Malvern. I think the focus with regards to what is being from Malvern is needs to change. I think there is a lot of acceptance of what the media has determined Malvern to be and there is too many, not all of us, there is too many of us that live in the Malvern community and accept it and say this is it. This is how you are going to see me, so this is what I am going to do at the end of the day. And I truly believe that we are much more than that. And, again just through talking to the youth that I have been proven right about that. We do want more. We do deserve more, it is up to us to recognize that and do more... (youth service provider)

Priya: [S]o if you are from Malvern you would be like I am from Malvern, this is sort of like, I felt it was more guys always presenting I am from Malvern, oh I am from this area so don't mess with me kind of thing...If you are from the Scarborough neighbourhood you know, if you grew up in Scarborough from when you were little you could tell who is from Malvern and who is not. Sometimes when they say they are from Malvern I just laugh cause I know who is from Malvern and who is not. Half of my friends are from Malvern, so I can tell. I spent half my time there, I have different programs there, so I go there and come back. So I know who lives there or not. When you are in high school you have so many friends or friends of friends. You can also tell from their physical appearance, the way they are, you can just tell. (Tamil identified, 24)

According to Priya, neighbourhood habitus informed how youth exist in space. She could not describe it but said she could “just tell” who was from Malvern from the way they acted and looked.

Service providers who worked across the city recognized different neighbourhoods in Toronto informed different outlooks on life.

Esquire: When you end up going along the, again Church Jarvis area, there is a certain culture you see there. If you walking past Lawrence Market than you would see when you

passing Malvern Mall. It is just a different outlook when you getting from that. It is just embracing that uniqueness that really tells a, that really tells an important story... I think a lot of Scarboroughians, I guess that is the word, and there is a uniqueness to being from Scarborough that you won't get from being anyone else. It is the same that you get from being from Jane and Finch. That you are a little bit harder, a little bit street smarter. I welcome that... So there is some pride that comes in that, you know what I mean. That you are not able to get anywhere else. I appreciate that you are able to see a lot more being from Scarborough that you would from being from other parts of the city. (youth service provider)

Living in these spaces created different ways of being. For example, one of the most valued attributes of living in these spaces for the participants was the emphasis on 'realness' or being authentic to their experiences. According to MP, youth that lived in poor social circumstances were not able to pretend to be happy. In their interactions with adults, they were reluctant to put on a false 'front stage' persona. Therefore, they were often perceived as deviant and in need of intervention. It limited their opportunities to have their voices heard. According to MP, youth in Malvern were not capable of portraying a false friendly disposition because of historical injustices and lies that conditioned their lives.

MP: Well, I believe youth voices don't get heard because how they present themselves. So, that is why I say to a certain degree. It depends on how the youth presents themselves, then their voice will be heard. Some people will have learned to, you get the people from Malvern, they understand that the youth in Malvern don't necessarily present themselves in a appropriate way right. So, you can look past that. But a lot of people can't look past the whole image, that whole presentation.

Anu: Is it clothes or?

MP: Um, I think it is the whole image. Yea, not just clothes, it is how you wear your clothes, it is how you come in, your attitude from coming in, so and so forth. You get a lot of people who get interpreted as having a bad attitude but it might just have a bad home life and they come out the house with not a happy face on. To get them to change that face into happy face its putting up a front that doesn't, is not real. And going back to the youth like to keep it real right, they are not going to put up a fake front in this situation, especially people from Malvern. They are not coming from a perspective of putting up a fake persona to trying to create results.

Anu: Why do you think youth don't do that? Why are they more wedded to this idea of being real?

MP: Um because that is what they know. If you look at things um that come down from the pipelines, heritage, you get from very long time ago people were trying to hide truths right so from the perspective that people were being, were[inaudible], hiding truth, not being upfront, through the generations you are going to get people revolting against that. (youth service provider)

The priority label

The priority label was intended to allocate more resources to lower socio-economic neighbourhoods. However, both youth and service providers recognized that it had many adverse effects. The stigma associated with the label was the most commonly cited negative implication of the designation. These neighbourhoods were deemed violent, undesirable, and often there was a homogenization of the residents as dependent and in need of saving. Despite the intended goals of the designation, the participants felt that the label limited the investments they received. The investments they received took a particular form. They consisted mostly of community social services as opposed to more diversified investments, for example, business ventures. The participants felt that certain investments, especially outside business ventures were dissuaded from investing in the neighbourhood because of the negative connotations associated with the label. Deque discussed the limitations of the label:

Deque: When you are still labeled a priority neighbourhood it is like okay these guys, we are only getting certain things just because of our label in general. We are only allowed to get certain things. It is putting us in a box or Malvern...It is like if Malvern is a priority neighbourhood than the majority of the youth in that neighbourhood are at-risk. At-risk can mean a whole bunch of things... Like, if I am, if you are at-risk right now it is like what is the City doing to help you right now. Personally, not in a huge collective, what are they doing to help you right now after labelling you at-risk, labelling you a priority. That is like, that is just like labelling bad food right. Cause no one is gonna want to touch it, no one wants to consume it, no one wants to share it, it is bad food, they want to throw it out. It is putting everything beside the trash and not calling it trash, calling it garbage. It is really sad that like especially in Malvern after, even just seeing growing up in Malvern and just witnessing the evolution of Malvern, of how a whole bunch of, who are still considered at-risk, if you put us as at-risk we are going to live us as at-risk, you are not giving us nothing. (Ghanaian identified, 21)

The designation further stigmatized these communities. According to Deque, the label marked people as “bad”. He compared the label to spoiled food that no one wanted to consume or rather wanted in the city. These negative connotations associated with being a priority neighbourhood informed young people’s views of their position in the city compared to those from other areas. It directed their habitus. For Deque, neighbourhood marginalization rendered youth few options other than engaging in problematic behaviour, “*if you put us as ‘at-risk’ we are going to live as ‘at-risk.’*” It is not only the ‘priority’ label itself that is problematic but also the socio-economic marginalization the label encapsulates and the lack of adequate investments to rectify this marginalization.

The participants recognized the racialized implications of the designation. When I asked what ‘priority neighbourhood’ meant to Manuela, she frankly stated:

Manuela: It means a way for the government to say other than without saying other than White. (Afro-Latina Caribbean identified, 25)

The participants in Malvern for the most part recognized the benefits and stigma associated with the ‘priority neighbourhood’ label. In Chester Le, I was exposed to another perspective on the designation. Some of the service providers echoed sentiments commonly found in dominant discourses, particularly the idea that the ‘priority’ label leads to dependency and entitlement. There were two potential reasons why the same sentiment was not voiced in Malvern. One, many of the service providers in Malvern lived or had previously lived in Malvern (not to say service providers here did not share these sentiments). No one that worked at The Hub lived in Chester Le. Secondly, since TCHC was home to those most economically marginalized it was more acceptable to view and openly express ideas of the residents as over-reliant, lazy, and entitled to ‘free benefits’. Helmer discussed the effects of the label, the habitus it informed, and the power struggles that ensued due to the designation.

Helmer: In terms of, in terms of negative perception I don't think, I don't think that the residents themselves feel that, actually I have had a conversation before where residents know they are priority neighbourhood and feel entitled because they are in a priority neighbourhood they should be treated differently in a positive way because of their situation. So, that to me that is interesting. But so I mean, as a result agencies feel that because residents feel they are entitled residents automatically, not automatically, residents have this ownership to programs and services because they are the priority population and that can become challenging. Because, when because when service providers feel that resident are entitled to, there can be mixed feelings of resident's expecting services or programs because they feel [inaudible] that can be tricky as well, it can be a power struggle.

It is not to say these issues did not exist before the label. Rather, the label acted as a discursive resource youth maneuvered to reap material benefits.

Mina, a youth service provider also described her frustration caused by the neighbourhood informed habitus. She felt that there was a sense of entitlement displayed by the youth. Simultaneously, she recognized that the youth asserted control and ownership over the center and the neighbourhood because they lacked power and socio-economic capital in many other aspects of their lives.

Mina: Uh, I think that they feel they have something to prove. I think they have some entitlement to the space that is very annoying. Also, because I don't know how much um ownership over they have other parts of their life so I think when they come here they feel this is the one thing, or part of something that they can own and it can be theirs and control. I think there is a lack of control in these kids' lives.

Stigmatization of Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC)

Sarah: Um, you can tell it is very, you know when you are walking into Toronto Housing Community... The places where I have been to Toronto Housing areas they look very broken down. Not, it is not broken down, it just doesn't look too appealing, let's put it that way... They are very much segregated. (Tamil identified, 23)

Participants who lived in TCHC had particular structuring experiences as a result of living in these spaces. Some service providers voiced their distaste for the contained TCHC model. These sites were seen as limiting the potentialities of the youth in these places. For example, Jenny discussed the social and in her opinion moral decay found in the neighbourhood. She cared

about the well-being of the youth in the community. However, she often reproduced hegemonic assumptions about the urban underclass. She felt that the contained model of public housing was a leading cause of social ills in the neighbourhood. However, she overlooked the fact that issues of criminality, violence, and gangs were not problems inherent to the people that lived in these neighbourhoods but rather a manifestation of what is done to these neighbourhoods (Kitossa 2012). She also failed to mention that the majority of the residents were hardworking and not involved in crime. Not all residents were criminals, gang members, or lacked ownership and pride over their neighbourhood.

Jenny: I think it is wrong to warehouse all the poor in one place cause they have nothing better to look forward too. Every household there in Chester Le they are all going through the same struggles and to warehouse them all there doesn't give them an opportunity. I think if they are intermingled into society where they see better role models in society, hardworking people, it will be better for them but to buy rows and rows of houses and put them all in one place is not a good, I don't think, in any of those housing complexes none of them have been successful because they have nothing better to look at. Everybody is having those same struggles, everybody is struggling to survive that is why they were put there and, and that is bad and all the kids then go to the same school where the values are fight and be better in warfare than in academics because that is more valuable on the street so. I find those areas kind of where they warehouse people not good, even apartment buildings I don't like that because if you don't have good neighbours and socially conscious people than the whole building gets drawn down by those elements that live in those buildings. That is what happens in their neighbourhoods, everybody stops caring. Everybody starts throwing garbage all over the place because nobody cares and they expect the government or the City or the the garbage cleaners to clean up everything which they should take pride in. Like in my neighbourhood, if someone takes the garbage on the wrong day, someone will tell them today is not garbage day so take your garbage back in. Because the rule before is you can only roll out the garbage 6 pm the day before. You can't just roll out your garbage whenever you want and spoil the neighbourhood. Everybody takes pride in taking care of their piece. When you are put here, and nobody loves the place, they don't even maintain the hedges, somebody else and does it for them so what pride do they have. So, it is wrong that kind of housing is wrong and if they continue to do that they are going to have ghettos and if you live with those values that is all you are going to get, you are never going to move over from that.

The view of TCHC residents as violent, criminals, lazy, morally defunct was found not only among service providers, outsiders, and popular media but also by the state. Toronto

Community Housing Corporation residents were heavily regulated by the state. Movement was constantly monitored. Surveillance cameras dotted the complex. The individuality and unique circumstances of the neighbourhoods were replaced with wide sweeping generalizations. For example, in the previous summer (2012) there was a high profile mass shooting at a barbecue at a TCHC complex in Scarborough. Consequently, neighbourhood barbecues were banned in TCHC complexes across Scarborough. These types of regulations shape youth's sense of community, ownership and belonging.

Mina: And there was a shooting that happened last summer during the barbecue, and so they were actually banned from barbecuing which I think is so ridiculous. I understand but it is, it is really like, it affects the kids. (youth service provider)

The barbecue ban was a passionately discussed topic in one of the focus groups. For the participants, the ban further reiterated and normalized the constant surveillance and regulation of youth in these marginalized spaces. Their mobility was dictated by the state. They grew accustomed to this reality. Many lived with this reality their entire lives. Donte shared stories of his earliest memories of these regulations. Donte as a child had accidentally started a fire in his former TCHC apartment complex. As a result, he was forced to move to his current TCHC home in Chester Le. There were many arbitrary rules enforced in these communities. There was a rule in Donte's old building that disallowed visitors of any kind except immediate family.

However, Donte openly resisted these rules.

Donte: Family is okay, but you couldn't bring friends over, like friends from other buildings. My dad and my cousin would just come any hour of the day, any hour, [I would] open the lobby door to them [inaudible]. (Jamaican identified, 21)

Regulation of residents' movements was enforced by police. Most participants in Chester Le stated that the biggest issue they faced in their community was poor relations with police, police harassment, racial profiling, and carding. In two separate focus groups, police harassment

dominated the discussion. The participants asserted that there were no avenues to voice their grievances about the police and enact real changes.

I should mention in the following focus group excerpt, Paula, a service provider, joined the conversation. It was the only focus group that was done in the presence of a youth service worker. I had assured all the participants that the focus groups would be conducted without a youth service provider present. However, in this case, the youth participants were more comfortable with her being part of the discussion. I received consent from the youth before I allowed Paula to join. Paula also mentioned that some of the participants could be particularly challenging. Based on her experiences she wanted to help me keep them “on track.” I was relieved she joined the discussion. She contributed unique insights. During this focus group, the participants discussed the racially informed basis of police interaction.

Anu: Um, ok, so what do you guys like about, so what are some challenges, what do you kind of dislike about your neighbourhood?

Aliya: Dogs.

Big: The cops.

Aliya: The cops.

Anu: What about the cops?

Big: The harassment

Anu: They harass you?

Big: They harass everyone

Anu: Do they harass girls and boys equally?

Big: Mostly boys

Anu: Have you guys ever felt harassed by the police? The girls?

Monroe: No.

Anu: What do they do to you and say?

Monroe: They do something back.

Big: They provoke you.

Anu: Have you guys ever thought to complain, or would you even?

Big: Do you think they will accept our complaints?

Anu: So you feel there is no place to go?

Victoria: We tried but nobody listens....

Anu: So what do you guys think the cops should do differently in your neighbourhood?

Paula: What do you think they should do differently? That is a good question.

Big: What do you mean?

Paula: The cops. What should they do differently?

Big: Who the cops?

Anu: Yea.

Big: They need to change themselves.

Aliya: I think they just come around mostly to see that people are okay. So yea.

Paula: And you are okay with that?

Aliya: Yea

Paula: What about you Monroe?

Monroe: They should leave us alone. They should leave us alone.

Paula: Not come around?

Aliya: They just come around to see if we are okay.

Monroe: Stop harassing kids.

Paula: Okay, why don't they come to my neighbourhood?

Big: Because our neighbourhood is hot.

Monroe: Because Chester Le has a bad reputation. That is what people think...

Anu: If you are a cop what would you guys do differently?

Big: Call the captain and be fuck off.

Monroe: That is what I would do.

Big: I would tell all the other cops. [Inaudible]

Paula: What would you do if you are cop what would you differently?

Big: I wouldn't be a cop. There is no if... They fuck around.

Monroe: I have never seen them protect anyone...

Anu: What approach would you take?

Monroe: I wouldn't be nosey.

Big: I would wait for trouble to come and stop it...

Paula: I felt discriminated in this community against.

Monroe: By who?

Paula: Did you guys hear that. I felt discriminated in this community, I felt that people were looking at me like I don't belong here. You come every day. When I first started coming to this community.

Monroe: It was over there.

Paula: Yea it was over there. I felt like people looked at me differently because of the colour of my skin. Like who is that White girl in our community and why is she here.

Monroe: Did they ever say anything?

Paula: No they didn't really say anything. [Laugh] it is just the way they asked. [Laugh] It is just the way they asked, who are you, no I mean who are you? It is not a bad thing I am just being honest. I felt out of place from the way they asked. I feel, and I am going to say this because I think it is important for you guys to know, sometimes I get stereotyped, or labelled, until people got to know me, or trusted me to know who I am and why I am here. I got looked at, is she an undercover cop? That was something that people questioned, they didn't question me directly and I could feel it from the youth and the adults. It was just youth.

Monroe: When there are White people they are Feds [police] and like sometimes they are trying to chill on the block like they are actually undercover Feds so it is just that person.

Paula: That is understandable because when you have been in that situation before and you have that mistrust then you are going to be specifically, you are going to question who are these new look coming in.

The above excerpt illustrated commonly expressed sentiments about the police in Chester Le.

The participants often were harassed by the police. The police provoked them during their interactions. There was also an age and gender dimension to the harassment. Aliya, the youngest member of the focus group, was not concerned about the police presence. In fact, many of the adults also shared these similarly positive sentiments. Young female participants were for the most part exempt from continuous police harassment. However, Aliya's older sister Monroe was quite resentful of the police. Young males faced the most harassment and subsequently distrusted the police the most. Even in a hypothetical scenario, Big refused to be a police officer. It demonstrated the deeply damaged relationship between youth and the police in the community. These negative relations also informed how racialized youth interacted with White adults who were not police officers. Paula thought the community initially distanced themselves from her because she was White. Being White and unfamiliar in Chester Le meant many people presumed she was an undercover police officer.

Police raids were seen as a relatively common occurrence in the community. The raids upset community dynamics. The raids expelled many Black people from the community who were replaced with other groups that “keep to themselves”. For the participants, the raids created a sudden loss of community in the neighbourhood.

Tasha: I used to come a lot during the summer and they used to have barbecues. Now, you can walk through the neighbourhood and there is nothing.

Rick: Barbecues to 11 pm.

Donte: This summer we had no barbecues...The cops. They are like the music is too loud, you have to turn it down, bullshit...

Tasha: They are just always around here so they just have to be up in your business.

Rick: They are like there is a barbecue, let's go check it up. They are disturbing the peace.

Tasha: Yea exactly they are disturbing the peace.

Donte: They are trying to regulate shit, disturb shit.

Anu: Was this recently or always?

Donte: Always.

Anu: So the cops have always been the same. Have they increased, are there more cops now?

Tasha: Well they raided everyone that used to be here.

Anu: Recently or?

Tasha: Over the years.

Donte: Now everything is quiet.

Rick: Yea, bro, that is not Chester Le. It is boring bro...

Tasha: Back then it used to be pretty much Black or even Arab, there were a lot of Arabs. Now ever since the raids now it is Asian and like

Donte: Afghan. Indian.

Rick: It is for everybody now.

Tasha: It went from the partiers to the book people.

Rick: Yea.

Donte: Yea basically, it went from all party people to nerds and like people just want to keep to themselves. Back then, every [inaudible] they walked past you would say hi.

Rick: You would have to say hi.

Donte: Nowadays people, I don't know, they look down, given them a head nod, say hi, some of them don't even say hi back. It never used to be like that. We used to be so close to the community.

The above passage also illustrated the idea of “entitlement” that was previously addressed. When youth have a diminished sense of power, they lay claims to the few things within their purview. An example was when Rick stated that the community was “for everybody now” (not just Blacks), demonstrating a sense of loss of ownership to a space he felt was rightfully his to own.

State regulation of movement and who has the right to certain spaces informed habitus. The regulation affected young people’s desires to be involved in the neighbourhood. For example, when Donte was asked why he was not involved in his neighbourhood, he simply stated:

Donte: They stopped doing things as a community you know. (Jamaican identified, 19)

Police harassment informed young people’s sense of belonging.

Anu: Do you feel Canadian?

Donte: No. My parents are from Jamaica. If I was Canadian I wouldn’t be getting arrested every day.

Indifference by local politicians

Participants’ relations with formal politics illustrated how youth and their neighbourhoods were socially located. It informed understandings of neighbourhood identities and marginalization and habitus. It also demonstrated how their social locations and identities were valued, what Yuval-Davis (2006) referred to as the ethical and political values that constitutes belonging. Neglect by politicians reinforced youth’s sense of belonging to their racialized neighbourhood spaces and reaffirmed their marginalized position in the city. According to Siemiatycki (2011) the incorporation of people in “everyday life realms of housing, employment, education, religion, media, and popular culture” are all important (pg. 1220).

