

Fit to be Canadian?
The Recreation Industrial Complex in Canada

by

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Abstract

In recent years, both recreation scholars and practitioners began calling for a sectoral return to municipal recreation's historical roots as a public good (e.g., Mahaffey, 2011; ISRC & CPRA, 2015; Cureton and Frisby, 2011; Smale and Reid, 2002; Taylor and Frisby, 2010). Blaming neoliberal ideology for the current pay-per-use model, these calls for a more inclusive recreation system not only highlighted the negative impacts of a consumer-based recreation system, they suggested that the profession's 'business-like' practices should be of concern because they are in direct opposition to the field's historic mandate of 'equal opportunity' for access.

A central assumption underlying these calls for the recreation profession to return to 'its historical roots' is that municipal recreation services, until late '80s and '90s, were available to all members of society. This narrative – of a more inclusive and equitable era in recreation's past – is, however, a romanticized account of public recreation's history. As I will argue throughout this dissertation, public recreation has always been, and continues to be, a location where racist, classist, sexist, homophobic, and ableist, outcomes are (re)produced.

Using Foucauldian genealogy, I trace some of the conditions that have given rise to what I have labeled the *recreation industrial complex*. More specifically, I use a vast collection of formal and informal archival documents to demonstrate how our public recreation facilities (both past and present) are intricately linked to the white supremacist logics of Western exceptionalism, settler colonialism, ableism, racism, capitalism, and (hetero)patriarchy. I begin by analyzing three seemingly unrelated pieces of Canada's past: Indigenous legislation, immigration policy and race science. I do so in an attempt to politicize the category 'Canadian' and demonstrate how it has been taken-for-granted in our traditional recreation histories. I then

weave these seemingly unrelated pieces of Canadian history into a recreation context. More specifically, I analyze two distinct eras of recreation facility development – the social medicine era (1880s-1920s) and the social welfare era (1930s-1970s) – and provide examples of how recreation was both produced by, and reproduced technologies of white supremacy. Finally, I demonstrate how these historical discourses, practices, and policies have created the conditions for the a public recreation system that positions everyone except white, middle to upper class, heterosexual, cisgender, able-bodied boys and (younger) men as an excludable type (Titchkosky, 2003).

By exposing the ways particular bodies came to be centered in a recreation context, the purpose of this work is to demonstrate how historical inclusions and exclusions (whether intentional or not) were in fact part of a broader biopolitical project intended to sustain white supremacy, with the goal of encouraging critical dialogues about what is inherently problematic, difficult, and dangerous in the discourses, practices, and policies that govern our contemporary public recreation systems.

Preface

Some pieces in the Introduction (specifically, some of the text on pages 9 to 11) have been previously published at Tink, L. N., Peers, D., Nykiforuk, C. I. J., & Mayan, M. (2020). 'Vulnerable,' 'At-Risk,' 'Disadvantaged': How *A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing* reinscribes exclusion. *Leisure/Loisir*, 44(2), 151-174.

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Introduction

When I started my PhD program, I was interested in studying the problem of *exclusion* in recreation. In particular, I wanted to understand how municipal recreation facilities came to operate as a pay-per-use style service that largely served the (white) middle and upper classes. More specifically, I wanted to answer the question, *how did recreation come to be a publicly funded service available to such a small portion of the population?*

When I first posed this question, I did not have the theoretical tools to understand how my dissertation could be built around this problem. What I did know at the time was that neither a descriptive history nor an ideological critique would suffice. As I continued to think about different ways to approach this question (e.g., through policy discourse analysis, participatory action research), I came across a quote from Foucault that resonated deeply and resulted in somewhat of an epistemological tear (Butler, 2002). The quote read: “people know what they do; they frequently know why they do what they do; but what they don’t know is what what they do does” (Foucault, 1982 in Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 187).

Having worked in both recreation practice and policy for many years, I could describe what it was I did and easily articulate the reasons for each of these actions. However, like Foucault suggested, I was unable to articulate the impacts of my actions, the ways these actions contributed to naturalizing an exclusionary recreation system, and how these actions made me complicit in the reproduction of particular harms. It was through grappling with this epistemological tear and immersing myself in Foucauldian literature that I decided my dissertation would take the shape of a Foucauldian genealogy.

Through my doctoral work, I have used the tools afforded by Foucauldian genealogy to trace and critique the historical arrangements (e.g., systems of knowledge, policies, practices)

that have created the conditions for what I argue is an exclusionary public recreation system. The document has been divided into four sections:

In Section One I situate the research by outlining how the problem of exclusion and the solution of inclusion have been discursively framed within a recreation context. I then provide a detailed account of Foucauldian genealogy and outline how it provided me with the theoretical and methodological tools required to answer the question, *how, and why, did public recreation come to serve such a small slice of human variation?*

In Section Two, I begin to analyze three seemingly unrelated pieces of Canadian history: settler colonialism, immigration policies, and race science. I do so in an attempt to politicize the category ‘Canadian’ and demonstrate how it has been taken-for-granted in our traditional recreation histories.

In Section Three, I begin to weave these seemingly unrelated moments of Canadian history into a recreation context. More specifically, I take as my subject of analysis two distinct eras of recreation facility development – the social medicine era (1880s-1920s) the social welfare era (1930s-1970s) – and demonstrate how earlier versions of public recreation were part of a broader biopolitical project that produced and governed both ‘normal’ and ‘abnormal’ bodies.

Finally, in Section Four, I demonstrate how our historical discourses, practices, and policies created the conditions for a system of contemporary public recreation facilities that systematically privilege white, middle to upper class, cis-gendered, heterosexual, able-bodied individuals. In this final section, I also provide my thoughts on the future of recreation in Canada by detailing what a new, more inclusive, health politics might look like.

As someone who has been, and continues to be, involved in recreation practice and policy, I offer this analysis knowing an examination of my own complicity is required. As McWhorter

(1999) writes, “every aspect of a human being, including our bodies, is implicated in the powers and knowledges we want to critique. What is at stake in critique, then, is our very bodies, our very selves” (p. 148). I, therefore, offer this analysis as a form of generous critique: one that encourages recreation, and other health professionals, (myself included) to be brave enough to acknowledge the harms implicit in our ‘health promoting’ practices, and open enough to explore new approaches to old problems. Because as Foucault so aptly stated in the 1974 debate *On Human Nature*,

The real political task in a society such as ours is to criticize the workings of institutions that appear to be both neutral and independent; to criticise and attack them in such a manner that political violence that has always exercised itself through them will be unmasked, so that one can fight against them. If we want right away to define the profile and the formula of our future society without criticizing all the forms of political power that are exerted in our society, there is a risk that they reconstitute themselves... (Chomsky & Foucault, 2006, p. 41)

SECTION ONE:

SITUATING THE RESEARCH

Chapter 1: The Recreation Industrial Complex

In 1961, during his farewell address from the White House, President Eisenhower stated:

In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist. We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. We should take nothing for granted. (p. 15)

Noting the ways in which America's national defense systems were valuing profitability (the goal of the arms industry) over national welfare (the theoretical goal of the military), Eisenhower not only called for measures that would re-balance these two goals, he also popularized the term *industrial complex*.

Simply understood, the industrial complex is a socioeconomic concept wherein social or political institutions (both private and public) maintain socially detrimental systems for financial profit (Munshi & Willse, 2007). When scholars and activists use the term industrial complex they are pointing to a conflict between some social or political goal (e.g., ending wars, reducing crime) and the financial interests of the individuals and agencies that have a stake in the unsuccessful outcome of this goal (e.g., arms companies, prisons). In other words, when scholars and activists use the term industrial complex, they are intentionally drawing attention to the ways our public systems perpetuate inequitable, harmful, exploitative, or life-ending practices by valuing profit over all other public policy goals.

In the sixty years since Eisenhower first popularized the notion of the military industrial complex, the concept has been used to articulate the conflict between public and private interests in almost all areas of our lives. Some examples include the non-profit industrial complex, medical industrial complex, prison industrial complex, marriage industrial complex, academic industrial complex, religion industrial complex, and the media industrial complex. And although

the term *recreation industrial complex* has not yet appeared on this list, there has been enough research conducted to suggest that our contemporary public recreation departments – despite aligning themselves with a number of health and social goals – place profit above participation. In a Canadian context, for example, scholars have been questioning the public nature of municipal recreation programs and services since the early 1980s (e.g., Andrew, Harvey, & Dawson, (1994); Dawson, 2010; Harvey, 1988; Macintosh & Whitson, 1990; Smale & Reid, 2002; Taylor & Frisby, 2010; Whitson, 2011). Documenting the ‘business-like’ practices used to finance the operation of multimillion-dollar recreation facilities, these scholars have demonstrated how Canada’s contemporary public recreation departments are primarily managed according to the market-based logics of neoliberalism.

Broadly defined, neoliberalism is a political rationality that aims to increase profitability, efficiency, accountability, and individualization in all areas of society. Understood as a sort of reverse Keynesianism (the economic logic associated with the welfare state), neoliberalism describes a range of political trends and activities that are intended to contribute to five very specific goals: 1) to reduce public expenditures by trimming ‘unproductive’ health, education, and welfare costs (or, the introduction of austerity measures); 2) to relocate industries from high-wage to low-wage countries (or, the promotion of globalization); 3) the removal of regulations that afford protection to citizens in order to increase corporate profitability (or, reduce ‘red tape’); 4) the lowering of corporate tax rates (or, stimulate the economy); and 5) to promote the notion of individualization in ways that obscure systemic inequities (or, support ‘freedom’ and ‘individual choice’; Brodie, 2007; Ratner & McMullan, 1983; Spade, 2015).

As a kind of framework for political programming, neoliberalism has shaped all areas of our social, economic, and political lives. Over the past 40 years, neoliberal politics have resulted

in an upward distribution of wealth, excessive resource extraction, the dismantling of welfare programs, a decline of labour unions, a rise of precarious employment practices, the reduction of living wages for millions of people, and increases in criminalization (Bryant, 2012; Kivel, 2007; McGibbon & Hallstrom, 2012; Munshi & Willse, 2007; Rodriguez, 2007; Spade, 2015). The result, as noted by Spade (2015), is a number of interconnected state and non-state practices that have “shifted toward preserving and promoting the class and race privilege of a small number of elite[s]...while marginalizing or overtly excluding the needs and experiences of people of color, immigrants, people with disabilities, Indigenous peoples, trans people, and poor people” (p. 34).

Many scholars have documented the health impacts of this marginalization (e.g., Arai & Burke, 2010; Battiste & Youngblood Henderson, 2012; Benatar, Upshur, & Gill, 2018; Etowa & McGibbon, 2012; Labonte & Stuckler, 2016; McGibbon, 2012a, 2012b; Spitzer, 2012). Arguing that physical, mental, and spiritual suffering is greater for groups who have been situated on the margins, these scholars have highlighted how the processes of social exclusion (processes that are magnified by neoliberal policies and practices) have created, and continue to create, an unequal distribution of wealth and security, translating directly into a number of health disparities (e.g., stress, illness, disease, death). Galabuzi (2012) described the intersections between neoliberalism, social exclusion, and negative health outcomes in *Social Exclusion as a Determinant of Health*:

In Canada as elsewhere, social exclusion is an expression of unequal relations of power among groups in society responsible for determining access to economic, social, political, and cultural resources. The assertion of certain forms of economic, political, social and cultural privilege occurs at the expense of those lower in the hierarchy of power. This is especially true in a neoliberal market regulated society, where the impetus for state intervention to reduce the reproduction of inequality is minimal. Social exclusion has time and spatial dimensions, suggesting it emerges out of dynamic processes of oppression. Key aspects of social exclusion are manifested in the economy in living conditions and in the experience with poverty, but also in contact with key institutions in society such as the criminal justice system, the health care system, the education system,

neighbourhood selection and in access to political processes. All of these have implications for the health status of affected groups...[T]he most appropriate and effective way to improve overall population health is by addressing the social exclusion of those disproportionately affected by health disparities. That means taking action on social factors known to influence health. (p. 100-112)

Emphasizing the connection between social exclusion and health disparities, these statements suggest that access to key institutions (e.g., health care, education, elections) contribute to health outcomes in much the same way as income levels and living conditions.

Suggesting that recreation and leisure also have an important role to play in mitigating both social exclusion and the effects of ill health, a number of scholars have called for changes to existing recreation policies and practices (e.g., Arai & Burke, 2010; Brooks-Cleator & Giles, 2016; Collins & Kay, 2014; Donnelly & Harvey, 2007; Kingsley & Spencer-Cavaliere, 2015; Kingsley, Spencer-Cavaliere, & Tink, 2017; Mair & Trussel, 2010; Taylor & Frisby, 2010). Contributing to the argument that our contemporary recreation systems centre white, middle to upper class, heterosexual, cis-gendered, able-bodied individuals, these scholars (most of which fall within a paradigm of critical interpretivism) have argued for strategies that aim to include those who have been constituted as marginal or excluded. However, as a number of poststructural health and disability scholars have noted, there are limitations with this approach to inclusion (e.g., Ferguson, 1990; Graham & Slee, 2007; Lupton, 2013; Macherey, 1992; McGibbon, 2012a; 2012b; Spade, 2015). Strategies that aim for inclusion into existing systems are based upon the assumption that those who occupy the centre (that is, white, middle to upper class, heterosexual, cisgender, able-bodied men, and to a lesser degree women) can, and should, include those who have been situated on the margins (that is, racialized, Indigenous, disabled, queer, trans, and people living in poverty). This dynamic not only (re)secures the power relations that position marginalized individuals as ‘the ones to be included’, it also effaces the processes

through which public places are claimed and reclaimed by those in the centre who seek to do the including.

A specific example of how strategies of inclusion have centred particular individuals can be found in *A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing* (Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Council (ISRC) & Canadian Recreation and Parks Association (CPRA), 2015). The first pan-Canadian recreation policy to be developed since the *1987 National Recreation Statement* (Federal/Provincial/ Territorial Ministers Responsible for Sport and Recreation, 1987), the *Framework* was created to guide and stimulate coordinated recreation policies and practices across each of the provinces and territories¹ (where jurisdiction over recreation lies) in an attempt to “improve the wellbeing of individuals, communities, and the built and natural environments” (ISRC & CPRA, 2015, p. 4). Described as a “call to action that invites leaders and stakeholders in a variety of sectors to collaborate in the pursuit of common priorities” (ISRC & CPRA, 2015, p. 5), the *Framework* aims to build upon recreation’s history of “public good” and “inclusion of vulnerable populations” (ISRC & CPRA, 2015, p. 18) in order to address major challenges in Canada’s existing recreation systems.

Grounded in the notion that the main problem facing contemporary recreation is “the exclusion of those who face constraints to participation” (ISRC & CPRA, 2015, p. 18), the *Framework* argues for the inclusion of seven different subsets of the population: “children and youth from disadvantaged families,” “older adults who are frail and/or isolated,” “ethnocultural groups [from] diverse and racialized backgrounds,” “Aboriginal peoples,” “women and girls of all backgrounds,” “persons with disabilities and special needs,” and individuals with non-normative “gender identity, gender expression...sexual orientations and sexual identities” (ISRC

¹ In 2015, *A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing* was supported by the Government of Canada and endorsed by Provincial and Territorial Ministers (excluding Quebec).

& CPRA, 2015, p. 22-23). And, although it suggests these seven subsets have been identified because “acknowledging and valuing cultural, ethnic and racial diversity is vital...” (ISRC & CPRA, 2015, p. 22), the naming of everyone except white, middle to upper class, heterosexual, cisgender, able-bodied boys and (younger) men reinforces the notion that recreation is ‘naturally’ a domain for individuals who embody those characteristics and in doing so (re)secures the relations of power that have, and continue to, constitute women and girls, Indigenous peoples, racialized people, disabled people, gay people, trans people, old people, and people living in poverty (along with the multiple intersections of these identities) as the marginalized others in need of inclusion.

Theorized in this way, the *Framework’s* strategies of inclusion can be read as normalizing technologies through which everyone except white, middle to upper class heterosexual, cisgender, able-bodied, boys and (younger) men are constituted as an excludable type in need of inclusion (Titchkosky, 2003). Relying on notions of Otherness to maintain the invisible, normative centre from which these strategies of inclusion derive, the *Framework* not only suggests that particular characteristics (e.g., ethnicity, class) are how the Other is constituted, it fails to acknowledge that the centre is also constituted through particular relationships to ethnicity, class, gender, (dis)ability, colonization, and sexuality, but that these particular markers are rendered unremarkable through the systems of knowledge/power that centre white, middle to upper class, heterosexual, cisgender, able-bodied subjects (Ferguson, 1990; Graham & Slee, 2007). Thus, despite its suggestion that the recreation sector “celebrate diversity as a gift, rather than a deviation from the norm” (ISRC & CPRA, 2015, p. 22) the *Framework* does the exact opposite. Through the (re)production and naming of the marginalized Other (without naming the institutions, structures, and systems that reinforce the processes and

perpetrators of systemic marginalization) the *Framework* (re)secures the invisibility, naturalness, and privilege of the centre, further inscribing and naturalizing the very exclusions it seeks to remedy. In doing so, it not only ignores the ways the categories of Otherness overlap and intersect in both bodies and systems of oppression; it also fails to name, or even ask, how and why recreation was ever constructed to serve only such a small slice of human variation.²

It is precisely this question, *how, and why, did public recreation come to serve such a small slice of human variation?* that is the focus of my research. It is through the lens of this question, that I will expose some of the conditions that have given rise to what I have labeled the *recreation industrial complex* (that is, a public recreation system that values profit over participation), while also disrupting our dominant notions of inclusion by detailing how recreation has been, and continues to be, a location where racist, classist, sexist, homophobic, and ableist, outcomes are (re)produced. The goal, of my research is, therefore, to focus on *impact* rather than *intent*. By looking beyond our dominant narratives and focusing instead on how a number of seemingly unrelated systems of knowledge/power have shaped our recreation practices (in both the past and the present), I hope to write a new history for recreation in Canada – a history that not only questions the legitimacy of public recreation’s inclusive past by demonstrating how our normalized practices (e.g., pay-per-use services in big box facilities) and naturalized discourses (e.g., biomedical discourses, inclusionary discourses) have been conditioned by the white supremacist logics of Western exceptionalism, settler colonialism, capitalism, racism, and (hetero)patriarchy; but also begins the process of determining what a new, more inclusive health politics might look like.

² Pieces of this analysis have previously been published in an article titled, “Vulnerable,” “At-risk,” “Disadvantaged”: How *A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing* Reinscribes Exclusion. The article was published in 2020 in *Leisure/Loisir*: Volume 44, Issue 2.

Chapter 2: Foucauldian Genealogy

Simply defined, Foucauldian genealogy is an investigation of the present through a detailed examination of the past (Foucault, 1977, 1980, 2003a). Genealogical investigations begin by identifying a current problem or discomfort and working backwards, then forwards, to highlight how the conditions of the past have led to this problem being posed in the present (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982; Meadmore, Hatcher & McWilliam, 2000). It is this interest in the present, rather than the past, that separates genealogy from the traditional historic method.

A second way genealogy differs from the traditional historic method is by opposing itself to a search for origins based on the idea of progress (Foucault, 2003a). Instead of seeing history as a continuous development that can be captured using grand (often linear) narratives, genealogy is interested in identifying discontinuities by recording the “singularity of events outside any monotonous finality” (Foucault, 2003a, p. 351). Within genealogy, there is no true beginning to descend upon and no grand logic to justify actions and decisions. Instead, as Foucault (2003a) describes, there are “numberless beginnings” spread across countless “sites of struggle” to be found buried within an “unstable assemblage of faults, fissures and heterogeneous layers” (p 355). It is, therefore, the job of the genealogist to seek out these numberless beginnings and demonstrate how particular moments have not only served a number of racist, classist, sexist, homophobic, and ableist interests in the past, but also how these moments continue to shape and animate our present (Foucault, 2003a; Meadmore, Hatcher & McWilliam, 2000; Tamboukou, 1999).

This does not mean that the purpose of a genealogy is to simply criticize the present and suggest that things are not good the way they are. Rather, the purpose of this type of theoretical work is to offer new ways of seeing the present — ways that disrupt or shatter our current

stabilities and taken-for-granted truths — so that we might question ourselves and the politics of our existence (Foucault, 2003a; Tamboukou, 1999).

Methodological and Theoretical Underpinnings

Foucault offers no prescriptive methodology for those of us interested in conducting “a history of the present” (Foucault, 1977, p. 31). Instead, he has introduced a series of methodological and theoretical tools that allow us to “engage in struggle, to reveal and undermine what is most invisible and insidious in prevailing practices” (Ball, 1995, p. 267).

Struggle is, therefore, a central component of Foucault’s genealogical projects. This is particularly apparent in *Two Lectures* (1980) when he states, “let us give the term genealogy to the union of erudite knowledges and local memories which allows us to establish a historical knowledge of struggles and to make use of this knowledge tactically today” (p. 83).

Poststructural disability scholar, Peers (2015), has suggested that this definition can be read as the *what* (a historical knowledge of struggle), *how* (the union of erudite knowledges and local memories) and *why* (contemporary tactical utility) of genealogical research. I will structure the rest of this section around these interrelated components, outlining the epistemological and ontological assumptions of Foucauldian scholars.

The What: A Historical Knowledge of Struggles

When discussing the philosophical underpinnings of genealogy, Foucault (2003g) highlights the importance of adopting a “historical ontology of ourselves” (p. 53). What Foucault means by this is that we must be willing to adopt a philosophical attitude that allows us to critique the historical limits imposed on us, and experiment with the possibility of moving beyond them. According to him, it is only through a historical examination of “entangled and confused parchments, on documents that have been scratched over and recopied many times”

(Foucault, 2003a, p. 351) that we are able to (re)discover the effects of conflict and struggle that traditional history is designed to mask (Foucault, 1980, 2003g).

Genealogical investigations, therefore, combine a meticulous examination of archival documents with a poststructural interrogation of the statements in those documents. The combination of these two activities highlights how power relations produce, circulate, and reinforce certain systems of knowledge at particular moments in history, and emphasizes the effects this knowledge can have on bodies (e.g., our capacities, our sensations, our desires, our actions) in both the past and the present. It is for this reason that genealogists must understand and engage with three of Foucault's most central concepts: power, knowledge, and the subject (Peers, 2015).

Power. Foucault challenges the conventional view of power in a number of ways. Rather than thinking of power as a centralized, top/down force, he argues that power operates in a capillary-like network made up of constantly shifting force relations, which run through the entire social body (1977, 1978, 1980, 2003e). Within this conceptualization, power is not simply located within prominent institutions or held by wealthy individuals. Instead, as Foucault (2003e) has stated, power is a multi-directional force that works “to incite, reinforce, control, monitor, optimize, and organize the forces under it...making them grow, and ordering them, rather than...making them submit (p. 138). It is in this way, that power becomes more a question of *government* than of domination or control; where to *govern* “is to structure the possible field of actions of others” (Foucault, 2003e, p.138). Thus, while the issue of domination (or power over) is not eliminated from Foucault's conception of power, it is the productive effects of power — how it inscribes itself on the body in order to shape, guide, correct or modify the conduct of individuals and collectives — in which the genealogist is interested.

Knowledge. For Foucault (1977, 1978, 1980, 2003e), knowledge cannot be separated from the procedures of its production. This is because knowledge is not produced outside power, nor is it lacking in power. Rather, knowledge is the result of the interweaving of social and political processes that occur in a specific society at particular moments in time. Knowledge and power, therefore, directly imply one another. It is only through particular power relations (those societal relations, which determine who is able to generate knowledge and the methods by which they are able to do so) that particular knowledges (or truths) can be produced. Furthermore, it is only after producing and circulating these dominant ‘truths’ that particular power relations can be (re)secured. Foucault (2003f) explained this relationship between truth and power when he wrote,

Each society has its regime of truth, its ‘general politics’ of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true. (p. 316)

As demonstrated by these statements, Foucault is not denying that truth exists. Instead, he is highlighting how the true and false statements by which individuals conduct their lives are both bound by the politics of the society in which they live (e.g., who can speak the truth, political aims and objectives) and limited by historical rules of formation (e.g., religious scripture, scientific methods). When conceptualized this way, truth, or what is understood to be true, can only emerge through a series of socially constructed processes, procedures, and techniques at particular moments in time. It is at these particular moments when certain discourses (and not others) become accepted as truth that power and knowledge become joined and discursive practices — those practices intended to *govern* (i.e., shape, guide, correct or modify individuals and their actions) — become possible.

The Subject. Foucault (2003e) offered two meanings for the word subject: “subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge” (p. 130). In either case, subjects are read as individuals to be *governed* by someone else (through control and dependence) or by themselves (through conscience or self-knowledge). In order for this individual government to happen, however, those subjects in need of governing must first be produced. Foucault (1977; 1978) has explained this inter-related process of subject *production* and *government* using three interconnected processes: (1) scientific modes of inquiry, (2) dividing practices, and (3) subjectivation.

Scientific modes of inquiry position individuals as objects of investigation. Using a series of tests, measurements, and diagnoses, subjects are presented as objects to be examined and classified within particular regimes of truth (Foucault, 2003e, 2003f). Once an individual has been ‘scientifically’ classified (or placed in a particular category), *dividing practices* are used to create a division from other (superior or inferior) subjects (Foucault, 2003e). This division is created using the binary logic of normal/abnormal. After having been categorized using this binary logic of normal/abnormal individuals are likely to experience *subjectivation*.

Simply put, subjectivation is when an individual begins to identify as either a normal subject or an abnormal subject (Foucault, 2003e). It is only after this process of subjectivation has occurred that various forms of governance become possible. Or more specifically, it is only after individuals have come to understand their bodies and behaviours (and the bodies and behaviors of others) as either normal or abnormal that the practices and policies that aim to shape, guide, correct, or modify individuals can be enacted.

Triangulated Concepts. Genealogists do not examine each of the aforementioned concepts individually. Instead, they seek to bring together the concepts of power, knowledge,

and the subject in order to problematize how we *know* and *govern* both ourselves and others. Genealogies are, therefore, not simply interested in how power and knowledge become joined to produce, categorize, and hierarchize particular subjects. They are also interested in how the subjects that have been produced, categorized, and hierarchized come to be governed at both an individual and a population level. It is for this reason that the distinction between the *individual* mode of power (termed disciplinary power) and the *population-level* mode of power (termed biopower) is important.