However, civic incorporation carries with it the most “symbolic resonance.” It is the political realm that defines the rules of society, and how we are responsible to others (Siemiatycki 2011, pg.1220). For the participants, politicians embodied the government and official avenues of civic engagement.

I found that the participants had strained relationships with their local politicians. There were everyday indicators that young people’s relations with their local politicians were thin and they perceived it to be strategic on the part of politicians. This might be a general sentiment possessed by many youths about politicians, I argue however, for youths in Malvern and Chester Le their distrust and marginalization was rooted in racial and spatial alienation. For example, Manuela, an Afro-Latino youth in Malvern discussed the barriers she faced when she attempted to engage politicians on community issues, in particular related to race. Manuela was a strong advocate against police brutality. However, she found during her advocacy work, that local politicians were indifferent about her community’s concerns. Participants viewed these politicians as only caring about certain groups or certain spaces.

Manuela: Creating more, or allowing accessibility to more spaces where politicians can be accessible and less intimidating and um making their way out to these communities and it not be based on a campaign or a especially in Malvern based on a tragedy, there, only time I ever see, what his is name, Cho [local councillor], I can’t remember his first name, the only time I ever see him, ever ever is when there is a shooting and to drop dirt in the Malvern um parking lot, the Malvern parking lot, that is the only time this man comes here. I have been to his office a few times. When the, when um, division 45, the one that the police division that oversees Malvern when they first implemented those tasers um I went, because I used to go to all the city council meetings and police board meetings and how many of millions of dollars were invested into these tasers, now there are only three division that got those teasers, division 41, which is Jane and Finch, I can’t remember the division number here, 44 or 45, and the downtown core. I went to see him to talk about it and he refused to see me all three times. He always sends someone out to see what I am asking about. (Afro-Latina Caribbean identified, 25)

Politicians did not help Manuela when she wanted to make changes in her neighbourhood. For example, she faced many obstacles when she went to her local councillor to inquire about certain

measures, such as why the introduction of police tasers were being mostly implemented in racialized neighbourhoods.

Manuela: Why is that these three areas, particular these two areas, Jane and Finch and Malvern are being targeted with people using tasers? The number one cause for people of colour, predominately, and especially Black people, and Black men is heart failure. Now if you incorporate that with tasing somebody which will send defibrillate shocks to someone's heart and potentially kill them, now you are dealing with two areas with very high populations of Black men, and if you try out this pilot project with tasers, and you are tasing, you know what I mean? Are police going to stop and ask, while they are shooting at you with a taser, do you have a history of heart problem? What about pregnant women, you know what I mean, take all these things into consideration.

Manuela discussed these issues to illustrate why youth need alternative spaces for community engagement. She desired spaces where youth can take the lead. She envisioned a reordering, in which politicians have to genuinely listen to racialized and marginalized youth's grievances and suggestions.

Manuela: For them to come outside, politicians not being political, spaces like this, let's create more spaces for young people to engage, um, and engage in a way that is on their own terms and in their own communities. Um, I feel there can be a lot more uh space for voicing, there is, sometimes they have these artists talk or civic engagement with artists and I think that can also be done with um, more space for young people to voice their opinions directly to politicians and then after all that actually taking into account that is not just for show, to say we have done this. We have listened to you, actually taking into account, built things that are sustainable for young people, be more engaged in terms of it not be like one talk a year with youth, with young people, you know what I mean.

Negative experiences with state officials have deeper ramifications. It contributes to youth feeling their social locations and identities are not respected by elites. When youth view the political system as disinterested in their lives and the issues that affect them, they become disillusioned with the state and its official channels of change and belonging.

Hadja: I just find that youth in Canada are not involved in politics in Canada so, it is, you know, they have no appeal to it, unless it is something that identifies with them. So if it is like, I think if it is directly affecting them they will be it. If it has nothing to do with them they don't care. (Somalia identified, 29)

The disillusionment has material effects and informs youth's habitus, orienting what they think is possible and what is not possible. For example, when there are opportunities for youth to enact concrete changes they often do not have the required skill sets. It is partly because there have not been adequate investments in the cultivation of these skills and because they are disillusioned with the formal process. For example, when I was at Malvern an opportunity arose for the youth at the center to submit a proposal to develop a youth cooking program. The opportunity was a result of a programming consultation with the youth by a service provider. Since one of the most common grievances youth at the center expressed was the lack of food at home, they wanted to develop a project that would address this need. The City was willing to fund the program on the condition that youth took a leadership position on the project. The City had allocated special funds to encourage youth engagement. However, the problem was engaging youth who had mostly negative experiences with state bureaucracies and formal avenues of civic engagement. In order to access the money, one of the conditions set by the City was to have a youth team on the committee. The committee consisted of representatives from the Public Library, Parks and Recreation, and Public Health. One of the youth at the center readily took the lead. As part of his duties, he was required by the funders to find two other youth for the committee. However, he could not recruit two youth committed to attend the meetings and complete the grant applications. Based on previous negative experiences, racialized youth in the study were disillusioned by the City's promises. They were skeptical whether the project would come to fruition. It explained their hesitation to join the committee. When they did not join the committee, the youth service providers framed them as irresponsible as opposed to alienated.

When racialized youth become disillusioned they become alienated from the formal processes which made it difficult for them to engage in civic actions through formal avenues. It

explained why they choose alternative ways to acquire resources, have their voices heard, and cultivate attachment and a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood. Funding requirements need to be youth friendly. Youth need to be given the skills to steer these terrains. The example illustrated that young people's negative experiences with state representatives, whether politicians or funders informed future relationships. It exemplified how they felt their social locations and identities were valued by elites which informed their own sense of belonging and desire for engagement.

The participants perceived politicians and the political system they represented as superficial. The perception explained their disillusionment with the process. The disillusionment might be shared by adults, however the main difference was that youth felt further alienated because of age discrimination and feeling their voices were not heard by adults in positions of power. The disillusionment with politicians and the political system might be a widespread sentiment shared by youth across the city. However, for youth already racialized, criminalized, and marginalized these shallow interactions were particularly damaging. It only reconfirmed the alienation they already encountered in society. These interactions reiterated to them their marginal position within the city. Youth internalized these framings by politicians which informed their own participation in formal avenues of engagement and belonging. For example, despite Egypt's activism she was skeptical of the formal political process.

Egypt: They think, a lot of people think, I called POLITRICKS, because of the lies and all the madness behind the scenes. If they want to change the world they live in or the country they live in they must have an interest in it, find a love for it you know. (Jamaican identified, 20)

Service providers also acknowledged the ill treatment and neglect of racialized youth in these communities by the state. They recognized politicians did not see any value in connecting with

certain marginalized communities because they were viewed erroneously as not being interested in formal politics.

Helmer: I think when I think of civic engagement politicians listening to people and I don't think that they do listen to low income marginalized people because they don't vote. If they don't vote they don't really care, in terms of the politicians. So I actually don't feel that politicians are willing to give their times to do that. That is how I feel. So there isn't really any civic engagement. There is not a lot of investment in low-income disenfranchised people to come and educate them to become civically aware, right, I think it goes back to the racism piece. Well, if we know that this particular population doesn't have a voice, doesn't have a say, doesn't know about these issues what are we doing in our community as a society to really bring their voice to the table. I think that, just a great example, it is just a great example of marginalization and racisms, especially in low-income communities. We know low-income communities have a higher proportion of Black folk. We should really focus on programs, civic engagement programs that focus on marginalized Black folk.

Neglect by politicians reinforced youth's sense of belonging to their racialized neighbourhood spaces and reaffirmed their marginalized position in the city. Despite this marginalization by politicians, neighbourhood attachments figured centrally in articulations of personal identity for these youth and their sense of belonging.

The inner suburb-core divide

The inner suburb-core divide discussed in the media analysis played a defining role in articulations of neighbourhood identities, neighbourhood habitus, and had implications for neighbourhood attachment and negotiations of difference. Youth in the inner city are marginalized and have less interaction with dominant members of society (Ghorayshi 2010). Many participants recognized symbolic power remains in the core. According to Nish, a service provider, power brokers who inform Toronto identity live in the core. When power is concentrated spatially, it informs the core's identity but also defines who is 'the other', which they have the power to define. The ability to define also has material implications. It effects where resources are distributed.

Nish: [T]hose who inform what is Toronto are primarily live downtown and they view the identity through a downtown lens where I see it as obviously being much broader, involving the inner suburbs, one of which is Scarborough and I feel that question is an evolving question...I want it to go to a space where there is a balance between the suburban and the core, that the media and the, those who inform Toronto identity and wield power on and in Toronto come to that recognition, that the way Scarborough is framed is obviously a big concern to me. It needs to be addressed. I don't think there is a sense of unity between the core and suburb. Rob Ford's³ you know prominence to power is recognition of that. I don't believe campaigned downtown, he was strictly campaigning in the suburbs, you know. Easily won on that.

Youth recognized residents in their neighbourhoods were unfairly treated compared to residents in the core.

Manuela: Um, I have seen police, I have seen this community being patrolled on horses, there is no riot mind you and there is no reason to bring out police officers on horses, like if they are on a plantation. I don't understand that. I have seen this community policed by helicopters uh you know. I have seen a government official come here and after a shooting, tell people that their lives should go on. I am pretty sure you would never say that up in Davisville or [inaudible], in fact there was a shooting up in Yonge and Eglinton up in Davisville, there was so much sympathy before anybody knew the story about what had happened. (Afro-Latina Caribbean identified, 25)

Participants confronted their disparity when they ventured out of their neighbourhoods or met residents from the core. Randy discussed the first time he realized the differences that existed in the quality of education in Malvern compared to the core.

Randy: There are schools like in the Bayview area, Bayview is predominately a more rich area you know, you call it a rich area right. So. Um. One of my friend that I met last year he was like when I was in grade 11 I took a anthropology and I was like what, how did you get anthropology and I didn't. I was upset `cause it was like why am I being marginalized. In one thing I noticed is that in Toronto they marginalize you. I am not saying I am a genius and only I found this out on my own but because Malvern is what it is they only provide a certain education. Most people in Malvern are not going to be doctors and lawyers, because this area is more factory workers and general labourers so that is what they provide... (Ghanaian identified, 21)

Many young people from these spaces rarely went to the core. Some, in fact, had never gone.

³ Former mayor who won due to his appeal to voters in the suburb, who felt alienated by the core.

Randy: Some people in Malvern have never stepped out of Malvern or never stepped out of Scarborough, so that is really unfortunate. Some people have never went downtown like seriously you know so ya.

Angela: [I] told them we are going to an art exhibit downtown they were just so excited. They were like oh my god we are going downtown. It was such a big deal because downtown is so far away. Even once they get there, where do they go. They don't know where they are going. They are not connected so. (Ethiopian identified, 24)

Most youth in these neighbourhoods rarely ventured to the core. They recognized the core had more resources and investments. I saw this first hand when I accompanied a small group of young women from the center on a trip to an art exhibition downtown. It took us 1.5 hours on public transportation from Malvern to downtown (exemplifying both the social and physical distance from the core). When we emerged from the subway onto the street, three of the young girls exclaimed with excitement. Shonda, one of the girls, was amazed at the creative architecture of the Ontario College of Art and Design (OCAD) building. The building was an architectural wonder that structurally stood out in the core. It looked like a white polka-dot table with multi-coloured legs looming high in the sky. Shonda exclaimed that seeing such attractive architecture was the reason she loved downtown and lamented that “this kind of thing” was missing in Scarborough. Some participants reproduced tropes that framed downtown as the only place where exciting culture existed. They did not question why these investments were made in the core.

Thomas discussed the core versus inner suburbs divide. He revealed that youth rarely left their communities or ventured to the core. They felt out of place in these spaces. They were not able to navigate these terrains. It was problematic because most of the intellectual, financial, political, and cultural power in Toronto remains concentrated in the downtown core. There were segments of the population that was both socially and spatially alienated from this center.

Participants recognized their neighbourhoods were often left out. They desired an incorporation of their neighbourhoods into the wider positive imagining of Toronto. Youth also reproduced dominant framings that othered the inner suburbs from the core. It informed how they traversed through their city. However, alienation from the core did not mean youth were inward looking. Albeit youth might not go downtown, they were not necessarily restricted to their neighbourhood. Many young people mentioned traveling to their 'home' countries and living transnational lives.

Thomas: There is cool things going on downtown. But at the same time you don't hear about a lot of stuff... A lot of the cultural festivals Toronto already sponsors. I appreciate what the government already does. But maybe on a more local level they can do that stuff. Like if they brought more stuff into Malvern. Because there are people fighting and advocating to get stuff in Malvern. But maybe it shouldn't be so much a fight, maybe the government should be open to going into smaller neighbourhoods and bringing stuff that is always happening downtown for some reason. I don't know a lot of people that go downtown as often as I do. Yea, they are comfortable in the neighbourhood. They comfortable with the people here. You kind of know everyone's face when you have been here for so long. It is kind of a nice thing. At the same time they have family all over the world, so they get to to Guyana for the holidays. So well-travelled, but love to stay home [local neighbourhood]. (Jamaican identified, 21)

Participants were cognizant of the divide and how it affected their way of being, what I considered an expression of their habitus. Deque discussed feeling unease when he left Malvern and travelled to wealthier neighbourhoods. It explained why the participants often did not leave their neighbourhoods, where for the most part they felt safe. Deque recognized that when he ventured out of his neighbourhood, he was in a different 'place'- social field. He acknowledged there was a different way to exist in these spaces; a different way to talk, a different habitus. Deque confronted this difference the most when he engaged in his civic work.

Deque: Um, I wish the government didn't have such a segregation in housing cause when like you have your typical neighbourhood like Malvern right and then you go somewhere else it is like there are suburbs and all these rich areas where it is like. Like the type of people there they are not comfortable with other people even walking through

it. It is like, it is like these filters that everybody has to go through as soon as they step into a new environment. I feel that everybody should be living in on a common ground. (Ghanaian identified, 21)

Deque was part of a local grassroots youth organization SPEAK (discussed in the next chapter) which engaged in art and community action projects. Both as a performer and activist Deque depended on funding agencies. These agencies were mostly located in the core. It was in his interactions with these organizations where he most directly experienced the power imbalances that exist in society. For Deque, these organizations did not value people in Malvern. They expected those in Malvern to come to the core for opportunities. The relationship between those in the core and those in the inner suburbs were unequal, with power lying predominately with those in the core. There was a sense youth had to behave and speak differently to access resources from the core. Deque discussed how those in the core thought they did not need to travel to the inner suburbs. It was partly because of fear and partly because they thought they were superior.

Deque: There is, it goes back to what I was saying about how there is so many different environments so it is like outside of Malvern there is, there is a different way you have to articulate yourself. You have to communicate differently... when you meet someone from Malvern from downtown core it is like there is a certain communication barrier there...

Anu: Do you think the core makes enough effort to come out?

Deque: No.

Anu: Why do you think that is?

Deque: I think um it is just because there is still a fear aspect, there is still um, like a way of thinking where it is like I am, I am this person and I shouldn't need, I shouldn't have to come down there, type of thing. Let me just, let my company come down. You don't need to see my face, you can see the logo or type of thing. It is like, we are, we are um being um bombarded with all these company logos and all these great initiatives, but it is like. If you come to me as a human being and I am unaware of who you are and we have a discussion I think that is the best way for you to help me and for me to help you because I don't need to, I don't have his perception of you this high person on the throne and it is

like I have to be on my knee, I really want this grant... Yea. I mean downtown Toronto there is, that is where all the venues are. That is where all the headquarters of grant organizations and all that is. So it is like where all the money is, pretty much. But, really and truly the money is in the community. Not in the community, the money is hovering over the community...

Youth recognized they were differentiated from those in City #1 or the core. There are pockets of the core that are socio-economically similar to neighbourhoods in the ‘periphery,’ for example Parkdale, Regent Park, St. Jamestown, Sherbourne. However, many of these neighbourhoods have been gentrified, with poverty continuing to move outwards. Despite these pockets, the core remains mostly ‘City #1’ or socio-economically more privileged than those in the northwest and northeast sections of the city. Because of how the spaces are constructed through narratives like the core versus inner suburb divide, where youth lived affected their personal and civic pursuits and informed their habitus. They came to see themselves as the ‘other’, ‘different’ because of where they lived in the city. The example above illustrated how they felt they needed to speak and behave to access resources.

Service providers also saw this core-inner suburb divide in their work. Prudent recalled one particular incident when she helped plan a 'meet and greet' with a financial donor from Rosedale (one of the most affluent neighbourhoods in Canada). The meet and greet was to be held at the donor's house. The donor wanted to meet the youth they helped through the programs they funded. Prudent disapproved of “parading” the youth around for donors. It was particularly disconcerting for her because the students had to take a leave from school to attend. However, it was out of her control. Before the meet and greet, Prudent's colleague voiced her concern about Prudent's preference for wearing high heels. Her colleague feared Prudent's heels would scratch the floors of the Rosedale house. Prudent interpreted this to mean that because

she was a Black woman from the inner suburbs, she did not understand appropriate household etiquette.

Prudent: So my first time ever being in Rosedale I was responsible for this project that was funded um by a donor that came through United Way Toronto. And um United Way have an interesting approach to donor stewardship and has nothing to do with altruism. It is very much based on the charity model, where when you fund something you go to the benefactor and you showcase them to um their donor and they want us to tell us the story about this youth and how their existence is in so much dire strait, and thank you and thank you, you save our lives. So this one time The United Way arranged for in the middle of the day no doubt, kids in school, um, I even refused but the agency that was the operator for the project I was responsible for agreed to do it. So I met the woman who was responsible for it at Sherburne and Bloor and of course I am always wearing heels so she looks at me and of course she is a liberal White woman with Birkenstocks or whatever they wear and she looked at me and said you are not going to walk inside their house with your shoes are you? I said pardon? She said you wore heels and we asked you not to wear heels. I said I thought you were joking, this was on the conference call before. I just walked away from her as she rode her bike. Yea. That was my, my first experience in that.

Anu: So did they make you take your shoes off?

Prudent: Yea, and I wouldn't mind it because her concern was about the fact that I have heels on and I am going to ruin their floors. It was, it was me to dictate what I wear and um.

Prudent found that the meet and greet was insensitive to the needs of the youth. There was also an undertone of racial indignation. Prudent did not like that the youth had to be 'paraded' in front of their 'White saviours', to make the donors feel good about themselves. According to her if they wanted to see how their donations were being spent they should visit the centers or attend one of the special events the youth organize. She was further antagonized when they dictated how to dress appropriately for activities in the 'core.' Prudent always stood out in a crowd with her beautiful bright clothes and her staple high heels. The incident made her feel she was being disciplined in order to assimilate to a particular way of being. A way of being that was more appropriate for those in the core. It seemed she did not want to partake in an offensive form of

respectability politics. Her mentioning of the woman's bike was a reference to the disconnect between those in the core and the inner suburbs. In this case, the bike was associated with downtown liberals, which was a sharp contrast to Prudent's Range Rover SUV. These were the everyday ways different social fields and habitus clash. Prudent's judgment was not trusted by those who policed the boundaries that separated those who lived in the privileged spaces of the core from those in the spaces in the peripheries. Racial and class disciplining occurred in everyday interactions. It was also an example of a clash of racial and gendered expressions of femininity.

The core versus inner suburb divide also informed how participants navigated their friendships. For example, Channel found it hard to reconcile her relationships with her activist friends from the University of Toronto (in the core) and her friends from high school. Despite her activist friends being 'progressive,' she recognized they occupied both a different physical and social space. Those in the core who she considered 'White-liberals' did not account for intersectionality in their progressive agenda. It caused tensions for Channel who negotiated both aspects of her inner suburb life and the core, where she attended school.

Channel: Not being able to like, I don't really know how I my other friends would socialize with my other friends from like Eastern Commerce you know, it would be two completely different world, but at the same time it is kind of like a test, they are very activist you know, that is the thing about activist community, they are community themselves, like it is very leftist, it is very social justice, like how do we treat each other...Is it the same as the same as what we get involved for that is completely different. If I was to bring in somebody from Eastern Commerce into that group like I don't know how the dynamic would be. Because it would be like, maybe they would treat them great but at the same time that person at Eastern Commerce doesn't know all these differences we have been taught, they don't know not to say oh that is gay or like the n word or things like that because that is how the community is, they talk like that, they don't see the repercussions of that. If they were to say that in that group dynamic then maybe they would judge them, they might be like this person is racist or this person is homophobic, you know completely judging a person just based on those things I don't think that is the way to go about things when you are wanting to help people. Especially, cause like if you are going to the real world that is kind of how everyone talks, especially if you are

not educated. Even if you are educated sometimes, you say those things and it is just you are not conscious of it, but that doesn't mean that you are a bad person. So, I think it would be those are the negative things about community that are very conscious but they don't want to be accepting of people who aren't educated of those things because they want to protect their community, they want to protect that bubble, that positive space, but how do you do that when someone is not educated on a topic. You have to be willing to accept a person for them to actually take you seriously and want to apply those rules to their life. (Trinidadian identified, 23)

Channel described her inner suburb friends as engaged in “hip hop” culture. They often used homophobic rhetoric and the “‘n’ word”. She recognized this culture emerged out of a sense of alienation. However, her ‘progressive’ White downtown friends did not understand the nuances and intersections of oppression. She felt they would negatively judge her other friends for being homophobic. However, her ‘White progressive’ friends did not interrogate their own social fields and the different cultural framework that existed among her friends in the inner suburbs. They did not contextualize the socio-economic reasons for the way her inner suburb friends spoke. There was little thought to the fact that in urban street cultures, where survival is most pertinent, a particular hyper-masculine culture develops. In this case, homosexuality is often associated with weakness. It was an example of the manner in which different forms of habitus clash. These differing habitus were informed by socio-spatial differences.

Similarly, Prudent discussed how the core-inner suburb divide limited youth civic engagement. For example, the City of Toronto hosts a youth cabinet where young people can participate in formal avenues of government. However, Prudent found youth from the inner suburbs did not participate at the same rate because most formal avenues of engagement were in the core. Youth from the inner suburbs were more reluctant to get involved in places both socially and spatially distant. Issues that were important to youth in the inner suburbs, for

example, police harassment, was not championed by these groups. Mainly because it did not concern the youth that got involved.

Prudent: You have the Toronto youth cabinet but I am not sure how many of these young people would feel comfortable going downtown. The way they are set up they have their collective strategy so if a young person comes, or if young people in specific area they are not going to take it on so you know youth and police relationships they have never taken that on as an issue. So, I am not sure. I am not sure, there are different avenues but I think we need to be, to rethink to do some analysis on that and to kind of rethink how.

Sense of Belonging

Despite recognition of negative framings and marginalization, participants asserted their neighbourhoods provided a great a sense of belonging. It was represented by their sense of feeling at home and feeling safe and comfortable in these neighbourhoods. Exclusion from outside spaces, isolating conditions in TCHC heightened their sense of neighbourhood attachment and sense of belonging. I examine this in further detail below.

Tina shared her positive experiences of life in Malvern that cultivated a deep sense of belonging:

Tina: There is a lot of community and there is a lot of love. Even in my building, I know, I have [been] living there for about 5-6 years. I feel like when you live downtown people are so stuck in their lives but in my building there are people that will knock on my door if they know my mom is on vacation. They will be like are you okay, do you need any food, like I am old enough to take care of myself, but just because they know I am an only child and they will still check up on me. If anyone is sick, like everyone goes to the house and is just like do you need anything. Even if you are going to the grocery store they will ask “like do you need me to pick something up for you?” I feel like there is so many positive in Malvern but you just don’t get to see that because of what they portray on the news. It is a nice place. (Latina identified, 20)

These spaces provided comfort and safety in familiarity. However, these sentiments were accompanied by concurrent feelings of ambiguity. Feelings of safeness existed with

simultaneous feelings of fear, which was an outcome of living in diverse and economically marginalized spaces.

Abalsh: I am kind of glad I grew up in Malvern.

Anu: How come?

Abalsh: I don't know.

Pragash: Just the people that you grow up.

Abalsh: Also like.

Pragash: Like we got taught, like,

Abalsh: In Malvern we are with our own people, if we go somewhere else you would be an outcast. So I rather be here.

Anu: So what do you guys like about your neighbourhood? What do you dislike?

Taran: I dislike that I can't walk around at any time. You can't, you always have to watch out.

Abalsh: Yea.

Shanthan: You can't just freely walk around.

Pragash: There is no ever 100 percent you are safe. There is always that chance that they call you over, anytime of the day.

Anu: Who is 'they'?

Pragash: Those gangs.

Abalsh: Black guys

Anu: Are they 'gangs' or are they just 'Black guys'?

All: It can be anyone.

Abalsh: It is usually Black guys. But there are some Tamil guys.

Anu: What do you like about it?

Abalsh: At times it is pretty quiet. I don't know about other areas.

Pragash: I would say the people.

Tharan: The area. The parks. Since there is a lot of Tamil people you feel comfortable with them right.

Abalsh: You feel safe.

Participants recognized that neighbourhood perceptions were informed by situated positionalities. People viewed neighbourhoods differently based on their relationship to the place.

MP: Well there is different perspectives on how people see Malvern. Um, like if you talk to a politician, a politician might say that Malvern has the lowest voter turnout in all of Toronto. Um, if you talk to a musician, a musician would tell you or somebody in the entertainment field would tell you that 70 percent of the people in the music business came from Malvern. (youth service provider)

Participants in both neighbourhoods had strong neighbourhood attachments. At Malvern community center I often heard participants affectionately shout ‘The Vern’ (nickname for Malvern) in the hallways. I was intrigued how locality was used as an explanation for how things were done, “this is how we do it in The Vern.”

Participant’s strong neighbourhood attachment was attributed to their limited opportunities outside their communities. Racialized youth had fewer spaces to cultivate belonging. A heightened sense of neighbourhood belonging was often the result of a lack of opportunities to identify with anything else.

Angela: I think what it comes down to is like, like when that is all you have that is what you identify with. They can’t even go out [outside their neighbourhood], well they can, but even for them to go out they can’t...If not having you don’t have nowhere else to connect with you will make you connect with where you at. Because you don’t have anything else... (Ethiopian identified, 24)

Mike referred to the lack of opportunities like organized sports to illustrate why youth in Malvern had strong neighbourhood attachments.

Mike: Um I think there is, with young people there is always, with everybody there is always a need to belong somewhere, so um. I think what has happened in the past, especially in Malvern, because a lot of people here don’t have access to play in sports club, they don’t do activities that can take them beyond Malvern, um so when you play with a sport team you identify with your team, you identify with something that gives you a sense of pride. Um. Because they don’t have that access as much, they identify with their neighbourhood. (youth service provider)

Isolation from wider society was often found with a sense of “place attachment” (Kintrea, Bannister, Pickering 2010, pg. 448). Strong neighbourhood identifications informed neighbourhood habitus. For example, participants reproduced popular negative discourses. George, a youth service provider, found it important to redirect the way youth identified with their neighbourhood.

George: Um, some of them have taken to the negative um I think we have to work on the positive ways of identifying, too many identify with the negative aspects. They will talk

about the media, a lot of the youth have taken on that to say this is we are from Malvern we are bad, our city.

Neighbourhood identities structured life opportunities. It was most evident in the way neighbourhoods limited young people's ability to find employment. Both service providers and youth discussed how residency in certain neighbourhoods made them undesirable for employers.

Mike: I think it is also a lot of youth are here under pressure to contribute to their homes and the nature of this neighbourhood is that there is a lot of stigma associated with the addresses. So if they live at a certain place it is hard for them to get a job based on that address. So now you have kids who are trying to get jobs but they can't. And they have pressure to produce finances at home so some of them do turn to crime. (youth service provider)

It affected issues as simple as getting pizza delivered.

Monroe: And it is pretty bad because when you go to apply for something and you write Chester Le and they are like this was in the newspaper, something bad happened, we don't, you are not getting in [employment]. And even Pizza, Pizza can't even come here. If you call them, you know [inaudible]. (Jamaican identified, 16)

It also affected everyday mundane activities such as catching the bus. One day Angela and I were looking out the window and we saw a boy run to catch the bus. The boy managed to reach the front of the bus and tap on the door. However, the bus driver continued to drive away. Angela saddened by the incident quietly exclaimed "see this is the kind of thing that happens in Scarborough." Young people were aware of the everyday dehumanization of racialized people in these neighbourhoods.

Angela: One thing that, that always pisses me off, when I am in Malvern is that, like if I am running to catch a bus, anywhere in the city the bus 9 out of 10 times will stop for me. When I am in Malvern it will not, it will drive off. And I am always confused, why would he do that? What did I do to him? Then I realize where I am and who I am. And I'm just like this is is, I am not going to shoot you. There is nothing hiding in the 'fro [afro]. Like. And like I have seen that with other kids too. Like a kid is literally right about to touch the door, like he ran and caught, he is about to touch the door and he drives off. And he sees him running after him the whole time. Like why. Like why do you have to. Like what is it that going to do for your life? That is said I know bus drives go through a lot as well. But. It just sucks when. I don't think. I think. I don't like it when young people are being um punished for older people's mistakes and like. Just 'cause 5 years ago some

other guy like spat on you doesn't mean that this other young Black kid is going to you know. It is just, that just hurts you. 'Cause then they start getting, they get a heart for that, they get hurt in their heart. You know, you know that racist guy just drove off, what an ass. They are building hate, they are feeding hate in this young kid that doesn't know anything. (Ethiopian identified, 24)

Youth used spatial imaginaries to indirectly find meaning about themselves and their potentials (Dillabough and Kennelly 2010). Wacquant (2007) argues that people in marginalized areas often try to distance themselves from others in their neighbourhood, saying things like 'I want to move out' or 'I am not really like others here.' He referred to this as "lateral denigration and mutual distancing" (pg. 68). I did not find this among my participants. I found that participants in Malvern and Chester Le took great pride in their neighbourhoods and did not distance themselves from these spaces.

Living in TCHC housing also constructed a particular form of attachment to their neighbourhood, mainly out of necessity to escape isolation that accompanied being arbitrarily placed in the community. It took years to qualify for a TCHC home. In the field, I heard wait lists could be upwards of 7 years. When a family got assigned a house, they could be placed anywhere in the city. Placement often disrupted families and established community networks, as families were uprooted and placed elsewhere. Chester Le youth had unique formative experiences because they lived in a more contained public housing community. Families were placed in Chester Le when housing became available. Therefore, people in Chester Le were often separated from their families. In addition to this separation, because the neighbourhood was more contained residents relied more on the community to escape the isolation that accompanied being separated from family and friends.

Anu: Do you think young people in the community have a strong sense of community?

Mina: Yes and no. Yes, I think more than most neighbourhood in Toronto because of the um the nature of the housing unit they live in. They are probably going to experience

problems, they need to rely on each other for help. Uh, as well, they mention in the women parenting group how uh a lot of these people are separate from their family. Their families live all over Toronto, or even further, or not even in Canada. So the reason why they are here, they are seeking that housing unit so. They are doing that, if they are just socialize within their family then they are I don't know they are going to be really isolated and it is not going to, they are not going to enjoy their life. They are forced to branch out and kind of make a new family amongst the people in the neighbourhood. Having said that, like [I] mentioned earlier there is also division in the neighbourhood amongst different ethnicities. (youth service provider)

Discussion

Chester Le and Malvern youth shared similar sentiments about neighbourhood attachment, and the formative role neighbourhood identity played in their negotiations of difference and sense of belonging. In both neighbourhoods, some youth reproduced ideas that their neighbourhood was tough, prone to gang violence and crime. Some celebrated these framings. Some recognized these characteristics provided them with a particular social capital both inside and outside their neighbourhood. They recognized that those outside their neighbourhoods thought they were dangerous or cool, both of which they welcomed when it benefited them. These neighbourhood social fields constructed a disposition that required them to act tough to survive or avoid problems with other youth in the neighbourhood. Their habitus affected how youth acted which at times was perceived by adults as unpleasant, unwelcoming, or brass. Participants acknowledged their neighbourhood informed ways of being, talking, acting, dressing can be detrimental when they left their neighbourhoods for the core. They felt that they had to speak and behave differently when they went to the core. For example, Deque discussed how he had to speak a particular way to receive funding for his projects. Embodied practices were different in White spaces.

Despite negative framings and acceptance of these dominant discourses, the participants illustrated a strong sense of attachment to these places. Despite local politicians' dismissal of

youth and their neighbourhoods, these spaces continued to be a positive frame of reference for youth constructions of identities, attachment, and belonging. The chapter demonstrated that participants can accept negative discursive constructions and still feel a strong sense of attachment to their neighbourhoods. The participants had a strong sense of neighbourhood identity and attributed this to the many positive aspects of living in Malvern and Chester Le. They mentioned the sense of family and love that they received in their communities. They recognized at some level their neighbourhoods informed their identities, how they lived, how they viewed the world. These understandings reflect their recognition of what I refer to as a habitus. These social fields cultivated a particular habitus that informed the way they talked, dressed, presented, and perceived themselves and how others perceived them. These fields were shaped by their marginalization by dominant discourses, socio-economic inequalities, racism and spatial alienation.

The chapter illustrated there was an external narration of these neighbourhood social fields and youth negotiated these narrations in different ways. Neighbourhood identities and attachments were used to construct their identities which facilitated or hindered their upward mobility. Even if it was a marginalized identity, neighbourhood attachment and identities were used to claim power. It was demonstrated by the way youth were proud to claim ownership over their local space and use neighbourhood identity markers to negotiate relations with others outside their neighbourhoods. The racialization of these neighbourhoods produced and limited the kind of identity practices they could employ. Neighbourhood identity was both useful and limiting. Despite negative framings and marginalization, these neighbourhoods provided important resources, whether it was peer relations, mentorship from service providers, or skills they received from the centers and others in these spaces.

Conclusion

According to Watt (2006), the making of social distinction has a powerful spatial dimension. Geographical location, the intersection of space, time, people in a particular historical moment all play an important role in people's development of cultural and social capital. Social structures often become spatial structures (Watt 2006). For Bourdieu (as cited in Richardson and Skott-Myhre 2012), in fact, the social is structured through repeated experiences of spatial distancing that affirms social distance. Life possibilities for residents are linked to their environment, which they internalize and act on. It has both material and symbolic effects (Richardson and Skott-Myhre 2012). Bourdieu's focus on the dispositional characteristics of situated life centers neighbourhoods. Young people's dispositions are formulated in these neighbourhood spaces.

According to Kintrea, Bannister and Pickering (2010) territoriality is an often undocumented aspect of how youth live their lives in local neighbourhoods and how their lives are affected by the neighbourhoods where they live. Researchers have found that youth are often more influenced by where they live than other groups (Kintrea, Bannister, and Pickering 2010). Limited opportunities during this stage in their life can lead to decreased life chances (Kintrea, Bannister, and Pickering 2010). Youth are more marginalized and often more restricted in their mobilities due to lack of employment that would typically take them out of these spaces. Space must be understood as one element among many symbolic and material factors in the life of young people (Dillabough and Kennelly 2010). All spaces are not created equal. Space is racialized. It is in these spaces where everyday negotiations of difference take place.

The chapter demonstrated the need to account for the spatial differences that informed youth's sense of belonging at the neighbourhood level. Official policies of social integration

typically promote and emphasize belonging at the national level, often overlooking local variances that differentiate a sense of belonging. Spaces are not equal, and belonging is most intimately fostered at the local level. Inequalities exist between people as well as neighbourhoods. For racialized youth in marginalized spaces, neighbourhood identities qualify their sense of belonging to the wider city and nation-state. Despite a great sense of belonging to their local spaces, they recognized that outside these spaces they were ‘othered’. They recognized that despite Canada’s promise of equality their neighbourhoods and its residents continue to be racialized and marginalized.

The everyday approach to difference I take here allowed for exploring how youth’s emotional attachments and neighbourhood identities are linked to their social locations which are fostered at the everyday level. By looking at how youth recognized, internalized, and at times reproduced dominant discursive constructions I explored how exclusionary experiences informed their attachments to these spaces which informed their identity, social mobility, and life opportunities. Despite these framings, they continued to have a strong sense of belonging to their neighbourhood as evidenced by their feelings of comfort, safety, attachment, and acceptance. In this chapter, I argued that discursive exclusions are mirrored by youth’s sense of political and social exclusions. In the following chapter, I examine the different ways of youth engage that do not appear to be political in the formal sense but are acts of reconfiguring belonging.

“We are the all, created everything. A sacredness in all its glory. We are the holy and nothingness. We are majestically divine and holy. We are eternal and beyond all states, beyond creation and above all faiths.” (Song, Malvern youth)

CHAPTER 8: RE-IMAGINING BELONGING THROUGH CREATIVE ENGAGEMENTS

In the previous chapter, I argued that youth’s social locations in lower socio-economic neighbourhoods informed their emotional attachments and identities. I examined how these spaces cultivated particular habitus which informed their identities and sense of belonging to their neighbourhoods. In this chapter, I examine how youth’s ethnicized/racialized habitus inform alternative politics of belonging. I argue that youth who are often marginalized from dominant political communities of belonging construct alternate spaces for belonging. In this chapter, I focus on how youth cultivate attachments and identity through creative engagements, in particular, through their involvement in hip hop culture and activism. I highlight a case study of a local art organization, started by a youth in Malvern which I call SPEAK (pseudonym). Youth recognized the intersection of art and activism in their lives or what they referred to as ‘ARTIVISM’ (art+activism). Through their activism, they were able to navigate everyday differences and renegotiate their place and sense of belonging in Toronto.

Hip hop encompasses “five core elements: Emceeing/rapping, Djing, graffiti art, break dancing, and what is termed ‘knowledge of self’” (Pieterse 2010, pg. 433) or the “critical consciousness about black history and the roots of racial oppression and exclusion” (Pieterse 2010, pg. 433). Racialized youth at both centers were immersed in hip hop culture. When I walked into the centers, I would often find youth freestyling and showcasing their latest raps to each other. Even the younger children in Chester Le would recite lyrics of local neighbourhood rap artists they watched on YouTube. Youth would perform, listen, and play hip hop music videos in the hallway TV at Malvern-Work, *Poetic Justice, Started from the Bottom*. I would see

youth frequenting sites like ‘World Star Hip Hop’ (American content aggregate site, referred to as the ‘ghetto’s CNN’). These were some examples of the ways hip hop culture was pervasive in these young people’s lives.

Hip hop offers another form of habitus, a set of guidelines of “how to ‘hold’ oneself-politically, stylistically, ideologically, socially, psychologically” (Pieterse 2010, pg. 440). Hip hop and art in general creates an intellectual and physical space of agency related directly to neighbourhood change and critical consciousness (Porfilio and Gorlewski 2012).