Foucault (1997) describes the disciplinary mode of power as a power that “centers on the body, produces individualizing effects, and manipulates the body as a source of forces that have been rendered both useful and docile” (p. 249). Disciplinary power is, therefore, interested in shaping and training the habits and behaviours of individuals through a constant division between normal/abnormal. Operating directly through norms that produce ideas about the ‘proper’ way to be (e.g., sane, healthy, good, thin, beautiful, straight, cis-gendered, married), disciplinary power shapes individual bodies and behaviours, and how we understand them, by reaching deep into our minds and souls (Foucault, 1977, 1978). Spade (2015) has provided a detailed explanation of this process of individualization:

Through disciplinary norms, we are taught how to be a proper man, woman, boy, girl; how to be healthy, chaste, punctual, productive, intelligent, outgoing, or whatever qualities are valued in our context; and how to avoid (or attempt to avoid) being labeled as truant, criminal, mentally ill, backward, promiscuous, lazy, sociopathic, addicted, slow, or whatever qualities or types are discouraged. We learn the archetypes of proper being and the techniques for reforming ourselves toward these ideals. The impossibility of matching the ideal types generates a lifetime of self-and external policing that keep us occupied with our personal reform efforts. (p. 53)

As outlined by this quote, disciplinary norms permeate every area of our lives. When disciplinary power is successful, individual acts are guided by those norms that are considered to be proper or right. And while both internal policing (governing ourselves) and external policing (governing

others) are used to reify these pre-determined norms, the consequences for not conforming (e.g., being shamed, excluded, fired or jailed) tend to remain at the individual level.

At the population level, however, knowledge and power operate differently. Instead of targeting the thoughts and behaviours of individuals, population-level biopower creates conditions of regulation and distribution that are intended to protect, promote and enhance the life of a national population (Foucault, 1997). In order to do so, however, clear ideas about who is to be included or excluded need to be agreed upon. The criteria for determining these inclusions and/or exclusions are, however, always the same. It is always “race, gender, sexuality, national origin, ability, and indigeneity [that] condition and determine who falls on either side of that line” (Spade, 2015, p. 75). Thus, it is only after racist, heterosexist, colonial, and ableist systems of knowledge have been produced that a national population can be constructed and population-level programs (those intended to increase the life chances of the national population) can be introduced. Spade (2015) has explained the difference between population-level programs that enact various forms of biopower and individual-level programs that enact various forms of disciplinary power:

Population-level interventions create conditions of control and distribution that impact people regardless of their individual acts. Living in communities impacted by policy decisions that have made schools, health care, housing, and other infrastructure insufficient, that have been zoned for toxic industries, and where high levels of police presence increase the likelihood of being harassed or even arrested for behavior that is just as common elsewhere but not equally surveilled, are all examples of conditions that impact the health and security of populations regardless of the acts of individuals that either comply or fail to comply with various norms. The opposite is also true: people living in communities with a high quality of services, clean air and water, and who are largely exempt from police harassment and criminal enforcement may retain enormous health and security whether or not they violate social norms. (p. 66)

As demonstrated by this quote, it is because of biopolitical mode of power that the lives of some individuals (those who meet particular race, gender, sexual, and economic criteria) are protected

and enhanced, while the lives of others (those who do not meet particular race, gender, sexual, and economic criteria) are not. Thus, while it is still the individual that is directly impacted by these public policies and programs, biopower governs through totalizing, population-level categories (e.g., income, 'race', neighbourhoods) instead of individualized, disciplinary norms (e.g., sane, thin, beautiful, straight, married).

Being able to understand the overlapping, but distinct, nature of these two modes of power is essential for any genealogy. That being said, "it is not power, but the subject, which is the general theme of [genealogical] research" (Foucault, 2003e, p. 127). It is therefore, the impact that these different modes of power have on particular subjects (in both the past and the present) in which the genealogist is interested. They seek to know *who* is constituted as being governable (e.g., abnormal individuals or populations), *how* these subjects are governed (e.g., systems of knowledge and power relations), and the *impact* this governance has on their bodies (e.g., modifications to their behaviour or decreases in life chances). Foucault (1982) described the three axes upon which this examination of the subject could centre:

Three domains of genealogy are possible. First, a historical ontology of ourselves in relation to truth which we constitute ourselves as subjects of knowledge, second a historical ontology of ourselves in relation to a field of power through which we constitute ourselves as subjects acting on others; third a historical ontology in relation to ethics through which we constitute ourselves as moral agents. (in Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 237)

Each form, although slightly different in how they engage with the triangulated concepts of power, knowledge, and the subject, is interested in interrogating the ways subjects are produced and governed through the shifting relations of knowledge and power. By asking questions such as, "How are we constituted as subjects of our own knowledge? How are we constituted as subjects who exercise or submit power relations? And, "How are we constituted as moral subjects of our own action?" (Foucault, 2003g, p. 56), all three genealogical projects seek to

uncover the sites of struggle and systems of subjection that have been formed through shifting relations of power and knowledge. It is through this theoretical work that the genealogist is able to politicize the historical conditions that have either been masked by traditional histories or written off as ideological mistakes of the past.

Before this theoretical work can begin, however, the genealogist must first identify the sites of struggle and systems of subjection that have been masked or ignored. Identifying these subjugated knowledges, those that lie slightly beneath our traditional histories, is *how* this historical interrogation of the present begins.

The How: Identifying Subjugated Knowledges

Subjugated knowledges are those “blocs of historical knowledge which were present but disguised within the body of a functionalist and systematizing theory and which criticism – which obviously draws upon scholarship – [aims] to reveal” (Foucault, 1980, p. 82). Subjugated knowledges are of interest to the genealogist because they provide the possibilities of other truths; truths that may break the hold of our contemporary discourse (Strega, 2015; Peers 2015).

Foucault (1980) discusses two different forms of subjugated knowledges: erudite knowledges and local memories. Erudite knowledges, as defined by Foucault (1980) are the “historical contents that have been buried and disguised in a functionalist coherence or formal systematization” (p. 82). Simply put, erudite knowledges are the institutional discourses (e.g., political or scientific discourses) that are available in the archives, yet are masked or ignored by our traditional histories (Peers, 2015). Examples of erudite knowledges include political briefings, economic analyses, or scientific papers that are no longer considered relevant. Local memories, on the other hand, are the marginalized knowledges “that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: native knowledges, located low down on the

hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity” (Foucault, 1980, p. 82). Such knowledges may be informed by dominant scientific discourses but they may also have fragments of “unscientific knowledges, anti-scientific sentiments, or seemingly irrational or discordant beliefs” (Peers, 2015, p. 43). Specific examples could include opinion pieces in newspapers, organizational manuals or policies, or writings from those constituted as dissenters, resisters, or abnormal.

As a method of analysis, genealogy begins by uncovering these subjugated knowledges. Through a meticulous reading of archival material, the genealogist is looking for those moments – the ones omitted by our traditional histories – where our moral norms and truths about ourselves sit contrary to our contemporary beliefs about who we are. It is in these moments — the moments that “introduce discontinuity into our very being” (Foucault, 2003a, p. 360) — that history becomes effective and genealogy becomes possible. Identifying these subjugated knowledges is, however, just the beginning of the genealogist’s analytical process. As previously discussed, genealogies are described as “a history of the present” (Foucault, 1977, p. 31). Therefore, rather than simply examining the subjugated knowledges of the past from the vantage point of the present, genealogists are interested in demonstrating how past systems of knowledge — those which have been buried and disguised (erudite knowledges) or disqualified as inadequate (local memories) — still affect how we think and act in the present (Foucault, 2003a; Tamboukou, 1999). This requires the genealogist to engage in two separate, yet-interrelated, analytical activities: descent and emergence.

Simply put, descent is the analytical activity that ruptures the linearity of our traditional histories. Instead of implying that there is a unified and progressive history that can be traced and retold, the process of descent forces us to acknowledge that history is an “unstable assemblage of

faults, fissures, and heterogeneous layers” (Foucault, 2003a, p. 356), meaning “numberless beginnings” (Foucault, 2003a, p. 355) are possible. When beginning the analytical task of descent, the genealogist, is therefore searching for a series of seemingly unrelated erudite and local knowledges – that is, those subjugated knowledges, which seem to have served a purpose outside the traditional historical narrative. More specifically, it is during the process of descent that the genealogist is looking for the unrecorded moments where power and knowledge were joined and particular practices (those practices intended to shape, guide, correct or modify individuals and/or collectives) became possible. It is in this way, that descent becomes much more than simply uncovering knowledges of the past. By adopting an analytical gaze informed by Foucault’s concepts of knowledge, power, and the subject, the task of descent is to examine, in the hidden contours of our past, the systems of knowledge that traditional historians have chosen to ignore. The goal in doing so, is to expose how particular bodies (not institutions) have been imprinted by history (Foucault, 2003a).

If the purpose of descent is to identify those singular moments of the past where power and knowledge have imprinted particular bodies, emergence can be understood as the weaving together of these seemingly unrelated singularities in order to make visible the “plays of dominations” (Foucault, 2003a, p. 357) that have created the world in which we currently live. As an analytical task, emergence can therefore be thought about as two separate phases. The first phase aims to demonstrate, by weaving together those singularities uncovered through the process of descent, the social and political conditions that made past subjections and dominations possible. Thus, the question to be answered in this first phase of emergence is, *how did the subjections and dominations of the past emerge in the first place?* Once this question has been answered, the second phase of emergence introduces a forward movement into the historical

process by demonstrating how “relations of knowledge and power are not static forms of distribution” (Foucault, 1978, p. 99). It is, therefore, during the second phase of emergence that the genealogist asks, *how do the power/knowledge formations of the past, specifically those, which traditional histories have masked or ignored, still constitute and animate our present?* It is only after this question has been answered that the genealogist can begin to imagine what a new politics might look like and how we could go about enacting this politics to create a more just future.

The Why: Contemporary Tactical Utility

As I have already discussed, Foucault (1977) describes his genealogical project by suggesting he is “writing a history of the present” (p. 31). What Foucault means by this is that he is not interested in providing a descriptive or linear account of the past. Instead, he is interested in using historical data to destabilize the natural or neutral status of our present-day practice, so that transformative interventions become both possible and urgent (Foucault, 2003c). It is, therefore, the present that genealogies are interested in and the future to which they aspire (Foucault, 2003a; Tamboukou, 1999). By using the knowledges of the past to call into question the self-evidences of the present, the genealogist is not only exposing some of the reasons why our present is the way it is; they are also separating us from our current reality by demonstrating how our discourses, power relations, and subjectivities could have been otherwise. This is the most important part of the genealogical process because, as Peers (2015) has noted, once we see “how it could have been otherwise, we can begin to imagine (and fight for) other kinds of worlds and selves” (p. 46).

This type of genealogical fight is especially useful in a contemporary health promotion context. Despite decades of research documenting the social determinants of health, very little

has been done to combat the historical, political, and economic causes of ill health. The result, according to McGibbon (2012a), is an entire health promotion field that gets to ‘have their cake and eat it too’:

Inserting the language of inequity (e.g., words such as discrimination, racism, social inequality, social justice) without mirroring the political economy of health inequities (e.g., social murder...neoliberalism, neocolonialism, imperialism, capitalism, apartheid, systemic oppression) enables policymakers, researchers, educators, and research funding bodies to play the SDH [social determinants of health] game without a consistent commitment to progressive social change. (p. 20)

Recognizing that the reasons for this disconnect are indeed varied and complex, it is my argument that these superficial commitments to health inequality are largely rooted in an unwillingness to thoroughly comprehend the technologies of white supremacy. Clinging to the myth that Canada is a multicultural meritocracy, most Canadians are not only unaware of how Western exceptionalism, settler colonialism, racism, capitalism, and (hetero)patriarchy intersect, they also fail to comprehend how these seemingly unrelated systems – which permeate every area of our lives – are sustained by the economic and political ethos of white supremacy.

If health professionals are truly interested in taking aim at the political and economic causes of ill health, it is crucial that they begin to recognize the ways oppressive public policies continually (re)secure the invisibility of white supremacy through the reproduction, naming, and ‘inclusion’ of marginalized Others (e.g., racialized people, disabled people, Indigenous people, gay people, trans people, people living in poverty) without an in-depth interrogation of the knowledges, systems, and institutions that continue to perpetuate this systematic marginalization. As Rodriguez (2007) has noted, “the social truth of existing society is that it is *based on* the production of massive, unequal, and hierarchically organized disenfranchisement, suffering and death of those populations who are targeted for containment and political/social liquidation” (p. 35-36 italics in original). Health policies and practices that claim to be committed to alleviating

this suffering and death and increasing 'quality of life' must be willing to contend with this truth. In other words, the harmful impacts of Western exceptionalism, settler colonialism, racism, capitalism, and heteropatriarchy (all of which are entangled within the economic and political ethos of white supremacy) need to be integrated into the master narrative of public health. And while this genealogy traces only one of Canada's many health-promoting practices, by exposing the ways white supremacy both produced and was (re)produced by 'public' recreation practices, policies, and discourses, it provides one example of how public health research can be better used in the fight for social justice.

Chapter 3: My Genealogical Moves

When used together, the *what* (a historical knowledge of struggle), the *how* (the union of erudite knowledges and local memories) and the *why* (contemporary tactical utility) of genealogical research allow the genealogist to break away from the traditional historical method and open possibilities for new and alternative futures. It does this by showing that there is no beginning but beginnings, no gradual progress but a consistent network of struggles, no truth but truths, and no reason but strategic rationalities (Foucault, 2003a; Tamboykou, 1999). That being said, when beginning a genealogy, it is impossible to know which beginnings, struggles, truths, and rationalities will be uncovered. It is for this reason that genealogists not only require a vast accumulation of archival material, but also tend to rely on diagrammatic visuals to help map and make interconnections between a multiplicity of seemingly unrelated systems of knowledge and the practices and policies that stem from this knowledge (Foucault 2003a; Koopman, 2013).

For the purposes of this research, my archival material consisted of formally archived documents that were available both online and in various libraries and archives (erudite knowledges) as well as the personal files of a number of retired recreation professionals (local memories). I spent countless hours reading these archives and mapping, on big white pieces of paper taped across my basement walls, moments that seemed like they might be relevant, only to discard the information on each map a week later. It was not until I discovered Koopman's (2013) "hourglass of threads" (p. 49) that I realized each of these maps were an essential part of my genealogical descent – not because of the dates, places, people and events that were scattered all over my walls – but because of those that were not. It was those historical moments, the ones that were missing from my maps because they had been ignored or masked by our traditional recreation histories, that I finally realized I needed to isolate and analyze. Koopman (2013) has

offered a more poetic representation of this genealogical descent into the archives:

Picture an hourglass horizontal on its side. In the two bulbs of the hourglass are not sand, nor powdered marble, nor mercury, but threads of multiple colors. The threads thick enough so that they can be drawn through the thin neck of the hourglass only one at a time. In the left bulb of the hourglass, the threads are all tangled together in a chaotic fashion: they look like they have come from an unkempt sewing box that would be a true chore to put back into disentangled order. Here it is difficult to pull out any single thread more than a little bit before one encounters a whole knot of threads that must be unraveled before any single strand can be further pulled free of the rest. In the neck of the hourglass, one can observe various individual threads as they are pulled through from the left bulb to the right: just one thread fits at a time such that they can pass through the next not as a tangled lump of material but as singular strands, each displaying its unique color and texture. In the right bulb of the hourglass, one can observe the various threads as separated from one another in such a way as to make visible the relations that each thread holds with the others. The key to the image is this: the threads on the left are all tied together in a fashion that is difficult to discern, whereas the threads on the right are not unrelated or isolated, but rather coordinate with one another in some more coherent fashion, though certainly not a neat and tidy pattern. (p. 49)

As noted in this description, Koopman's (2013) "hourglass of threads" (p. 49) separates genealogy into three separate yet interdependent activities. The first activity (represented by the left bulb) involves a detailed examination of tangled and chaotic practices, knowledges, power relations of our past. The second activity (represented by the neck of the hourglass) involves isolating particular threads by pulling them, individually, through the neck of the hourglass in order to theoretically analyze each one. The third, and last, activity (represented by the right bulb) involves weaving these isolated threads back into a historical matrix making visible those struggles, truths and rationalities which the traditional histories in question have masked.

Recognizing that Koopman's (2013) "hourglass of threads" is one of many ways genealogists can think about the processes of decent and emergence, it was this description that I found to be the most pedagogical, and therefore, the one I have used to develop my own six-phase diagrammatic visual (see Figure 1). I will use the rest of this section to describe each phase represented in the image below.

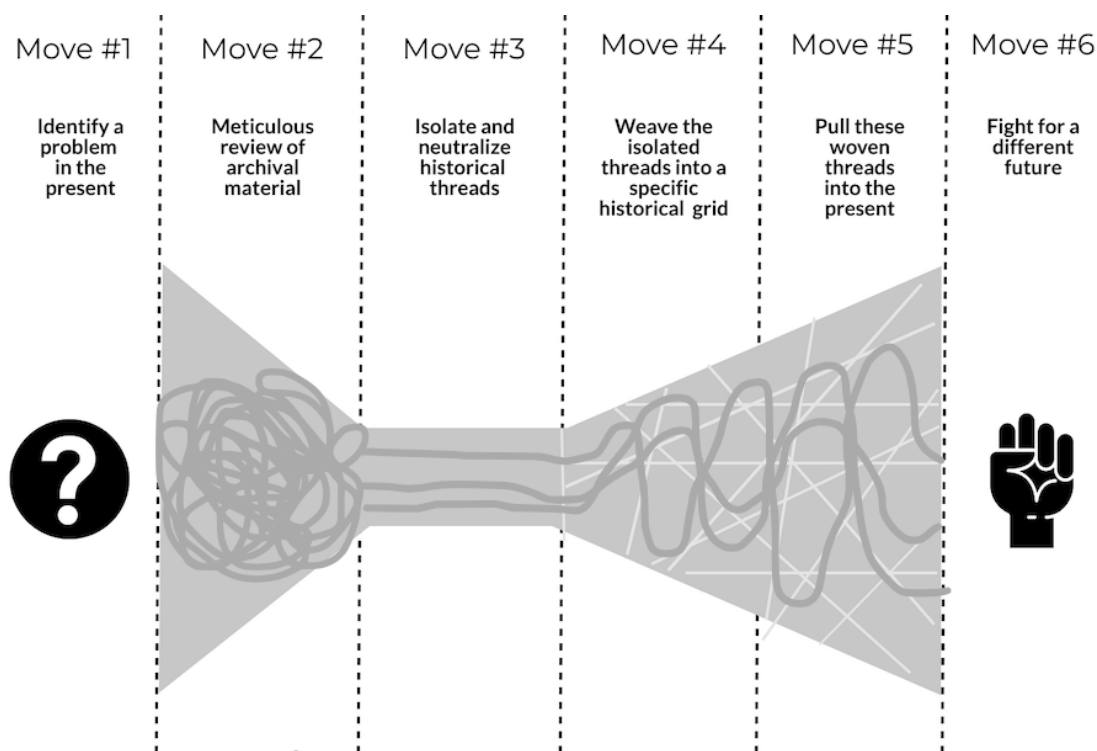


Figure 1. My Six Methodological Moves

Methodological Move #1: Identify a Problem in the Present

As I have already discussed, genealogies take as their starting point a shared discomfort within contemporary society (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982; Meadmore, Hatcher & McWilliam, 2000). The first methodological move, therefore, begins by posing a question about the practices and/or discourses that have come to normalize this present discomfort. For the purposes of this genealogy, this question was, *how, and why, did public recreation come to serve such a small slice of human variation?* Stemming from my work in both recreation practice and policy (I worked in various recreation-based non-profits and was a Director in the Government of Alberta's Physical Activity and Recreation Branch prior to beginning my PhD), this question was not only a response to my own discomfort about how the problem of *exclusion* and the

solution of *inclusion* were being discursively produced by recreation professionals (refer to chapter one for more details), it was also something that a group of recreation professionals (a group which came to be called a community advisory committee³) were also grappling with when I started my research.

My examination of the recreation sector's problem of exclusion, therefore, started as a series of conversations. Drawing on my own experiences working in the recreation sector, I used what I knew about recreation policies and practices and how they intersected with classism, racism, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia as I engaged in conversations with former provincial employees, recreation consultants, non-profit executive directors, municipal recreation staff, community development scholars, public health scholars, leisure scholars, critical disability scholars, mad scholars, queer scholars, and other community activists. And as I listened to the experiences and stories of each of these knowledge holders, I slowly began to acknowledge that my own recreation story (like most others who have, and continue to work in the field) was about whiteness, wealth, and privilege as much as it was about recreation.

Prompted by this realization, I came to understand that out of the three genealogical questions offered by Foucault (2003g) – “*How are we constituted as subjects of our own knowledge? How are we constituted as subjects who exercise or submit power relations? And, How are we constituted as moral subjects of our own action?*” (p. 56) – it was the second question, the one that asks how some individuals become constituted as subjects capable of including, excluding, and governing other individuals, that I needed to explore. In other words, it

³ Members of my community advisory included both former and current recreation professionals (i.e., government employees, non-profit staff, consultants, and academics) from British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, Quebec, and New Brunswick. The group met every three to four months over the course of three years. The purpose of each meeting was to discuss the research activities that had been completed to date and develop a knowledge mobilization strategy. They had no input into the academic pieces of the work. A member of the Canadian Training Network for Parks and Recreation chaired the committee.

was only by acknowledging my own privilege, as well as my ongoing complicity in maintaining a recreation system that centres white, middle to upper class, heterosexual, cisgender, able-bodied subjects that I came to realize the purpose of my archival analysis was to uncover the historical conditions that gave rise to a public recreation system that is run by, and for, white, wealthy, privileged individuals like me.

Methodological Move #2: Meticulous Review of Archival Material

Having clearly articulated both my genealogical question and the axis upon which my genealogy would centre, the next methodological move was to begin to trace backwards the social and political conditions (e.g., the systems of knowledge and relations of power) that have given rise to a contemporary public recreation system that centres white, middle to upper class, heterosexual, cisgender, able-bodied subjects. The primary assumption during this methodological move was that the problems we raise in the present (e.g., exclusion in municipal recreation facilities) cannot be completely separated from the practices of past. We must, therefore, (re)problematize particular pieces of the past in order to effectively intervene in our present.

In the context of my research, this (re)problematization began with an extensive review of materials that I had received from a number of retired recreation professionals. Delivered to my house by the carload, these dusty file boxes (which took up space in both my basement and my garage for almost three years) were filled with recreation textbooks, histories, policies, discussion papers, scientific manuscripts, and personal emails from as far back as the 1940s. And while it is important to note that I didn't read every document in these boxes, I did spend months sifting through them and mapping, chronologically, on the walls of my basement the key discourses, institutions, movements, programs, and political rationalities that were archived on

these pages. At the time, I believed that this approach to organizing the archives would allow me to clearly see what had been hidden, ignored, or unrecorded by our traditional recreation histories. In other words, I thought, scattered amongst these boxes, I would find the subjugated knowledges I would need to answer to the question, *how, and why, did public recreation come to serve such a small slice of human variation?* The more I read, however, the more confused I became about the relevance of each of these maps and the more unattainable an answer to my research question seemed.

It was not until the beginning of my sixth academic year, after approximately two and a half years of working within these vast archives, that I was able to articulate the subjugated knowledges that were essential to my genealogy. Up until this point, I had read about and mapped hundreds of discourses, practices, and policies over and over again to try to make sense of something that seemed incomprehensible. I also submitted numerous drafts of a ‘dissertation’ only to be told I had not quite yet mastered the genealogical analytic (I was still trying to provide a ‘complete’ historical picture). It was also brought to my attention that my process was centering the experiences of European settlers at the expense of other perspectives (that is, the work was too white). Exhausted by the process and staring hopelessly at the cover of Elsie McFarland’s (1970) book, *The Development of Public Recreation in Canada*, I came to realize that what is most invisible and insidious in our Canadian public recreation histories is an explanation of *who* it is that gets to be considered a Canadian, and *who* does not. By focusing on this category – the category of Canadian – I was finally able to identify three areas (or threads) that had been ignored by our traditional recreation histories, yet had a significant impact on why, how, and for whom public recreation programming was developed. The three threads were Indigenous legislation, immigration policy, and race science.

Methodological Move #3: Isolate and Analyze Particular Threads

It was only after I had identified the aforementioned three threads that I was able to make my third methodological move, which was to examine each area – using a historical ontology that centered colonial power relations – in order to identify the ways particular discourses, laws, policies and practices determined who was, and who was not, considered ‘Canadian.’ It was, therefore, during this move that I abandoned (for short while) the recreation archives, focusing instead on the injurious legacies of settler colonialism, Canadian sovereignty, and scientific racism. Relying primarily on erudite knowledges – that is, those institutional discourses that were easily available, yet masked or ignored by our traditional recreation histories (Foucault, 1980) – I began to (re)politicize the category ‘Canadian’ by not only exposing the ways this category had been taken-for-granted in traditional recreation histories; but also demonstrating how particular bodies (e.g., European settlers, Indigenous peoples, immigrants) came to be included or excluded from our national ‘community’ using the white supremacist logics of Western exceptionalism, settler colonialism, capitalism, racism, and (hetero)patriarchy.

Methodological Move #4: Weave the Threads Back into Recreation’s Historical Grid

In a 1975 interview, Foucault described himself as a cartographer. Seeing his work as a theoretical collection of “meticulous diagrams, sketches, and outlines” (Foucault 1975 as cited in Tamboukou, 1999, p. 214), Foucault likened genealogies to the making of maps. It was, therefore, during this fourth methodological move that I returned to the many maps and diagrams I had sketched when first examining the recreation archives. I did so, not because I was interested in every single discourse, program, and event that I had documented in these maps, but because collectively they provided a visual framework that I could use to identify four foundational movements that created the conditions for the existence of our contemporary ‘big

box' recreation facilities (i.e., large, market-oriented facilities located in urban areas). The four movements were the playground movement, the urban park movement, the depression era-recreation movement, and the community centre movement.

It is important to emphasize, recognizing that writing about historical movements often results in “forays into the biograph[ies]...of ‘Great Men’ (or ‘Great Women’)” (Valverde, 1991, p. 12), that this approach to history is rejected here. That is, rather than tracing the acts of important people using a grand linear narrative, this section of my genealogical analysis examined how, within these four recreation movements, particular relations of knowledge and power were used to protect, promote, and enhance the lives of particular subjects. Relying once again on a network of erudite knowledges (i.e., readily available scientific, political, and historical discourses), I used this fourth methodological move to weave the white supremacist logics of Western exceptionalism, settler colonialism, capitalism, racism, and (hetero)patriarchy into the heterogenous layers of the playground movement, the urban park movement, the depression era-recreation movement, and the community centre movement.