Youth semi-consciously and sometimes knowingly reproduced conventions of hip hop culture. My experience with Fredrico, a youth I met at Malvern Community Center demonstrated the way youth reproduced these conventions. Fredrico only came once to the center to seek help to complete a school form. The form was to allow him to count his work experiences towards high school credits to get his diploma. Fredrico was hearing impaired. While I was helping Fredrico complete his form, he mentioned that he was a big fan of hip hop music. I asked him why he liked hip hop; he replied it that it helped him learn how to “stand”. Fredrico carefully noted things other youth took for granted because of his hearing impairment. Fredrico told me he consciously studied how people walked, talked, and even stood so he could blend in more seamlessly with other youth. Hip hop allowed him to learn and perform a particular identity he wanted to manifest. Fredrico stated that hip hop helped with his communication skills. These were skills he constantly worked on because of his divergent ability. The example highlights ways youth draw on hip hop culture and how it produces a way of being, habitus.

According to Black (2014) from its inception hip hop was an “urban movement” engaged in a “politics of resistance” (pg. 700). Born out of the New York working class African-American and Latin-American street culture it was rooted in claims to urban space and

cultivating alternative spaces of belonging for racialized bodies. It aimed to shed light on issues of systemic racism, poverty, and social issues of drug abuse in poor Black and Brown neighbourhoods that were ignored by the state. Hip hop was born in response to the decline of Keynesian Fordism, the conservative revolution, the ‘war on drugs,’ the rise of mass incarceration of poor racialized men (Black 2014). Lamotte (2014) drawing on James Scott’s everyday resistance argues that hip hop is a form of ‘everyday street politics’ or a ‘hidden transcript’ of the oppressed. Hip hop is not necessarily a politics of resistance against something but rather a construction of a way of being. It is a form of citizenship that lays claim to urban space. Hip hop is illustrative of how culture can be a form of activism (Lamotte 2014).

According to Arthur hip hop resonated with youth because of its ability to transverse borders and reach different ethnicities. Despite stemming from oppressed spaces and rooted in a history of slavery, hip hop is now a beacon of light across the world for the marginalized. It traversed borders, reaching as far as Japan, India, and Sri Lanka.

Arthur: [H]ip-hop, which is a globally recognized youth culture which encompasses, it invites all youth you know what I mean. It is one about the best things to ever happen in the world, which wouldn't have happened if not of people of the African diaspora who brought people from. They complain about, you know, being oppressed and things like that but there is so much that came from it [inaudible] I just, just feel like it is making the world smaller too, so yea. I like building bridges...hip hop now you can reach kids in Japan, kids in India or Sri Lanka or anywhere on this planet, just from this idea and then it, it is just a good thing (Jamaican identified, 22).

Hip hop also resonates with youth because it is rooted in local space. From its inception locality has figured centrally in hip hop. Youth marginalized from access to other spaces take great pride and ownership of their local neighbourhoods. Even today rappers continue to ‘represent’ or reference their neighbourhoods in their music. The attachment to neighbourhood identity also emerged out of a drug culture and its related turf wars. In contemporary times this neighbourhood attachment has morphed to different cities often being associated with distinct

‘hip hop sounds’. For example, there is a ‘West Coast’ sound, a New York sound, an Atlanta sound, and with the popularity of Drake and The Weeknd an emerging popular Toronto sound.

Pieterse (2010) builds on the idea of the centrality of place in hip hop and argues that “place-specific” mentions are about extending insurgent citizenship and an alternative means of participation in the city (pg. 439). For Fredericks (2014) hip hop culture allows for “new claims to voices and spaces of citizenship” (pg. 132). It fosters a sense of political identity for youth and “offers a language of both geographical and social critique” (pg. 132). Hip hop is a form of “resistance that is both geopolitically diasporic”, but also situated in local neighbourhoods (pg. 132). It disparages “geographies of exclusion” and articulates alternative claims to belonging to the city (pg. 132). I asked the participants why hip hop resonated with youth in Malvern and Chester Le. They stated that the appeal was the result of their isolation from mainstream spaces.

For Thomas hip hop was central in the lives of racialized youth, mostly because of their socio-spatial isolation from other spaces.

Thomas: A lot of them are excited, they grew up watching Kanye West or Lil Wayne. Especially Lil Wayne or 50 Cent it is people who came up from neighbourhoods, or Jay-z that there were things going on they feel they can relate to. It is not happening to any degree that it was back then, but whatever, crimes or drugs, or like marijuana or whatever that. [Pause] Like it is in the neighbourhood, but it is in every neighbourhood, because it is being penalized so they feel they can relate to it cause they can hear it in their music. For a way of expression, music is a powerful thing and like a lot of the times people are, a lot of the youth don't know how to express themselves probably or express themselves in a efficient or like. I am just going to say efficient... Yea positive way to other people. To be making a song, a lot of people get excited about music. Music is something people can collectively gather around and listen to. If everyone like a song, everyone can gather and share the enjoyment of the song, a lot easier than dancing or talking, so a lot of people find a lot of... Yea. Expression, creative freedom, liberty, place of power, and confidence in music. (Jamaican identified, 21)

Hip hop was not the only form of art youth practiced. In fact, the first program I assisted was a photography class. The program typically attracted 5-10 youth. During my first class, I was greeted by photos of famous historical Black photographers. It brought to the fore the type of

history often omitted in the school curriculum. Weekly assignments for the program ranged from youth taking photos that reimagined their neighbourhoods (a common theme in all the programs) to discussions about how photography was used in the over-sexualization of women in mass media.

One example that captured the essence of the photography program was a trip to a photo exhibit entitled, “Exposed: Telling our Stories through our Lens.” It was held on March 21st, International Day for Elimination of Racism. The exhibit was held downtown by another community organization from Scarborough. The art collection was created by youth from Scarborough. Choosing to hold the exhibit downtown was both an act of reproducing dominant discourses and an act of resistance. Choosing a gallery downtown as opposed to Scarborough signified to an extent the desire to gain popular cultural legitimacy that comes with the opportunity to have one’s work showcased in the core. However, by having the exhibition in a traditionally White space, young people were able to traverse these imaginary boundaries. They were making claims to parts of the city that were often socially and culturally off-limits for the participants. Their very existence in this space was a form of resistance. The theme of the exhibition was to change the discourse around marginalized bodies and spaces in the city.

The exhibition was from 7-9 pm; about 75 young people attended. They were mostly between the ages of 19-30. Most attendees were African and Caribbean; there were also few White and South Asian individuals in attendance. Most attendees were youth, but few older adults were also present. The exhibit started with instrumental hip hop and pop music, rapping, spoken word performances. Randy, a youth from Malvern started the event with a spoken word piece called “Mama Africa.” His piece spoke about transnational connections and holistic understandings of systemic injustices. He discussed the need to change dominant discursive

constructions surrounding Black people in both Africa and North America. After the opening performances, we were given 30 minutes to look at the photographs on display. The photos covered issues of tokenism, shadism, African values, multiple diasporas (African and Caribbean diaspora). The subjects of the photos varied, including depictions of Black bodies, foods from ‘homelands’, Black families. The exhibit finished with a talk by a popular Toronto-based international activist Kim Crosby titled “Art in our Revolution.” She discussed how art both ‘others’ racialized people and could be a tool for resistance. For example, she spoke about how bindis, henna art, body piercings and tribal tattoos ‘other’ racialized bodies. However, when appropriated by White bodies these artistic expressions become normalized. Nevertheless, dominant discourses can be challenged through art. Kim also discussed issues of consumption, colonialism, femininity, place, imperialism, masculinity, how Blackness reimagines itself, media influences, and media sensationalism.

In my study I learned that youth used art to interrogate their place in their community. Art encapsulated their everyday reality, both as creators and consumers. They engaged in many different artistic forms, including painting/drawing, graffiti, music, rap, hip hop, spoken word, dance, photography, and videography. Participants recognized art’s potential to engage, to act as a catalyst for self-knowledge, social dialogue, and wider social critiques. For Thomas, art resonated with people on a deeper level and had the potential to shift ways of thinking.

Thomas: Art is cool to explore on its own and it also gets you to explore yourself. So like I really like how when I see, um people really resonating with a painting or something you know some art piece resonates with them they start question things in their lives, they start to share it with people, start opening up conversations with people and really engaging with people on whole bunch of other levels. It is amazing in that sense. (Jamaican identified, 20)

Racialized youth's artistic expressions encompassed social critiques of issues in their neighbourhoods. Art allowed participants to lay claims to the city. Their art was spatially informed; 'neighbourhood' figured centrally in their work. Their local neighbourhood acted as their muse, canvass, and at times the reason to escape through art. Their neighbourhoods inspired a particular art informed by the everyday realities in these spaces. It was a place-based art that offered both geographical and social critique and re-imagined place-making by reconstructing their neighbourhood. Below I highlight the case of SPEAK to showcase how youth use art to re-imagine space and belonging.

The Case of SPEAK

SPEAK was a youth collective that held weekly art nights in Malvern. It was started by a local youth in 2012. The collective gathered local youth together in a space provided by the library/community hall. Once a week they met to present their spoken word pieces, raps, songs, and sometimes visual art pieces. It would not be uncommon to see upwards of 200 youth from across the city (but mostly Malvern) attend the weekly event. I attended several SPEAK events over the course of few of months.

SPEAK located itself at the intersection of entertainment and education, which the participants referred to as 'edutainment.' A typical night would begin with a \$3 cover charge. Upon entrance, youth would be greeted by music played by a young deejay playing hip hop throughout the evening. Many of the youth at the weekly event were both organizers and patrons. There was a strong sense of communal solidarity amongst the youth in the space. The youth had shirts and caps made with the SPEAK logo that many wore to show their collective spirit. The youth would set up the chairs in a half moon style, with the front acting as a stage

with a microphone in the middle. Before the recitals began, everyone would introduce themselves.

To understand a typical night, I will describe my first time at SPEAK. After our introductions, one of the first performers that night was a South Asian youth. He performed a piece about his experiences growing up in Malvern (neighbourhood figured centrally in these young people's art). Despite moving out of Malvern, he continued to visit, because for him Malvern "feels like home". He was followed by a rap performance by Black Magic, a youth I met at Malvern Community Center. Black Magic's rap spoke to the interrelated issues of marginalization in formal politics (his distaste for politicians); marginalization in the school system (he valued self-knowledge over post-secondary education); a desire for reclaiming Black history; media stigmatization (he called for the community to start their own *City Pulse*-a local 24-hour news channel), and neighbourhood marginalization. Black Magic's rap was followed by a third performer, an East African hijab-wearing Muslim girl who shared a piece about missing her homeland. She spoke of her desire to return to her homeland because of the holistic and organic nature of their lifestyle. She critiqued capitalism and consumerism associated with North American life, most evidenced by the West's reliance on genetically modified foods. Several performances followed the first set.

The brief example illustrated some of the issues that were important to youth in these spaces. These are the types of issues they met weekly to discuss. It demonstrated that youth were aware of how they were represented in dominant discourses. They resisted these framings through artistic expressions. Topics varied from discussions of their diasporic realities to experiences of everyday neighbourhood marginalization and struggles. Youth shared personal stories of abuse, abortions and low self-esteem. For example, one youth spoke fearlessly about

her painful journey getting an abortion and despite her great sense of loss she knew it was the right decision. A few female performers spoke about sexual and physical abuse by an older male figure in their life. Youth made connections to larger issues of socio-economic marginalization, racism, Islamophobia, and sexism. Each week often had a specific theme that structured the night. Topics included the examination of hip hop culture and masculinity, Black masculinity, homosexuality, abuse survival stories, discussions about the role of art in society.

SPEAK was a reflective cultural space. It used spoken word and hip hop to construct a supportive culture based on openness, shared experiences, and the strong desire to uplift others. For youth, these were the key ways to build their neighbourhoods. They even adorned their bodies with messages of neighbourhood belonging. It was not uncommon to see message t-shirts. For instance, one of the performers wore a shirt that said “art is where the hood is” and an embroidered hat that said “Scarborough.” ‘Hood’ in hip hop lingo is a short form for impoverished/underserviced neighbour(hood). According to Richardson and Skott-Myhre (2012), the term encompasses “both the utopian and dystopian” features of these neighbourhoods (pg. 9). It represents an awareness of community but simultaneously recognizes the community’s marginality (Richardson and Skott-Myhre 2012). Derek at Chester Le captured both the utopian and dystopian feelings in these ‘hoods’.

Derek: The “hood” is missing the neighbour factor I think. So, you know the hood. I mean yea there is a family thing but there is not a real, at least from what I have seen, in the newer generations there is not I don’t know, there is not much morals, just like certain level of like respect for the community you know. That is the thing, neighbours are missing it is just hood now. But whatever, the hood is used to describe an underserviced community, you know that is prone to poverty and when you are prone to poverty that comes with all kinds of symptoms, drugs, alcohol, abuse, violence, domestic violence, you know it comes with all those things you know. So, when I think of the hood I think of that but I also think of determination, I think the will to survive, I think of very strong people that have endured all kind of live challenges who still find the will to wake up in the morning and keep things going. That is what I think about. (youth service provider)

The participants used art to debunk dominant discursive constructions of their ‘hood’ as a crime-ridden desolate space. For youth, as the shirt stated, the ‘hood’ despite its marginality was a place of beauty, pride, and worthy of recognition and celebration. It was in these spaces where creativity bloomed, “art is where the hood is.” This articulation of ‘hood’ was a critique of the normative, as physically represented by the core, away from Scarborough. The normative, to retain its symbolic power and remain pervasive allows little room for creativity, critique or change. The hood on the other hand, as lived practice is a “geography of conflict, hybridity, contestation, creativity, survival, warfare, unrest, resistance, and the mundane” (Richardson and Skott-Myhre pg. 29). Therefore, the hood is a perfect place for fostering art that inspires change.

SPEAK was more than a space to share grievances. It was a safe space for groups to share love and critical social commentary. It was where community was built, and this space was their town hall. Alias, a 21-year-old Somali rapper captured this sentiment when she stated that spaces like SPEAK allowed for solidarity and a place to showcase different aspects and representations of racialized identities omitted from dominant narratives.

Alias: I think one of the strongest things I have observed at SPEAK is the level of love between the men. Now that is outstanding. Hearing other men of colour saying to each other I love you, that is unseen in any other part of the city. You know, hearing youth say that you know, or seeing guys hugging each other you know just that you know that love its so, it is so beyond, it is so beyond the walls we put up. SPEAK is a way, it breaks it down for some people very slowly, for some people very quickly. Um, yea SPEAK is love. (Somalian, 22)

Through art, youth articulated a politics of recognition and expressed their grievances. Art provided a venue for hope and aspirations for youth who faced marginalization and exclusion (Pieterse 2010). Through art, youth found different connections to the city, created a way of

existing in the city situated in the “city’s sound and movement” (Lamotte 2014, pg. 688), colours, visual imagery.

Harris and Rose (2014) argue that involvement in the arts serve two important societal functions. One, it allows youth to articulate issues in a public arena where their legitimacy is not questioned. Secondly, it permits a different forum for dialogue which can foster solidarity. Through art, whether it was photography, spoken word, music, rap, youth unsettled normative frameworks of dominant society. Art is accessible to even those most marginalized which goes against dominant rules of who has the authority to represent the community (Fredericks 2014). Art allowed racialized youth to cultivate a sense of belonging to their city and renegotiate dominant discourses about them and their neighbourhoods.

Conclusion

Hip hop and rap have been viewed as both a social ill as well as an “expression of cultural resistance” (Tanner, Asbridge, Wortley 2009, pg. 694). Lamotte (2014) argues that hip hop is a “hidden transcript” that comes from spaces of marginalization and “inscribed” in the claims to the city (pg. 686). The power of hip hop comes from its “aesthetical sensibility”, that is a combination of affect “such as rage, passion, lust, critique, pleasure, and desire” which turns into “political identities” and “agency” (Pieterse 2010, pg. 428). Racialized youth draw on hip hop and art as a site to negotiate difference and an expression of their sense of belonging to their neighbourhoods. These creative engagements are both expressions of attachment and social connection that both indirectly and directly critique relations of power. They rethink exclusion by offering spaces of inclusion. The current chapter demonstrated how youth through creative

engagements contributed to an alternative political belonging. One that offered an alternative counter politics to formal politics that excluded them.

My interest in art as a site of resisting socio-economic, ethno-racial, and spatial marginalization and cultivating a sense of belonging led to the focus of the next chapter, a participatory photo-voice project. I wanted to understand through a more directed, participatory approach how youth in Chester Le can use art to express and negotiate belonging and difference in their everyday life in their neighbourhoods. Since The Hub did not have art programs, I wanted to explore the potentialities of an art-based program for social change in this neighbourhood.

“Know the city love me, know the, know the city love me. All my Malvern girls ‘cause you know the city love me, all my Rexdale girls ‘cause you know the city love me. All my Flemo girls because you know the city love me, know the city love me. I was raised in Flemo 2004, shortly after that I gave Malvern a turn” (Rap, Malvern youth).

CHAPTER 9: RE-IMAGING NEIGHBOURHOODS - REPRESENTING EVERYDAY DIFFERENCE AND BELONGING



Taylor’s picture of Chester Le front foyer



Big’s picture of a group of children in the of The Hub

I incorporated a participatory element to my research to both learn about the participants’ lives as well as examine whether research could be used more directly for social change. It led to my experimentation with photo-voice. There have been a few examples of photo-voice being used as an “empowerment technique” for disenfranchised groups, including youth (Gant, et al. 2009, pg. 358; Seitz, et al. 2012). Gant, L. M. et al. (2009) in their study found that photo-voice, especially among older youth encouraged them to get civically involved in their community. Photo-voice not only encourages participants to document their realities but also act as an ‘agent of change’ that encourages participants to reflect and engage with their socio-spatial realities. For Bourdieu (as cited in Back 2009), visual sociology or the use of photographs in sociology allows insight into aspects of the social world which is captured and simultaneously speaks to the choices made by the person who takes the photos. The meanings of photographs are made

through the “social relationship between the image, the context, those who look at it, and the circulation of discourses they used to make meaning” (Back 2009, pg. 482).

I asked eight participants to take photographs either with the disposable cameras I provided or their personal cameras. I instructed them to take pictures that represented their community. I told them to focus on what made them feel attached to the community and what made them feel excluded. I used semi-structured interviews and focus groups to discuss the images they captured.

The approach provided insight into the way youth perceived, understood, interpreted, and navigated difference in their communities and how they imagined life in the city. According to Wood (2014), photo-voice also allows for the capture of “spatial narratives” beyond the community center setting. It offers insights on a different aspect of the participants’ lives and experiences compared to those discerned through more traditional research methods (pg. 220). The approach gauges an understanding of youth belonging. It also contributes to the advancement of their sense of belonging by getting youth to explore what belonging entails and its limits. The aim is to help them understand how they can resist exclusionary boundaries. It might allow them to imagine opportunities for social change.

Because The Hub did not have art-based programs, I decided to conduct my photo-voice project with Chester Le youth. There was one youth in Malvern who wanted to participate, so I included his photos as well. I encountered bigger obstacles than I anticipated when I began the photo-voice project. In fact, it was the reason why my original one-year timeframe for my fieldwork was extended by four months.

My initial goal was to give the cameras to the youth who were part of a program and instruct them to return the cameras when they completed the project. However, when I told the

youth service providers my plan, they were quick to warn that if I gave the participants the cameras, there was no guarantee they would be returned. They also worried about the types of photos I would receive. They suggested I incorporate the project into the program and have the participants return the camera the same day. Another obstacle was finding time in the program. Most of the weeks were filled with other activities that were mandatory because they were tied to official guidelines constructed with funders. Funding depended on ensuring certain criteria were met. When the date of the project finally arrived it had to be postponed due to a rainstorm. These are the types of obstacles researchers don't account for when attempting participatory research. I didn't want to leave the field and return to do the photo-voice project because I thought it would negatively affect my relationship with the youth. It was a relationship I worked hard to cultivate. Therefore, I decided to stay for few more months. Participatory research requires researchers to work around the participants' schedules and desires.

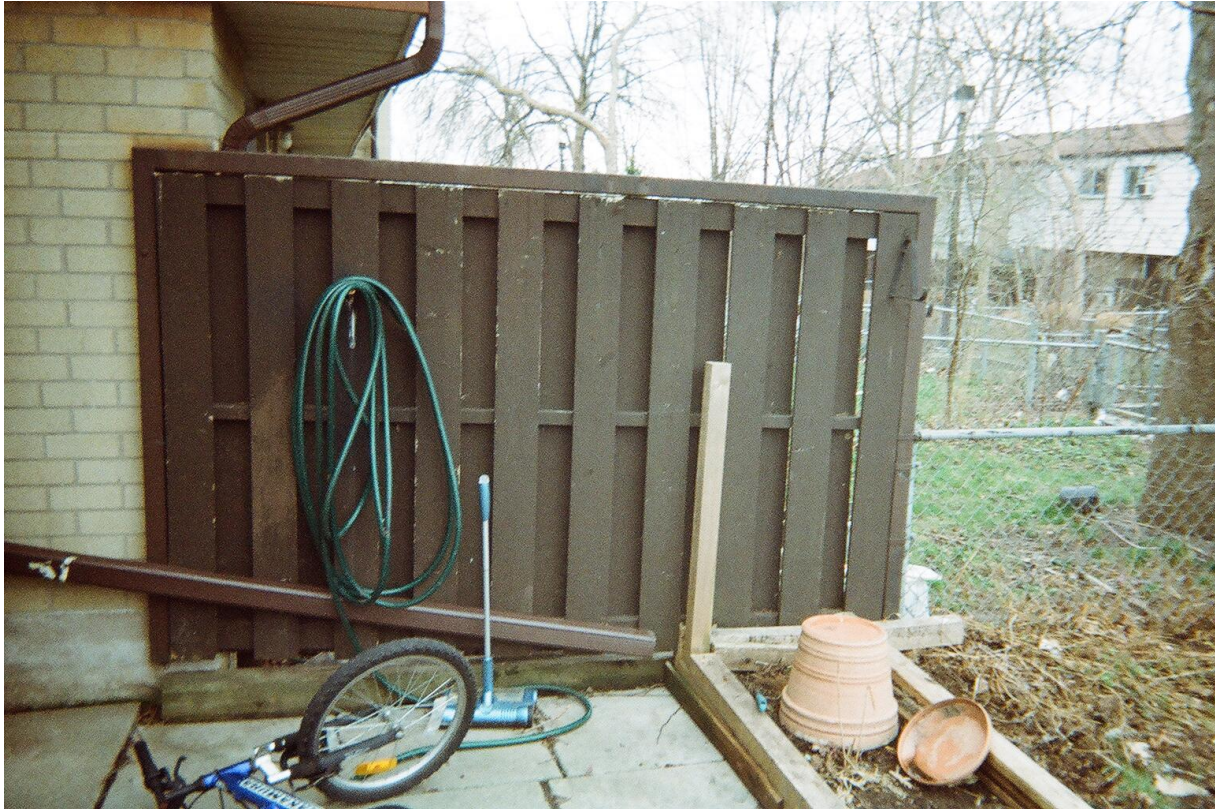
The youth were excited to be a part of the process. I explained the project a week prior and instructed them to think about some of the pictures they might want to capture. The youth were intrigued by the disposable camera. In an era of smartphones, a disposable camera was a novelty item. Donte, one of the participants, was vocally skeptical about the camera's ability to produce pictures. In fact, Donte only believed it would take pictures after I gave him the developed film. He was excited when he saw the developed pictures and asked if he could keep them. All participants were given a copy of their photographs.

Participants went out into the community at the same time with the cameras. After a few hours, they returned with their cameras. I developed the photos and the following week conducted a focus group with all the participants. Prior to the focus group, I interviewed the two girls in the project together. I conducted an individual interview with Thomas from Malvern. I

received consent from the participants to use their pictures. They signed a separate consent form for pictures that revealed their identities. I asked questions about their pictures and why they took them. The camera permitted the participants to capture moments unencumbered by my presence. It also allowed them to look at things they saw every day with a new lens, to think at a more conscious level about realities they often took for granted. Through the photo-voice process I found that the participants' belonging was tied to their socio-spatial attachments. The first theme I discuss is the idea of shared space being important for a sense of belonging.

Shared Space and Belonging

Hakeem took a photograph of a backyard in the neighbourhood where he and his friends used to run through when they played games as children. For Hakeem and Donte this photograph represented their childhood where they used to play games and jump over the fences into their neighbours' yards. The picture spoke to the internal dynamics of Chester Le. I found that there was a sense of community where people didn't police each other's access to spaces. There was a shared atmosphere where children could run through others' gardens without disapproval. However, in some incidences this posed problems. For example, Ann, a resident discussed a serious problem she was having with her neighbour because their son broke something in her yard as he was running through it. The conflict had taken a racial turn. The boy was Somali, as a result Ann felt she was being bullied by the Somali community in the neighbourhood. She partially attributed this to the fact that she was single and a South American Chinese woman.



Hakeem: That is the days I used to play manhunt, I used to run there and hide.

Donte: That is where we used to hide all the time

Hakeem: We used to hop over the fence.

Anu: This is some else's house?

Hakeem: Yea

The role of communal areas had socio-spatial significance in the cultivation of belonging. In fact, each participant took pictures of the community center. I asked Yasmin why she took a picture of a communal space in Chester Le.

Yasmin: Yea, people sit there, let me see, it is like a fun playground.

Faduma: I guess.

Yasmin: A small playground, or it is for people that smoke or something, I see them. No, no, seriously.

Anu: Like older or younger people?

Yasmin: Both. Younger people like teenagers play basketball here, skateboard, they just skateboard here.

Through the photographs, the participants expressed the importance of community to their sense of belonging. They discussed the need to actively cultivate a sense of community through things like community centers.



Local community gather place

Several of the participants took photographs of another community center as well as the center they currently attended. I asked Faduma why she took pictures of the community centers and she stated it was because they represented the importance of being involved in the civic life of their neighbourhood. The centers were her means to get involved in the neighbourhood. Even for her required volunteer hours for school, she had chosen to volunteer in her community.

Anu: Why did you also take a picture of The Hub sign?

Faduma: Because, I think you should get involved in the community.

The participants also had an ambiguous relationship with the concept of community. They felt they belonged but simultaneously felt disconnected, at times they believed they lived among strangers. In these settings, community centers were particularly important for the cultivation of a sense of community.

Thomas's explanation of a photograph of a youth walking in Malvern captured this ambiguity. I assumed the youth in the picture was his friend. However, to my surprise, the boy in the picture was a stranger. Thomas took a picture of the stranger because he was captivated at how in deep thought the boy was while walking in the neighbourhood. Despite his curiosity, Thomas thought it would be too strange to ask the boy about his thoughts. Despite living in close proximity he felt there was still a lack of a sense of community in his neighbourhood. There was a sense people did not know their neighbours. But he quickly recognized that due to social investments into the neighbourhood a sense of community was being revitalized. For Thomas, socio-economic disparities caused people to look inward. Through these photos, Thomas expressed how socio-economic inequalities affected how people related to others in these spaces.

Thomas: Uh, there is a lot of interesting characters walking the streets, a lot of people they don't, a lot of noticed faces but they don't talk and I always wonder what are they thinking about. Some people, they have a very focused look on them, they are really lost in their thoughts and stuff. Like even though we live in the same community we don't know what is going on with the guy living in the house next to you... I think it is just like, less than a sense of community than it was before. I feel like it is sort of coming back, like obviously it is, like spaces like Malvern Community Center there is more investment in community. Well, sort of, there is more investment in community programs, or interest anyways, maybe not yea. But um, I guess. I guess like for the last few years, because of the recession and all that stuff, a lot of people have been focused on keeping their own, holding their own, making sure they are well off, rather than worrying about the community. As long as they have a house to live, they have to worry about feeding themselves rather than are we taking care of the community gardens or how the youth are doing in the community. We need to engage them more.



Relative Disparity

The idea of relative disparity was a common thread that informed belonging by those living in these neighbourhoods. The participants were aware of the relative disparity in their neighbourhood. They faced this in minute ways in their everyday life. They encountered physical and social manifestations of disparity in mundane, taken for granted ways. For example, few of the participants took photographs of the ‘nicer’ parts of their neighbourhood. Chester Le was a social housing townhouse complex, but there were few privately owned detached houses. For the participants, these houses represented the “nicer parts” of their neighbourhood. Hakeem took pictures of the houses across the street and referred to it as ‘the rich part.’ What he referred to as “rich” most Canadians would consider a typical middle-class home. These were the everyday ways youth confronted their relative disparity. For Hakeem, the house motivated him to work hard so he could buy his mother a similar house. For others, the relative disparity only heightened their sense of alienation.



Hakeem: That is the rich part.

Anu: That is a big house.

Hakeem: That is a the rich part of Chester Le. That is motivation.

Anu: Motivation.

Hakeem: One day.

Anu: Two garages.

Hakeem: So I can bring my mom to that house, but in a different area.

Identity

Participants' negotiations of their hyphenated identities also informed their sense of belonging.

The participants' photographs captured both the hyphenated nature of their Canadianness as well as their ambiguity towards attachment to Canada. Ethno-racial and religious identities were formative for their sense of belonging. For example, I asked Yasmin why she posed with the peace sign; she stated it was because she was Muslim. This picture challenged dominant representations of Islam as a violent religion.



Anu: Why the peace sign?

Yasmin: Peace, come on, peace, us you know Muslim when we say hi we say peace, peace upon you right. It is like alaykum. So for me when I go home and I get out we say, it is short cut, we say salaam right. It is like alright peace, it is like peace out. I even say it with my friends' peace out.

These were the everyday ways the participants expressed and rearticulated their identities.

Through photo-voice, the participants offered counter-narratives to the dominant negative images of their identities that circulated in media. Participants' assertions of their ethno-religious identities were not at the expense of their sense of 'Canadianness.' For example, several of the participants took a picture of a Canadian flag.



Donte: I am used to seeing it at school and because I am Canadian.

I asked Donte why he took a picture of a Canadian flag; he responded: “because I am Canadian.”

In an earlier focus group, independent of the current program, he said he did not feel Canadian because of the everyday racism he experienced, especially by the police. Donte’s seeming contradiction captured the ambiguous sense of Canadianness that so many racialized youth experience. They felt they belonged while simultaneously feeling like an outcast. His photograph also captured the intersection of nationalism, citizenship, Canadianness, and schooling. Donte associated the flag as something he was used to seeing at school. School is a major site where belonging to the nation-state is cultivated. Despite their sense of attachment to Canada and their ethno-racial and religious identities youth in marginalized neighbourhoods were constantly reminded about their ‘otherness’ in multiple ways. One of the most common

reminders of their ‘otherness’ highlighted by the photo-voice project was ongoing police harassment and state surveillance.

Surveillance and Policing of Young People

Despite an attachment to their neighbourhood, the participants felt constantly marginalized. It was largely due to the heavy police presence in their community. Almost every participant took a photograph of a police car in the neighbourhood. Despite the fact, the participants took pictures on their own, in pairs, or smaller groups and still managed to take pictures of a police car at different times illustrates the constant police presence in the neighbourhood. All of the male participants (except Taylor) did not like the unwarranted police presence and wanted to highlight their aversion for the police. Even though Taylor felt the police protected the neighbourhood, he acknowledged they harassed his friends and not him. It could be because he was Asian and his friends were Black. Asians are often seen as a model minority and therefore do not have the same relations with the police as other groups in Chester Le.



Hakeem: Because I don't like the police.

Anu: How come?

Hakeem: Because they are bad people, because they serve and protect themselves.

I asked Big about his photograph of the police, he similarly said:

Big: Because cops around here always harass us.

Anu: How come?

Hakeem: Because they are jerks.

For Taylor the experience was dissimilar:

Taylor: Because they protect us around the community.

Anu: How come you are the only one that says that?

Johnathan: Um.

Anu: How come all your friends disagreed?

Taylor: Because they are harassed though, harassed.

Anu: They don't harass you?

Taylor: They don't harass me.

The example demonstrated that youth often had different perspectives of the same picture based on their situated realities. The two female participants, Faduma and Yasmin, had a different relationship to the police. Their gender mostly shielded them from everyday police harassment, but this did not mean they did not fear the police. They feared the police presence because they associated them with negative incidences. The fear was encapsulated by a story Yasmin shared. One day Yasmin helped a lost child with a disability in her neighbourhood. The police later contacted her to thank her for her assistance. She admitted that when they contacted her, she was initially scared. Any form of contact with the police, even when positive was marked with a bit of uncertainty.

Faduma: Because normally, I think almost every other day I see a police car or a cop walking around the neighbourhood which sometimes scares me that something bad is going to happen.

Anu: Like they are going to do something bad or something bad is happening?

Faduma: Something bad is happening.

Anu: So you feel safe because of them?

Faduma: Sometimes.

Yasmin: Sometimes you see police it is like no, you know something bad is going on so you just stay inside the house. Like when we have police, they are there to keep us safe. Two, there is different kind of reasons when you see a police car.

The constant police presence was not the only way some participants felt over-surveilled in their neighbourhood. Donte discussed the constant surveillance and disciplining that people in Chester Le were subjected to due to the fact that they lived in a public housing complex. He took a photograph of a sign found throughout the community that showcased some of the arbitrary rules imposed which have racial implications. The subject of the photograph was a sign barring alcohol consumption, playing cards, dice, or dominos in the common areas. He understood why smoking or drinking might be prohibited but did not understand the barring of dominos. Dominos is a popular pastime for those from the Caribbean, this prohibition had racial and cultural implications where certain groups felt targeted.

Through a participatory approach, I was able to garner details about their lives that I was not able to glean from semi-structured focus groups and interviews. Interviews and focus groups, for the most part, were guided by me as the researcher. I set the parameters of the topics and discussions through my questions and follow-up questions. However, through a participatory visual research method, I gave youth the opportunity to make visual selections that conveyed everyday issues that I was not aware of in the community. For example, I did not notice many of the signs posted around the neighbourhood. In many cases the concerted effort to convey meaning through photographs forced youth to analyze, for example, signs that they might have taken for granted in their everyday life.

Donte: Because, to be honest, I think it is a stupid rule about you can't play dominos in the parking lot. I can understand no drinking, no smoking, no domino playing in the area is kind of stupid and no trespassing, so.



Big also took a photograph of a sign notifying the neighbourhood of ongoing video surveillance.



Despite harassment, disciplining, and constant surveillance the participants engaged in resistive practices and renegotiated dominant discourses that governed their existence.

Rearticulation of Dominant Discourses

Given the opportunity to make visual selections youth conveyed everyday rearticulations of dominant discourses and resistance. Photo-voice permitted participants to rearticulate dominant representations of their identities and their communities. Their photographs demonstrated both intentional and unintentional forms of resistance to dominant discourses. For example, Yasmin took a picture of a (what appears to be a Somali) father pushing his two children on the swings in the local park. The park signified many different things for the participants, safety for some, and for others a sense of home. In fact, several of the participants took photographs of the park.

When I asked Yasmin about the man in the photograph, she revealed that she did not know the father, but nonetheless asked if she could take the picture. She expressed there was a sense of familiarity in their neighbourhood. Even though the father did not know her, she thought he probably saw her before in the neighbourhood. According to her, that was why he agreed to be in the photo. The familiarity was also a result of living in a smaller neighbourhood, not readily found in Malvern.

Yasmin: This is a park, they are with their dad, cause they are safe and I, I asked him that I could take a picture for that picture, and yea.

Anu: Where they okay with you taking their picture?

Yasmin: Yea they were okay, they are like okay, they are like fine with it. I think they have seen me before. If you ask them politely and all that they will say yes...Park, the playground, the playground is the most important thing in our community because every day, every single day, if it is raining, if it is snowing, you will see people there, you will see someone in the park. For example, me I walk everyday through the park to go to my school. So, the park is the, when I look at the park I am like finally I am home. You know what I mean.

Like Yasmin, for many youth Chester Le was a safe place to live contrary to mainstream media representations. There was a sense of familiarity with the residents. Chester Le was not a place of crime, absentee fathers, and moral decay as often represented. The father in this picture captured this often unrecognized reality.



The park represented different things to the participants, again it illustrated how the same subject of a photo held various meanings and conjured up varying sentiments. For Yasmin, the park represented community, safety, familiarity, kinship. For Donte, the park represented an alternative representation of Chester Le. He took a similar photograph of the park, but he was explicit in his intention to dispel homogenous representations of Chester Le. For Donte, the newness of the playground structure which replaced an old play structure signified the positive changes in the community that rarely gets media attention.

Donte: I took picture of the park because this neighbourhood is represented in a certain way. I took a picture of the playground because everyone views the neighbourhood the same way. It might not be the same way as a couple of years [ago].

Resistance and rearticulation of dominant discursive constructions were a constant theme within the photo-voice project. It demonstrated the emancipatory potential of photo-narratives. None of the participants described their neighbourhood as unsafe or crime-prone. In fact, all said it was safe. For example, when I asked Yasmin why she took a photograph of some youth walking

in the community, she stated that she wanted to capture the positive aspects of everyday life in Chester Le.

Yasmin: Over here, friends chilling, walking by, they are safe and it is a good weather, there is nothing bad about it. Everyone is safe, you see cars over here, the houses.



Similarly, Thomas took a photograph of a social housing unit in Malvern which was known as ‘dangerous.’ His photograph rebuked this idea and showed the everyday realities of these spaces. Thomas recognized that despite the ‘rougher’ elements of the area; however, for the most part, it was a diverse place with families, love, and a sense of community.

Thomas: [I]t looks pretty cozy. The basketball court is over there, even though there is no kids running over there right now I always see some little kid going around. It kind of loops, so a lot of kids, little kids like to go and race each other on their bikes, there is always some kids playing street hockey, like right down where the truck is, a lot of kids play street hockey by that house, or basketball or soccer.

Anu: What kind of people live there?

Thomas: It is mixed. Everyone. There is White people, Black people, Brown people, old people...you do see some rough people coming in and out sometimes. They are pretty cool, everyone is kind of chilling, everyone knows where everyone lives. Um, I don't know. When you walk through there, you see everybody...There are really loving families. You walk by a house and you see love radiating out, people just, yea, and then like you see a lot of elderly people. Some elderly people just chilling on their steps...