It was through weaving these logics, the logics of white supremacy, throughout this historical grid that I was able to do three things. Firstly, I was able to demonstrate how municipal recreation facilities came about in a piecemeal fashion and served many interests beyond those of the recreation professional. Secondly, I was able to complicate the relations between public health and settler colonialism by discussing the historical relatedness of recreation and governance in a white settler society. And lastly, by providing examples of how recreation was both produced by, and reproduced, the white supremacist logics of Western exceptionalism, settler colonialism, capitalism, racism, and (hetero)patriarchy I was able to demonstrate who was included in, and excluded from, our earliest forms of public recreation and why.

Methodological Move #5: Pull these Woven Threads Toward the Present

As previously stated, it is the present, not the past that is the object of inquiry for the genealogist. Thus, an essential part of the genealogical process is demonstrating how the historical relations of knowledge and power still constitute our present. It was, therefore, during this fifth methodological move that my historical gaze shifted. I was no longer interested in uncovering the “hazardous plays of domination” (Foucault, 2003a, p. 357) that existed in our past. Instead, I became interested in exposing the ways Western exceptionalism, settler colonialism, capitalism, racism, and heteropatriarchy still constituted our present. It was at this point that I introduced a forward motion into my analysis, pulling the historical conditions of the past into a contemporary context. Relying on the chronological maps developed during my misguided foray into the archives (Move #2) as well as my genealogical re-reading of public recreation (Move #4), I used this move to challenge the contemporary notion that Canada’s public recreation system was built upon the historical values of equity and inclusion. More specifically, I used my analysis of a number of contemporary recreation documents (e.g., A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015, City of Toronto Parks and Recreation Departments Strategic Marketing Report, published academic articles) to call into question the contemporary claims which suggest, “through much of the 20th century...the emphasis [for public recreation] was on accessibility for all” (ISRC & CPRA, 2015, p.18). My aim, in challenging these dominant discourses, was to make the racism, (hetero)sexism, ableism, and classism of our past both comprehensible and open to criticism in our present. In other words, the overall purpose of this move was to combine the knowledges of our past with the knowledges of our present in a way that would allow us to (re)locate recreation (and health promotion more broadly) at the intersection of social justice and politics and begin the ongoing process of critical reflection and

transformative intervention.

Methodological Move #6: Fight for Different Futures

Consistent with Foucault's genealogical projects, the overall goal of my research was to destabilize our traditional recreation histories by exposing some of the harmful policies and practices that have constituted our contemporary recreation systems. I therefore used this last methodological move to call into question the legitimacy of our current 'health promoting' recreation systems by demonstrating how our normalized practices (e.g., pay-per-use services in big box facilities) and naturalized discourses (e.g., biomedical discourses, inclusionary discourses) have been conditioned by the white supremacist logics of Western exceptionalism, settler colonialism, capitalism, racism, and (hetero)patriarchy. My aim during this final move was to challenge recreation, and other health promotion professionals, to recognize that in order for policies and practices to be successful in their attempts to "create inclusive opportunities; develop healthy, engaged citizens; build healthy, active communities; enhance leadership; and build and protect spaces that are essential for participation in recreational experiences" (ISRC & CPRA, 2015, p. 8) they must first contend with the injurious legacies of white supremacy. It is only when recreation and health professionals have come to terms with the ways public recreation was both produced by and further perpetuated white supremacy that they will be able to reinvent what is possible to do, think, or be in such a way that more people might have access to the "physical, social, intellectual, creative, and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing" (ISRC & CPRA, 2015, p. 4).

SECTION 2:

EXPLORING THE SEEMINGLY UNRELATED AREAS OF INDIGENOUS LEGISLATION, IMMIGRATION POLICY, AND RACE SCIENCE

Chapter 4: Colonial Sovereignty and the Elimination of Indigenous Peoples

The foundational narrative of Canadian nationhood is a romantic account of the Europeans who discovered, and settled, an uninhabited land (Daschuck, 2019; O’Bosawin, 2020; Thobani, 2007). Celebrating those who overcame the hardships associated with the climate of this vast northern territory, this dominant narrative tells a story of “pioneering adventure, of wild lands and savage peoples, of discovery and enterprise, of the overcoming of adversity through sheer perseverance and ingenuity” (Thobani, 2007, p. 34). European settlers were, as the story goes, interested in developing a ‘peaceful’ nation built upon the ‘orderly’ principles of liberal-democracy. What is concealed in this narrative, however, is the colonial violence that was legislated and bureaucratized by these same settlers in order to establish, and maintain, economic, political, cultural, and racial dominance. Thus, as Thobani (2007) writes, “[t]o claim a peaceful and orderly founding of a nation by Europeans anywhere on this continent...as does Canadian national mythology, is clearly an exercise in absurdity” (p. 43).

Canadian sovereignty, like other settler colonial states, was accomplished and sustained through a series of struggles between the colonizer and the colonized. The political theorist Mbembe (2001) has categorized these colonial struggles as three interrelated kinds of violence: foundational violence, legitimating violence, and institutionalized violence. *Foundational* violence is rooted in the right of conquest. Territories are mapped out and claimed by a colonizing power, primarily through physical genocide. *Legitimating* violence transforms this foundational violence into state structures and legal regimes. Through rights and laws, the colonizing power establishes superiority, with settlers positioned as the rightful subjects of particular lands. *Institutionalized* violence is required for the maintenance of this legislated domination. Here legislation and policy not only continue to be used by colonial governments,

they justify the actions of ‘ordinary’ people and their involvement in controlling the practices of daily life. And while these interrelated violences are not specific to settler colonial states (Mbembe was writing about colonial occupation more generally), they provide a framework in which to easily understand how Canada, as a settler colonial state, used various forms of violence to erect a new society on expropriated Indigenous territory (Veracini, 2010, 2015; Wolfe, 1999, 2006). It is for this reason that I have chosen Mbembe’s (2001) three forms of colonial violence to structure this chapter.

Before offering my analysis, it is important to highlight that my account of the dispossession and elimination of Indigenous peoples focuses entirely on the acts of European settlers and completely ignores the many ways Indigenous peoples have challenged, resisted, and survived the policies and practices of settler colonialism. As a number of scholars in the field of Indigenous studies have pointed out (e.g., Macoun & Strakosh, 2013; Rowse, 2010; Snelgrove, Dhamoon, & Corntassel, 2014), this way of describing settler colonialism not only overstates the strength and stability of colonial regimes, it also overshadows the ways Indigenous peoples have continually refused the acquisition and commodification of Indigenous territories. And while these insights into the very real acts of Indigenous resistance, resurgence, and agency could have provided a more rigorous analysis of how colonial violence has been both (re)produced and resisted they are beyond the scope of this genealogy, which ultimately aims to demonstrate how public recreation was, and still is, a biopolitical technology of white supremacy.

Securing Indigenous Territories: From Foundational to Institutional Violence

In Canada’s colonial project, early forms of *foundational violence* can indeed be categorized as physical genocide. Defined by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015) as “the mass killing of the members of a targeted group” (p. 3), physical genocide

was a strategy used by British colonial governments on a number of occasions (O’Bonsawin, 2020). In the mid-1700s, for example, British colonial governments issued bounties for the bodies and scalps of Mi’Kmaq men, women, and children (O’Bonsawin, 2020). Proof of this can be found in the 1749 *Scalping Proclamation* delivered by the Governor of Nova Scotia: “a reward of ten Guineas for every Indian Micmac taken or killed, [would] be paid upon producing such Savage taken or his scalp” (Government of Nova Scotia, 1749 as cited in Paul, 2000, p. 110). And while the number of Mi’Kmaqs killed during the 1700s is still undetermined, contemporary Indigenous historians have uncovered records that suggest soldiers and mercenaries delivered scalps “by the bagful” (Paul, 2000, p. 116).

Another method of physical genocide used by British colonial governments was the deliberate transmission of smallpox. Commonly referred to as *the smallpox induced genocide*, this practice of physical eradication was used sporadically during the 18th and 19th centuries (O’Bonsawin, 2020; Thobani, 2007). A technique intended to reduce the number of Indigenous peoples living on the settled lands now known as Canada, British forces distributed blankets that were deliberately infected with smallpox in an attempt to promote the spread of the disease. Exactly how many Indigenous peoples died as result of this biological warfare is unknown, but Indigenous historian Christine O’Bonsawin (2020) has suggested this form of foundational violence “reduc[ed] the populations of some Indigenous nations by over 50 percent” (p. 281).

From the middle of the 18th century until the middle of the 19th century, European diseases brought “unprecedented sickness and death” (Daschuk, 2019, p. xxv) to Indigenous peoples. Even when microbes were not being used as biological weapons, death was an unavoidable consequence of the interactions between people previously living in separate ecosystems. Thus, just as the intentional acts of elimination (i.e., murder) were at the centre of

the decline of Indigenous nations, so too was the biological presence of European settlers on Indigenous lands. Daschuk (2019), has described the magnitude of this biological exchange between Europeans and Indigenous peoples:

The singularity of the encounter between the ecosystems of the Old World and the New in the past 500 years is hard to fathom. Never has there been a comparable environmental and human transition. The equivalent exchange of goods, flora, fauna, people, and microbes could only be repeated if there was an exchange of life forms between planets.¹⁰ (p. XXV)

As demonstrated by this statement, the mere arrival of Europeans cannot be overstated. Disease and death, even when unintentional, were an inexorable outcome of the arrival of European settlers. Thus, just like the other (more intentional) forms of foundational violence, the introduction of infectious disease (intended or not) would forever alter the economic, political, cultural and medical history of Indigenous nations (Daschuck, 2019).

Despite the deadly efficiency of these early forms of death and disease, it became clear to the British Government, toward the middle of the 19th century, that securing Indigenous lands would require additional methods. Consequently, the overall colonial goal shifted from physical eradication to ‘civilization’. Thus, in 1830 the Colonial Office — a department established by the British Government to manage its colonial activities — committed to developing an *Indian Civilization Program* in an attempt to “create ‘civilized’ and ‘Christian’ [Indian] communities” (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, p. 61). The commitment to this approach, which stemmed from an investigation about the mistreatment (dispossessing and killing) of Indigenous peoples, marked the beginning of a new form of violence against Indigenous populations: *legitimizing violence* (Mbembe, 2001).

Recognizing the need to turn the physical violence of conquest into a legitimizing authority, both the right to Indigenous territories and the physical and administrative eradication

of Indigenous populations became possible through new forms of colonial law (Mbembe, 2001). Blatantly ignoring the existing structures of governance among different Indigenous nations, these new colonial laws cast the British, and to a smaller degree the French, as the ‘legal citizens’ of the Canadian colony (Thobani, 2007). A biopolitical mode of power, this new legal categorization produced clear ideas about who was to be included, and therefore protected, within this new colonial population (Spade, 2015). Aimed at ensuring the health and security of European subjects, the category of ‘citizen’ not only excluded Indigenous peoples from the national population, it cast them as both ‘threats’ to continued colonization and ‘drains’ on the national community and reinforced the notion that they should be administratively controlled and eliminated.

The first piece of legislation to administratively control the ‘Indian’ was passed in 1850. Titled, *An Act for the better protection of the Lands and Property of the Indians in Lower Canada* (1850), this piece of legislation used a set of criteria to determine “who shall be considered as Indians” (p. 1248). Only those who met these criteria were granted “any right of property, possession or occupation in or to any lands belonging or appropriated to any Tribe or Body of Indians” (p. 1248). Claiming British authorities needed to intervene in “the defence of [Indigenous peoples] rights and privileges” (p. 1247), the Act gave a “Commissioner of Indian Lands” (p. 1247) the power to determine who was Indigenous and what lands and resources, if any, they were legally entitled to. In other words, the Act not only legally defined the racialized category of ‘Indian’, it was the first of many legislated interventions that used the logic of national health and security to categorize, surveil, and control Indigenous peoples in order to reduce their life chances.

Shortly after the introduction of *An Act for the Better Protection of the Lands and*

Property of the Indians in Lower Canada (1850), British Authorities began to question Indigenous peoples' right to land. Fearful that a self-sufficient network of Indigenous landowners could act as a threat to the colonial project, government officials began to advocate for the assimilation of Indigenous peoples into Euro-Canadian society, with the intention of gradually eliminating all "lands belonging or appropriated to any Tribe or Body of Indians" (p. 1248). In 1857, British authorities passed the *Gradual Civilization Act* (1857). Intended to accelerate the "progress of Civilization among the Indian Tribes" (p. 84), this Act promoted the assimilation of Indigenous peoples through voluntary enfranchisement. The logic behind this piece of legislation was based on the assumption that if Indigenous peoples relinquished their status, and became legal subjects of the British crown, it would eventually result in "the gradual removal of all legal distinctions between [Indian Tribes] and Her Majesty's other Canadian Subjects" (*Gradual Civilization Act*, 1857, p. 84), eliminating the need to protect Indigenous lands. However, between 1857 and 1876 only one individual voluntarily relinquished their status in exchange for the right to vote (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015).

In response to this overt resistance, the Government introduced the *Gradual Enfranchisement Act* (1869). Passed in 1869, this piece of legislation sought a more active form of assimilation by attempting to remove many of the self-governing rights previously afforded to Indigenous peoples. Granting the Canadian full control over all disenfranchised Indians, this Act not only made it illegal for 'status Indians' (i.e., those Indigenous people refusing to assimilate and remain disenfranchised) to lawfully own their own land, it also forced all Indigenous nations to adopt a European-style electoral system, granted the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs the power to determine who was eligible for band and treaty benefits, and eliminated the status rights of Indigenous women who married non-Indigenous men (*Gradual Enfranchisement Act*,

1869). All of these administrative measures, which operated through the process of gendered racialization, were intended to continuously reduce the number of Indigenous people with more than “one fourth Indian blood” (*Gradual Enfranchisement Act*, 1869, p. 23), eventually eradicating the category of ‘Indian’ all together (Neu, 2003).

In the years following Confederation (1867), the Canadian Government further institutionalized the assimilation (and therefore administrative eradication) of Indigenous populations by consolidating all of the previous colonial ordinances into one comprehensive act: *An Act to Amend and Consolidate the Laws Respecting Indians* (commonly know as the *Indian Act*, 1876). Like legislation that came before it, the *Indian Act* sought to govern Indigenous peoples separately from Canadians (read European settlers) and gave the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs the power to control and manage all “reserves, lands, moneys and property of Indians in Canada” (*Indian Act*, 1876, p. 43). Doubling down on the colonial logic that Indigenous peoples needed protection from themselves and could be civilized through assimilation, *The Indian Act* (1876) introduced a number of new mechanisms of control (there are 100 separate clauses over 31 pages) in an attempt to govern every aspect of Indigenous livelihood and extinguish any existing structures of self-governance.

Operating once again through a racialized-gendered framework, the *Indian Act* (1876) not only used particular criteria to determine who was eligible for the rights afforded by Indigenous status (e.g., access to reserve lands, use of resources on those lands), it also positioned Indigenous women as both inferior to and directly dependent on men. For example, women were only eligible for Indian status if they were “lawfully married” to “any male person of Indian blood reputed to belong to a particular band” (*Indian Act*, 1876, p. 44). Directly ignoring their own Indigenous ancestry, this administrative policy required Indigenous women to marry in

order to maintain the same cultural and economic rights afforded to all Indigenous men. Through the Act, Indigenous nations were also forced to abandon all forms of matriarchal governance by stating that “those entitled to vote at council or meeting thereof shall be the male members of the band of the full age of twenty-one years” (Indian Act, 1876, p. 61). Thus, it was through a mandated style of Westernized governance that the Canadian state not only banned the participation of Indigenous women, but significantly reduced the political power of Indigenous confederacies by directly ignoring their right to independent governance (Thobani, 2007).

Creating an extensive framework for the governance of Indigenous peoples, the *Indian Act* (1876) can be read as form of population-level power that reified physical, cultural, and administrative violence, land theft, and exploitation (Neu, 2003). Using a racialized hierarchy to determine which group of people should be *protected* and *enhanced* and which group should be *controlled* and *eliminated*, the Act institutionalized the racialization of Indigenous peoples through two legal categories: ‘the Indian’ and ‘the Canadian.’ It was through these separate categories that European settlers were able to reify their own Christian superiority by casting themselves as the true, law-abiding citizens of the colony (despite their violent and murderous acts); while also transforming Indigenous peoples into objects for elimination, exploitation, and/or benevolent control (Thobani, 2007). Alexander Morris, an imperialist who served under Prime Minister John A. Macdonald in the late 1800s, demonstrated this attitude of Christian superiority when he said, “Let us have Christianity and civilizations to leaven the masses of heathenism and paganism among Indian tribes; let us have a wise and paternal government...They are wards of Canada, let us do our duty to them” (Morris, 1872 cited in Fridenes, 1983, p. 2). Demonstrating how this process of racialized categorization positioned Indigenous peoples as physically and morally inferior to Europeans, Morris’ quote is one of

many examples of how early Canadian settlers came to embody what they believed was a god given duty to govern all aspects of Indigenous life (and death).

Towards the end of the 19th century, legislative amendments intended to improve how the *Indian Act* (1876) managed, regulated, or restricted the day-to-day activities of Indigenous peoples became common practice. In 1881, for example an amendment prohibiting the sale of any “grain or root crops, or other produce grown upon any Indian Reserve” (An Act to Amend the Indian Act, 1881, p. 17), except in accordance with government regulations was assented into law. As a result of the amendment, Indigenous farmers were not only required to have a permit to sell grain and produce, settlers were also prohibited from purchasing goods directly from Indigenous farmers. It was, therefore, through this amendment that the Canadian Government contradicted an earlier argument suggesting, “agriculture was the great panacea of what was perceived to be the ills of Canada’s Indians” (Reed, 1897 as cited in Carter, 1993) in order to protect ‘the market share’ for Europeans who were threatened by the unexpected success of some Indigenous farmers.

By 1883, only a few hundred Indigenous people were living off reserve and free from the control of the Dominion Government (Barron, 1988, Daschuk, 2019). This meant that the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs was in control of almost all Indigenous “lands, moneys and property” (Indian Act, 1876, p. 1). Because of this, those living on reserves were forced into an arrangement that made them almost entirely dependent on the food supplied by the state. As such, the distribution of food became one more way to control Indigenous populations. Bands considered to be hostile not only had their food supplies cut off, they also had their horses and weapons confiscated, further limiting their ability to secure sustenance (Daschuk, 2019; Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). Furthermore, because of the widespread

dependence on state food rations, corporate contracts (and the exploitative methods that came with them) became common practice. Daschuk (2019) has documented the negative effects of this ‘business–side’ of food distribution throughout reserves:

One company, the firm of I. G. Baker, almost single-handedly controlled the commercial economy of the west in the years before railway completion. Baker used numerous unscrupulous practices to assure its control of the lucrative government trade, undermined its competition, and bought political favours. The company also abused its privileged position by delivering substandard food to reserves, probably with the collusion of government officials. By 1883, reports of tainted food and reserve deaths were common. In addition, government regulations that kept the distribution of provisions on reserves to a minimum required to sustain life exacerbated the TB [tuberculosis] problem and led to provisions rotting in storehouses even as the reserve population suffered from malnutrition. (p. XXXV)

Therefore, just as smallpox had taken the lives of so many Indigenous people decades earlier, tuberculosis (which was made worse by the politics of famine) led to further significant deaths for Indigenous peoples.

In addition to the death and starvation that occurred as a result of state food rations, the eradication of Indigenous culture was made very explicit in *An Act Further to Amend The Indian Act* (1884). Passed in 1884, this piece of legislation banned the practice of the potlatch: An Indigenous ceremony where families gather to celebrate births, marriages, or mourn the loss of a loved one (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). The rationale behind this legislative amendment was that true assimilation required the abolishment of all cultural practices (all off-reserve Indigenous dancing was banned in 1914 and in 1925 Indigenous dancing was outlawed all together; Native Women’s Association of Canada, 2018). An administrative act of cultural eradication, this amendment – which was so obviously rooted in religious superiority – was just one more way the Canadian Government attempted to eradicate Indigenous culture and bring “the uncivilized and unchristianized Indians” (The British Columbian News, 1863 as cited in Harding, 2006, p. 208) under the stewardship of (white,

Christian) European settlers.

At the same time as the Indian Act was legislating a number of assimilationist goals, an administrative policy that reinforced the segregation of Indigenous peoples was approved by Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald. This policy, commonly known as the pass system, kept Indigenous peoples (primarily those living in the Western provinces) confined to reserves by requiring them to obtain a pass from a Federal Indian Agent in order to leave and return (Barron, 1988). Designed as a tool to limit the active participation of “rebel Indians” (Reed, 1885, p. 552), the idea for the pass system was communicated to Macdonald in a lengthy memo with the subject line “...relative to the future management of Indians” (Barron, 1988, p. 27). The memo contained fifteen recommendations, one of which read:

No rebel Indians should be allowed off the Reserves without a pass signed by a J.D. official. The dangers of complications with white men will thus be lessened, & by preserving a knowledge of individual movements any inclination to petty depredations may be checked, by the facility of apprehending those who commit such offences. (Reed, 1885, p. 552)

As demonstrated by these statements, the Canadian Government was explicit in its desire to limit the interactions between Indigenous peoples and Europeans. The assumption was if the Canadian state could keep Indigenous peoples confined to their reserves, Macdonald’s *National Policy* (a policy which promised increased immigration in the west and the development of the Canadian Pacific Railway’s Transcontinental Line; 1878) would be realized. As historian Sarah Carter (1985) has noted, “in 1885 immigration to the prairies was at a virtual standstill...The National Policy could wither and die unless large numbers of settlers were attracted to the West to develop its agricultural potential and create a staple for export” (p. 19). The pass system was, therefore, positioned as a necessary measure in reassuring prospective settlers of a peaceful and prosperous existence in Western Canada.

From 1884 to 1893, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) enforced the pass system as an instrument of confinement, despite it never being enacted in law. As demonstrated in a telegraph sent by a RCMP Commissioner, officers were ordered to “[a]rrest all those without passes, and after due warning, if they do not leave [the] neighborhood of town, try them as vagrants” (RCMP, 1888, p. 134). This practice of compulsory confinement was finally abandoned in 1893 after numerous objections were made citing Indigenous rights and the application of the law (Barron, 1988), and Indigenous people were no longer legally punished for being off the reserve. Despite this acknowledgment of Indigenous rights, however, the issuing of passes by Indian Agents did not stop. As demonstrated in an 1888 circular, agents were now instructed to “issue passes to Indians who they know will leave in any case, and so preserve an appearance at least of control, and a knowledge of their movements” (Reed, 1888 as cited in Carter, 1993). Thus, as is demonstrated by this circular, the illegality of the pass system was not enough to put an end to this extremely oppressive policy. Instead of confining Indigenous peoples to reserves, this modified pass system – which was enforced in various degrees until the late-1940s – was now used to monitor all movements of Indigenous peoples as ongoing wards of the Canadian state.

For over 80 years, the modified pass system made the movements of Indigenous people knowable. And although it was born from a desire to increase European settlement in the West, it did not take long for this form of racist surveillance to become a technique used to sever parental contact once children were forced to enter the residential school system.

Yet another example of the *institutionalizing violence* used to eliminate Indigenous peoples, Canada’s residential school system has been described as the “longest and darkest practice in the Canadian Government’s apartheid system” (Goodleaf, 1993, p. 226). Although

religious schools for Indigenous children date back as far as the 17th century (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015), the Canadian Government's involvement was limited until 1894. Prior to this time, Indigenous schools were church-run facilities that received minimal state assistance. Attendance was, therefore, dependent on the recruitment abilities of Catholic and Protestant missionaries and, not surprisingly, many parents resisted sending their children to these institutions (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). Rather than exposing the reasons for this ever-increasing resistance, however, these low enrolment rates were used to strengthen the political arguments for residential schools. This was evident in Prime Minister MacDonald's comments in an 1883 sitting of the House of Commons:

When the school is on the reserve the child lives with its parents, who are savages; he is surrounded by savages, and though he may learn to read and write his habits, and training and mode of thought are Indian. He is simply a savage who can read and write. It has been strongly pressed on myself, as the head of the Department, that Indian children should be withdrawn as much as possible from the parental influence, and the only way to do that would be to put them in central training industrial schools where they will acquire the habits and modes of thought of white men; so that, after keeping them a number of years away from parental influence until their education is finished, they will be able to go back to their band with the habits of mind, the education, and the industry which they have learned at these schools. (p. 1107-1108)

Suggesting that that Indigenous "savages" were biologically unfit to be parents, MacDonald's statements not only reified the notion that it was for the benefit of the nation that Indigenous children be schooled away from the reserve and trained in the 'civilized' habits of European settlers; they also marked the beginning of a new, state-financed era in Canadian residential schooling.

In 1883, the Canadian Government opened its first residential school in Battleford, Saskatchewan (Treaty Six Territory; Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). Established on the recommendations in the *Report on Industrial Schools for Indians and Half-Breeds* (Davin, 1879), the Battleford Industrial School was the first of many residential schools

intended “to solve the long debated ‘Indian Problem’” (Matheson, 1899, p. 282). A boarding school operated by the Anglican Church, Battleford had two goals: to “dissociate the Indian children from the deleterious home influences to which he would otherwise be subjected” and “reclaim him from the uncivilized state in which he has been brought up” (Dominion of Canada, 1890, p. 14).

Despite this notion that residential schools provided a final solution to the “long debated ‘Indian Problem’” (Matheson, 1899, p. 282), compulsory attendance was not legislated until 1894 (11 years after Battleford School was built; Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015). Suggesting a lack of attendance was the result of “indifference of the parents in the matter of the education of their children” (Vankoughnet, 1887 as cited in Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015, p. 207), the Federal Government developed a set of compulsory education laws “for securing compulsory attendance at schools” (Vankoughnet, 1894 as cited in Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015, p. 254). As a result of these new laws, which were legislated by the Indian Act, all children between the ages of seven and sixteen were required to attend school; Indian agents were authorized to appoint truant officers who had the ability to fine and arrest parents who did not comply with these regulations; and parents who kept their children out of school were to be denied food and other state assistance (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015). Furthermore, it was now federal policy that no Indigenous child could be discharged from a residential school without departmental approval. This discharge policy ensured children could not “go back to pure Indian surroundings” (Dominion of Canada, 1898, p. 465) until they turned eighteen.