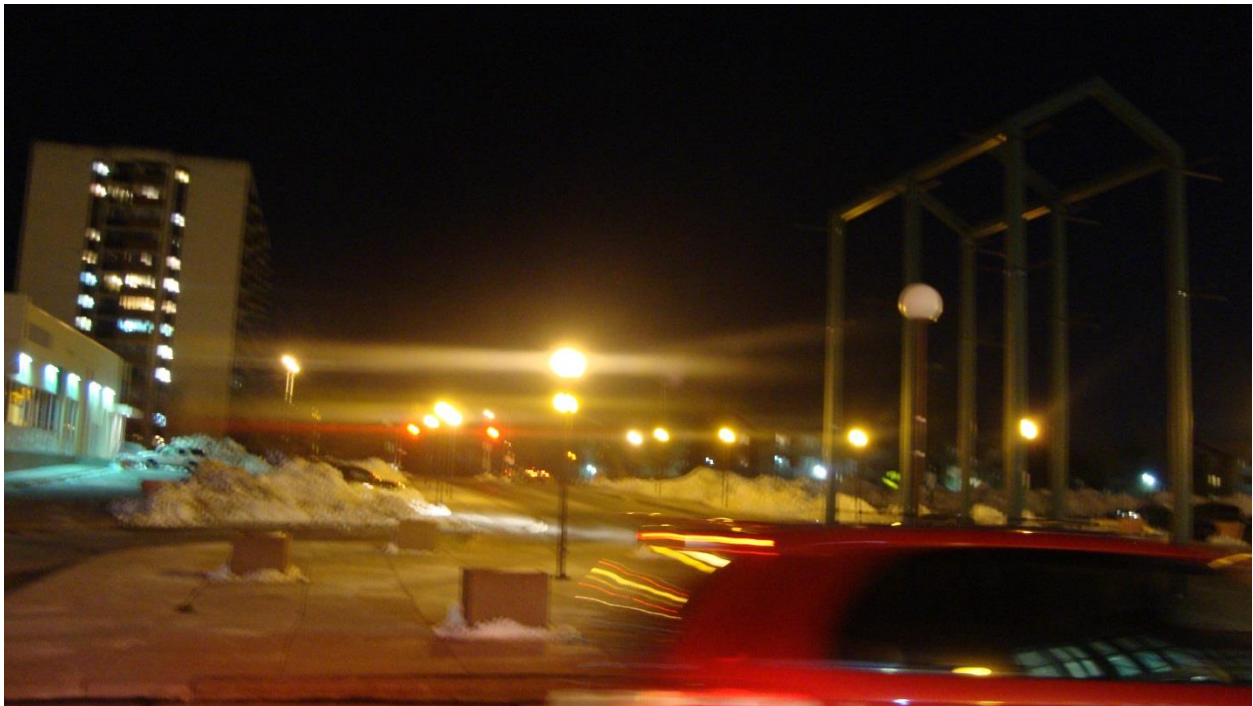


Thomas also took a photograph of Malvern at night to dispel widespread ideas that it was not a safe place to walk at night. He also recognized that this had not always been the case, but attributed increased safety to community programs.

Thomas: [W]hen I was in grade 9 and like in elementary school there was a lot of, a lot of kids running around getting jumped and all that kind of stuff... Um, I don't know, that was, that was fun too, that added a edge to it. We were all cognizant of the fact we could get jumped going home, like in the catwalk or something or even in the parking lot of the mall. We always had to look around, but for the most part we were relaxed about it. We knew there was enough of us together to hold our own if we really, really had to. But at

the end of the day if someone wants something from us, we are not going to sit there trying to get stabbed. Like if we have 2 dollars I am not balling out, I don't have a job you know. So.

Thomas looked back at his fears and experiences nostalgically, almost as a rite of passage for young people in his neighbourhood. Albeit many attested to the decrease in the number of robberies, many of the participants in high school stated that it continued to happen. Thomas's belief that robberies were less common could also be attributed to the fact that he was no longer in high school and therefore he was more immune to these incidences.



Thomas' photograph of Malvern Town Center's parking lot at night.

Another way participants resisted dominant representations of their neighbourhood was by rearticulating their neighbourhoods as green spaces. These were images often not associated with either neighbourhood. For example, Hakeem took several pictures of the greenery in Chester Le. Contrary to dominant representations these spaces were not simply 'suburban wastelands.' For Hakeem, gardens, flowers, and plants in Chester Le were a defining aspect of

the neighbourhood's physical landscape. In fact, the gardening program was the most popular program at the center.



Hakeem: Everyone plants, everyone plants flowers and stuff. [Taylor is in the frame]

Similarly, Thomas from Malvern took photographs of greenery and cited the importance of green space in the neighbourhood. He recognized that those outside the neighbourhood did not associate greenery with Malvern. He contrasted this with downtown, which to him was the real unlivable place because of its congestion and pollution.

Thomas: There is still a lot of green here, there is still a lot of trees and a lot of natural spots. Um, it is not smoggy and populated like downtown, there is a lot of space, it is never really busy, so I feel. It is just very calming.

I am not arguing that participants did not have unadulterated utopian ideas of their community. They did capture images of the ‘run-down’ nature or the ill-maintained aspects of their neighbourhoods. By highlighting these elements participants showcased the changes they desired in their communities.



William’s photograph of an ill-maintained electricity meter box.

Presence

Through their photographs, the participants also asserted their desire to be seen and heard in their social spaces. For example, Thomas shared a photograph of his friend’s graffiti work. I asked why he captured that specific image; he explained it was because it highlighted the importance of art and the need to respect youth’s voices. Thomas stated that graffiti programs in the neighbourhood have declined. His friend got in trouble for tagging at school. But Thomas blamed this on the lack of places to practice graffiti. He argued that instead of criminalizing

graffiti it needed to be seen as a legitimate art form that could beautify the city, while simultaneously allowing youth to assert their legitimacy to public spaces. Thomas suggested creative ways to incorporate graffiti art into the neighbourhood and make youth feel included. For example, he suggested instead of painting over electrical boxes that get tagged, graffiti art could be used to decorate the boxes. It was one example of the different ways youth asserted their belonging in the city. The picture also illustrated how participants who recognized their marginality in wider society carved out their own spaces.



Conclusion

Wang and Redwood-Jones (as cited in Molloy 2007) lay out the main goals of photo-voice: 1) allow individuals to capture and think about the negative and positive aspects of their

community; 2) encourage discussion about issues; 3) an alternative way to engage policy-makers. It is done in the hopes of social change (Molloy 2007). According to Molloy (2007), photo-voice is grounded in the idea that youth have expertise that those outside do not possess. Photo-voice validates youth's experiences and encourages "self-advocacy" (Molloy 2007, pg. 45; Moore et al. 2008). The power of photographs lies in their ability to make "a sensory connection" between different people (Molloy 2007, pg. 49). Through the use of photo-voice youth conceptualized belonging in their neighbourhoods. They highlighted things that made them feel like they belonged, for example, feelings of safety, nostalgia, familiarity. The photographs revealed the centrality of the neighbourhood in their life. It also demonstrated the many ways the participants navigated difference in their everyday lives. The use of photo-voice also had great emancipatory potential. Participants used their photos to resist dominant negative representations of their neighbourhoods and rearticulated their neighbourhood identities.

The photo-voice project was experimental. I demonstrated the great potential it has to strengthen youth's participation in policy discussions. The project was used to engage youth in a critical discussion about their perceptions of experiences and issues that inform their sense of belonging in their communities. Sharing the photos with their peers in the focus group helped cultivate critical consciousness. Youth were confident using the method. Photos were a great way to share grievances and create and discuss social change. In the future, the participants can share the photos with others both inside and outside their communities. It provided a good opening for social change by increasing awareness of their experiences and issues in their communities (Molloy 2007).

“This is the voice of our musicians. This is the song that will satisfy a nation, the people that will change a generation. Like TV with this opportunity see this music is part of you and me, for real. Grow up we never came from the block, we blow up we say we came from the Malvern Community Center” (Rap, Malvern youth).

CHAPTER 10: CONCLUSION

The objective of this study was to examine the way youth experience belonging and negotiate difference in two ‘priority neighbourhoods’, Malvern and Chester Le. In what ways did local neighbourhood spaces inform belonging and negotiations of difference? How did youth reproduce dominant scripts and rupture others in relating to and identifying with their peers, family, friends and neighbours? Yuval-Davis (2006) provided a schema to understand the relationship between belonging and un-belonging; that belonging is framed by inclusions, (membership within), and exclusions. Structured by relations of power, individuals are located socially in ways that enable or disable their inclusion and the sense of connection that being a part of something affords. This approach tends to foreground the way national identities are produced to include some and exclude others through axes of race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality and class. Bourdieu (1984) however offered me valuable concepts, particularly that of social field and habitus to spatialize Yuval Davis’s framework for belonging. In this way, I sought to rescale belonging onto the neighbourhood level. Habitus illuminates the way youth in the case of this study, are positioned to reproduce the structures of power — institutions, norms and world views in their everyday lives. I sought to elicit how youth made sense of these conditions, namely, their agency- how they interpreted their social world particularly their understanding of difference. The study nonetheless points to the way their sense of belonging is deeply structured by exclusions in which these neighbourhoods are embedded. In the next section, I summarize the findings and consider the contributions of the study: its implications for future research and practical and policy related questions and initiatives.

Through the media analysis in Chapter Five I found that Chester Le and Malvern were constructed as poor places, plagued by gun violence and gang activity, and antithetical to the ‘core’ of the city. The racial tone of media framings arguably reproduced at times indirectly, negative representations of black youth in ways that marginalized them through stereotyping for example. The image of absentee fathers, promiscuous single mothers and dependency on social assistance were coded language for Blackness. The Black and Brown young body was depicted as something to fear.

Despite these negative framings, I found that these identities - of being Black or Brown, and that of a national or ethnic heritage, were important sources of self and pride for the participants in the study, as I discussed in Chapter Six. Participants maintained strong ethno-racial identities and attachments despite being second and third generation. Ethno-racial identities provided a foundation for their life and acted as a guideline for their life choices. Race was interwoven with ethnic identities and the complex backgrounds of youth who had diverse immigrant and ethno-racial family histories. These identity markers were ‘messy’, and contextual. Youth self-identified in many different ways, often in the same interaction. For example, a second generation Canadian Jamaican youth might identify simultaneously with their national identity, regional (Caribbean), ancestral (African), or racial (Black). The descriptors I used were chosen by the participants and rooted in particular interactions. These markers should not be taken as their only or even their primary identity.

At the same time, youth were associated with particular traits or qualities - cultural, ethnic and racial stereotypes that formed a position and a boundary from which they would evaluate, include and at times exclude other youth. Their own identity was at times reinforced by or grounded in this othering of peers or even friends. For example, many Asian youths took

pride in being ‘nerdy.’ It separated them from the ‘street tough’ Black youth, a stereotype which reaffirmed both their position in the racial hierarchy and connection to other Asian youth. Some of the Black youth distanced themselves by viewing other groups as less “cool” or physically weak. When the participants distanced themselves, they rarely questioned these stereotypes. For example, many of the participants did not interrogate the systemic issues that render Black youth disproportionately affected by discrimination in employment opportunities which might lead some to engage in criminal activities, or why it might be problematic to call Tamil youth ‘terrorists.’ These assumptions illustrate how dominant ideas of race or a cultural group are reified and reproduced in spaces like Malvern and Chester Le, where the dominant White group does not reside in large numbers.

Still, I found that participants in the study recognized that living with diverse groups of people allowed them to be more accepting of differences and cultivated their ability to traverse diverse groups. Such moments of connection, however, were nonetheless offset or subverted particularly in times of conflict when differences between groups would be reinforced. Participants engaged in inter/intra-identity disciplining, policing ethnic-cultural and racial boundaries in minute ways. One way boundaries were maintained was through parental socialization. Some participants mentioned that parents began to monitor their friendships as they entered high school; parents would categorize different groups of youth peers in relation to whether they were likely to have positive or negative influences on their children. Intercultural relations were also informed by economic and cultural comparisons. For example, some of the participants recognized that some groups were more economically successful than others, and the success of other groups was a source of resentment. The sense of resentment was heightened in neighbourhood spaces because this is where individuals most directly encountered others in their

daily lives, whether it was at the grocery store, mall, or park. It translated into how groups perceived others to be differentially treated by the general public, institutions, government, and even corporations.

Participants' understandings of inter-ethnic relations was a direct result of living in diverse, 'priority' neighbourhoods, where ethno-racial difference was unavoidable. It was in these local spaces where they bumped up against diversity and interacted with those different from them. In sum, their reflections about themselves and each other, their social identities were informed by dispositions—expressed through habitus - the repeated practices through which they reproduced the social relations of race and ethnic identity that informed who they were. I argue that such dispositions were constituted within their neighbourhood spaces, to forge a local sense of belonging that was nested in broader social and economic dynamics.

The importance of place and specific neighbourhoods as sites of inequality, exclusion and inclusion is depicted and evidenced throughout this thesis. In Chapter Seven, I illustrated that the participants recognized the negative representations of their neighbourhood spaces or social fields. Youth in these neighbourhoods were framed by hegemonic discourses as 'at-risk,' racialized, troubled, and disengaged. The discourse analysis conducted in this study revealed that residency in these neighbourhoods was associated with moral decay and criminality. The participants realized that many outside their neighbourhoods including teachers, police, youth service providers, reporters held negative views about their neighbourhoods. Some of the youth reproduced these dominant scripts in their everyday practices, whether it was by 'acting tough' or being involved in crime or gang activities. For some youth, there was a sense of pride that came from the negative framings of their neighbourhood as tough, which they drew on strategically when outside their neighbourhood. This type of posturing was also essential for

their social survival both inside and outside their neighbourhood. Neighbourhoods informed their ways of being, talking, acting, dressing, and even what they deemed possible, and some realized this could negatively impact them when they left their neighbourhoods for the core.

Many participants faced discrimination on the basis of where they lived, which structured their opportunities. Discrimination often prevented employers from hiring youth from these neighbourhoods, which they perceived as negatively impacting their chances of securing employment. Their addresses prevented pizza stores from delivering to their homes and informed how others treated them; for example, bus drivers would not wait for them, and teachers held stereotypical views.

I found that participants recognized that the ‘priority’ label was intended to allocate resources; yet such labelling also had negative effects, such as relegating those who resided in priority neighbourhoods as ‘other’ and these spaces, as dangerous. Some youth recognized that these labels were coded ways of saying ‘non-White’ spaces. Youth who lived in community housing experienced particular alienation, especially in regards to the over-surveillance of their daily movements, whether it was by police or security cameras that dotted the complexes. Residency in these neighbourhoods resulted in higher police profiling and harassment because of the associated negative labels. These neighbourhoods were contrasted with the core which participants perceived as holding power, where dominant members of society- the financial, political, intellectual, or media, elite, lived. They recognized that those in wealthier areas had more life opportunities and access to resources.

I found that the discursive constructions of these neighbourhoods reflected or was reinforced by the material conditions of the participants’ neighbourhoods and lives: living in community housing, constant police harassment and limited access to employment, produced a

particular habitus that informed youth's sense of belonging and engagement in the city. Youth's dispositions were informed by the recognition that their identity in the wider city was one that was marginalized, criminalized, and racialized. The youth participants recognized that they had to switch or to perform a different type of identity and speech if they wanted to engage in established power structures, most of which they perceived as residing in the core.

However, neighbourhoods were also used as a resource to protect themselves from racism. These spaces provided them with a place where they felt safe with people of similar ethno-racial identities and enabled them to avoid the racism they faced when they ventured to other spaces. Neighbourhoods could then, forge a sense of belonging that had moreover, creative and even alternate potential.

Specifically, participants used art to interrogate their place in their community as discussed in Chapter Eight. They recognized art's potential to act as a catalyst for self-knowledge, dialogue, and social critiques. Many of these critiques centered on issues in their neighbourhoods, such as the absence of positive representations of their neighbourhoods and its inhabitants, lack of commercial and government investment in these spaces, over-policing of their communities, poor transit. Art was an important way the participants laid claims to the city. Their place-based art re-imagined place-making by reconstructing their neighbourhood. The participants drew on hip hop and art as a site to articulate their grievances, whether it was racism, sexism, police brutality, over-surveillance. Art also helped them express their attachment to their neighbourhoods. They shared stories of how their neighbourhoods made them feel loved, safe, welcomed. Art and hip hop offered a space of inclusion. Artistic practices provided an alternative that was arguably a political counter to the formal politics from which they felt excluded. The photo-voice project revealed the centrality of neighbourhoods in the participants' lives discussed

in Chapter Nine. Participants used their photos to resist dominant negative representations of their neighbourhoods and re-articulated their neighbourhood identities as spaces of belonging, safety, attachment, diversity, and sense of community.

Study Implications

There are five important contributions of the study that I highlight. Firstly, neighbourhoods figure centrally in the lives of youth in marginalized spaces. The study demonstrates that sense of belonging can be rooted in neighbourhoods. Youth experiences of inclusion and exclusion have an important spatial element. It is particularly true for youth who due to limited resources are more confined to their local spaces compared to their adult counterparts (Harris 2009; 2013; 2014). Bourdieu's concepts of social field and habitus provide a sociological way to spatialize belonging, whether it is at the level of neighbourhood, schools, or community centers. By centering a spatial analysis, the examination of belonging and difference which are usually maintained at the nation (Yuval-Davis 2006) or city (Bonnerjee 2013) level are rescaled to the neighborhood.

My findings moreover resonate with several studies in the Canadian context that directly or indirectly suggest that the negotiations of difference have a spatial and regional context that begs further research. For example, Byers and Tastsoglou's (2008) work on ethno-cultural identities of Greek and Jewish youth in Halifax indicates that living in a space with smaller immigrant populations had particular implications for the "articulations" and "performance" of their identities (pg. 24). These homogenous spaces rendered them "both too visible and invisible" (pg.27). Similarly, Cairns (2013) illustrates that spatial differences of rural versus urban centers informs a sense of whiteness amongst youth in rural Ontario.

There are also studies that focus on how marginalized youth experience exclusion and racialization in particular neighbourhood spaces. Gosine and Islam's (2014) examination of youth in Toronto's Regent Park schools found that they are discriminated on the basis of neighbourhood. However, simultaneously they found a "strong sense of community" among the residents. Racial and class oppression heightened residents' sense of community. Zaami (2015) found a dialectical relationship between social and spatial exclusion among Ghanaian youth in Toronto's Jane and Finch neighbourhood. The youth in the study credited their limited access to the labour market and increased racial profiling by police as an outcome of living in these spaces. The studies reveal the centrality of space in the lives of marginalized youth, and for their sense of exclusion and inclusion.

These works center the importance of local place and demonstrate the need to focus on the particularity of spaces in constituting ethnic and racial identities in Canada where the discussion is typically linked to the national level. My study builds on these works and shows that we need to think differently about how difference and belonging are studied. Importantly, I foregrounded how race gets coded through socio-spatial racism.

For Yuval-Davis (2006) the politics of belonging includes the boundary construction work of those in power but also how boundaries are constructed and resisted. Belonging is about emotional attachment, and the politics of belonging is the boundary marking of who belongs and who does not. It is through everyday practices and contestations of belonging that the practical work of inclusion and exclusion occur. Building on this and the findings of this study I argue that the politics of belonging should incorporate the importance of spatial difference. James Holsten (2008) in his study of Sao Paulo in Brazil, found that residents constructed new ways of being in the urban peripheries of that global city, ways that resisted dominant structures. Holsten argued

that the urban civic square symbolizes its role as the center of the society. It also embodied social divisions and inequalities. I found that youth in the periphery do not make their demands in this civic square or as in the case of this study, in the downtown core at Queen's Park (the location of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario) or City Hall. Demands were made in everyday life in the urban peripheries. It was at the neighbourhood level where negotiations over definitions of 'insider' or 'outsider' took place. Therefore, both research and policy must be redirected to local spaces.

The second contribution of the study shows that we need a more nuanced analysis and more examples of racialization and its complex manifestations in identity. For example, the study illustrated that the category of Black in the local context of Toronto is complex, relational and multi-layered and it is important to take account of these nuances in future studies. The category of Black encompassed those of African and Caribbean origins and was complicated by nationalities and religion. Youth are constantly redefining what it means to be Black, African, Tamil, Caribbean, Jamaican and Canadian in the places where they live. Blackness in the Toronto context was multifaceted. Many recognized that even within the category of Black there were constant negotiations of who was Black. While a youth might identify as Black, their parents might not, illustrating the levels of negotiations, including in this example, inter-generational differences. Research on second generation youth in Canada tends to focus on negotiations of belonging between 'home' and 'host' countries. The current study encourages works to go beyond examining negotiations of 'inbetweenness' and rather interrogate how difference is navigated amongst multiple axes of differences.