In the 1920s, additional compulsory measures in relation to school attendance were introduced (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015). Championed and tabled by the Deputy

Superintendent of Indian Affairs, these new measures were intended to “give the department control from the Indian parent the responsibility for the care and education of his child” (Scott, 1920, as cited in Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015p. 280). In other words, these measures gave the Canadian state the power to force all children into residential schools in order to completely assimilate an entire generation and ensure “there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic” resulting in “no Indian question, and no Indian Department” (Scott, 1920, as cited in Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015, p. 289).

For over 100 years (from 1883 until 1996) residential schools were part of a comprehensive system by which the Federal Government sought to eliminate Indigenous peoples – and thus, their legal claims to land and other treaty-named rights – from Canadian society. During this time, emotional, physical, sexual, and spiritual abuse ran rampant within residential schools. Indigenous youth died in astounding numbers from abuse, starvation, treatable illnesses, and controllable infections (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015). However, neither the Canadian Government nor the churches kept accurate records of these deaths, despite there being ample evidence that they were aware of the extent of suffering and chose to do nothing about it (Milroy, 1999; Whalen, 2010). We will, therefore, never know exactly how many lives were lost (out of the over 150,000 who were forced to attend). Of those who did survive, their traumas have not only been inscribed within their bodies, they have been transferred to their children’s bodies. Thus, as one of the most readable forms of institutionalized violence against Indigenous peoples, residential schools are proof of a Canadian political system, both past and present, that determines who is to be protected and supported in life and who will be eradicated or left to die (Foucault, 1997).

It is important to note here, that it is not just a few radical assimilationists who can be

blamed for these acts of administrative, cultural, and bodily eradication. European settlers, simply by their presence on these stolen lands, also reinforced the practices and policies aimed to eradicate Indigenous peoples. Thus, the administrative, cultural, and bodily violence that Indigenous peoples experienced cannot simply be understood as something that occurred at the same time as Europeans settled the colony. Rather, it was only because of this physical, cultural, and administrative violence that both European settlement and the formation of the Canadian state became possible. Using a 'legal' regime that allowed Indigenous peoples no rights and no claims to legality (except those required to maintain colonial order), Canada's system of racial hierarchy not only consolidated European control over Indigenous lands, it gave the Canadian state the legislative power to eliminate claims of Indigenous sovereignty and absorb Indigenous peoples into the colonial regime. The result, as stated by Thobani (2007), was a nation divided: "on the one side, a world of law, privilege, access to wealth, status, and power for the settler; on the other a world defined in law as being lawless, a world of poverty, squalor, and death for the native" (p. 38).

These life-making or breaking practices were, however, not limited to the two categories of people discussed throughout this chapter. As I will demonstrate in the next section, Canada's overt racial dictatorship was also upheld through a number of immigration policies.

Chapter 5: Colonial Sovereignty and the Conditional Inclusion of Immigrants

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the colonization of Canada must be read as a “structure not an event” (Wolfe, 2006, p. 388). By moving from the practices of foundational violence to the structures of institutionalized violence, the elimination of Indigenous peoples became an organizing principle of the Canadian state. European settlers had come to Canada to develop a new society and Indigenous people threatened this goal. Thus, as Wolfe (2006) has pointed out, for settler colonial states like Canada, the primary motive for the elimination and dispossession of Indigenous people was “not race (or religion, ethnicity, grade of civilization, etc.) but access to territory” (Wolfe, 2006, p. 388). In other words, settler colonialism was a territorial practice: the ultimate goal being the acquisition and commodification of land. This does not mean, however, that the systematic dispossession and elimination of Indigenous peoples did not rely upon the hierarchical categories of race. While the primary objective of settler colonialism was indeed the acquisition of Indigenous territories, it was the concepts of race, religion, and civilization that were used to justify the political acts of murder, starvation, and confinement that were intended to disposes, eliminate, and assimilate Indigenous peoples (Rose, 1991; Wolfe, 2006).

For immigrants, elimination from the Canadian population was very different. Unlike Indigenous peoples, immigrants were constituted as an external, rather than an internal threat. It is for this reason that Indigenous people and immigrants became racialized, and therefore governed, in very different ways. As I will demonstrate throughout this section, while Indigenous peoples were being legislatively eliminated, monitored, and controlled, immigrants were experiencing very different forms of legislated harm and exclusion. However, before discussing these particular harms and exclusions, it is again important to note that this analysis is not

intended to overstate the strength of the colonial regime. Throughout Canada's history, racial inclusions and exclusions have never been total. Not only was Canada's immigration regulation 'leaky' in practice, immigrant communities (just like Indigenous communities) have always engaged in very real acts of resistance, resurgence, and agency. And while each of these acts is indeed a part of Canada's larger history, given the purpose of this genealogy – which ultimately aims to demonstrate how public recreation was, and still is, a biopolitical technology of white supremacy – they are beyond the scope of analysis.

Protecting Canada's Borders: An Overview of Early Immigration Legislation

The first pieces of legislation intended to deal with 'immigrants' were the 18th century *Quarantine Acts* of Lower Canada (1795, 1823, 1832), Nova Scotia (1835a, 1835b) and New Brunswick (1838a, 1838b). Concerned with the health of passengers arriving at their ports, these three colonies required ships to wait offshore for medical clearance. Despite the existence of these quarantine procedures, however, it was observed toward the beginning of the 19th century, "that persons emigrating from different parts of the United Kingdom, have in various instances, suffered great distress and hardships, on account of the crowded state of the vessels" (United Kingdom, 1803a, p. 4). Thus, in the early 1800s an additional layer of legislation was added. Recognizing the need to control the transmission of contagious diseases on overcrowded ships, the British parliament passed two *Passenger Vessels Acts* (1803, 1828). The purpose of these acts was to address overcrowding by restricting the number of immigrants "per tonnage of vessel" (Vineberg, 2015, p. 281). In other words, just like the earlier *Quarantine Acts* the objective of the *Passenger Vessels Acts* was to reduce the number of diseased emigrants landing in the colonies in order to preserve the health of the Europeans who had already settled here.

Throughout the early 1800s, the landing of "destitute emigrants" (Harvey, 1971, p. 130)

evoked critical comments from middle- and upper-class settlers. For many of them, it was believed that assisted emigration had become an economic technique used by the British Government to deal with the “poverty-stricken of Great Britain” (Eligin-Grey Papers, 1847 as cited in Harvey, 1971 p. 129). British Historian, Cecil Woodham-Smith (1962), discussed this tactic in more detail:

The cost of emigrating a pauper was generally about half the cost of maintaining him in the work-house for one year, and once the ship had sailed the destitute were effectively got rid of, for they could only return with immense difficulty. (p. 228)

Blaming the British Government for the strategic elimination of individuals “in such a debilitated and destitute state” (Harvey, 1971, p. 130), the economic cost of maintaining an emigrant came to be equally as concerning as ensuring their health. Publicly expressing these concerns, the Chairman of Montreal’s Emigration Society published a letter accusing the “Mother Country” of using assisted emigration to “rid themselves of the burden of a worn out and unprofitable population, wholly destitute of that mental and physical exertion indispensable to useful labour and the success of honest industry” (Ferrie, 1847, p. 5). The overall message from this letter being that the emigrants arriving in the colonies were mentally and physically unable to work on farms, build railroads, develop cities, and grow industries. That is, they were unable to contribute to the goals of settler colonialism.

Concerns about the ‘quality’ of emigrants only increased towards the middle of the 19th century. This was not only because the 1847 emigration numbers were the largest the colonies had ever seen, but also because the majority of these emigrants were seeking refuge from the poverty caused by the great potato famine in Ireland. Of the more than 95,000 emigrants that had reached British North America in 1847, approximately six-sevenths were Irish (Harvey, 1971). Described in the 1848 *Papers Relative to Emigration* as “decrepit, maimed, lame, the subjects of

chronic disease... incapable of maintaining themselves at home by their own labour” (Executive Council on Matters of State, 1848, p. 4), these emigrants were discursively positioned by members of parliament as “extraordinary expenses” (Executive Council on Matters of State, 1848, p. 31) and “object[s] of terror” (Doughty, 1847, as cited in Harvey, 1971, p. 183). As such, it was subsequently decided that additional measures were required to protect “this young country” from becoming the “asylum of the sick” (The Globe, 1848).

In 1848, *An Act to Make Better Provision with Respect to Emigrants* was ratified in the *Provincial Statutes of Canada* (1848). Mirroring some of the more stringent immigration measures used in the United States, this Emigration Act was intended to “prevent the introduction into the Province of a pauper class of Emigrants” (p. 5271) by imposing the first explicit medical examinations and requiring ships masters to put up a bond for the passage of anyone “likely to become permanently a public charge” (p. 5272). The monies in the bond were intended to cover the costs incurred for the care of any passenger over a one-year period. Bonds were required for any individual “laboring under disease and incapable of supporting themselves,” which included “any child not bearing a member of any emigrating family on board, or lunatic, idiotic, deaf and dumb, blind or infirm person, or any person above the age of sixty years, or any widow with a child or children, or any woman with a child or children without her husband...” (p. 5272).

Between 1848 and 1885, Canada’s immigration laws remained relatively unchanged. Even after confederation, when *An Act Respecting Immigration and Immigrants* (1869) was ratified, entry was given almost entirely to those who could demonstrate, through their own means or the means of a relative, a level of economic security. Indeed, members of the upper and middle classes from Britain and other Western European countries remained targets for

recruitment, but as Critical disability scholar Danielle Peers (2015) has pointed out, legislative discussions suggest “that pretty much any immigrant who could be put to work was treated (at the very least) as a tolerable asset in the infrastructure and settlement projects of colonization, nation-building, and maintaining sovereignty, particularly in the west” (p. 59). Between 1881 and 1885, for example, over 17,000 Chinese immigrants arrived in Canada to aid in the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway (Foundation to Commemorate the Chinese Railroad Workers in Canada, 2010). Their labour, which was inexpensive compared to the labour of European settlers, was pivotal to the completion of the railway. Therefore, despite the popular belief that individuals emigrating from China possessed the vices of “an ancient and effete civilization” (Canadian Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration, 1902, as quoted in Valverde, 1991, p. 111), their economic and colonial utility during this time outweighed the European notions of racial degeneracy that were directed toward the Chinese.

This, however, is not to say that because immigrants were granted entry due to their economic utility, that notions of ethnic, racial, and religious superiority were ignored. In their day-to-day interactions, both non-European and non-Protestant immigrants were cast as unwelcome intruders. In 1847, for example, a Saint John newspaper published an article that stated,

The facts were these: several thousands of immigrants were annually landing upon our shores; they were nearly all Catholics, nearly all ignorant and bigoted, nearly all paupers, many of them depraved... What have we to expect but murder, rapine, and anarchy? Let us ask, should not Protestants unite? Should they not organize? (Loyalist and Conservative Advocate, 1847 as cited in See, 1983, p. 73).

Referring to the thousands of Irish Catholics that arrived in the late 1840s, this statement not only highlights the religious distain that Protestants felt toward Catholics, it also demonstrates the commonly held belief that one’s faith was believed to be directly associated with degenerate

and immoral behaviours.

Irish Catholics were not the only category of ‘degenerates’ to be targeted by European settlers throughout the second half of the 19th century. Black migrants were also subject to a number of racist discourses and practices during the middle of the 19th century. According to Adams (2011), this was largely due to a labour market that was unable to support the rapid increase of black migrants entering Canada after the United States amended its *Fugitive Slave Act* and started to allow for the capture and return of ‘free’ slaves without a trial. Fearful that their freedom would no longer be protected in the United States, thousands of African Americans began migrating to Canada (Adams, 2011). This rapid increase in the black population was met with a growing sense of “negrophobia” (Stanley, 2016, p. 13), which resulted in a number of organized exclusions including, but not limited to, residential segregation, segregated schooling, and wage discrimination (Adams, 2011; Stanley, 2016; Walker, 2012). The rationale behind this racialized segregation can be seen in transcripts from an 1884 court case where Chief Justice Beverly Robinson stated,

[Western Europeans felt] an apprehension that the children of the coloured people, many of whom have but lately escaped from a state of slavery may be, in respect to morals and habits, unfortunately worse trained than the white children are in general, and that their children might suffer from the effects of bad example. (Hill v. School Trustees of Camden and Zone, 1884, p. 578)

As demonstrated by these statements, it was the culture (read the morals and habits) of Black people that required they be schooled separately. Or as McLaren has noted, Western Europeans believed that “‘African barbarianism’ would ‘triumph over Anglo-Saxon civilization’ if black children were to be schooled alongside white children” (McLaren, 2004, p. 33).

Towards the end of the 19th century, the racialized discrimination that had previously been directed toward both Irish emigrants and Black migrants began to center almost entirely on

Chinese immigrants (with the notable exception of areas with significant black settlements, such as Nova Scotia). The reason for this was threefold. Firstly, the descendants of the ‘potato famine immigrants’ were experiencing significant levels of upward mobility (Olson & Thornton, 2002). As a result, this third generation of Irish Catholics was now economically and politically useful enough to be considered contributing members of the Canadian nation. Secondly, many black migrants returned to the United States when the Civil War ended in 1865 (Adams, 2011a). This reduced the number of individuals with “African origins” by one quarter between 1861 and 1871, minimizing the circulation of discourses related to their degeneracy throughout many parts of Canada (Adams, 2011a; McLaren, 2004). Lastly, in response to John A. MacDonald’s National Policy, large numbers of Chinese men were being given entry into Canada because of their economic and colonial utility. Their labour, which was both underpaid and life risking, was positioned by the Federal Government as an essential element in cementing colonial land claims in the West (Chen, 2019). However, many European settlers did not agree with this justification. Suggesting that Chinese men were stealing jobs from the (white) working class, these settlers wanted the Canadian Government to ban the entry of all Chinese immigrants. The reasons for this ban were explicitly outlined in *The Globe* (1883) article titled *The Prohibition of Chinese Immigration Advocated*:

They [the Chinese] could not be Christianized, neither could they be civilized, nor assimilated to our civilization...If they could the people might be benefited by the Chinese.... The Chinese forced the working people out of industries, owing to the cheapness of their labour...The immorality of the Chinese was their worst element... The Dominion Government should prohibit the landing of Chinese on our shores. (p. 5)

As can be seen in these statements, the Chinese were not only positioned as threats to the security and livelihood of working-class Europeans (a class to which many Irish descendants now belonged), they were also constituted as uncivilized and immoral. According to popular

discourse, they were biologically prone to “lying, thieving, drug dealing, gambling, and prostitution” (Thobani, 2007, p. 85), making them both racially inferior to, and religiously incompatible with, white European settlers.

Two years after this newspaper article was published, both the *Chinese Immigration Act* (1885) and the *Electoral Franchise Act* (1885) were introduced. Passed during Canada’s first “citizenship debates” (Strong-Boag, 2002, p. 69), both of these Acts are clear examples of how European superiority (or white supremacy) lies at the very heart of Canadian nationhood. The *Chinese Immigration Act* (1885), for example, introduced a head tax of \$50 in an attempt to reduce the number of Chinese immigrants coming to Canada. Passed the very year the Canadian Pacific Railway was completed (which should not be read as a coincidence), the Act was the first piece of immigration legislation to include explicitly racialized immigration restrictions. The reason for these racialized restrictions, as highlighted by Sir Joseph-Adolphe Chapleau, when he introduced the Act in the House of Commons, was a need to ensure the biological protection of the Western European Race:

It is a natural and well-founded desire of British subjects, of the white population of this Dominion, who come from either Britain or the other European States and settle in this country, that their country should be spoken of abroad as being inhabited by a vigorous, energetic, white race of people; I say it would be much more pleasant to have this said of the Province of British Columbia, than to have that Province even if it grew richer than it is, with two-thirds of its population composed of a race which is not similar to ours, and which cannot assimilate with ours. (Chapleau, 1885, p. 3010)

With this introduction, Chapleau was able to do two things. First, he was able to highlight the growing anxieties about the decline of the Anglo-Saxon race due to the growing number of “fertile mongrels” (Darwin, 1868a, p. 24) living in British Columbia (by 1885 Chinese immigrants outnumbered Western Europeans, making up the majority of the population in some areas; Stanley, 2016). Second, he was able to reify the biological hierarchy that suggested

Chinese immigrants were not evolved enough to achieve the intellectual and moral expectations of superior, white civilizations by reinforcing the view that the Chinese were a “non-assimilable race” (Royal Commission on Chinese Immigration, 1885 as cited in Valverde, 1991, p. 111).

Two days after the *Chinese Immigration Act* (1885), was passed, the *Electoral Franchise Act* (1885), was enacted in the House of Commons. Designed to create a federal franchise system that aligned with the larger project of forming a transcontinental Dominion, this piece of legislation provides another example of how white (male) supremacy was a key principle in the formation of the Canadian state. Excluding all women (due to their “being under legal incapacity” and therefore not categorized as persons), any “Indian,” and any person “of Mongolian or Chinese race” (Electoral Franchise Act, 1885, p. 41- 51), the Act constituted Canadian nationality in crucial ways. Not only did it disenfranchise women, Indigenous peoples, and people of Chinese heritage, it also required all other “persons” to earn an annual income of \$300 or more and own or rent a property of a specific value, further reifying the existing hierarchy that placed white wealthy men at the top. It was through these financial conditions that the lower classes, specifically Black migrants, French settlers, and Irish immigrants, were also disenfranchised.

From Confederation (1867) until the second half of the 20th century, Canada’s entire social, economic, and legal systems consolidated the ideology of white supremacy by establishing prohibitions and exclusion on the grounds of race. It was through this comprehensive immigration framework — or what Thobani (2007) has termed the nation’s “Keep Canada White policies” (p. 92) — that the Canadian state was able to strengthen the racial hierarchy that marked entire groups of people for elimination and/or exclusion. The *Immigration Act* (1906), for example, called for unconditional exclusion of any person convicted of “crimes

involving moral [read racialized or religious] turpitude” (Immigration Act, 1906, p. 1714). Thus, the threat posed by immigration was no longer deemed to be predominantly economic. The racial and religious ‘inferiority’ of non-European immigrants was now considered equally, if not more, dangerous to Canadian nationhood.

The *Continuous Journey Passage* (Minister of the Interior, 1908) is another example of a racialized immigration policy that was introduced to protect the ‘whiteness’ of the Canadian nation. Introduced in 1908, this amendment to the *Immigration Act* (1906) prohibited the entry of immigrants unable to arrive from their point of origin uninterrupted. A response to the increasing number of immigrants arriving from India and Japan, this new *Regulation* became “one of the most useful new tools for racialized immigration control” (Peers, 2015, p. 65). Not only was it successful in curtailing immigration from India and Japan (in 1907 a total of 2,500 South Asian immigrants entered the country, in 1909 that number was reduced to 6; Ungerleider, 1992), it did so without having to explicitly mention race. Thus, similar to the ways in which the *Electoral Franchise Act* (1885) used income amounts and land values to disenfranchise Black migrants, the *Continuous Journey Passage* (Minister of the Interior, 1908) also used seemingly non-racialized techniques to exclude racialized people.

Despite the discourses of race being absent from the *Continuous Journey Passage* (Minister of the Interior, 1908), fear of racialized ‘degenerates’ became more explicit when the *Immigration Act* (1910) was ratified. Further expanding the exclusionary authority of the state, this new Immigration Act deepened the ideology of white supremacy by prohibiting the landing of “immigrants belonging to any race deemed unsuited to the climate or requirements of Canada” (p. 218). The logic behind this statement was that the non-white inhabitants of the warmer climates were less evolved and therefore incapable of thriving in Northern climates (McWhorter,

2009; Peers, 2015). It was, therefore, through the use of the term ‘climate’ that the Canadian Government was able to avoid any mention of the term race, while simultaneously restricting immigration from warmer countries in Africa, South Asia, and Southern Europe.

Additional racialized prohibitions were added to in *An Act to Amend the Immigration Act* (1919). As part of this amendment, anyone “deemed undesirable owing to their peculiar customs, habits, modes of life and method of holding property, and because of their probable inability to become readily assimilated or to assume the duties and responsibilities of Canadian citizenship” (p. 7) was now prohibited from immigrating to Canada. In other words, anyone who threatened the homogeneity of the nation due to a lack of whiteness, Christianity, or capitalist lifestyle could be constituted ‘unCanadian’ and denied entry. This version of the Immigration Act remained relatively unchanged until 1976 (Van Dyk, 2020).

Despite the statements in *An Act to Amend the Immigration Act* (1919) remaining relatively consistent for fifty-seven years, there were additional legislated exclusions added in 1923. These additions targeted, once again, the Chinese. Although already categorized as an excludable type in other legislative documents, the *Chinese Immigration Act* (also known as the *Chinese Exclusion Act*; 1923) restricted virtually all Chinese immigration between 1923 and 1947. During this time Chinese merchants, diplomats, and foreign students were granted entry (due to their temporary status), but all other Chinese immigrants, including those with British nationality, were banned (Chinese Immigration Act, 1923). It is estimated that between 1923 and 1946 only 15 Chinese immigrants were granted entry into Canada (Van Dyk, 2020). Therefore, just as Indigenous peoples were constituted as inferior humans to be eliminated from Canadian society, so too were individuals of Chinese descent. Considered a source of racial degeneration and contagion, Chinese immigrants were not only deemed categorically unworthy of Canadian

citizenship, their racialized exclusion was seen as part of the larger project of securing a ‘healthy’ and ‘progressive’ nation state (Peers, 2015; Valverde, 1991). As Ward (1978) describes it in his book *White Canada Forever*:

The Chinese were considered a grave source of lawlessness...In the eyes of their critics, the Chinese could be trusted only when watched. They reputedly escaped punishment for most of their crimes...Because of their guile, their offences went unreported and their testimony in court could not be trusted. Furthermore, through secret societies, the Chinese systematically conspired to commit and conceal crimes. These societies allegedly controlled Chinatown’s opium dens and gambling halls and also extorted money from their countrymen. ‘Tong’ wars among them erupted on occasion. To outside observers the Chinese secret society often seemed an insidious device to evade the law with impunity. It was a further sign of the depths of Chinese depravity. (p. 9-10)

This notion, that Canadian society must be defended against (Foucault, 1997) the depths of Chinese depravity demonstrates how the exclusion and disenfranchisement of the ‘racialized Other’ (which included Indigenous peoples and all ‘non-preferred’ race immigrants) is deeply embedded within the Canadian state. The *Act for the Gradual Civilization of the Indian Tribes in the Canadas* (1857), the *Act for the Gradual Enfranchisement of Indians* (1869), the *Indian Act* (1876), the *Chinese Immigration Act* (1885), the *Electoral Franchise Act* (1885), the *Immigration Act* (1906), the *Continuous Journey Passage* (1908), the *Immigration Act* (1910), the *Immigration Act* (1919), and the *Chinese Exclusion Act* (1923) all represent legislated forms of racialized exclusion intended to secure the “Aryan character of the future British America” (Macdonald, 1885, p. 1589).

It is important to note here that while racialized exclusions were a significant part of Canada’s nation-making project, so too were racialized inclusions. Ensuring a (primarily white) European population also required legislation that promoted inclusion of ‘superior’ races as much as it required the exclusion of ‘inferior’ ones. Therefore, at the same time as most ‘non-white’ races were being denied entry into the Dominion, two more pieces of legislation intended

to ensure an increasingly white (and presumably ‘healthy’), Christian nation were introduced.

The first piece of legislation was the *Empire Settlement Act* (1922). Introduced to facilitate the immigration of British subjects, this Act introduced a variety of settlement incentives (e.g., transportation fares, agricultural training, financing for land) to try to increase the number of British subjects settling in Western Canada (Van Dyk, 2020). The second piece of legislation was the *Order in Council* (1923). Adding further restrictions to an already comprehensive framework of racist immigration legislation, *the Order in Council* prohibited the entry of all industrial labourers (reducing the number of non-white men that would have previously been granted entry due to their economic utility), and limited eligibility to British subjects, United States citizens, and relatives of Canadian residents. Some allowances were provided for non-white farm workers and female domestic servants, but only because both were seen as important in securing and settling the Indigenous lands that were now known as the Western prairies (Van Dyk, 2020).

It was these legislative orders, together with the racialized legislation targeting (although very differently) Indigenous peoples and non-white immigrants that provided the comprehensive legal framework required for an almost exclusively white nation. The success of this framework, as noted by Peers (2015), is “evidenced by population percentages of European descent increasing from 97%, to 97.5%, and 97.7% in the 1911, 1921, and 1931 censuses respectively” (p. 126). Indicating that the white race was to remain the dominant race, these percentages demonstrate how white supremacy played out in a Canadian context. Through various legal inclusions and exclusions, the Canadian state was able to do three things: 1) centre middle to upper class European settlers by protecting and enhancing their rights and wellbeing, 2) conditionally include some lower class or racialized immigrants depending on the economic and

colonial needs of the nation, and 3) physically, culturally, and administratively eradicate Indigenous peoples by completely eliminating their sovereignty. But why did it happen this way? How did Western Europeans come to be constituted as the superior race? And how did racism, as a (bio)political rationality, become available for use by the Canadian state? These are the questions I will address in the next chapter.

Chapter 6: Race as the Scientific Justification for Colonization

To understand the origins of racism in Western societies, one must first understand the historical transformation of the term race. Race, in its earliest uses of the term, was used to describe one's cultural heritage (Foucault, 1997; McWhorter, 2009). Individuals were considered to be part of a race if they "grew up in its traditions, spoke its language, and practiced its religion" (McWhorter, 2009, p. 63). One's racial identity was, therefore, "not joined to a stable biological meaning" (Foucault, 1997, p. 77). Instead, throughout the 17th and early 18th centuries, race was simply a matter of culture, tradition, and language (McWhorter, 2009; Foucault, 1997).

It was not until the mid-18th century that the meaning of the term race shifted from cultural heritage to categorical physicality and inherent embodiment (Foucault, 1997; McWhorter, 2009; Saini, 2019). The reason for this shift was primarily European colonization. Fed by what McWhorter (2009) has termed "the classical scientific effort to tabulate natural entities" (p. 66), prominent European thinkers began to develop a collection of theories in order to differentiate human variation and ultimately justify the occupation of land through the concept of terra nullius. A Latin term meaning 'nobody's land,' *terra nullius* legitimized the fiction that particular continents had no 'human' inhabitants before Europeans arrived (Reid, 2010). Lands that had not been cultivated based on European standards and had only non-European inhabitants (read as 'savage' and 'primitive' peoples) were legally regarded as "empty" of people, which meant the "underlying title could be claimed" by Europeans (Reid, 2010, p. 34).