The third key contribution is that there are intercultural dimensions to the way youth understand their connections and disconnections. By intercultural I mean the simultaneous

relationship between people's attachments to their ethno-racial identities and their interactions with others outside their perceived groups. The emphasis on the local also redirects attention from scholarship that focuses on negotiations and relations between ethnic groups and 'mainstream' society (Cui 2012) to relationships between ethno-racial groups that constitutes the everyday realities of life in diverse neighbourhoods. The study demonstrates that neighbourhoods are good sites to understand inter-cultural relations. In local spaces interaction with difference is unavoidable in day-to-day life. It is in these spaces of inter-cultural mixing where it is possible to evaluate the relational aspects of difference. My study moves past studying ethno-racial groups in isolation or relation to Whiteness. It is important to traverse ideas of ethnicity as a contained unit. Moving past ideas of difference as contained, this dissertation illustrated the importance of context or place in which difference unfolds. We saw differences within groups and between groups. There were many ways youth negotiated intersecting racial hierarchies and navigated their positionalities in both their communities and in relation to dominant Whiteness. In a racialized context ethno-racial groups often other 'others' as they try to find their place within the wider racialized nation-building project. However, there were moments of solidarity in these shared spaces that could be cultivated as I discuss further through local practices and/or policy.

The fourth key contribution is that this study illustrates the creative possibilities youth exhibited through their engagement with subversive art forms. Art, whether it was graffiti, photography, spoken word, break-dancing or hip hop was used by the participants to reimagine their realities and the common tropes that limited their being. In these spaces, youth were empowered. The youth's use of art and hip hop was arguably a tool of resistance and an expression of agency that has political dimensions worth considering more broadly. The use of

photo-voice illustrated the potential of participatory-action research for social change. Photo-voice was used to engage youth in critical discussions about belonging and difference in their neighbourhood. Youth's confidence with the use of the photo-voice method illustrated that the photos could be used to raise awareness of the issues in their neighbourhoods to others with youth guiding the process as the experts.

Lastly, the study revealed the ambivalence that framed the experiences of youth in these spaces. They appreciated diversity, found it foundational for Canadian identity, but simultaneously 'othered' each other in their pursuit of belonging. They shared many commonalities, facing many of the similar structural and material inequalities that condition life in these neighbourhoods; and yet, they cast others as lazy or violent, markers they did not assign to themselves. They felt they belonged in their communities; neighbourhoods were spaces of love, safety and familiarity, but also of fear, crime, gang activities, and isolation and anonymity. This sense of ambiguity illustrates that young people live complex lives that are framed not simply by feelings of belonging or unbelonging. More accurately, sense of belonging is found along a spectrum that is informed by constant negotiations of multiple axes of difference as situated in particular spaces.

Despite a significant sense of belonging, the findings demonstrated the many ways that youth participants continue to be 'othered' in these spaces. These young people continue to face economic, political, and social exclusions. My focus on youth negotiations of belonging and difference centers the importance of a practice approach that foregrounds youth agency. It illustrates the possibilities for change. However, the inequalities and othering faced by the youth participants in these neighbourhoods illustrate the importance of structural issues in governing their everyday lives. These realities of exclusions have implications for policy.

Recommendations

The current study highlights three key issues discussed above that have important policy implications. Firstly, youth often internalize stereotypes of other groups in their neighbourhoods. We saw how youth tend to organize along the lines of racial hierarchies. They rarely engaged in systemic interrogations of the marginalization of certain groups. Despite living with diversity, recognizing the benefits, and the comfort they felt living with other groups, ethno-racial differences were often reified, particularly in times of conflict. Secondly, youth demonstrated that their identities are very complex, intersect with many differences, and are context specific, situated, and constantly negotiated. When complexities are not recognized young people are often left to subscribe to the limited identity tropes made available to them by dominant discourses or are wrongly assumed to conform to these stereotypes. Lastly, space figures centrally in young people's lives and as such policy and curriculum needs to reflect these realities.

The significance of race in the study led to the focus on the importance of anti-racism. Anti-racism moves beyond talks of "tolerance" to examine "difference and power" (Dei 2000, pg. 40). Anti-racism recognizes and resists the structures and actions that support systemic racism and other intersecting axes of inequalities, including class and gender. The anti-racist approach centers the importance of the situated relational elements of difference which confronts essentialist ideas of racialized people (Dei 2000). Anti-racism advocates constructing space for multiple knowledges. It is only through multiple knowledges we can assess the lived realities of racialized groups and their structural experiences and interactions with social institutions (Dei 2011). Drawing on anti-racist principles, I argue for the importance of building local knowledges through curriculum and a key element is to foreground the localized political practices which can contribute to broadening our understandings of citizenship, belonging and engagement. Policy

and curriculum that continues to focus on national, provincial, or even the city level, omits local issues. There needs to a centering of a community focus in policy and curriculum construction. Broader issues should be framed through a local understanding, and by factoring in local dynamics.

The study also has practical implications for the many stakeholders discussed throughout the dissertation, whether it is school administrators, teachers, youth service providers, police, or politicians. It provides insight into how youth negotiate boundaries and lay claim to space in their neighbourhoods. It shows that despite narrow framings of ethno-racial youth, their identities are complicated. Identities shift in different context. Whether it is how we design policy or curriculum, it is important that it reflects this complexity, and that we do not simply draw on reified ideas of ethno-racial identities. For example, general racialized youth policy strategies that do not account for differences will fail to serve the particular needs of diverse groups. Policy strategies aimed at Black youth need to account for the complexity of this identity, often differentiated along nationalities, religion, language.

According to Berry (2012), inter-group contact is associated with lower levels of prejudice compared to no contact. However, this is stronger where there are programs that make this contact their objective (Berry 2012). Research shows that experiences of active collective social resistance foster youth's capacity to build alliances (Watkins, Larson, and Sullivan 2007). Intercultural education entails the minimization of boundaries between people achieved through Habermas' communicative action (Bash 2014). For example, Bash (2014) advocates for classrooms that are characterized by an objective of interculturalism. Ensuring effective methods of resistance requires understanding how oppression is internalized and reproduced. I recommend that schools, governments, community centers and civil society need to play an

important role in the cultivation of deep intercultural relationships that go beyond ‘diversity’ training. Intercultural relationships are particularly important for collective mobilization. Social segregation weakens collective identity. Inclusive ethno-racial organizations can help unite people against wider structures of oppression (Pyke and Dang 2003).

Proximity alone will not, however, cultivate social transformation; in fact, it can exacerbate intolerance (Valentine 2008). Research shows that proximity does not translate to consequential contact (Ghorayshi 2010; Valentine 2008). Rather, I recommend that spaces need to be created for interdependence to develop intercultural understanding. It is not possible through large-scale events like multicultural festivals but rather through purposefully organized activities whereby different people come together and learn diverse methods of connecting (Amin 2002).

Ghorayshi (2010) in her work on relationships between immigrants and Aboriginals advocates for resources that fund intercultural projects that cultivate alliances between groups. It allows for an inclusive shared agenda (Ghorayshi 2010). It is crucial for a sense of belonging. The economic realities of living in poorer neighbourhoods can also cultivate solidarity between groups that might not happen “in idyllic suburban life” (Richardson and Skott-Myhre 2012, pg. 20). In line with these realities, I recommend a concerted effort by governments, schools, community centers to invest in meaningful intercultural exchanges, intercultural organizing, and intercultural education that allow people to understand each other and their histories.

Despite youth’s expression of their own identities as fluid they often continued to reify the differences of others in their neighbourhoods. I recommend that to remedy these constructions schools must provide critical tools to deconstruct these ideas. Youth must be given a chance to be able to engage in critical discussions of complex issues related to inequality, power, and identity. Schools must provide youth with the skills or framework for a more equitable

understanding of their world. It must be done in a thoughtful and dialogical manner in which youth can critically reflect as we saw through their use of art and hip hop. There is a need for a critical pedagogy that helps youth deconstruct negative reified ideas of each other in their daily lives in their neighbourhoods and understand the socially constructed nature of their ideas and how to change them. A critical pedagogy that incorporates art and hip hop would be well suited to speak to youth. Teachers themselves need to examine how their own social identities inform their practices.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

As stated at the beginning of this dissertation, this study is rooted in the assumption that all social research is personally and epistemically situated. My position as a 1.5 generation Tamil refugee female who grew up in a neighbourhood sharing many of the same socio-economic realities informed how I co-constructed the data with the participants. It informed the questions I asked, how I formed my relationships with the participants, and how they responded to me. For example, being a Tamil female helped me connect with many Tamil youths based on my shared ethno-racial identity. However, this did not translate the same way to my experiences with Black youth. Still, I was able to connect through other means, whether it was music, stories, food. My positionality might offer different insights from other researchers. That is why I recognize the importance of a reflexive research process, acknowledging the importance of positionalities.

Before I conclude, it is important to address the conceptual and practical limitations of the research. The study captured varied voices, to elicit the complex negotiations of difference by youth in multicultural neighbourhoods. Through an ethnographic approach, I wanted to elicit

understandings, insights and interactions within a given social field. However, I was not able to speak to youth from all ethno-racial backgrounds. I spoke to members of the most visible groups, but some groups were overlooked. Since White youth rarely, if ever, came to the centers I was not able to garner their perspectives. Further research, however, should examine how White youth, who are a numerical minority in these neighbourhoods, negotiate difference. It was an aspect I was unable to develop. The absence of White youth is arguably a reflection of many of the issues discussed in the dissertation. Despite Canada's promise of equality, neighbourhoods continue to be segmented along the lines of race and class. Marginalized populations continue to live mostly in the peripheries of the city in poorer neighbourhoods compared to their White counterparts.

A practical limitation of this study is that its focus is restricted to youths that come to the centers. There are multiple pockets of youth and individuals whose experiences would provide a richer insight to my research question. Those most marginalized often do not come to the centers, for example, gang affiliated or homeless youth. The youths that need services the most are often the most reluctant to come. Although many of the programs targeted those most 'at-risk' of crime, they were also the hardest to reach.

The limited focus on gender was both a practical and conceptual limitation. I sought to take an intersectional approach, but most of the programs at the community centers were male-dominated. Although there were groups specifically targeted at girls the general programs were dominated by boys. Several youth service providers stated that this was because girls' mobility was more restricted. Their parents tended to be stricter about their after-school activities. Although gender insights are woven into the data, they need to be pursued with more attention. I recognize the current study has centered class and ethno-racial identities. However, more

follow-up attention to symbolic power as it intersects with masculinity and femininity in these spaces need to be examined in future research. A future area of research interest is how girls navigate difference in everyday life. What are the gendered and sexual particularities that young women face in their diverse neighbourhoods?

Another suggestion for future research is a more comprehensive analysis of youth engagement in politics and civic engagement. Chapter Eight examined how interactions with politicians by youth in marginalized neighbourhoods informed belonging. Albeit, I briefly touch on youth political engagement, it begs more attention in future research.

Contrary to popular belief of racialized youth in this city as problems to be addressed, I find them to be remarkable individuals. They are resilient, spirited, and care about their neighbourhoods and their city. Many seek to change the city for the better. They long for a city where they can have their voices heard and their desires for change implemented. Often shut out of formal venues of engagement they continue to find remarkable ways, in their circumscribed lives, to contest narratives in hopes of building a better future for all those that share this space.

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APPENDIX A-INTERVIEW GUIDE-YOUTH

General Background

- How old are you?
- (If not born in Canada) did you come directly to Canada? How would you compare your experience in that country to Canada? Why did your parents decide to come to Canada?
- Did you move to Toronto directly, have you lived here your whole life?
- When you moved to Toronto where did you live?
- When you arrived did you have relatives or friends that lived here?
- When you came to Toronto do you remember how it was for you?
- What were your first impressions of Toronto?
- What does being a Torontonion mean to you?

Family and Cultural Background

- Can you tell me an about your family?
- How do you self-identify
- What does culture mean to you?
- What is your cultural background?
- Is your cultural background important to you? Why? And if not, why?
- What does it mean to b Canadian?
- Do you think of yourself as [ethnic identity they mentioned] or Canadian?
- What role do you think if any the government needs to play in protecting culture?
- Do you think that your ‘cultural/ethnic’ experience is any different from other cultural/ethnic groups? In what ways are they similar?

Neighbourhood

- Why do you come to the center?
- How would you describe Malvern/Chester Le?
- What is the composition of Malvern/Chester Le?
- What is it like to live in a city/neighbourhood there were there are so many other cultural groups?
- What do you think is the difference in growing up in Toronto compared to if you would have grown up elsewhere?
- What do you like or dislike about your neighbourhood that you live in?
- Do different cultures in your neighbourhood get along? How would you describe relationships between cultures? Do different cultures get along in Malvern/Chester Le?
- What do you think others think about your neighbourhood? What do you think of their views?
- What do you think the media thinks about your neighbourhood? What do you think of the media’s view on your neighbourhood?

- Would you say youth and people in general in Malvern/Chester have a strong neighbourhood identity? If so why?
- What does priority neighbourhood mean to you?
- What does at-risk youth mean to you?

School

- What was it like for you to start school?
- Did you know English when you started school? If not how was that experience?
- How is/was your high school experience? What is/was the composition of your school? What kinds of people are/were there?
- What ethnicities are/were your friends?
- How do you feel about school? What do you like and dislike about school?

Friends

- Can you tell me about your friends?
- Why are they your friends?
- What do you and your friends do in your free time?

Free Time

- What do you do in your free time?
- Are you involved in your neighbourhood?

Multiculturalism

- Did you get along with people of other cultural backgrounds in your school or neighbourhood?
- Are there certain groups or people you get along with more or don't get along with?
- Is there racism or discrimination in your neighborhood or school?
- Have you ever felt racism or discrimination?
- Do you feel you belong in Canada?
- There is a debate about multiculturalism, one that Canada is a great multicultural nation where everyone is accepted equally and able to practice their culture and the other argument that although there are many cultures there is hidden forms of racism, hierarchies of groups. What do you think about this?

Citizenship

- What do you think was the point of grade 10 civics class?

- Did you enjoy that class?
- How would you change it if you could change anything?
- What did you mainly learn about in that class?
- Did you learn about multiculturalism in that class?
- What do you think about civic education in Ontario?
- What does being a citizen of Canada mean to you?
- What do you think it means to be a good citizen?
- Do you think you are a good citizen? How? Why?
- Do you think all citizens are equal?
- Do you think youth are politically active?
- What do you think politicians can do to get youth out and involved?
- What are your future goals?
- Do you plan on living here or do you want to leave this neighbourhood?
- What do you think are the most important issues youth face in the community?
- Do you feel youth are heard by adults in the neighbourhood?

APPENDIX B-SERVICE PROVIDERS INTERVIEW GUIDE

General Background

- (If not born in Canada) did you come directly to Canada? How would you compare your experience in that country to Canada? Why did your parents decide to come to Canada?
- Did you move to Toronto directly, have you lived here your whole life?
- When you moved to Toronto where did you live?
- When you arrived did you have relatives or friends that lived here?
- When you came to Toronto do you remember how it was for you?
- What were your first impressions of Toronto?
- What does being a Torontonians mean to you?

Family and Cultural Background

- Can you tell me about your family?
- How do you self-identify
- What does culture mean to you?
- What is your cultural background?
- Is your cultural background important to you? Why? And if not, why?
- What does it mean to be Canadian?
- Do you think of yourself as [ethnic identity they mentioned] or Canadian?
- What role do you think if any the government needs to play in protecting culture?
- Do you think that your 'cultural/ethnic' experience is any different from other cultural/ethnic groups? In what ways are they similar?

Work

- What made you decide to go into the youth service sector?
- Can you brief me on what you do at Malvern Community Center/Chester Le Community Center, say on a typical day?
- What are some of the rewarding things you get to do in your work and what are some of the challenges?

Neighbourhood

- How would you describe Malvern/Chester Le?
- What is the composition of Malvern/Chester Le?
- What is it like to work in a city/neighbourhood there were there are so many other cultural groups?
- What do you think is the difference in growing up in Toronto compared to if you would have grown up elsewhere?

- What do you like or dislike about your neighbourhood that you work in?
- Do different cultures in the neighbourhood get along? How would you describe relationships between cultures? Do different cultures get along in Malvern/Chester Le?
- What do you think others think about the neighbourhood? What do you think of their views?
- What do you think the media thinks about the neighbourhood? What do you think of the media's view on the neighbourhood?
- Would you say youth and people in general in Malvern/Chester have a strong neighbourhood identity? If so why?
- What are some of the things you like about Malvern/Chester Le and what are some of the challenges of working in Malvern/Chester Le?
- What do you think are the positives and negatives of working with different cultural backgrounds?
- What does priority neighbourhood mean to you?
- What does at-risk youth mean to you?

Multiculturalism

- Are there certain groups or people you get along with more or don't get along with in the neighbourhood you work in?
- Have you ever felt racism or discrimination?
- Do you feel you belong in Canada?
- There is a debate about multiculturalism, one that Canada is a great multicultural nation where everyone is accepted equally and able to practice their culture and the other argument that although there are many cultures there is hidden forms of racism, hierarchies of groups. What do you think about this?

Citizenship

- What do you think about civic education in Ontario?
- What does being a citizen of Canada mean to you?
- Do you think all citizens are equal?
- Do you think youth are politically active?
- What do you think politicians can do to get youth out and involved?
- What do you think are the most important issues youth face in the community?
- Do you feel youth are heard by adults in the neighbourhood?
- What is your future goals or vision in terms of both the Spot/Chester Le Community Center and your own career?

APPENDIX C-FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW GUIDE

Introduction:

- Conduct a go-around of who is present and say something about themselves if they wish-no need to say anything. [grade, school, age]
- Why do you come to the Center?

Neighbourhood:

- Can you describe your neighbourhood? —Discussion [get them to give it a name label]
- What is the composition of your neighbourhood?
- Is this a diverse neighbourhood? How so?
 - Discussion and follow-up on what diverse means to them
 - If yes, what is it like to live in a city/neighbourhood where there is so much diversity?
- What do you think is the difference in growing up in Toronto compared to if you would have grown up somewhere else?
- What do you like or dislike about neighbourhood?
- What do you think others think about your neighbourhood? What do you think of their views?
- What do you think the media thinks about your neighbourhood? What do you think of the media's view on your neighbourhood?
- What kind of public activities take place in your neighbourhood? —discussion
- Do you think there is a sense of community in this neighbourhood? Or several communities? Discuss- what does this look like, what does this mean to you?
- Would you say youth have a strong neighbourhood identity? If so why?
- What are some important issues you feel youth are dealing with in your neighbourhood?
- Do you feel youth are heard by adults in Scarborough?
- Do you think youth are involved in their neighbourhood?
- What does 'priority neighbourhood' mean to you

- What does ‘at-risk’ youth mean to you?

School

- What is/was the composition of your school? What kinds of people are/were there?
- How did people connect and make friends in your school?

Free Time

- What ways are you involved in this neighbourhood?
- Do you think it is important to be involved in your community? Why or why not?

*If they bring up ethnic and cultural diversity move to multiculturalism topic.

Multiculturalism

- What does culture to you?
- Is your cultural background important to you? Why? And if not why not?
- Do you think of yourself as [ethnic identity they mention] or Canadian?
- Do you think that your ‘cultural/ethnic’ experience is any different from other cultural/ethnic groups?
- What role do you think if any the government needs to play in supporting culture? If any?
- What do you think are the positives and negatives of living and going to school with people of different cultural backgrounds?
- Do people of different cultural background in your school or neighbourhood get along?
- Are there certain groups or people you get along with more or don’t get along with?
- There are many cultures in the community, are some cultural similarities and differences that you see?
- Is there racism or discrimination in your neighborhood or school?
- What do you think it means to b Canadian?

Citizenship

- What do you think is the point of grade 10 civics class?
- What did you mainly learn about in that class?
- How would you change it if you could change anything?
- Did you learn about multiculturalism in that class?
- What does citizenship mean to you all?
- Do you think all citizens are equal?

APPENDIX D- INTERVIEW CONSENT FORMS

YOUTH

Dear Youth:

I am Anuppiriya Sriskandarajah, a Ph.D. student in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Windsor. I am interested in how youth understand multiculturalism and citizenship in their neighbourhoods. I will also be interviewing service providers (separately) to hear their perspectives.

I am really interested in talking to you. I want to hear about how you see multiculturalism, citizenship, civic-engagement, and your neighbourhood. As a youth you deserve to be heard, and “we” as adults need to hear what you have to say.

I promise that I will not tell anyone what you as an individual say and that I will not use your name or personal details that would reveal who you are in anything that I write or present. The only exception is if you tell me that you intend to hurt yourself or someone else, or that you are being hurt. If you tell me something like this, I am required to make sure you receive help.

It is totally up to you if you will talk to me in an interview. If you think you would like to talk to me and you are 16 or older you can decide for sure after you read the CONSENT FORM that goes with this letter. You should only agree to participate in an interview if you understand all the details around “confidentiality” and your right to refuse to answer questions and to “opt out” of the study at any time.

There is no hidden motive for this study. Its only purpose is to build knowledge on youth perspectives on multiculturalism, citizenship, and neighbourhoods. By participating, you can hope to help make Canada a better place for youth.

If you have any questions about this study you can contact me at sriskana@uwindsor.ca

Thank you for your interest and assistance,

Investigator

Anuppiriya Sriskandarajah, Ph.D. Candidate at the University of Windsor.

CONSENT – YOUTH

I agree to participate in one or more interviews in a study on multiculturalism, citizenship, and neighbourhoods conducted by Anuppiriya Sriskandarajah who is a Ph. D student at the University of Windsor. There is no hidden motive for the study; its only purpose is to build knowledge on youth citizenship, multiculturalism, and neighbourhoods.

I understand that:

- I am participating in any interview only because I freely want to (I volunteer).
- I understand service providers will also be participating in the study.
- I do not have to answer questions I do not want to answer, and I can stop any interview and “op out” of the study at any time without anything bad happening to me. I have until 24 hours after the completion of focus group to withdraw from study.
- My participation is wholly private (confidential). Unless I report child abuse that the authorities do not already know about, or that I intend to hurt myself or someone else, I will tell no one what I have said. If I do report one of these, I will include me in reporting these activities to an authority.
- I should NOT use real names during the interviews. The interviews will be tape-recorded and the tapes will be turned into a written record. Any names that I do use in the interview will be changed when the written record is made. Then the tape recording will be erased.
- The results of the study will be published in articles or books, but no real names will be used. All people, all community agencies, all schools will be given a false name in all publications and discussions.
- There is no hidden motive for this study. Its only purpose is to build knowledge on youth citizenship, multiculturalism, and neighbourhoods. I can hope to benefit from this study by helping to make Canada a better place for youth.
- University of Windsor Ethics Review Board have reviewed and cleared this study. I can contact the University of Windsor Ethics Review Board Coordinator about any concerns or questions I have about the study at any time at 519-253-3000, #3916. I can also contact the researcher, Anuppiriya Sriskandarajah, at sriskana@uwindsor.ca.

I understand what I am being asked to do to be in this study as described on this CONSENT FORM, and I freely agree to be in this study. Consent will be orally recorded on the audio tape.

APPENDIX E-FOCUS GROUP CONSENT FORM

YOUTH FOCUS GROUP

Dear Youth:

I am Anuppiriya Sriskandarajah, a Ph.D. student in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Windsor. I am interested in how youth understand multiculturalism and citizenship in their neighbourhoods. I will also be interviewing service providers (separately) to hear their perspectives.

I am really interested in talking to you in a group setting. I want to hear about how you see multiculturalism, citizenship, civic-engagement, and your neighbourhood. As a youth you deserve to be heard, and “we” as adults need to hear what you have to say.

I promise that I will not tell anyone what you as an individual say and that I will not use your name or personal details that would reveal who you are in anything that I write or present. The only exception is if you tell me that you intend to hurt yourself or someone else, or that you are being hurt. If you tell me something like this I am required to make sure you receive help.

It is totally up to you if you will talk to me a focus group seeing. If you think you would like to talk to me and you are 16 or older you can decide for sure after you read the CONSENT FORM that goes with this letter. You should only agree to participate in the focus group only if you understand all the details around “confidentiality” and your right to refuse to answer questions and to “opt out” of the study at any time.

There is no hidden motive for this study. Its only purpose is to build knowledge on youth perspectives on multiculturalism, citizenship, and neighbourhoods. By participating, you can hope to help make Canada a better place for youth.

If you have any questions about this study you can contact me at sriskana@uwindsor.ca

Thank you for your interest and assistance,

Investigator

Anuppiriya Sriskandarajah, Ph.D. Candidate at the University of Windsor.

CONSENT – YOUTH

I agree to participate in a focus group in a study on multiculturalism, citizenship, and neighbourhoods conducted by Anuppiriya Sriskandarajah who is a Ph. D student at the University of Windsor. There is no hidden motive for the study; its only purpose is to build knowledge on youth citizenship, multiculturalism, and neighbourhoods.

I understand that:

- * I am participating in the focus group only because I freely want to (I volunteer).
- * I understand the interview will be in a group setting.
- * This study will include service providers but they will not be in the same focus group.
 - * I understand that because it is a group setting, confidentiality cannot be ensured by other participants. Therefore, I have been advised not to share anything personal that you would not want others in the focus group to disclose to those outside the focus group.
- * I do not have to answer questions I do not want to answer, and I can stop any interview and “op out” of the study at any time without anything bad happening to me. I have until 24 hours after the completion of focus group to withdraw from study.
- * My participation is wholly private (confidential). Unless I report child abuse that the authorities do not already know about, or that I intend to hurt myself or someone else, I will tell no one what I have said. If I do report one of these, I will include me in reporting these activities to an authority.
- * I should NOT use real names during the focus group. The focus group will be tape-recorded and the tapes will be turned into a written record. Any names that I do use in the focus group will be changed when the written record is made. Then the tape recording will be erased.
- * The results of the study will be published in articles or books, but no real names will be used. All people, all community agencies, all schools will be given a false name in all publications and discussions.
- * There is no hidden motive for this study. Its only purpose is to build knowledge on youth citizenship, multiculturalism, and neighbourhoods. I can hope to benefit from this study by helping to make Canada a better place for youth.
- * University of Windsor Ethics Review Board have reviewed and cleared this study. I can contact the University of Windsor Ethics Review Board Coordinator about any concerns or questions I have about the study at any time at 519-253-3000, ext. 3916. I can also contact the researcher, Anuppiriya Sriskandarajah, at sriskana@uwindsor.ca.

I understand what I am being asked to do to be in this study as described on this CONSENT FORM, and I freely agree to be in this study. Consent will be orally recorded on the audio tape.

APPENDIX F-PHOTO-VOICE CONSENT FORM

Dear Youth:

I am Anuppiriya Sriskandarajah, a Ph.D. student in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Windsor. I am interested in how youth understand belonging, multiculturalism and citizenship in their neighbourhoods through photo narratives. Photo narratives are a way to allow you to be included in the direction of the research process. You will get to take pictures of things, places, people (with their written consent) that represent belonging, multiculturalism, and citizenship in your neighbourhood. Subsequently you will be asked to participate in either a focus group or interview (whichever you are comfortable with) to discuss your photographs and what they mean to you.

I am really interested in talking to you. I want to hear about how you see multiculturalism, citizenship, civic-engagement, and your neighbourhood. As a youth you deserve to be heard, and “we” as adults need to hear what you have to say.

If you volunteer to take part in this study, you will be asked to:

1) Sign this consent form and a consent form giving permission to audio record your voice and to include any pictures you wish to submit to be part of the research study.

2) You will be asked to either take pictures on your phone, personal digital camera, camera from the community center, or a disposable camera will be provided if the above options are not available to you. You will be asked to take pictures of items, activities and/or people that represent belonging, multiculturalism, and/or citizenship in your neighbourhood. I will bring copies of the pictures to the interview or focus group and discuss what the pictures mean to you.

I promise that I will not tell anyone what you as an individual say and that I will not use your name or personal details that would reveal who you are in anything that I write or present. The only exception is if you tell me that you intend to hurt yourself or someone else, or that you are being hurt. If you tell me something like this I am required to make sure you receive help.

It is totally up to you if you will talk to me in an interview. If you think you would like to talk to me and you are 16 or older you can decide for sure after you read the CONSENT FORM that goes with this letter. You should only agree to participate in an interview if you understand all

the details around “confidentiality” and your right to refuse to answer questions and to “opt out” of the study at any time.

There is no hidden motive for this study. Its only purpose is to build knowledge on youth perspectives on multiculturalism, citizenship, and neighbourhoods. By participating, you can hope to help make Canada a better place for youth.

If you have any questions about this study you can contact me at sriskana@uwindsor.ca

Thank you for your interest and assistance,

Investigator

Anuppiriya Sriskandarajah, Ph.D. Candidate at the University of Windsor.

CONSENT – YOUTH

I agree to participate in one or more interviews in a study on multiculturalism, citizenship, and neighbourhoods conducted by Anuppiriya Sriskandarajah who is a Ph. D student at the University of Windsor. There is no hidden motive for the study; its only purpose is to build knowledge on youth citizenship, multiculturalism, and neighbourhoods.

I understand that:

- * I am participating in any interview only because I freely want to (I volunteer).
- * I understand service providers will also be participating in the study.
- * I do not have to answer questions I do not want to answer, and I can stop any interview and “op out” of the study at any time without anything bad happening to me. I have until 24 hours after the completion of focus group to withdraw from study.
- * My participation is wholly private (confidential). Unless I report child abuse that the authorities do not already know about, or that I intend to hurt myself or someone else, I will tell no one what I have said. If I do report one of these, I will include me in reporting these activities to an authority.
- * I should NOT use real names during the interviews. The interviews will be tape-recorded and the tapes will be turned into a written record. Any names that I do use in the interview will be changed when the written record is made. Then the tape recording will be erased.
- * The results of the study will be published in articles or books, but no real names will be used. All people, all community agencies, all schools will be given a false name in all publications and discussions.
- * There is no hidden motive for this study. Its only purpose is to build knowledge on youth citizenship, multiculturalism, and neighbourhoods. I can hope to benefit from this study by helping to make Canada a better place for youth.
- * University of Windsor Ethics Review Board have reviewed and cleared this study. I can contact the University of Windsor Ethics Review Board Coordinator about any concerns or questions I have about the study at any time at 519-253-3000, #3916. I can also contact the researcher, Anuppiriya Sriskandarajah, at sriskana@uwindsor.ca.

I understand what I am being asked to do to be in this study as described on this CONSENT FORM, and I freely agree to be in this study.

CONSENT FOR AUDIO TAPING and PICTURE TAKING/PHOTOVOICE

Research Subject Name: _____

Title of the Project: **Citizenship and Belonging in Two East-end Toronto Multicultural Neighbourhoods.**

I consent to the audio taping of interviews, and I allow the pictures I take for the research study to be used and shared with others outside of this study.

I understand that I am volunteering to take part in this study and that I may choose to not take part in this study. At any time I may ask that the audio taping be stopped. I also understand that my name will not be shared with anyone and that the audio taping and pictures will be kept confidential. The audio recordings and pictures will be kept in a password protected file. Any pictures I do not want shared with others will not be included in the study results and will not be shared with others outside of this study.

The audio recordings will be erased after transcription/typing of the interview is completed.

I understand that confidentiality will be respected and that the audio tape and pictures will be used for professional use only.

(Research Subject)

(Date)

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH AND RELEASE OF PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN IN THIS STUDY

Title of Study: **Citizenship and Belonging in Two East-end Toronto Multicultural Neighbourhoods.”**

I am Anuppiriya Sriskandarajah, a Ph.D. student in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Windsor. I am conducting a research project on how youth understand multiculturalism, citizenship, civic-engagement, and your neighbourhood.

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Anuppiriya Sriskandarajah under the supervision of Professor Glynis George from the department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminology at the University of Windsor. Results will contribute to the completion of a Ph.D. dissertation

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel to contact Anuppiriya Sriskandarajah at sriskana@uwindsor.ca or [REDACTED] or Dr. George at 519-253-3000 ext. 2196.

You are being asked to have your picture taken as part of a study looking at the day-to-day meaning of belonging, citizenship, and multiculturalism in your neighbourhood. You have been an important part of this person’s life.

PROCEDURES/What will I need to do?

If you agree to be part of this study, you will:

- Sign this paper, which is called an informed consent. Your signature lets the person know that it is OK to take your picture. The person knows that she may not take your picture or use your picture as part of this study unless she has you sign this form first.
- By signing this consent you are also saying that it is OK that your picture is shared with other people outside of this study.

- The person has been given extra copies of this consent and you may keep a copy, as it has the researcher's phone number and contact information if you have any questions about the study.
- Before you have your picture taken remember that your safety is most important. Do not take let your picture be taken if it may put you in danger of hurting yourself or others.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS/Will this study hurt me in any way?

At this time, there are no potential risks or discomforts that are expected to happen to you if you choose to take part in this study. Please know that you may choose to stop your participation in the study at any time and you may ask the person to not take your picture or to not include your picture(s) in this study.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY/How will this study help me or other people?

It is important to learn more about what youth think about belonging, multiculturalism, and citizenship. By allowing your picture to be taken as part of this study you may help others learn about how youth understand the world.

COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION/How will I be thanked for my time?

You will not be paid for taking part in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY/How will my name and information be kept safe?

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed or shared with others only with your permission.

Because you are agreeing to have your picture taken, your identity will be protected or disguised. You will be identified in the study records by a code name. All pictures will be kept in a password protected file or locked in filing cabinet if pictures are printed out. The researcher and supervisor will have access to these items. By signing this consent you are giving permission to share your pictures with others outside of this study.

Pseudonyms or a made up name will be used to describe your identity.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL/Can I leave this study at any time?

Taking part in this study is voluntary or up to you. If you do decide to take part in this study, you may later change your mind and stop the study at any time. You have the right to not take part in this study and not have your picture taken. The researcher might not include your picture(s) as part of the study, even if you have said it is OK to include the picture(s). The decision that is made is to protect your safety.

FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE PARTICIPANTS

If you wish to read the results of our research project, a summary of the research will be posted in the University of Windsor Research Ethics Board website (<http://www.uwindsor.ca/reb/>). I will also hold a forum at the community centres at the completion of the project to provide the results.

SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA

These data may be used in subsequent studies in publications and in presentations.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact: Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, N9B 3P4; Telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3948; email: ethics@uwindsor.ca

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I understand the information provided for the study “Citizenship and Belonging in Two East-end Toronto Multicultural Neighbourhoods” as described herein. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

To voluntarily agree to take part in this study, you must sign on the line below. If you choose to take part in this study you may leave the study at any time. By signing below you are agreeing that you have read, this entire consent form, including the risks and benefits, and have had all of your questions answered. You will be given a copy of this consent form.

I understand the information provided for the study “**Citizenship and Belonging in Two East-end Toronto Multicultural Neighbourhoods**” as described herein.

Signature of Participant/Person being Photographed Date

SIGNATURE OF PERSON OBTAINING CONSENT

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent/
Participant of the Study Date

APPENDIX G-CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEWS WITH SERVICE PROVIDERS
LETTER OF INFORMATION TO CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH
INTERVIEWS (SERVICE PROVIDERS)

Title of Study: Citizenship and Belonging in Two East-end Toronto Multicultural Neighbourhoods

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Anuppiriya Sriskandarajah under the supervision of Professor Glynis George from the department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminology at the University of Windsor. Results will contribute to the completion of a Ph.D. dissertation

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel to contact Anuppiriya Sriskandarajah at sriskana@uwindsor.ca or [REDACTED] or Dr. George at 519-253-3000 ext. 2196.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The proposed doctoral project looks at youth in two ethnically diverse neighbourhoods in east end Toronto and how they learn, represent, and understand spatial, cultural, and political issues when constructing ideas about belonging and citizenship within a multicultural state framework. You will be asked to answer general questions and personal questions on this issue as part of an open-ended dialogue in which we will explore issues related to neighbourhood, multiculturalism, and citizenship as related to the youth you work with. The information will be used to examine these issues as it relates to your community and help build a knowledge base that will further research and identify issues in the community faced by youth and service providers. This information will be used for the completion of my Ph.D. dissertation and for future publications and presentations. It should be noted identities will be kept confidential to ensure privacy.

Both service providers and youth are participating in this study.

PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study you will be asked to share your ideas on belonging, multiculturalism, citizenship, civic engagement as it relates to your neighbourhood in an

approximate 1.5 to 2 hour interview. A follow up interview will be asked only with your permission. All interviews will be transcribed and then analysed.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

The research project is designed to minimize the likelihood that you will be negatively affected by any risks or discomforts whether, physical, psychological, emotional, financial or social. Nonetheless, I ask that you tell me during the interview process if you want to temporarily or permanently stop the interview for any reason.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

For youth this project allows them to learn about research, research methods, and possibly motivate them to enter research careers in their personal pursuits or have a greater appreciation for the value of research. In terms of benefits to the scholarly community, this project attempts to gain knowledge on how multicultural belonging and citizenship is thought about at the everyday level by ordinary people. Usually, multicultural citizenship is studied at level of policy. This project attempts to bridge this gap by grounding this literature in ethnography and everyday thinking of these issues. The research project will be seen as an important contribution to community knowledge among the community organizations and service providers I will be working with. Academic studies are important to such organizations to access future funding from government and other organizations. Including community voices is important to explore experiences with institutionalized practices to look at power relations. This is useful to organizations that want to help marginalized youth. As a Ph.D. candidate this project will also benefit me and the wider scholarly community by giving me an opportunity to learn the skill sets to complete my own research project in the process preparing me for future projects.

COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION

No compensation for your involvement in this interview will be provided.

AUDIO-RECORDING: The interview will be audio-record. At any time during the interview I will replay the recording or a portion of the recording at your request. After the interview I will transcribe the audio recording, taking care to delete or change any identifying names of individuals, agencies, or places that might identify who you are. I not allow any other person to listen to the audio recording and will safeguard the recording in a locked drawer or password protected computer file until the transcription is complete. I will destroy the audio-recording when the transcript is complete.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in the process of this study and can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. I will not disclose your identity in any written or oral manner. My supervisor Dr. George will have access to the interview and focus group transcripts.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You are free to choose whether to participate in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study you may withdraw at any time without any consequences. If you do request the termination of the interview the audio recording of the interview will be erased. After the completion of the interview you have 24 hours to request to have the data erased and excluded from the study. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and still continue with the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE PARTICIPANTS

If you wish to read the results of our research project, a summary of the research will be posted in the University of Windsor Research Ethics Board website (<http://www.uwindsor.ca/reb/>). I will also hold a forum at the community centres at the completion of the project to provide the results.

SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA

These data may be used in subsequent studies in publications and in presentations.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact: Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, N9B 3P4; Telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3948; email: ethics@uwindsor.ca

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I understand the information provided for the study “Citizenship and Belonging in Two East-end Toronto Multicultural Neighbourhoods” as described herein. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study.

I understand what I am being asked to do to be in this study as described on this CONSENT FORM, and I freely agree to be in this study. Consent will be orally recorded on the audio tape.

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

These are the terms under which I will conduct research.

Signature of Investigator

Date

VITA AUCTORIS

Anuppiriya Sriskandarajah was born in 1986 in Jaffna, Sri Lanka. She graduated from West Humber Collegiate Institute in 2004. From there she went on to the University of Toronto where she obtained a B.A. in Criminology and Political Science in 2008. She is completed her Master's degree in Sociology at the University of Windsor in 2010. She is currently a candidate for the Doctoral degree in Sociology with a Specialization in Social Justice at the University of Windsor and hopes to complete her studies Summer 2017.