The concept of terra nullius can be traced back to a set of 15th century theological assumptions that collectively defined the *Doctrine of Discovery, 1493* (Manuel & Derrickson, 2017; Reid, 2010). Applied in the Atlantic World by Pope Alexander VI, the *Doctrine of Discovery, 1493* was used to support the Spanish conquest in the New World (Reid, 2010).

Rooted in a belief that both conquest and subjugation were an essential part of spreading Christianity, the Doctrine of Discovery reinforced a religious superiority that dates as far back as the crusades. A series of religious wars supported by the Catholic Church, the crusades resulted in the invasion of Muslim territories, and in doing so reinforced the superiority of European Christians. This sense of superiority is demonstrated in a 1240 pronouncement by Pope Innocent IV who concluded that “despite the fact that infidels [read Muslims] possessed natural rights, they could be legally deprived of these by virtue of the pope’s obligation to oversee the spiritual needs [read Christian needs] of all people” (Reid, 2010, p. 338). It was, therefore, under this ruling that the invasions of Muslim territories came to be seen by European Christians as necessary wars waged in the name, and service, of God (Miller, 2006).

Providing the legal foundation for both European colonialism and the slave trade, the Doctrine of Discovery underwent a great deal of theological reinterpretation between the 13th century and the 15th century (Manuel & Derrickson, 2017; Reid, 2010). During this time, however, two points remained consistent: 1) the pope had the authority to grant sovereignty based on discovery claims, and 2) once sovereignty had been granted, Indigenous peoples lost their title to the land (Miller, 2006; Reid, 2010). Up until the 16th century, the discovery claims required for European sovereignty could be made through a number of “symbolic acts” (Reid, 2010, p. 339). It is for this reason, that European monarchs sent a number of navigators to erect crosses, plant flags, bury coins, or read official pronouncements in order to lay claim to foreign lands (Miller, 2006; Reid, 2010). A specific example of this direction from the English Crown can be found in the 1496 patent issued by King Henry VII:

Be it known and made manifest that we have given and granted as by these presents we give and grant, for us and our heirs, to our well beloved John Cabot, citizen of Benice, and to Lewis, Sebastian and Sancio, sons of the said John, and to the heirs and deputies of them, and of any one of them, full and free authority, faculty and power to sail to all

parts, regions and coasts of the eastern, western, and northern sea, under our banners, flags and ensigns...to find, discover and investigate whatsoever islands, countries, regions, or provinces of heathens and infidels, in whatsoever part of the world placed, which before this time were unknown to all Christians. We have also...given licence to set up our aforesaid banners and ensigns...acquiring for us the dominion, title, and jurisdiction of the same towns, castles, cities, islands and mainlands so discovered. (Biggar, 1911, p. 7-10)

Much more than an artifact of English history, this 1496 patent was the first step in the British laying claim to the Indigenous territories now known as Canada. As Reid (2010) has noted, it was “on the basis of John Cabot’s explorations of 1496 through 1498 [that] England laid claim to the entire eastern seaboard of North America” (p. 340). These claims were, however, challenged by the French for over two centuries, and were only settled in 1763 when France surrendered to Britain after the Seven Years War (Manuel & Derrickson, 2017; Miller, 2005; Reid, 2010). Thus, despite laying claim to ‘Canada’ in the late 15th century, it was not until 1763 that the British Crown was able to enact the *Royal Proclamation* and ‘legally’ assert sovereignty over the Indigenous territories now known as Canada.

These ‘legal’ justifications developed in “the service of Christendom” (e.g., terra nullius, The Doctrine of Discovery, 1493, The Royal Proclamation of 1763; Reid, 2010, p. 338) were, however, not the only way Europeans were able to lay claim to Indigenous territories. Science, like the law, was also a tool that was used to maintain colonial sovereignty. It was therefore around the same time as the *Royal Proclamation* was drafted that the classification of human varieties became the object of numerous ‘scientific’ investigations. During this time, the physical characteristics of skulls, skin, and other bodily features were examined by (white, male) Europeans, categorized by (white, male) Europeans, and hierarchized by (white, male) Europeans. The result was a variety of classification schemes each charting — through various forms of quantification and comparison — ‘naturally’ distinct types of humans.

Among the first of these prominent ‘scientists’ to tabulate human beings — or as McWhorter (2009) writes, “to produce a comprehensive table of natural kinds” (p. 66) — was the Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus. Known as the father of taxonomy, Linnaeus turned his attention to human variation in his 1758 edition of *Systema Naturae* (Painter, 2010). In it, he listed four species of humans, suggesting each type could be categorized by continent and identified by skin colour: *Europaeus albus* (European white), *Americanus rubescens* (American reddish), *Asiaticus fuscus* (Asian tawny), and *Africanus niger* (African black; Painter, 2010). He went on to suggest that the distinction between these four categories was primarily a product of climate. As a theory of human variation, Linnaean proposed that the differences between these four varieties of man (meaning skin color as well as all other physical and moral attributes) could be directly attributed to a hierarchical geography. Europeans were constituted as physically and morally superior to all other categories and were consistently placed at the top. Africans, on the other hand, were constituted as having the most negative moral and physical attributes, so were consistently positioned at the bottom. It was, therefore, through these ‘scientific’ claims — those that attributed geography to superior or inferior human attributes — that Linnaeus was able to introduce a theory that conflated character with appearance, and in doing so also ‘naturally’ subjugated three categories of geographically distinct peoples (McWhorter, 2009).

For other ‘scientific’ thinkers during this time, climate alone was not a sufficient explanation for human variation — primarily, because the differences did not disappear when people moved to different climates. Therefore, a few years after the release of *Systema Naturae*, human variation was no longer just a matter of geography and climate; it also became a matter of ancestral lineage. We can see this melding of geography and ancestral lineage in Charles White’s 1799 *Human Chart* (Painter, 2010). Instead of developing a categorical hierarchy based on

geography, he measured the skulls of different ‘species’ and ordered them according to *The Great Chain of Being* (Painter, 2010). A hierarchy that placed God at the top and progressed downward to humans, animals, plants, and minerals, *The Great Chain of Being* provided the linear logic required for the seven categories in White’s (1799) *Human Chart*: Ape, Negro, American Savage, Asiatic, Europeans, Roman, Grecian Antique. The order of the different human ‘species’ is important to note here. By situating the “Negro” alongside the “Ape”, and “Europeans” alongside the ‘god-like’ figures of the “Roman” painter and “Grecian Antique,” White’s chart not only reified the notion that “Europeans” were the most advanced segment of modern humanity, it reinforced a commonly held belief that “Negros” were the most ‘animalistic’ of the human species.

Linnaeus and White were among a long line of European men whose empirical investigations attempted to explain and justify human variation. In the 18th century alone, the number of distinct ‘species’ documented by the classification systems of various Europeans ranged from as little as two to as many as thirty-four (McWhorter, 2009). And despite each of these investigations contributing in their own way to the “irrefutable proof of a white supremacy” (Painter, 2010, p. 67), it was the work of Johann Fredrich Blumenbach that would have the longest lasting consequences.

Like other anthropologists of the day, Blumenbach’s classification system supported the belief that Europeans – as a result of their brain size and other cranial measurements – were the most intelligent and beautiful of the human types. Where he differed from others was the way in which he described these types. In addition to ranking the different ‘species’ hierarchically, his “meticulous measurement endowed the ‘Caucasian’ variety with an unimpeachable scientific pedigree” (Painter, 2010, p. 75).

Prior to Blumenbach's use of the term, 'caucasian' was a geographical descriptor used to refer to people from the mountainous Caucasus region. But as the concept of human beauty became increasingly understood to be a "scientifically certified racial trait" (Painter, 2010, p. 81), Blumenbach felt it essential to have a term that distinguished whiteness from all other skin tones. He, therefore, chose the term 'Caucasian', "both because its neighbourhood, and especially its southern slope, produces, the most beautiful race of men" (Blumenbach, 1795 as cited in Painter, 2010, p. 81). In other words, he chose the term Caucasian because he could enlarge the "neighbourhood" of this "most beautiful race of men," making the term (and the characteristics associated with it) synonymous with Western Europeans. The result was another new take on the human varieties — Caucasian, Mongolians, Ethiopians, Americans, Malays — as well as the beginning of whiteness as it is understood today (McWhorter, 2009).

Throughout the late 18th and early 19th centuries, race remained a matter of structural and physical features. Skin colour, facial features, and cranial measurements were not only considered the primary markers of human variation, it was these physical differences that came to be directly correlated with the purported differences in intelligence, morality, civilization, and beauty. This science of morphology, however, did not precipitate the belief that Europeans were the most advanced and intelligent segment of humanity. Rather, it was the other way around. Scientific theory was used to explain, refine, and sustain the political ethos of (white) European superiority. As McWhorter (2009) writes, "scientific theories would not only justify racializing practices after the fact, but would appropriate them as a means to produce the subjectivity of Enlightenment science itself" (p. 344). Thus, it was through their various classification schemes that European thinkers developed the parameters — based on their own ways of experiencing the world — for what constituted a 'modern' human being. Or to put it differently, it was through

these ‘scientific’ classifications that whiteness not only became the visible measure of human modernity, it became the benchmark against which all other races would be measured, judged, colonized, and controlled.

Toward the end of the 19th century, the concept of race changed once again. Now integrated into the science of biology, human variation was no longer explained by structural and physical difference; it was now a matter of developmental function and biological difference (McWhorter, 2009). This biological shift was due in large part to Charles Darwin’s (1871) *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex*. Applying his theory of biological evolution to the human species Darwin suggests humans, like all other life forms, evolved slowly over many millennia from one common ancestor. And while this line of intellectual thinking did a lot to discredit earlier beliefs of religious creationism (i.e., The Great Chain of Being), it did nothing to eliminate notions of white supremacy. As outlined in *The Descent of Man*, Darwin (1871) believed there were gradations “between the highest men of the highest races and the lowest savages” (p. 39). Therefore, despite his contribution to the idea of racial unity — that all members of the human race can be traced back to one common ancestor — he still believed in an evolutionary hierarchy that constituted the Caucasian race as biologically superior to all other races.

By the time *The Descent of Man* was published, race was already a well-established tool of colonization in the colonies of British North America (see earlier chapters for details about the specific legislation). Using science to position themselves as politically, culturally, spiritually, and economically superior to all other races, Western Europeans (primarily the British and to a lesser degree the French) not only constituted themselves as the lawful subjects of Indigenous lands, they also used this ‘empirical data’ as proof that Indigenous peoples (due to their place in

The Great Order of Being) lacked the civility and morality required to live in European society. Thus, the ‘scientific’ theories of morphological race did indeed play a central role in the dispossession and elimination of Indigenous populations. However, it was not until the introduction of Social Darwinism (toward the end of the 19th century) that biological racism became the primary logic underpinning what would soon become a comprehensive network of policies intended to “Keep Canada White” (Thobani, 2007, p. 92).

Biological racism stems from the ‘scientific’ assertion that racial difference *is* biological difference (McWhorter, 2009). Within this new form of racism, racial inferiority was no longer linked to culture or lineage. Instead, it was now rooted in biological theories of human inheritance. The ‘desirable’ traits of white, Europeans (e.g., lawfulness, cleanliness, morality, temperance) and the ‘undesirable’ traits of non-white Others (e.g., lawlessness, heathenness, immorality, laziness) were no longer simply matters of culture and geography; they were now integrated into the science of biology and considered the result of ‘good’ heredity or ‘bad’ heredity. Furthermore, within this new form of racism the notions of heredity were not limited to racialized categorizations. Any form of abnormality (conditions we now classify as poverty, same-sex desire, disability, mental illness, alcoholism, and drug addiction) was considered a threat to the genetic purity of the nation and was to be eliminated, regulated, and/or managed (Foucault, 1997; McWhorter, 2009).

Foucault (1997) has termed this battle against all those “who deviate from the norm” (p. 61) state racism. Suggesting that the objective of state racism was to ensure “the biological protection of the race,” (p. 82) he uses the discipline of psychiatry to demonstrate one of the many ways the discourses of degeneracy were used to govern society:

Within this notion of degeneration and these analyses of heredity, you can see how psychiatry could plug into, or rather give rise to, a racism that was very different in this

period from what could be called traditional, historical racism, from “ethnic racism.” The racism that psychiatry gave birth to in this period is racism against the abnormal, against individuals who, as carriers of a condition, a stigmata, or any defect whatsoever, may more or less randomly transmit to their heirs the unpredictable consequences of the evil, or rather of the non-normal that they carry with them. It is a racism, therefore, whose function is not so much the prejudice or defense of one group against another as the detection of all those within a group who may be the carriers of a danger to it. It is an internal racism that permits the screening of every individual within a given society. (Foucault, 1999, p. 316-317)

Born at a point when the desire for biological purity was combined with a need for colonial security, the primary goal of state racism (as demonstrated by the statements above) was to exclude and eliminate anyone who threatened the health and security of the white national populations. Therefore, alongside those policies and practices set on eliminating, regulating, and managing those who threatened the actual whiteness of the nation, state mechanisms grew to include a variety of techniques intended to eliminate, regulate, and manage any, and all, forms of abnormality (Foucault, 1997). In other words, this advanced form of state racism sought to promote, protect, and enhance the ‘quality’ of the Canadian population by eliminating both non-whites and ‘tarnished,’ ‘degenerate,’ or ‘abnormal’ whites.

By expanding the field of abnormality beyond an ethnic or racialized racism, state racism opened the door to a number of new social and political reforms. Anyone who was considered morally, mentally, or physically degenerate (e.g., ‘the pauper,’ ‘the criminal,’ ‘the crippled,’ ‘the feeble-minded,’ ‘the drunkard,’ ‘the homosexual’) was now constituted as biologically inferior and was to be treated as such. The result was an intensified need to identify all of the ‘abnormal’ individuals to be excluded, regulated, and controlled, as well as an increased number of innovative reform techniques that came to be explained, refined, and sustained through the concept of Social Darwinism.

Understood as the application of Darwin’s theory of biological evolution to the human

species, Social Darwinism provided the ‘scientific’ foundation for a comprehensive network of policies and practices that emerged throughout Canada around the end of the 19th century. Largely influenced by the phrases “struggle for existence” (Darwin, 1909, p. 241) and “survival of the fittest” (Darwin, 1868b, p. 9), supporters of Social Darwinism believed in both economic and political competition (Leonard, 2005). Despite these foundational beliefs, however, different groups “mined Darwinian ideas for their various purposes” (Leonard, 2005, p. 218), which meant the societal application of Social Darwinism was not clear cut. As noted by Leonard (2005), when applied to society, Social Darwinism “devolved into an omnibus term” (p. 213) that was used to explain and justify both a “brutish laissez-faire capitalism” (p. 213) and the expansion of social welfare. Business apologists who believed both political competition among races and economic competition among individuals should be left to natural selection adopted the former view. As pure Social Darwinists, they held that the struggle for an economic and political existence was considered a natural process that could be reduced to the biological concept of “survival of the fittest” (Darwin, 1868b, p. 9). Those with a more ‘progressive’ view of social and economic reform were, however, opposed to this laissez-faire model of political and economic governance. Arguing that “unfettered capitalism was dysgenic” (Leonard, 2005, p. 212), these progressive Social Darwinists suggested that state-guided reform was superior to natural selection. As such, the Canadian state had a responsibility to “interfere on behalf of the really fittest” (Croly, 1909, p. 191). Therefore, rather than relying on the processes of natural selection, they argued for social, political, and economic reforms that would facilitate the “survival of the fittest” through the targeted elimination of those considered to be “the unfittest” (Greg, 1868, p. 355). In other words, they argued for the introduction of *eugenic* policies and programs in order to eliminate anyone marked as morally, mentally, physically or racially

degenerate.

Officially coined in 1883, eugenics was defined by Sir Francis Galton as “the study of agencies under social control that may improve or impair the racial qualities of future generations, either physically or mentally” (Galton, 1907, p. 17). Focused on solving the ‘ills’ that were plaguing Britain, Galton suggested eugenics could differentiate superior (or desirable) human traits from inferior (or undesirable) ones and determine how each could be increased or decreased within a population (McLaren, 1990). Edward Mason (1912) explained this in more detail in an article published in the *Journal of Society of Comparative Legislation*:

If the race is to be improved — if it is to be saved — we must study and apply the laws of heredity; we must eliminate the unfit, we must encourage the survival and propagation of the best in all classes. This is not only a social ideal, it is a matter of urgent practical importance. The growing humanitarianism of modern communities under the influence of civilization and Christianity has long been working, and is still working, against the stern law of natural selection — against the methods of ancient communities and in favour of the “weak things of the earth”... Sympathy and tenderness have replaced hardness and indifference, and philanthropy is now busy in a thousand forms. All this is well, and God forbid that we should ever go back upon it; but the result is that we find ourselves confronted with a very serious social situation — the multiplication of the unfit. The weak that would have died under the old regime live on, the feeble-minded group and propagate themselves — transmitting their taints and weaknesses, their diseases and defects, and with this degeneration of the race an ever-increasing burden is imposed on the rest of community.... The Eugenist, then, has got his goal in the improvement of the race, physical, mental, moral, and spiritual, but he has yet to reach it. Much can be done... There are three factors involved: (1) Heredity, (2) Environment, and (3) Education. Of these three influences men of science are agreed that heredity is the most potent... but environment and education are also potent influences, and in both the State has been asserting itself with growing emphasis during the last fifty years. (p. 123-125)

As demonstrated by these statements, Eugenicists combined racist research in the areas of biology, anthropology, demography, and genetics. In doing so, they not only reinforced earlier scientific beliefs that Western Europeans were the most evolved, making them superior to all other humans; they also provided legislators with the ‘scientific’ rationale necessary for the introduction of a comprehensive network of policies and programs intended to “eliminate the

unfit” while simultaneously “encourag[ing] the survival and propagation of the best in all classes” (Mason, 1912, p. 123). In a Canadian context, this meant supporting the health, wealth, and security of white, heterosexual, able bodied men/boys (and to a lesser degree women/girls) from Western Europe descent, while simultaneously restricting the health, wealth, and security of those individuals we now describe as racialized, Indigenous, disabled, queer, trans, or experiencing poverty (Peers & Tink, 2020).

Knowing all of this, the question becomes: What does this pseudo science (that is, a science that was developed to justify the theological, political, economic, cultural, and racial dominance of Western Europeans) have to do with the ‘health promoting’ practices of recreation? I will use the next section to address this question.

SECTION 3:

A RE-READING OF PUBLIC RECREATION'S PAST

Chapter 7: A Three-Tiered Hierarchy

As I've demonstrated until this point, it was a complex combination of political struggles and 'scientific' theory that rendered white supremacy an active process in the formation of the Canadian state. Beginning around the late 1700s, a network of particular knowledges, laws, policies, and practices resulted in what Thobani (2007) has termed the *exaltation* of white status nationals:

[Exaltation is] the embodiment of the particular qualities said to characterize nationality...exaltation has been key to the constitution of the national subject as a particular kind of human being, a member of a particular kind of community, and hence, ontologically and existentially distinct from the strangers to this community. (p. 5)

As highlighted by these statements it was through this process of exaltation that the colonial state was able to use a number of human qualities (e.g., skin colour, religion, ancestry, cultural practices) to define who was to be *included* and who was to be *excluded* from the national community. Intent on establishing a new colonial society, the British government not only positioned European settlers as the legal occupants of Indigenous lands, once biological security became equally as important as territorial security – that is, when Indigenous sovereignty was no longer the primary threat and the colonial state began to also ensure the biological health and purity (i.e., the whiteness) of national community – citizenship, and its associated privileges, became hierarchically constituted.

Poststructural scholar Danielle Peers (2015) discusses this hierarchical categorization using three "Canadian kinds" (p. 88). Building on the work of both Sunera Thobani (2007) and Judith Butler (2009), Peers (2015) demonstrates how the social security nets that were introduced in Canada in the early 20th century differentially secured the (quality of) life chances of three separate categories: the Canadian national, the precarious Canadian, and the degenerate Other. Continuing with this argument, I use these same hierarchical categories to demonstrate how

public recreation programs and policies also differentially served (and continue to serve) these same “Canadian kinds” (Peers, 2015, p. 88). Recognizing, however, that precarious Canadians – despite their lowly status – have been constituted as being worthy of ‘national’ status, I have replaced the category of *Canadian national* with the category of *incontestable Canadian*. I have done so in an attempt to better demonstrate how, precarious Canadians, just like incontestable Canadians have been, and continue to be, included within the national community. Throughout the rest of section, I therefore explain Peers’ (2015) “Canadian kinds” (p. 88), but I do so using slightly different hierarchical categories: the *incontestable Canadian*, the *precarious Canadian*, and the *degenerate Other*.

At the top of the hierarchy is the *incontestable Canadian*. I use the term ‘incontestable’ to describe this category because individuals within this category were granted unconditional membership into the national community, meaning their citizenship was undeniable. Members of this category were primarily able-bodied, heterosexual, middle to upper class men and women (although to a significantly lesser degree) of British descent. Situated below this group were *precarious Canadians*. Primarily made up of working and lower class subjects from Britain and France as well other Western European nations such as Ireland, Finland, and Sweden, members of this group were considered white enough to be conditionally accepted into the national community. However, in order to maintain this acceptance, these subjects needed to remain economically productive, while also being politically and morally aligned with the ruling British class. In other words, their sustained inclusion, and the security that came with it, was directly reliant on their ability to avoid becoming an economic, social, moral, or political threat to the national community.

Situated at the bottom of the racial hierarchy is the *degenerate Other*. Perhaps the most

complex category within Canada's racial hierarchy, this category included all members of the previously defined 'non-preferred' races (e.g., 'the Chinese,' 'the Japanese,' 'the Negro,' 'the Indian') as well as anyone else who was considered to be economically, morally, or physically degenerate (e.g., 'the pauper,' 'the criminal,' 'the crippled,' 'the feebleminded,' 'the drunkard,' 'the homosexual'). Positioned first as threats to the development of settler colonial nation (beginning in the 1700s) and later as biological threats to the 'purity' of the nation (beginning in the late 1880s), individuals situated within this category remained cut off from the national community through a whole host of policies and practices that explicitly eliminated, excluded, segregated, or institutionalized them. And although it could be argued that each group within this category was valued (and therefore managed, controlled or regulated) very differently, the key point is that everyone who was constituted as a 'degenerate' Other was physically and/or administratively denied the basic wealth and securities afforded to those included, whether unconditionally or conditionally, within the national community.

Recognizing that each of these categorizations, along with their raced, classed, gendered, (dis)abled, and sexualized assumptions, are socially constructed (that is, they are created within and through the interactions of people that are socially and politically located; Potts & Brown, 2015), I use these categories to demonstrate how the activities and facilities that have come to define Canada's public recreation facilities are directly related to this understanding of who was, and who was not, part of Canada's national community. More specifically, I will use a heuristic process to walk the reader through a chronological history that demonstrates how public recreation facilities were, and continue to be, sites that privilege (although slightly differently) the two categories of Canadian nationals: the incontestable Canadian and the precarious Canadian. It is through this categorical examination that I am able to demonstrate how, in a

recreation context, historical exclusions (whether intentional or not) were in fact part of a broader biopolitical project intended to sustain white supremacy. McWhorter (2009) has summarized this argument nicely:

Exclusion, oppression, hatred, and fear of abnormality as practiced and perpetuated in our society have everything to do with race, no matter which group of ‘abnormals’ are the targets. Modern racism is about racial purification; it defines the abnormalities it identifies as racial impurities or as threats to racial purity. Modern racism is not really about nonwhites; modern racism is really all about white people. And once we fully understand *that* – and fully understand how *that* came to be, historically – our understanding of racism, sexuality, and the biopolitical regimes within which we live and know ourselves and each other will be dramatically and profoundly transformed. (p. 35, emphasis in the original).

Following Foucault’s (1997) thoughts on state racism, McWhorter (2009) not only asserts that all forms of ‘abnormality’ are produced through racism, she also highlights how racism, despite targeting racialized people, is about white people. It is only through the technology of whiteness that both the ‘abnormal’ (e.g., racialized, Indigenous, disabled, queer, trans, and people living in poverty) and the ‘normal’ (e.g., white, straight, cis, middle to upper class people) can be imagined, produced, and governed. Or to state it more simply, it is only because our social, economic, and political systems continue to sustain white supremacy and everything entangled in it (e.g., Western exceptionalism, settler colonialism, racism, capitalism, (hetero)patriarchy), that race, gender, sexuality, (dis)ability, and class continue operate in ways that either increase or decrease one’s chances of health, wealth, and security.

It is within this line of thinking that my genealogical analysis demonstrates how white supremacy is, and continues to be, an inherent part of public recreation. Responding to calls for more critical examinations of how whiteness is internalized and perpetuated in the fields of health and recreation (e.g., Arai & Kivel, 2009; Daniels & Schulz, 2006; Floyd, 2007; Fullilove, 1998; Kaufman and Hall, 2003; Mowatt, 2020), this genealogical analysis uses Foucault’s notion

of biopolitics – understood as the governance of life chances – to highlight how our past and present recreation facilities have reified the white supremacist logics of Western exceptionalism, settler colonialism, capitalism, racism and (hetero)patriarchy (see Chapter 2 for an overview of biopolitics). Moving beyond the singular identity analyses that still tend to dominate the recreation and health literature (e.g., Arellano, Friis, & Stuart, 2019; Flanagan, 2010; Wilkinson, Harvey & Tabbane, 2019), this analysis not only traces the many ways public recreation facilities have been, and continue to be, sites of raced, classed, gendered, (dis)abled, and sexualized normalization; it also provides an example of how “genealogy-based politics” (McWhorter, 2009, p. 382) can be used to expose the ways health promotion discourses, practices, and policies are part of a broader biopolitical project that produces, and in turn governs, both ‘normal’ and ‘abnormal’ bodies.

I take as my subject of analysis two distinct eras of recreation facility development in Canada: *the social medicine era* (1880s-1920s) and *the social welfare era* (1930s-1970s). I begin with the social medicine era for two reasons. Firstly, it was during this time period that eugenics was introduced and the technologies of whiteness and normalization converged resulting in what has previously been termed ‘a state racism against the abnormal’ (Foucault, 1997, McWhorter, 2009). Secondly, prior the 1880s, public recreation facilities, as we understand them today – that is, government-funded swimming pools, skating rinks, gymnasiums – were non-existent. It was not until after eugenics became a political rationality of the colonial state that public recreation facilities were introduced as part of a larger biopolitical project aimed at improving the health and fitness of the national community. Thus, it was only in the late 1880s that the story of municipal recreation as a normalizing technology of whiteness began.

Building on traditional histories of recreation (e.g., Burton, 2011; Kidd, 1996;

McFarland, 1970; Wetherell & Kmet, 1990, my analysis therefore demonstrates how municipal recreation facilities, as part of a larger project of state racism, were both produced by, and reinforced, the white supremacist logics of Western exceptionalism, settler colonialism, capitalism, racism, and (hetero)patriarchy. It is this focus on state racism (or the normalizing technology of whiteness) that makes this analysis unique. While there have been a number of historical analyses that have previously situated recreation practices within the frameworks of race, gender, class, and sexuality (e.g., Peers & Tink, 2021; Mobily, 2018; Valverde, 1991) there has yet to be one that traces, from the 1880s until today, the ways municipal recreation facilities operate as a biopolitical technology of white supremacy. More specifically, there has yet to be a genealogical analysis that demonstrates how the threads that were analyzed in the previous section – that is, the disposition and elimination of Indigenous peoples; the enactment of racist immigration legislation; the ratification of a gendered, classed, and racialized system of enfranchisement; and the eugenic techniques intended to eliminate, regulate and manage all forms of ‘abnormality’ – created the conditions for a system of public recreation facilities that systematically privileges white, cis-gendered, heterosexual, able-bodied Canadians.

It is important to note, given the breadth of what could be classified as a public recreation facility, that I have limited my analysis to those foundational innovations that have created the conditions for the existence of our contemporary ‘big box’ recreation facilities (i.e., large, market-oriented facilities located in urban areas). In other words, my analytical gaze focuses only on those municipal-level services and amenities that traditional historians have suggested, “evolved most naturally” (Burton, 2011, p. 8) through a “general pattern of [pan-Canadian] development” (McFarland, 1970, p. 38) into our contemporary municipal recreation facilities. As a result, my chronological re-reading includes four historical innovations: the playground

movement, the urban park movement, the depression-era recreation movement, and the community centre movement. Other government funded institutions such as provincial and national parks, municipal green spaces, non-profit organizations, sport clubs, public schools, universities, residential schools, prisons, and other ‘therapeutic’ institutions are, therefore, beyond the scope of this analysis.

It is also worth noting that while my chronological re-reading illustrates how white supremacy has been, and continues to be perpetuated within public recreation facilities and programs, I am in no way dismissing the many ways white hegemony has continually been resisted in recreation facilities and other sites (see Kidd, 1996; Forsyth, 2020; Nzindukiyimana & Wamsley, 2020; and Te Hiwi, 2021 for examples of how recreation and sport has afforded a space for the agency, resistance, and self-determination of women, the working class, Indigenous peoples, and racialized individuals). As Foucault (1978), concisely noted in *The History of Sexuality*, “where there is power there is resistance” (p. 94). Therefore, while my analysis does indeed suggest that recreation facilities are sites where the white supremacist logics of Western exceptionalism, settler colonialism, capitalism, racism, and (hetero)patriarchy have been, and continue to be, reproduced, this analysis should not be read as a deterministic account of white hegemony. Instead, this analysis should be read as a tactical move that could become the starting point for an opposing strategy: one that redefines what public recreation means within Canadian society.

It is at this intersection of hope and resistance that I begin my re-reading of recreation in Canada.

Chapter 8: Health as a Biological Requirement: Public Recreation as a Technique of Social Medicine

Social medicine, as articulated by Foucault (2003d), is a “modern medicine...whose basis is a certain technology of the social body” (p. 321). The essential objective of social medicine (or what we would now refer to as public health) is, therefore, to ensure the health of a national community. However, as previously discussed, within any national community there are both inclusions and exclusions, and the criteria for determining each are always the same. It is always “race, gender, sexuality, national origin, ability, and Indigeneity [that] condition and determine who falls on either side of that line” (Spade, 2015, p. 75). Thus, like other biopolitical techniques, social medicine impacts different subjects in a variety of different ways. In liberal states, like Canada – where the sovereign does not possess the right to explicitly kill – subjects that have been constituted as ‘problems,’ ‘drains,’ or ‘threats’ tend to be excluded, rooted out, or passively eliminated from the national population (Foucault, 1997). Exactly how this is accomplished depends on the purported ‘problem’ or ‘threat,’ but, as I have previously outlined, between the 1880s and 1930s the Canadian state used a comprehensive network of Indigenous legislation, immigration policies, and eugenic practices, to exclude and/or eliminate the majority of the nation’s ‘problematic’ or ‘threatening’ subjects (i.e., degenerate Others).

During this same timeframe, more valued populations experienced the strategies of the colonial state very differently. Instead of being excluded, rooted out, or passively eliminated from the national population, more ‘desirable’ subjects (i.e., incontestable Canadians and precarious Canadians) were politically and socially recognized as part of the national community. As a result, they benefited from the numerous policies and practices that were intended to improve the health and security of the Canadian population. Spade (2015), although

writing in a contemporary context, explained how policies and programs benefit members included within the national community when he wrote,

One way to think about these [policies and programs]...is that they are created as care-taking programs. They are invented to address perceived risks to the national population and to distribute resources across the population in ways that aim to address those risks. They are aimed at increasing the health, security, and well-being – access to food, transportation, public safety, public health, and the like. Because they mobilize the idea of the population (sometimes “society” or “the nation” or “the people”), they are designed in ways that reflect and amplify understandings of who is “inside” and who is “outside” of the group whose protection and cultivation is being sought (p. 75).

The reference to ‘perceived risks’ is important to note here. From the 1880s until the 1920s, precarious Canadians (read the white labouring class) were often constituted as a *risk* (or a danger) to incontestable Canadians, despite being considered part of the national community. Many of their working class behaviours were considered ‘unhealthy’, making them the direct targets of a number of interventions. As far as the working class were concerned, they were no longer simply judged in terms of their economic cost. As part of a new web of social relations, they were now rendered calculable in terms of norms and deviations and subject to regimes of correction and reformation. The result, in the context of social medicine, was the organization of a public health system that took as its target the bodies of precarious Canadians in order to further secure the health and security of the (white) colonial state (Foucault, 2003d).

When read this way, social medicine cannot be separated from the overarching structure of settler colonial capitalism. As both a population and an individual-level health-promoting program, social medicine not only targeted the bodies of the precarious Canadians, it also positioned their bodies as a social, political, and economic force required to maintain the colonial order. Thus, just like other institutional apparatuses (e.g., the education system, the legal system), the history of social medicine is entangled in histories of Indigenous peoples, immigrants, and race science. Between the 1880s and the 1930s, the colonial state used the categories of

Indigeneity, race, gender, national origin, and economic productivity, to develop a series of health promoting institutions (most of which still exist today) in an attempt to protect and enhance a new colonial society. The emergence of these institutions was, however, neither a natural process nor a predestined inevitability. As noted by Thobani (2007), “the shape that this nation assumed was the outcome of the intense race battles waged — and the race compromises forged — by the state and Nation(als) against those whom they sought to eliminate and exclude” (p. 22). Therefore, while the dominant narratives of Canadian nationhood continue to define Western Europeans as the founders and protectors of this national territory, the health promoting institutions they developed were born from a number of normalizing knowledges that were not only strategically racialized, gendered, and classed, but also consistently brought three forms of social medicine into play: state medicine, urban medicine, and labour force medicine.

In a Canadian context, these three forms of social medicine were each formalized around the end of the 19th century and contributed, although differently, to the structures of settler colonialism. State medicine, for example, was concerned with the military strength of Canada as a Dominion. Techniques of state medicine were therefore intended to strengthen the bodies of individual soldiers so they could more effectively protect the British Empire from external threats posed by enemy nations. Urban medicine, on the other hand, focused on internal threats. Primarily concerned with the issues caused by overcrowding and industrialization, techniques of urban medicine were to address environmental factors such as air, water, and decompositions. Therefore, as Foucault (2003d) has noted, urban medicine was not so much “a medicine of man, the body, and the organism [as it was] a medicine of things...of the living conditions of the existential milieu” (p. 332). The overall objective was to control the urban environment in ways that would improve the living conditions within the poor parts of these European settlements in

ways that would decrease disease, degradation, and contagion at the level of the national community.

Like urban medicine, labour force medicine focused on internal threats. However, instead of mitigating threats posed by the urban environment, labour force medicine was intended to mitigate the threats posed by economic inequality. Described by Foucault (2003d) as a medicine that was intended to “control the bodies of the needy classes, to make them more fit for labour and less dangerous to the wealthy classes” (p. 337), labour force medicine was of interest to the colonial state for a number of reasons. Firstly, there were numerous physically demanding and dangerous tasks that needed to be completed in, and between, the newly established towns and cities (e.g., garbage collection, railroad construction). A healthy and productive workforce was therefore required for all of these tasks. Secondly, the wealth of capitalists (i.e., middle and upper classes who profited from others’ wage labour) was directly dependent on the existence of a workforce. So once again, a healthy and productive working class capable of paid labour was required. Lastly, when members of the working class were gainfully employed, they were thought to be less likely to engage in ‘immoral’ behaviours that contributed to social unrest. Thus, in addition to instilling the habits of health, authorities that focused on labour force medicine sought to instill in the lower classes habits of political, social, and moral self-regulation in order to ensure a productive and compliant labour force (Foucault, 2003d).

When read together state medicine, urban medicine, and labour force medicine, can be understood as an organized attempt to govern in particular, but not exclusively, the conduct of ‘the poor’. Focused on improving the physical and moral health of precarious Canadians, social medicine manipulated both the physical and the social environment in an attempt to correct, improve or modify a number of personal and social pathologies. Operating as part of a broader

strategy in which the wealth and security of incontestable Canadians were to be further secured, the techniques of social medicine sought to align the self-governing capacities of precarious Canadians with the objectives of the colonial state. However, as I will demonstrate throughout this chapter, the interventions that were part of the structure of social medicine were in no way coercive. Rather, it was through acts of education and tutelage in sites such as supervised playgrounds and urban reform parks that the processes of normalization – processes which (re)inforced the white supremacist logics of Western exceptionalism, settler colonialism, capitalism, racism, and (hetero)patriarchy – took place. Before I detail exactly how supervised playgrounds and urban reform parks operated as a biopolitical technology of white supremacy, however, it is important to situate this chapter within the context of 19th century urbanization.

Urbanization in Canada: A Brief Overview

In a Canadian context, urbanization began during the 19th century and can be interpreted through the framework of settler colonialism (Edmonds, 2010; Hugill, 2016; Peters, 2018; Toews, 2018). Entailing both an ideological conquest of space and the physical organization of people, urbanization can be understood as the “production of urban space in settler-dominated societies” (Hugill, 2016, p. 6). Defined by the permanent settlement of Europeans (and other immigrants) in towns and cities located on Indigenous territories, urbanization resulted in the “unreformed immanence of fundamentally unequal relations between Indigenous peoples and their nonindigenous counterparts” (Veracini, 2015, p. 1). Urban planners and developers (read middle and upper class European settlers) not only sought the removal, rather than the integration, of Indigenous people from settler colonial towns and cities; they also pursued a diverse range of tactics in an attempt to mitigate the negative effects of urbanization for nonindigenous settlers (e.g., disease, poverty, pollution) in order to further secure state

formation, European settlement, and capitalist development (Hugill, 2016; Veracini, 2010; Wolfe, 2006).

As previously noted, by the early 1880s only a few hundred Indigenous people were living off reserve and free from the control of the Dominion Government (Barron, 1988, Daschuk, 2019). Furthermore, by the early 1900s racialized prohibitions were a significant part of Canada's immigration project (Thobani, 2007; Van Dyk, 2020). Therefore, while the urban population of Canada increased from approximately 1.1 million to 4.3 million between 1881 and 1921 (Urquhart & Buckley, 1965), so too did the whiteness of that population. It is for this reason that urbanization, in addition to being remembered as creating an entirely new "economic and social character" (Rutherford, 1971, p. 203), should also be associated with solidifying a settler colonial political order organized around British Imperial state formation and capitalist development (Hugill, 2016). Not only did the massive growth in manufacturing that occurred during the late 19th and early 20th centuries result in extensive returns (economically, socially, and politically) for a new class of white industrial elites (i.e., incontestable Canadians; Foglesong, 1986, Rutherford, 1971, Valverde, 1991), this new urban-industrial order also saw the proliferation of an almost entirely white "proletariat, in part foreign-born, generally poor and concentrated in crowded subdivisions, slums, or shanty-towns" (i.e., precarious Canadians; Rutherford, 1971, p. 210). It is for this reason, that both urban medicine and labour force medicine can be characterized as a direct response to urbanization. Towards the end of the 19th century, it was widely accepted that a new, and more effective, form of social intervention was required "to improve the conditions...in the tenements and slums of industrial cities" (Burton, 2011, p. 6). Rejecting the earlier political ideology, which suggested society was a collection of individuals seeking their individual fortunes, social reformers (read incontestable Canadians)

began to think about society as a single, interconnected entity (Foglesong, 1986, Rutherford, 1971, Valverde, 1991). All the problems of “the social” (Valverde, 1991, p. 20) were now of interest, with particular attention being paid to the health and fitness of those living in “the slum and the immigrant ghetto” (Rutherford, 1971, p. 210). Beginning around the 1890s, a number of empirical studies were therefore conducted in an attempt to create a more detailed picture of the health and fitness within the slums and ghettos in both major cities and smaller centres (Rutherford, 1971; Valverde, 1991). Herbert Ames’ (1897) publication *The City Below the Hill: A Sociological Study of a Portion of the City of Montreal, Canada* is an excellent example of these developments in health surveillance. A statistical account of the living conditions in a working class area of Montreal, this study was intended to guide the city’s reform efforts by demonstrating that within “enlightened municipalities... public health can be conserved, morals improved, and lives saved by the right knowledge of local conditions and the proper use of measures for their amelioration” (p. 4).

Promoting what Valverde (1991) has termed a “re-visioning of society” (p. 129), this new form of statistical surveillance became part of an overarching effort to “coloniz[e] the slum” (p. 139). Converging around a religious sense of community responsibility and the development of health surveillance, this new approach to urban planning was considered “a rational scheme of supervising [and thus improving] the conditions in which [poor] people...live” (Sifton, 1914 as cited in Rutherford, 1971, p. 209). Without a ‘healthy’ environment, social reformers warned, the health of the Canadian nation was at risk. However, as I have previously outlined, the term health did not imply the same thing at the turn of the 20th century as they did throughout the earlier parts of the 19th century. Toward the end of the 19th century, a healthy individual was no longer a rational, self-interested subject capable of fulfilling their ‘god-given’ economic and

moral duties. Rather, due to a number of ‘scientific’ advances that began in the 1880s, the terms health and fitness became firmly rooted in the biological theories of eugenics.

The first Canadian lecture on eugenics was delivered at McGill University in 1884 (Berger, 1983). Touted by the scientific, social, and political elite as a solution to what was described as the “degeneration of the [Aryan] race” (Mason, 1912, p. 123), eugenics – defined as “the study of agencies under social control that may improve or impair the racial qualities of future generations, either physically or mentally” (Galton, 1907, p. 17) – provided the ‘scientific’ backing for social medicine to become part of “the civilizing mission to the poor” (Burton, 2011, p.6). Using a series of interventions that were intended to ‘uplift’ the masses, the objective of this ‘civilizing mission’ was to eradicate the diseases of crime, poverty, and alcoholism in order to ultimately increase the biological purity of the (white) Canadian race (McLaren, 1990).

The link between the social ills of the industrial city and biological purity of the Canadian race is important to understand. As Leonard (2005) has noted, “no eugenicist doubted that social and economic pathologies were the product of heredity” (p. 219). As a result, both eugenicists and social reformers, operated under the assumption that social and economic traits (e.g., alcoholism, criminal behaviours, poverty) were inherited in exactly the same way as polygenic traits (e.g., skin colour, eye colour). Educational and environmental interventions were, therefore, thought to improve the biological purity of the nation equally as much as sterilizations or immigration controls (Leonard, 2005). That being said, the targets of educational and environmental interventions were very different from the more extreme eugenic interventions. As previously indicated, individuals who sat at the bottom of the racial hierarchy — that is, individuals constituted as ‘non-preferred’ races (e.g., ‘the Chinese,’ ‘the Japanese,’ ‘the Negro,’ ‘the Indian’) as well anyone else who was considered to be economically, morally, or physically

degenerate (e.g., ‘the pauper,’ ‘the criminal,’ ‘the crippled,’ ‘the feeble-minded,’ ‘the drunkard,’ ‘the homosexual’) — were not ‘fit’ enough to be included in the national community. As such, they were much more likely to be the victims of life-reducing practices such as segregation, institutionalization, sterilization, or deportation (McLearn, 1990; Peers, 2015).

Precarious Canadians, on the other hand, were white enough and economically useful enough to be conditionally accepted into the national community. However, due to the biological advancements of eugenics that occurred in the late 19th century, this acceptance was no longer simply conditioned by an economic and moral subjectivity. Instead, the acceptance of this group was now based on the assumption that the ‘curative’ nature of educational and environmental interventions could limit the transmission of social pathologies, ultimately improving the ‘health’ and ‘fitness’ of future generations (Leonard, 2005). In other words, the acceptance of precarious Canadians was based on the assumption that educational and environmental reforms would “eliminate the unfit” while “encourage[ing] the survival and propagation of the best in all classes (Mason, 1912, p. 123). It was this assumption — an assumption that lasted well into the 1930s — that resulted in the development of both supervised playgrounds and urban reform parks.

I will use the rest of this section to detail some of the ways both supervised playgrounds and urban reform parks reified the state’s desire for this eugenic form of health and fitness. More specifically, I will demonstrate how these recreational interventions were sites where the technologies of whiteness and normalization converged through the logics of Western exceptionalism, settler colonialism, capitalism, racism, and (hetero)patriarchy.

Supervised Playgrounds: A Re-Reading

Most recreation historians agree that the movement for supervised playgrounds officially began in 1901 (e.g., Adams, 2011b; Markham, 1995; McFarland, 1970). Although there were

some members of the ruling class that were pressing for playgrounds beginning in the 1890s (Kidd, 1996; McFarland, 1970), it was the following resolution, which was read at the eighth annual meeting of the National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC), that is said to have marked the beginning of the Canadian playground movement:

Whereas the agitation for vacation schools and playgrounds where children may find organized recreation having become so widespread that it is now known as the playground movement, and whereas the establishment of such vacation schools and playgrounds is acknowledged by educators and philanthropists to be desired in every community, and whereas the necessity for such schools and playgrounds to improve the condition of children in the cities of Canada declare therefore, be it resolved that this national council of women of Canada declare themselves in favour of the establishment of vacation schools and playgrounds and pledge themselves to do all in their power to promote their organization. (NCWC, 1901, p 152)

Read by Mabel Peters, the resolution was drafted out of concern for children who lived in “over-crowded squalor, with resultant high incidence of crime, disease, and drunkenness” (McFarland, 1970, p. 19). Shifting from a philosophy of juvenile punishment to childhood prevention, supporters of this resolution believed that if they could intervene in the lives of children and youth from the lower classes they would be able to eradicate many of the moral, social, and physical ‘disorders’ associated with poverty and “eventually dispense with the curfew, the juvenile court, the jail and the reform school” (NCWC, 1913, p. 11). Thus, between 1904 and 1928, the majority of Canada’s urban centres developed and operated supervised playgrounds (Adams, 2011b; Kossuth & McMurray, 2021; McFarland, 1970). Although the locations, numbers, and facilities were specific to each city (some made use of schools yards and vacant lots, developed wading and swimming pools, and others partnered with the YMCA), the general pattern of development, as noted by McFarland (1970), was basically the same: “initiation by the local Council of Women, formation of a broadly representative playground association, and, finally, establishment of a civic department, in many cases a section of the parks department,

responsible for playground and more general recreation programming” (p. 38).

That a local council of the NCWC initiated most Canadian playgrounds is something that should not be overlooked. Positioned as one of the many ways members of the NCWC could ensure the ‘proper’ development of Canada’s youngest nationals, supervised playgrounds were seen as a logical extension of the NCWC’s maternal responsibilities and thus, a way for white-, middle- and upper-class women to ensure the biological protection and advancement of the white Canadian race (Peers & Tink, 2021). Supporters of the playground movement, therefore, echoed many of the discourses of the eugenics movement and reified the notion that the ‘fitness’ of the population was the key issue (Peers & Tink, 2021). However, as previously discussed, between the late 1880s and the late 1920s, ‘fitness’ implied much more than is conveyed by our traditional recreation and public health histories. Rooted in the deeply racist, colonialist, classist, and ableist notions of eugenics, the term fitness referred to the biological purity of the national (which meant Aryan) race (McLearn, 1990; Leonard, 2005). Therefore, while the playground movement aimed at improving the physical health of children and youth from the lower classes, supporters of the movement were equally invested in maintaining the racial hierarchies and class structures that privileged middle to upper class individuals of Western European descent. Nellie McClung’s (1915) book *In Times Like These* provides an example of how these eugenic discourses of race and class converged around the notion of ‘quality’ children:

It does not seem to the thoughtful observer that we need more children nearly so much as we need better children...it is a doubtful favour to the child to bring it into life under any circumstances, but to bring children into the world, suffering from the handicaps caused by ignorance, poverty, or criminality of the parents, is an appalling crime against the innocent and hopeless, and yet one about which practically nothing is said. Marriage, homemaking, and the rearing of children are left entirely to chance, and so it is no wonder that humanity produces so many specimens who, if they were silk stockings or boots, would be marked “seconds.” (p. 88)

As demonstrated by this quote, children of the lower classes (not the ‘degenerate’ Others) were

the target of McClung's materialist discourses. Describing them as 'specimens' who could be "marked as seconds", Nellie McClung warned of a number of internal threats to the national community (e.g., ignorance, poverty, criminality) and stressed the need for interventions that could develop 'better children.' In other words, she emphasized the role of social engineering in the eradication of a number of 'biological' pathologies.

Seen as a means of inoculating the nation's most vulnerable children against the problems of inner-city decay, playgrounds quickly became an essential element of the social reform program promoted by women like Nellie McClung. Viewed as "laborator[ies] where habits of health and social custom could be taught in a play atmosphere" (McFarland, 1970, p. 37), there was a prevalent faith that playgrounds could help purge society of all its degenerative influences while also promoting a homogenous British patriotism that encouraged "one community" (Calgary Herald, 1917 as cited in Wetherll & Kmet, 1990, p. 100). Therefore, in addition to being positioned as sites that were capable of contributing to the biological purity of the nation by eliminating the social pathologies inherent in children born to precarious Canadians, supervised playgrounds were also seen as sites of assimilation. Or as one playground supervisor described them in 1913, playgrounds were an effective way to "preserve our Canadian ideals and inculcate them in the strangers within our gates" (Jackson, 1913, p. 609).

The 'strangers' referred to in this statement were, however, not a homogenous group. As outlined by J.S. Woodsworth (1909) in the book *Strangers Within Our Gates: Coming Canadians*, the term 'stranger' was inclusive of two very specific colonial categorizations: the "better class of immigrants" and the "undesirables" (p. 32). Synonymous with precarious Canadians, those constituted as 'the better class of immigrants' were considered white enough to preserve the ideal of a "fixed Canadian type" (Woodsworth, 1909, p. 13). Individuals from Great

Britain, Scandinavia, Germany, France and south eastern Europe were included in this category, making their children the primary targets of the playground movement. The ‘undesirables,’ on the other hand, included “Immigrants from Austria-Hungary,” “Immigrants from the Balkan States,” “The Hebrews,” “The Italians,” “Levantine Races,” “The Orientals,” “The Negro,” and “The Indian” (Woodsworth, 1909, p. 9). And although the characteristics that made each of these categories ‘undesirable’ differed significantly, they were all constructed as ‘degenerate Others’ and treated as such. Therefore, instead of being given the same ‘uplifting’ opportunities as (white) desirable immigrants, these (non-white) undesirables were more likely to be eliminated, excluded, segregated, or institutionalized.

Murnaghan (2013) has provided two very specific examples detailing the ways Canadian playgrounds naturalized whiteness and ultimately contributed to Woodsworth’s racist ideal of a “fixed [white] Canadian type” (p. 13). In the first example, Murnaghan describes, and then briefly analyzes, a photo taken at the *McCormick Minstrels* 1916 Christmas performance:

[A] stage with 23 seated white boys and men in ‘blackface’ (burnt cork) in two neat rows (with the exception of the one white man, who appears to be their leader seated in the middle), a riser is used to stagger the second row. Several of these boys smile wide, white smiles, and all wear the trademark white gloves of the minstrel which act as a marker signaling that these are clearly white boys and men who are playing black in order to tap into a set of cultural stereotypes for in-group members (white-Anglos)... Above the stage hang two Red Ensigns, and Union Jack indicative of the colonial roots to the playground identity... The room is located in the basement of the McCormick Recreation Centre on the Brock Avenue Playground... Through this valorization of the performance, it can be assumed that children internalized many of the racial stereotypes that centred on the *negros* lower intellect, poor taste, and carelessness that accompanied the show’s story lines... Whiteness is naturalized in this performance through the construction of an inferior black subject that is made abject by mocking and mimicking the stupidity or lack of mental fitness of the black man/boy. (p. 141)

The second example offered by Murnaghan (2013) is also an account of an early 20th century photo, but in a feminized form.

The image was taken at the yearly Playground Festival at the Canadian National

Exhibition on 11 September 1914. This exhibition was important for the showing of industrial products, livestock, and general entertainment for visitors (Walden, 1997). Fifteen white girls with traditional Dutch hats and white dresses stand in a line with a smaller brown girl, representing an Indian chief in a feather headdress and buckskin suit, in the centre. This play or dance represented a distant colonial moment...The girls are accompanied by their playground supervisor...and they (except the *Indian*) smile grandly at the camera and photographer...The play that these girls were performing has the effect of the minstrel show in terms of reinforcing a colonial objectification of the Other. Indeed, in the Canadian case, the Aboriginal as Other is a trope that highlights a locally specific form of colonialism that was essential to Canadian identity (de Leeuw, 2009)...The fact that the girls are smiling except for the stoic *Indian*, also highlights that this game of Othering was fun for all those who were not made the minority, or made the odd girl out without the lacy white dress and stocking. (p. 142-143)

Both of these examples shed light on the ways white supremacy was practiced on playgrounds during the early 20th century. Through the use of characters such as ‘the stoic Indian’ and ‘blackface’ playground performances not only normalized racist attitudes for the pleasure of a white audience, they also constructed white subjects as superior (biologically, socially, culturally, religiously) to non-white Others. Thus, it can be concluded that even though supervised playgrounds continue to be remembered as sites that were intended to improve the health and fitness of “the little foreigner” (Wetherell & Kemt, 1990, p. 100), those foreigners that would compromise the health and fitness of the white, Christian nation (i.e., degenerate Others) were never meant to be included in these efforts.

The examples offered by Murnaghan (2013) are also proof that race was not the only influencing structure present on 20th century playgrounds. As sites that were strategically organized according to gender, the programming that was offered also reified the notion that men are superior to women, and society should be organized as such. Focused on instilling traditional gender roles, the programming offered on playgrounds was intended to prepare the children of precarious Canadians for their eventual roles in society (Adams, 2011b; Mobily, 2018; Murnaghan, 2013). Young (white) boys from lower classes were to become fit for wage labour

and/or military duty. Team games and sporting competitions were therefore used to teach physical efficiency, a respect for authority, and a loyalty to the British crown – all ideals of the Muscular Christian Movement (Adams, 2011b; Kidd, 2006; McFarland, 1970; Mobily, 2018). Young (white) girls, on the other hand, were taught ‘proper’ domestic habits through “instruction in basic sewing, knitting, and crafts, and drills that focused on dance, song, and games” (Adams, 2011b, p. 71). As the future ‘mothers of the nation’ their health and domesticity was central to their service as wives and mothers (Devereux, 2005; Peers & Tink, 2021). Therefore, even when they did participate in physical activity the overall goal was to strengthen their bodies for their future domestic/maternal duties. A newspaper article published in a 1920 edition of *The Echo* demonstrated the logic behind this segregated playground philosophy:

The man who has played football for the team, and in the proper team spirit, when a boy, is not likely to take advantage of a fellow worker, and the woman who has indulged in games in the proper spirit when a girl will undoubtedly create the right atmosphere in the home in which she is mistress (Buchanan, 1920, as cited in Adams, 2011b, p. 72).

As is made clear in these statements, for boys the playground was a place to prepare them for an honest and productive labouring life. For girls, however, play was a form of familial welfare intended to increase their chances of becoming ‘proper’ wives and mothers.

It was through this gendered approach to programming that supervised playgrounds reinforced the Christian ideals of (hetero)patriarchy. Feminist Indigenous Scholars Maile Arvin, Eve Tuck, and Angie Morrill (2013) have defined (hetero)patriarchy as “the social system in which heterosexuality and patriarchy are perceived as normal and natural, and in which other configurations are perceived as abnormal, aberrant, and abhorrent” (p. 13). Using expressions of race, gender, and sexuality, they suggest that (hetero)patriarchy should be read as a paternalistic structure that positions men (primarily white men) as natural leaders of the family, the state, and its institutions, while simultaneously reducing women to wives and mothers to be cared for by

their husbands.

Reinforcing this concept of (hetero)patriarchy, the supporters of the playground movement campaigned on the notion that women were, first and foremost, wives and mothers (Peers & Tink, 2021). Thus, despite the fact that many of the women who advocated for supervised playgrounds have also been celebrated for their involvement in the fight for women's rights (Markham, 1995; Peers & Tink, 2021), these (primarily white) women – which have since been labeled first wave feminists (Devereux, 2005) – did very little to challenge traditional gender roles. An example of this can be seen in a passage from Nellie McClung's (1916) article *Speaking of Women*:

Women are the mothers of the race - therefore they can be nothing else. When once a woman has a child, they argue, she must stay right on the job of raising it...From observation and experience I wish to state positively that children do grow up - indeed they do - far too soon...And when they are gone from their mother, she still has her life to live. The strong, active, virile woman of fifty, with twenty good years ahead of her, with wealth of experience and wisdom, with a heart mellowed by time and filled with that large charity which only comes by knowledge - is a force to be reckoned with in the uplift of the world. (p. 23)

Within these statements, McClung (one of Canada's Famous Five Suffragists) reified the notion that the primary role of women was to preserve and strengthen the family home. It was only after their children were grown, and their maternal responsibilities over, that she suggested women fully participate in public life. This was the paradox inherent in first wave feminism: (white) middle and upper class women fought for expanded opportunities for (white) women and girls, but they did so while reinforcing the racialized and patriarchal views about (white) women's 'natural' duties.

Returning now to playgrounds, it becomes clear how this racialized notion of (hetero)patriarchy was reified within these supervised sites. Although not legally defined as white-only spaces, the exclusively white supervisors coupled with the primarily white

participants demonstrate how these recreational sites reinforced the dominance of whiteness (and therefore the structure of settler colonialism) without having to explicitly exclude non-whites. Furthermore, given that programming was intentionally gendered – boys born to precarious Canadians were to develop the skills required to be wage labourers and/or soldiers, while girls born to precarious Canadians were to develop the skills required to be wives and mothers – Canada’s earliest playgrounds can also be read as sites where the male/female binary was reinforced and British imperialism, settler colonialism, capitalism, and (hetero)patriarchy intersected.

It is also worth noting that the norms of (hetero)patriarchy and settler colonial capitalism were not limited to playground programming. The ways in which playgrounds were supervised and staffed also reinforced the unjust distributions of wealth and security between men and women. Not because (white) women were not provided with paid employment — across Canada women were hired to teach “a wide variety of activities including stories, games, sewing, paper flower making, knitting, kindergarten work, clay modeling, and basketmaking” (McFarland, 1970, p. 24) — but because, when compared with the employment opportunities of their (white) male counterparts, women’s opportunities were both seasonal and limited. As playground matrons and teachers in vacation schools, most (white) women were only employed during July and August (Adams, 2011b; Markham, 1995; McFarland, 1970). This was not the case for the (white) men employed by municipal governments as full-time parks commissioners and superintendents. Furthermore, when jobs were created for full-time playground supervisors, only (white) men were hired. McFarland (1970) demonstrated the lack of women in full-time positions in her history of supervised playgrounds:

The merging of summer and winter programs, together with the development of indoor programs in schools or community centres, led to the employment of full time

supervisors for public playground programs. S. H. Armstrong of Toronto was the first such person to be employed in Canada. He was followed by A. R. Morrison of Winnipeg in 1914, J. J. Syme of Hamilton in 1918, and W. J. Neale of Ottawa in 1919. Neale was replaced by E. F. Morgan in 1921. (p. 39)

It can be assumed from this passage — given that S.H Armstrong, A. R. Morrison, J. J. Syme, W. J. Neale, and E. F. Morgan are all names of prominent white men — that women were considered ‘unfit’ and/or ‘unqualified’ for each of these jobs. Therefore, despite being celebrated by our traditional histories as innovative sites that “provided new opportunities for paid feminine employment” (Strong-Boag, 1976, p. 270), supervised playgrounds simultaneously reinforced the notion that white (middle to upper class) men are naturally and necessarily the leaders of the state and its institutions.

When we combine this lens of classed (hetero)patriarchy with the earlier notions of normalization we can see how supervised playgrounds must be read as more than an early 20th century reform that sought opportunities for “rational activity and healthy play” (NCWC, 1901, p. 154). As demonstrated throughout this section, supervised playgrounds were positioned as an efficient and effective way to rid the children of precarious Canadians of a number of degenerative pathologies (making them less dangerous to incontestable Canadians), while simultaneously acting as sites where gendered patriotism was strategically reinforced. Influenced by the ‘scientific’ study of eugenics, the social reformers (or incontestable Canadians) who were paid to develop and run these supervised playgrounds saw play as an optimal way to normalize the white supremacist logics of Western exceptionalism, settler colonialism, capitalism, racism, and (hetero)patriarchy in order to “improve...the racial qualities of future generations” (Galton, 1907, p. 17). Thus, just like other forms of state intervention during this period (e.g., forced sterilizations, the Indigenous pass system, immigration policies), supervised playgrounds were intended to do much more than simply “improve the lives of residents and families in industrial

cities and town” (as our traditional histories suggest; Burton, 2011, p. 8-9). As a technique that combined the technologies of urban medicine, state medicine, and labour force medicine, this unique form of social medicine modified urban landscapes so that the children of precarious Canadians could be taught the raced, classed, and gendered “habits of health and social custom” (McFarland, 1970, p. 37) required to grow, and protect, the cities, towns, industries, and families imagined within this white, capitalist colonial society.

Urban Reform Parks: A Re-Reading

Towards the end of the 19th century, urban reform parks, like supervised playgrounds, became an essential element of the social reform program. Replacing the concept of the 19th century pleasure grounds (those ornamental parks that primarily benefited the wealthy class; Kossuth & McMurray, 2021; Loughran, 2018; McFarland, 1970) urban reform parks were introduced in an attempt to eliminate the disease and disorder in inner city neighbourhoods (Cranz, 1982; McFarland, 1970). Thus, unlike the large tracts of land that sat outside the city proper and were intended to offer the quiet seclusion of “the pleasing rural scenery” (Olmsted, 1886, p. 42), this new iteration of the urban park was strategically placed throughout the industrial landscape in an attempt to eliminate the “rottenness pervading the slums of large cities” (Hastings, 1911 as cited in Valverde, 1991, p. 133).

Frequently described by medical authorities as “the lungs the city” (Mulvany, 1884, p. 101), urban reform parks were positioned as one solution to the “density and overcrowding” of urban “localities” (Ames, 1897, p. 41). From the late 1880s until the early 1920s, cities across Canada enacted legislation designed to provide for the new open space requirements of urban-industrial residents (McFarland, 1970; Kossuth & McMurray, 2021). Justified through reports of demographics and health statistics, these municipal parks were deemed essential to “secure the

health, moral as well as physical, of cities” (Mulvany, 1884, p. 101). Therefore, just like the members of the playground movement, advocates of these new urban parks (which can also be read as social reformers and therefore incontestable Canadians) reacted to the fears of national decline by adopting a reform eugenics which assumed environmental interventions could address the degenerative effects of industrialization and strengthen the “future fitness of the country’s germinal seed” (Mobily, 2018, p. 149). In other words, as was the case with supervised playgrounds, it was an ever-growing emphasis on biological health and fitness that resulted in the urban park design. No longer designed with only passive recreations in mind (e.g., picnics, strolls and contemplation), these new inner-city “breathing spaces” (Ames, 1897, p. 45) were to include a number of facilities for sports and other vigorous physical activities. Chance (2012) described these new designs when he wrote,

The modern park, [now] needed to accommodate the needs of those who preferred to stroll through the park and enjoy peace and horticultural displays, those who came to the park to listen to music or play gentle games such as bowls and croquet, those who preferred more physical sports such as tennis, football, swimming or basketball and for the needs of children and their carers, seeking playgrounds and wading pools. (p. 1604)

As demonstrated by this statement, urban parks were now expected to strike a balance between ‘passive’ and ‘active’ recreation. The new expectation being that park designers would integrate green spaces and facilities for sport and other physical activities without abandoning the earlier nature-based philosophy. And while it is important to note that Chance (2012) was writing in an American context, this statement is certainly relevant in a Canadian context — not only because American park designers worked extensively across Canada during the first half of the 20th century, but also because members of the Olmsted Firm trained a number of Canada’s earliest landscape architects (McFarland, 1970; Pollock-Ellwand, 2020).

The promotion of these two distinctly different types of recreation (that is, passive

recreation and active recreation) represents an important moment in Canadian recreation history. As the first multi-use recreation sites, urban reform parks offered a blue print for our contemporary multi-use facilities. Intended to provide 'healthy' recreation and leisure opportunities for all ages, these new urban parks were designed with a number of physical activities in mind. Sporting fields, racquet courts, swimming areas, playgrounds, and ice rinks were all included within this 'modern' expression of the urban park. Saskatoon's first *Park Act* provides an excellent example of how the new 'urban park' was defined by local governments. Passed in 1912, the Act included a statement, which read "public bathhouses and gymnasia may be deemed to be included in the expression of 'park'" (City of Saskatoon, 1912 as cited in McFarland, 1970, p. 13). Another example of how these various facilities fell within the new definition of the urban park can be found in a report submitted by the City of Ottawa (1925) which stated that their municipal Parks Commission was operating "ten skating rinks, four hockey rinks, one figure skating rink, one speed skating rink, two toboggan slides, twelve playgrounds, four athletic fields, four swimming pools, four bowling greens, and four tennis courts" (p. 125-126).

By the early 20th century, most urban centres had invested in park facilities similar to those that were inventoried by the city of Ottawa in 1925 (McFarland, 1970). That said, when and why facilities across the country were developed was in no way universal. As Kossuth (2005) has noted in his history of public swimming, "the question of providing [facilities] accessible to the public ultimately fell to the discretion of fiscally-conservative politicians who were seldom swayed by the moral, safety, or health-centred arguments" (p. 799). Thus, as is the case today, decisions related to municipal investments in recreation facilities were often made using the cost benefit principle. And while a detailed account of exactly when, where, and why

recreation facilities were constructed is far beyond this analysis, I will use the rest of this section to highlight some of the facilities that were commonly included in the aforementioned definition of the term “park”, the logics behind their construction and management, and the ways these logics determined who was included and excluded in these ‘public’ recreation sites. I will begin with public baths.

In a Canadian context, public baths can be read as the nation’s first indoor swimming pools. Primarily located in the larger, older, and wealthier urban centres of Ontario and Quebec (e.g., Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal), these public facilities have been celebrated by contemporary historians for “allow[ing] a level of hygiene to be maintained in the working class,” while also “promot[ing] exercise, which would again contribute to the physical health of the user” (Stewart, 2014, p. 86). Positioned as sites where personal hygiene and physical fitness could intersect, public baths were not just a public health solution, they were a public obligation — “all classes of people” were said to benefit from this “great public beneficence” (McWharf, 1919, p. 370). However, as Cook (2006) has noted in his history of public baths in Britain, “to explore and affirm the moral utility of public baths takes us only so far” (p. 22). By virtue of their desire to have members of the working class pay for the opportunity to simultaneously clean and strengthen themselves, public baths reinforced two ideals central to Victorian liberalism: self-governance and market-based decision making.

Take as an example, Toronto’s Harrison Baths. Opening to the public in 1909, the Harrison Baths were strategically located just a few blocks west of “Toronto’s most notorious and improvised ‘slum’ – The Ward” (Lake, 2019, p. 28). Described as an “excellent institution” built of “brick, stone, and concrete,” the Harrison Baths were “erected and equipped at a cost of \$46,000” (The Globe, 1909, p. 14). And although these capital dollars did indeed come from the

municipal treasury, access to the baths was never intended to be free. As demonstrated in an article published by *The Globe* (1867) titled *Against Free Baths*, Toronto's Aldermen were of the belief that "as a rule baths [should] not [be] free" (p. 5). Instead, it was determined that a fee should be charged to both "prevent abuse of the privilege" (presumably by those 'Degenerate' Others who were financially dependent on the state) and "provide a revenue [to] help to meet current expenses" (p. 5). Thus, when the Harrison Baths finally opened in 1909, members of the city council expected the majority of the operating costs to be offset by the revenue earned through admission fees (*The Globe*, 1909).

During the first year of operation, showers were free but entry into the pool cost 10 cents, generating annual revenue of \$5,034.70 (*The Globe*, 1909; 1910). This amount was, however, significantly less than the Bath was expected to make (\$11,557.30 less to be exact; *The Globe*, 1910). Thus, it was not long before the "charges for the use of the public baths of the city [were] revised on a slightly higher scale" (*The Globe* 1919). In 1919, the admission fees increased to "five cents for the showers and 15 cents for showers and a plunge" (*The Globe*, 1919, p. 17). Five years later, the fees increased once again to a combined cost of 25 cents (*The Globe*, 1924, p 3).

According to Canada's Inflation Calculator, 25 cents in 1924 is the equivalent of \$3.75 today (Official Data Foundation, 2020). That is only 25 cents less than what the City of Toronto charges for a single entry adult lane swim in 2020 (City of Toronto, 2020). Therefore, this notion that the (neo)liberal, or 'business-like,' principles of profitability, efficiency, and accountability did not come into play until the 1980s is a romanticized account of recreation's history. As demonstrated by the Harrison Baths, some of our earliest municipal swimming pools adopted a 'pay-to-play' business model, charging the public for the use of public facilities. To suggest

otherwise, as both practitioners and scholars tend to do, not only fictionalizes the ways our earliest swimming pools were conceptualized and managed, it also ignores the fact that these ‘public’ facilities primarily centred a ‘private’ buyer with enough disposable income to voluntarily access the pools.

It is for this reason that the inclusive nature of these ‘public’ baths must be brought into question. As political institutions, they were intended to be much more than simply sites where personal hygiene and physical fitness could intersect. While they were indeed designed to contribute to the broader goal of national health by producing clean, fit subjects, as a disciplinary technology within a capitalist society their ‘pay-to-play’ model also sought to instill the industrious habits required within a market-based economy. As a result, in addition to enjoying the benefits of being ‘healthy,’ individuals capable of voluntarily paying for the use of the baths were constituted as self-governing, self-sufficient subjects worthy of public benefits and supports. Thus, by charging individuals to use the public baths, municipal governments further secured the notion that lower class individuals who were economically independent and had the disposable income to access the baths (i.e., precarious Canadians) were entitled to these publically funded facilities, while individuals who lacked this economic independence (i.e., ‘degenerate’ Others) were not.

The provision of public swimming and bathing was, however, not limited to public baths (Kossuth, 2005; Wetherell & Kmet, 1990). In areas where the cost of building and maintaining these elaborate facilities was prohibitive, the concerns related to health and hygiene were often addressed through the construction of outdoor public facilities (Kossuth, 2005; Kossuth & McMurray, 2020; Stewart, 2014; Wetherell & Kmet, 1990). Primarily located in, or adjacent to, urban parks, these supervised stretches along rivers, harbours, lakes and beaches were meant to

provide a fiscally conservative solution to the aforementioned concerns by controlling where and how swimming could take place (Koosuth & McMurray, 2020). Kossuth (2005) has written about the development of an outdoor swimming area on the Thames River in London, Ontario:

The formalization of a city-run swimming programme occurred in the summer of 1912. At that time London City Council set aside \$500 for the establishment of swimming areas on the Thames River. The following summer a supervisor of swimming baths was hired at a salary of \$15 per week, and the City Engineer received instructions to build a partly covered changing shed for boys and a fully covered shed for girls at the Southland bathing camp... Thus, by 1914, the provision of swimming facilities remained limited to supporting bathing camps on the Thames River at a minimal cost to the city. (P. 807-808)

Constructed for \$45,500 less than the Harrison Baths, this supervised ‘bathing camp’ is just one example of how cities across the country were able to address some of the concerns related to public health and morality, while simultaneously responding to economic anxieties of “fiscally-conservative politicians” (Kossuth, 2005, p. 799). Metcalf (1978) documented earlier examples of the cost-effectiveness of these outdoor swimming areas in his history of physical recreation in Montreal:

In 1883 Council gave permission for the construction of a public bath at the cost of \$1,000 in the waste weir of the Lachine Canal between Wellington Street and Grand Trunk bridges. On 18 June, the (26’ x 160’) bath was opened to men and boys, from 5:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., six days a week, and was inundated with customers; no less than 3,296 in the first four days! It proved to be so popular that rules had to be drawn up restricting the bathing time to twenty minutes... Even though the swimming bath used water from the Canal which was contaminated by sewage, it retained its initial popularity throughout the period. In 1884, a new public bath was opened on St. Helen’s Island but its distance from working class areas detracted from its popularity. (p.156)

Putting aside the fact that these baths were only open to boys and men and were closed on Sundays (these gendered and religious restrictions will be addressed later in this section), such statements indicate that these ‘public’ baths were intended for, and frequented by, members of the working class. Thus, like other techniques of social medicine these baths can be read as political technologies intended to “control the health and the bodies of the needy classes, to make

them more fit for labour and less dangerous to the wealthy classes” (Foucault, 2003d, p. 337).

Throughout the first part of the 20th century, as the urban population of Canada continued to grow, the number of these outdoor swimming areas increased significantly (Hoose, 1989; Kossuth, 2005; Wetherell & Kmet, 1990). Making use of the rivers, harbours, lakes, and beaches located alongside public parks, cities across the country invested in a variety of facilities (e.g., bathhouses, changing sheds, swimming platforms) so “to ascertain the will of the people as to the erection of public swimming baths” (London City Council, 1906 as cited in Kossuth, 2005, p. 806). Despite these infrastructural advances, however, municipal investments in these natural swimming areas slowed around the 1920s with the arrival of in-ground swimming pools. Introduced in Canadian cities after the First World War, investments in these outdoor pools have been attributed to a number of seemingly unrelated factors, some of which include the water contamination from industrial pollutants (Kossuth & McMurray, 2020); the growing concerns about water safety and drowning (Kossuth, 2005); the over 5,000 young men that were deemed unfit to serve in WWI (Clark, 2009; Wetherell & Kmet, 1990); the 1918 Spanish flu epidemic (Stewart, 2014); and an increase in ‘healthy’ child development discourses due to the growing popularity of the eugenics (Valverde, 1991).

With these various problems in mind, parks boards, commissions, and departments began to invest in the construction of excavated swimming pools. In Calgary, “St. George’s Island Park, Elbow Park, and Riley Park all had wading and swimming pools by 1922” (Weatherell & Kmet, 1990, p. 100). That same year, the city of London “managed to secure the necessary financing to build an excavated swimming pool in Thames Park” (Kossuth, 2005); the City of Edmonton opened Western Canada’s “first full swimming pool” (Walker, 2011, n.p); and the city of Toronto opened a “new swimming pool [on] Sunnyside Beach” (City of Toronto, 1922, n.p.). However,

just like the ‘public’ baths that were constructed in larger centres a decade earlier, these ‘public’ swimming facilities were never intended to be free. As demonstrated by Toronto’s Sunnyside Pool, the cost of a single admission was 35 cents for an adult and 10 cents for a child (City of Toronto, 1922). These amounts, which do not seem prohibitive in a contemporary context, equate to five dollars and 19 cents for an adult and one dollar and fifty cents for a child, amounts only slightly less than what Sunnyside pool charges today (City of Surrey, 2021).

Cost was not the only exclusionary factor at play when it came to public baths and swimming pools. Racialized exclusions were also present in these ‘public’ facilities during the first part of the 20th century. Fearing that proximity between races “would ‘mongrelize’ their race,” the British-Canadian elite sought to minimize “contact with ‘lesser’ races” (Barbour, 2011 p. 16). This fear of contact was directly linked to a notion that racialized people (especially black people) were carriers of disease (Barbour, 2011; Verbrugge, 2010). Describing these racist fears within the context of swimming, Hoose (1989) noted, “many white people became uncomfortable or fearful if [black people] dared to enter [the pool], as if the blackness itself would ooze off in the water” (p. 72).

A clear example of how White individuals attempted to avoid interracial contact in ‘public’ swimming pools can be found in a 1923 Edmonton bylaw. Banning all black people from parks and swimming pools, this bylaw was a response to “two black citizens enter[ing] Oliver Pool, prompting all white bathers to leave” (Zdeb, 2014, n.p.). The bylaw was quickly overturned, due to fierce opposition from Edmonton’s black community (Retamales Ochora, 2013; Zdeb, 2014), but as Nzindukiyimana and O’Conner (2019) have noted, “complaints about Negroes and Chinese” (p. 157) in pools across Alberta existed well into the 1960s. Therefore, even in the absence of explicit laws, pool administrators and managers (most of which were white)

were able to reaffirm their superiority through ‘legal’ segregation measures such as white-only areas and white only schedules (Nzindukiyimana & O’Conner, 2019).

The racialized segregation that occurred in Alberta was not an exception. Although the practices of segregation varied by location, similar cases appeared in parks and swimming pools throughout the early 20th century. Talbot (1984), for example, describes how, in Southwestern Ontario, “blacks could only swim at four spots along the shoreline” (p. 68). Noting the fact that black people were not entirely prevented from accessing public swimming areas, she goes on to paint a picture of how private recreation facilities went beyond simply normalizing whiteness by explicitly excluding members of the non-preferred races:

Private picnic grounds or bathing beaches, even for church picnics, bowling alleys or other amusement centres were even more definitely out of the question for blacks. Such signs as ‘Whites Only’, ‘White Gentiles Only’, ‘No Jews or Coloured People Allowed’, or ‘Restricted Clientele’ were not uncommon sights. (p. 69)

Winks (1997) offered a similar account of parks in Colchester, Ontario. Highlighting how “police patrolled the parks and beaches to keep blacks from using them” (p. 325), he provided another example of how recreational swimming areas not only privileged whiteness, but in doing so further reified the notion of white supremacy.

Despite these obvious forms of racial discrimination, however, it was class, not race, which remained the primary concern within recreation sites throughout the first half of the 20th century. This was largely due to the fact that Canadian society was almost exclusively white (see Section Two for more details about how the Canadian state eliminated or excluded most non-white immigrants and Indigenous peoples). Therefore, just like other social reforms during this time, these new urban reform parks were part of a larger disciplinary program intended to instill in the lower classes a subjectivity that aligned with the needs of settler colonial capitalism (e.g., health, efficiency and productivity). Parks designers carefully considered the intended uses of

these open spaces, as well as the ideal users. Through a combination of physical design and both formal and informal policing, urban reform parks were seen as a way to regulate immorality and indecency and improve the health and fitness of those who did not embody a Victorian ideal. In London Ontario, for example, an 1896 bylaw made “public exposure” illegal when “bathing or swimming in any public place” (Town of London, 1896, as cited in Kossuth, 2005, p. 804).

Similarly, in Hamilton a 1910 bylaw “required everyone except boys under 14 to cover themselves with a swimming suit from the neck to the knees” (Kossuth & McMurray, 2020, p. 109). Furthermore, because Sabbatarianism demanded individuals “take one day’s rest in seven in the manner best fitted to improve his spiritual, moral, and physical condition” (Calgary Herald, 1906, as cited in Whetherell & Kmet, 1990), Sunday Observance Laws⁴ were introduced by the Federal government in order to continue to secure and promote the religious customs of the wealthy British class, while also attempting to ensure the health (and therefore the economic efficiency and productivity) of the lower, labouring classes.

Tabled in the House of Commons on March 11, 1906 *An Act Respecting the Lord’s Day* (1906) was brought to the floor by Charles Fitzpatrick. A representative for Quebec County, Fitzpatrick (1906) introduced the bill by saying,

I know that among all classes Sunday is becoming more and more an accepted period for expeditions of some sort in pursuit of pleasure. I cannot say that personally I agree very much with that view of the day. This Bill is not intended in any way to facilitate or

⁴ Between 1763 and 1841, England’s Sunday Observance Laws were adopted (although to varying degrees) in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Upper Canada and Lower Canada (Schrodt, 1977; Ontario Law Reform Commission, 1970). In 1845, Canada West (now Ontario) enacted its own Sunday Observance Laws (Ontario Law Reform Commission, 1970). As written in An Act to prevent the Profanation of the Lord’s Day, commonly called Sunday in Upper Canada (1845) it was illegal for any person or persons to,

...play at skittles, ball, foot-ball, racket, or any other noisy game, or shall gamble with dice or otherwise, or shall run races on foot, or on horseback, or in carriages or in vehicles of any sort on that day – or if any person or persons shall go out fishing, or hunting or shooting... not is it...lawful ...to go out fishing or hunting or shooting...or shall bathe in any exposed situation in any water within the limits of any incorporated City or Town, or within view of any place of Public Worship, or private residence, on the Lord’s Day. (p. 263-264)

It was not until 1906 that Canada passed the first Federal bill related to Sunday Observance.

encourage these Sunday amusements. On the contrary it is intended to increase our regard for Sunday Observance...Legitimate recreation and amusement are in no way interfered with, but the business of amusement will be prevented. (as cited by Ontario Law Reform Commission, 1970, p. 43)

As demonstrated by these statements the primary target of this Act was the ‘business of amusement.’ Leisure time was to remain ‘legitimate’ and ‘useful’, especially for the precarious Canadians who made up the labour force. Thus, by rendering ‘immoral’ and ‘unhealthy’ amusements – that is those activities that were positioned as an obstacle to the nation’s economic and social progress such as drinking, gambling, or sporting competitions – illegal on Sundays, the general purpose of *An Act Respecting the Lord’s Day* (1906) was to reinforce the Protestant customs of upper- and middle-class British Canadians, in order to maintain a moral, healthy, docile, and productive working class.

Unlike Fitzpatrick, however, most other members from Quebec refused to be governed by British custom. Arguing against the Act on the grounds that it was an infringement of provincial rights (objections made on behalf of the religious freedoms of Catholics, Jews, Adventists, and Muslims were previously overruled by the almost entirely Protestant House; Ontario Law Reform Commission, 1970), representatives from Quebec pushed for amendments that would allow Sunday restrictions to be regulated in accordance with provincial custom (Ontario Law Reform Commission, 1970; Schrodt, 1977). After considerable debate, the House finally agreed to allow provincial variations in respect to games, entertainments, and passenger excursions and two separate amendments were drafted (Ontario Law Reform Commission, 1970). The first amendment stated that any provincial laws already in effect would not be compromised by this new federal legislation. The second amendment stated that the activities prohibited by the federal legislation could be made lawful under provincial law. Provinces were therefore able to enact their own legislation in opposition to the federal laws outlined in *An Act*

Respecting the Lord's Day (1906).

The only province to enact their own legislation determining the 'lawful' nature of Sunday activities was Quebec. Passed in 1907, Quebec's *Sunday Observance Act* stated, "every person...shall enjoy on Sunday all such liberties as are recognized by the customs of Quebec" (Ontario Law Reform Commission, 1970, p. 416). Demonstrating that Federal infringements on French culture and Catholic traditions would not be tolerated, Quebec introduced legislation that more closely resembled the Continental Sunday of France (Ontario Law Reform Commission, 1970; Schrodt, 1977). Under this framework – a framework that did not provide protections for members of non-Christian faiths – Sundays were still considered a day of Christian worship, but once mass was over, sports and commercial activities could be enjoyed.

The rest of the provinces adopted the federal *Lord's Day Act* (1906) without modifications (Ontario Law Reform Commission, 1970; Schrodt, 1977). Thus, in addition to prohibiting most forms of labour, beginning in 1906 English-speaking Canada banned all organized sports and other commercial entertainments on Sunday. The section of the Act banning these activities read:

It is not lawful for any person, on the Lord's Day . . . to engage in any public game or contest for gain, or for any prize or reward, or to be present thereat, or to provide, engage in, or be present at any performance or public meeting, elsewhere than in a church, at which a fee is charged. (p. 27)

As demonstrated by these statements both sporting participants and spectators were the primary targets of *An Act Respecting the Lord's Day* (1906). However, because the responsibility for enforcement lay entirely with provincial and local authorities (Schrodt, 1977), the enforcement of the Act was very uneven and often had a disproportionate impact on the recreational activities of precarious Canadians. Kidd (1996) noted this disproportionate impact when he wrote, "with Saturday employment common, the Lord's Day Act meant that most working people had few

opportunities to use their own parks for active recreation” (p. 233). In the winter of 1912, for example, the City of Toronto prohibited the use of toboggan runs in parks on Sundays (Kidd, 1996). Similarly, after the passing of An Act Respecting the Lord’s Day (1906), the Vancouver Park Board closed the tennis courts in Stanley Park (Schrodt, 1977). Despite these public closures, however, both private sporting clubs and municipal golf courses – which were described as costing an “ungodly sum” (Barclay, 1928 as cited in Wetherell & Kemt, 1990, p. 143) – remained open to paying customers, further reinforcing the notion that it was the lower classes that Sunday observance laws were intended to govern.

Unlike these explicit class-based differentiations, the gendered restrictions within Canada’s urban reform parks were less obvious. Although most public baths initially allowed only boys and men (Lake, 2019; Metcalf, 1978), other urban park settings (and eventually public baths) were considered to be sites where women and girls could engage in ‘biologically appropriate’ physical activities. Poststructural scholar Patricia Vertinsky (1989), outlined what was considered ‘biologically appropriate’ when she wrote:

In an era where survival of the fittest had become a catchword for individual striving and progress (and when, in spite of the fact that women outlived men, men were quite obviously defined as the fittest), women were to be discouraged from entering any contest which might cause the expenditure of energy that was required for reproduction and healthy mothering. The progressive functional separation of the sexes demanded that women be socialized to become ever more feminine and to place more rather than less concentration upon their naturally ordained, primitive function of reproduction. Well-regulated sport and exercise would help in this endeavour... However, the pervasive notion that should a woman step beyond this formula of correct, moderate, and systematic exercise she might encounter physical, mental and moral dangers became deeply embedded in the culture of female sport and exercise. (p. 22)

Described by Foucault (1978) as the “hysterization of women’s bodies” (p. 104), this specific mechanism of (hetero)patriarchal power used medical discourses to qualify (and disqualify) the feminine body. Women were not only positioned as weaker than men; they were bound to their

reproductive duties in a way that men were not. As a result, any activity that was thought to jeopardize a woman's reproductive capacity (e.g., 'manly' sports that required speed, strength and physical contact) was discouraged not only by gendered convictions and practices, but also by medical knowledge that asserted excessive physical exertion was dangerous for women because it "depleted [the] energy stock required by the reproductive system" (Vertinsky, 1989, p. 60).

Considered to be a site where women could engage in "correct, moderate, and systematic exercise" (Vertinsky, 1989, p. 22), urban reform parks reinforced these late 19th and early 20th century expressions of (hetero)patriarchy by restricting women's physical activities to 'biologically appropriate' endeavours. Swimming, skating, tennis, and other 'lady-like' sports were not only positioned as an antidote to the purportedly degenerative conditions of urban life, they were also considered safe and appropriate uses of the feminine mind and body. It is for this reason that we do not see the same gendered exclusions in urban reform parks as we do in many other public environments during this time.

Combining, once again, this lens of (hetero)patriarchy with the logics of settler colonialism and capitalism, we can see how urban reform parks served many interests beyond simply providing recreational opportunities. As a particular form of urban medicine, these strategically located "breathing spaces" (Ames, 1897, p. 45) – and the facilities that came to be included within them – were as much about normalizing settler colonialism, capitalism, racism, and (hetero)patriarchy as they were about improving "the lives of residents and families in industrial cities and town" (Burton, 2011, p. 8-9). Thus, just like supervised playgrounds, urban reform parks represent yet another form of social medicine that sought to improve the health and industriousness of precarious Canadians in order to make them better able to grow and protect

the cities, towns, industries, and families imagined within this white, capitalist colonial society.

A Biopolitical Summary

As demonstrated throughout this section, both supervised playgrounds and urban reform parks served many objectives of the colonial state. British imperialism, Western exceptionalism, settler colonialism, capitalism, racism, and (hetero)patriarchy were all logics that influenced the location of these recreational sites, how they were designed, and who was able to use and manage them. Therefore, despite being positioned within our contemporary discourses as sites that emphasized “accessibility for all, outreach to disadvantaged groups and a belief in universal benefits to the whole community” (ISRC & CPRA, 2015, p. 18), Canada’s earliest ‘public’ recreation facilities actually contributed to the unequal distribution of (quality of) life chances. As a technique of social medicine, these regulated environments were used to control “the state of the environment” (Foucault, 2003 p. 332), while simultaneously acting on “the bodies of the needy classes to make them more fit for labour [domestic labour and military duty] and less dangerous to the wealthy classes” (Foucault, 2003, p. 337). Therefore, while I am not denying that there were benefits associated with both of these recreational facilities, the ways in which they were primarily intended to facilitate the production of a ‘biologically fit’ and ‘economically productive’ (white) lower class must also be remembered. As sites that (re)inforced a number of racist, classed, and gendered discourses and practices, both supervised playgrounds and urban reform parks were intended to instill the subjectivities needed to further secure a white, Christian, capitalist nation. Thus, rather than continuing to be remembered as simply health-promoting sites that served Canada’s most “vulnerable populations” (ISRC & CPRA, 2015, p. 8), these recreational interventions should be repositioned as biopolitical technologies that reified the exclusion of those constituted as ‘unfit’ or ‘degenerate’ in order to (re)secure the health,

wealth, and security of (white) European settlers.

Chapter 9: Health as a Responsibility of the Welfare State: Public Recreation as a Form of Social Liberalism

As a political rationality, the welfare state can be understood as a form of governance that took as its problem the social, political, and economic consequences of a market economy (Barry, Osborne, Rose, 1996; Rose, 1999). Commonly described as a response to the combined devastation of the Great Depression and the Second World War, the strategies of the welfare state were intended to address political concerns such as poverty, unemployment, and other forms of unrest, while simultaneously ‘socializing’ individuals in the name of collective security (Finkel, 2006). Moving beyond the reformatory methods of social medicine, this new formula of government, reconceptualized the political subject as a citizen with rights as well as duties (Rose, 1999). The state, from this new social point of view, now aimed to ensure a level of collective security using both pre-emptive forms of social insurance and a proliferating network of social work programs (Barry, et al., 1996).

Briefly defined, social insurance is a risk-management technique intended to mitigate “the collective dangers posed by the economic riskiness of a capricious system of wage labour, and the corporeal riskiness of a body subject to sickness and injury, under the stewardship of the state” (Barry, et al., 1996, p. 48). Commonly referred to as a social safety net, social insurance was (and in some ways still is) intended to provide citizens with a basic level of security. Operating according to a principle of common solidarity, social insurance established new connections between the ‘public’ and the ‘private’ in an attempt to avoid a breakdown of social order, economic productivity, and national efficiency (Barry, et al., 1996; Rose, 1999). Examples of social insurance include unemployment relief, child benefits, health insurance, and pension plans.

Like social insurance, social work can also be understood as a risk-management technique. But rather than providing relief for the collective dangers posed by capitalism, the strategies of social work target the bodies of ‘problematic’ individuals, subjecting them to regimes of education and/or reformation (Rose, 1999). Thus, it is only those individuals that are considered to be pathological in relation to social norms that are targeted by these forms of disciplinary normalization. This does not mean, however, that ‘unproblematic’ individuals are free from the techniques of normalization. Although, they are not directly within the gaze of the social worker, they are still expected, as part of their social citizenship, to take responsibility for their own health and wealth in order to minimize both individual and collective consequences (Barry, et al., 1996; Rose, 1999).

When the technologies of social work and social insurance are combined, they are in many ways similar to the earlier efforts of social reform. Using a number of strategies intended to manage individual and the collective dangers, both forms of intervention take as their ultimate targets the health and the security of the nation. It is, therefore, the strategies, more so than the logics, which separate social welfare from social reform. As I have previously outlined, during the social reform era (1880s – 1920s) the essential objective of the Canadian state was to ensure the biological purity of the nation. Combining racist research in the areas of biology, anthropology, demography, and genetics, eugenicists provided legislators with the ‘scientific’ rationale required to develop and implement many of the policies and programs that were intended to “Keep Canada White” (Thobani, 2007, p. 92). Beginning in the 1930s, however, the ‘science’ that had justified this comprehensive network of racist programs and policies came under fire as the horrors of the Nazi state were becoming known. Having developed one of the most efficacious eugenic programs in modern history, the Nazi state – ruled by Hitler from 1933-

1945 – sought a return to “the traditions of a mythic German medieval past” (Stanley, 2018, p. 13). As documented in *Mein Kampf*, Hitler (1925) understood the human race to be divided into three categories that mirrored Canada’s three-tiered racial hierarchy: “founders of civilization, the maintainers of civilization, and destroyers of civilization” (p. 191). Upon this premise, the Nazi state sought Aryan purity by systematically murdering around two-thirds of Europe’s Jewish population (between 5.3 to 6.2 million people) as well as millions of other non-white Germans, disabled individuals, gay individuals, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and other political dissidents (Benz, 1999; Gallagher, 2004; Grau, 2013; Hass, 2008).

As countries began to denounce these genocidal logics, strategies, and tactics of the Nazi state, eugenicists also began to distance themselves from this particular form of state racism (McWhorter, 2009). It was, therefore, in the 1930s that the term ‘racist’ arose in ‘scientific’ discourse. A clear indication of this attempt to distance from the eugenic practices of the Nazi state (Barkan, 2011; McWhorter, 2009), the term ‘racist’ was introduced in order to differentiate ‘Hitler’s eugenics (a eugenics that sought national fitness through the elimination of entire races) from ‘proper’ eugenics (a eugenics that sought national fitness by eliminating only those ‘unhealthy’ individuals regardless of race). Attempting to salvage the ‘scientific’ credibility of eugenics, the introduction of the term racist did two things for eugenicists. Firstly, it discursively separated eugenicists from racists by pathologizing individuals who believed race was a definitive indication of moral and social value (McWhorter, 2009). Racists, within this new line of ‘scientific’ thinking, were not ‘normal’ people. Like Hitler, racists had a pathological personality that was said to be rooted in latent homosexuality (Adorno, Frankel-Brunswik, Levinson, & Nevitt, 1950; Kovel, 1970). McWhorter (2009) explained this connection in detail:

Immediately after World War II, social scientists set to work to understand this sickness called racism. An enormous number of psychological studies were done, and the results

tend to converge. Prejudice, xenophobia, ethnocentrism, racism, anti-Semitism, and so forth, were symptoms of a pathological personality, sometimes called Authoritarian Personality... Individuals who develop such a personality are weak, submissive, conformist, and fearful... Their racism is really self-loathing, and the greater self-loathing, the more violent and aggressive racism. Of course, weak, passive males are fundamentally effeminate, even if they sometimes appear to be very masculine. Their masculinity is merely a cover for their fundamental effeminacy. At the same time that they hate the powerful males who dominate them, they also identify with them and at times may even worship them. They are obsessed with virile, forceful men. They are latent homosexuals. Psychological profiles of Hitler describe exactly this sort of personality type. He was dominated by his violently erratic father and ashamed of having only one descended testicle. He acted out his effeminate masochism in his sexual encounters with women. But in public he assumed the role of dominating, sadistic super-male as compensation for his effeminacy and weakness. *Voila*. Hitler was queer. (p. 243)

As this paragraph clearly demonstrates, it was homosexuality, not white supremacy, that science now suggested was at the root of racism.

The second thing the introduction of the term racist did for the eugenics movement was to provide eugenicists with the opportunity to rebrand themselves. Abandoning the notion that there were biologically superior and inferior races (once again, it was only latent homosexuals who were associated with those beliefs), eugenicists now focused only on the superiority or inferiority of individual traits (e.g., health, intelligence, behaviours). A scientific manuscript published in the 1937 edition of the *Eugenical News* clearly demonstrates this discursive shift:

It would be unwise for eugenicists to impute superiorities or inferiorities of a biological nature to social classes, regional groups, or to races as a whole. Scientists are not all sure that any races or social classes in this country are above or below others in biological capacity for developing socially valuable qualities. But they are sure that even if there are differences between the average biological capacities of such groups, they are small to the much greater differences existing between individuals. Eugenics should therefore operate on a basis of individual selection. A program of selection of the best individuals and the best family stock, from every race and socio-economic class, will have wide scientific support. (Osborn, 1937 p. 106)

As demonstrated by these statements, eugenicists began to reposition eugenics as a form of population-level management that sought the propagation of superior individuals, rather than the propagation of one superior race. However, as McWhorter (2009) has noted, the “ideological

distinction that [this rebranding] insists is decisive...may not actually make much difference in practice” (p. 248). ‘Proper’ eugenicists, despite avoiding the term race, still reified what Lisa Gannet (2001) has termed ‘statistical racism’:

“Population thinkers” can be what we might call “statistical racists.” “Population thinking” precludes stereotyping of the form “person A is a certain way because *all* individuals belonging to that group are that way”...But “population thinking” is consistent with the stereotyping of individuals based on the statistical properties of the entire group. Such stereotyping takes the form: “person A is *probably/likely/maybe* a certain way because *most/many/some* individuals belonging to that group are that way”...“Population-thinking” is *not* inherently anti-racist. (p.S490)

Therefore, even when inferior traits (or ‘abnormalities’) are measured at the individual level, mean trait values can be used to statistically justify the superiority and/or inferiority of entire groups of people. Which, put differently, means that the white race could be still be constituted as superior to all non-white races because, ‘statistically’ speaking, they had more members who exhibited ‘positive’ traits (e.g., health, intelligence, character). Thus, as McWhorter (2009) has so articulately stated, “the lesson... eugenicists learned from the Holocaust was not to stop judging people on the basis of race, but to be more specific about exactly what was wrong with people so judged so that biopolitical population management and normalization techniques would not be confused with the irrational elements of Nazism” (p. 249).

Beginning in the 1930s, the most efficient way to reduce individual “variations trending toward poor health, low intelligence and anti-social character” (Osborn, 1940, p. 297), without evoking the concept of race, was to target the family. Deemed an effective site for social interventions, the family came to be “the semantic substitute for *race*” (McWhorter, 2009, p. 250). In other words, it was now The Family, rather than The Race, that was to be protected. However, as the Sociologist Talcott Parsons (1943) demonstrated, the concept of family was not as inclusive as it might seem. Describing the modern family as a “conjugal [nuclear] system” (p.

24), Parson's detailed the roles and boundaries of the conjugal (read normal) family:

The conjugal family unit of parents and children is one of basic significance... To be the main 'breadwinner' of his family is a primary role of the normal adult man in our society. The corollary of this role is his far smaller participation than that of his wife in the internal affairs of the household. Consequently, 'housekeeping' and the care of children is still the primary functional content of the adult feminine role in the 'utilitarian' division of labour. Even if the married woman has a job, it is, at least in the middle classes, in the great majority of cases not one which in status or remuneration competes closely with those held by men of her own class. Hence there is a typically asymmetrical relation of the marriage pair to the occupational structure. (p. 34)

As demonstrated by these statements, the 'normal' family was a heterosexual unit of two parents and their 'healthy' offspring. At the head of the unit was an able-bodied, male capable of success in the labour market, and therefore capable of supporting his wife (who was expected to remain at home) and their children. Families that did not fit this definition were deemed *abnormal* and thus not worthy of state-supports. McWhorter (2009) unpacked this claim when she wrote:

Families that did not measure up to these requirements were not normal families, not the sort of families that had endured for 500,000 years, not the sort of families that were effective schools for people who could safely be allowed to exercise civil rights, and thus not the sort of families the state or private foundations and charities should support and encourage... Thus, through the first two-thirds of the twentieth century, the Normal Family could not be black [or Asian, or Indigenous]. Simply being white was not enough either, however. [The] concept of The Family also made the extended kinship networks of recent immigrants and impoverished rural white communities suspect. Who really was the head of such a household? How could a young father command the respect he deserved from wife and offspring if his own parents, in-laws, aunts, uncles, or older siblings lived in the same house? And it surely goes without saying that single-parent households and same sex couples were abnormal by definition, because to be normal a family had to have both a father and mother who exemplified gender-appropriate behaviour. (p. 252- 253)

Conceptualized as the principal site for the socialization of future citizens, it was therefore the *normal* (read nuclear, Christian) family that came to represent the bond between the nation and its nationals. Instead of an individual's societal contribution being entirely predicated by their place in the racial hierarchy, it now centred on sexuality and the reproduction of 'normal,' 'healthy' families. The result, as I will demonstrate in the next section, was a revised form of

social policy: one that promoted the rights and responsibilities of (white, heteropatriarchal) Canadian families, rather than the racial purity of the nation.

Canada's Welfare State: A Brief Overview

As previously mentioned, the transition to what is commonly referred to as Canada's welfare state is associated with the legislation that emerged in response to the devastation caused by both the Great Depression and the Second World War (Finkel, 1977). It was during this time that provincial and federal governments introduced a number of mechanisms intended to respond to the demand for *universal* social programs (Finkel, 1977; Ursel, 1992). However, as I will demonstrate throughout this section, these programs were far from universal. While all levels of government did indeed recognize the need to respond to political concerns such as poverty, unemployment, and other forms of unrest, exclusion, precariousness, and marginalization were still accepted as norms within Canada's welfare state. A primary reason for this, as noted by Bernhardt (2015), was that the Canadian state never seriously pursued a social democratic objective. Opting instead for a "liberal regime" (p. 2) that perpetuated the centring of a market-based economy, Canada's welfare state was built around the norm of a "white male-breadwinner" (p. 1), leaving those that did not fit a (hetero)patriarchal family model vulnerable to unemployment and poverty. Before demonstrating precisely how these seemingly 'universal' programs reified the notion of the 'normal' family, it is first important to provide a brief overview of social liberalism and detail how it differed from social democracy during the 'Golden-Age' of Canada's welfare state.

As a typology of capitalist welfare states, social liberalism can be understood as a form of government that maintains the principle of 'productive' labour by "contain[ing] the dangers posed by the worst-off and reinforce[ing] the security and individual freedoms of the better-off"

(Rose, 1999, p. 135). Under a social liberal welfare state, social insurance provides precarious subjects with means-tested supports (e.g., unemployment insurance), while also providing more generous entitlement programs (e.g., pensions) to non-precarious subjects (Bryant, 2012; Saint-Arnaud & Bernard, 2003). Thus, as a form of restorative justice, social liberalism aims to address social and health inequalities by increasing the number of means-tested programs, instead of directly addressing the inequitable distribution of resources created within a capitalist economic system.

In contrast, within a social democratic welfare state, public policies aim to reduce social and health inequalities through the redistribution of wealth, and other resources (Bryant, 2012; Saint-Arnaud & Bernard, 2003). Organized around the principle of distributive justice, social democratic states therefore use a combination of techniques (e.g., taxation, regulation, social programs) to reduce the gap between the high- and low-income groups. And while many scholars frequently refer to Canada's welfare state era as the 'golden age' of social welfare programming (see, for example, Abu-Laban & Gabriel, 2008), the redistribution of wealth was never intensely pursued in Canada (Bernhardt, 2015; Bryant, 2012). Finkel (2006) described the political reluctance to a social democratic welfare state when he wrote:

Many members of the Canadian elite, including Mackenzie King [Liberal prime minister of Canada, 1935-1948]...argued that a headlong rush to expand the state's role in the peacetime economy was a prescription for economic disaster, or socialism, or both. (p. 128)

Thus, as was the case in other social liberal regimes such as the United States and Britain, the policies that defined Canada's welfare state focused on stimulating and sustaining economic growth, rather than a redistribution of wealth and security. Or to state it differently, while the introduction of moderate welfare policies served to mitigate the negative effects of the market (e.g., unemployment, poverty, ill health), classed, gendered, and racialized power structures were

never fundamentally altered.

Take as an example, Unemployment Insurance. Introduced in 1940, the *Unemployment Insurance Act* (1940) was largely a response to the rampant poverty experienced by millions of Canadians during the Great Depression. Financed through contributions between employees, employers, and the Federal Government, the main objectives of the Act were to “provide financial assistance to unemployed persons, to find suitable employment for Canadians, to move people out of areas of high unemployment, and to provide aid to the disadvantaged” (Lin, 1998, p. 42). And while the Act underwent a number of amendments between 1944 and 1971, the criteria (or means test) for assistance remained relatively the same: eligible individuals had to have proof that they were unemployed, they had to be physically able to work (which meant they could not be ill, injured, pregnant, or too old) and they had to have contributed to the national unemployment fund through previous employment (Lin, 1998; Pal, 1988). Furthermore, individuals were deemed ineligible if they had left their employment without just cause, had been dismissed for misconduct, had refused any form of employment, or had participated in work stoppages or strikes (Pal, 1988). Unemployment insurance was therefore far from universal. By using what Quadagno (1990) has termed a “labor control factor” (p. 14), this form of social assistance was structured according to an expectation of market participation. It was only those individuals that had both a past and future within the labour force that were eligible for support. And because women and racialized people were considered to have a low market value, their access to full-time, stable employment was limited, meaning their ability to access unemployment insurance was also limited. Thus, as articulated by Bernhardt (2015), even during the ‘golden age’ of social security programs, the state upheld an unequal model of white, male participation:

The Canadian workforce and the policies of the post-World War II welfare state were built around a norm of a white male-breadwinner model, which perpetuated the experience of marginalization for racialized, as well as for female, workers. (p. 1)

It was, however, not just racialized people and women who were excluded from receiving unemployment insurance. Both political dissenters and homosexuals could have also been denied assistance based on the criteria of the program. Political dissenters could be denied assistance on the grounds that those who were active in work stoppages or labour strikes were deemed ineligible for state support. Anyone who challenged the inequalities inherent in capitalism could therefore be considered ineligible. Homosexuals could also be denied assistance on the grounds that unemployment due to 'misconduct' was an ineligible form of unemployment. Therefore, the hundreds of lesbians and gay men that were fired from the civil service, the military, and the RCMP during the 'purge campaigns' of the 1950s and 1960s on account of their 'sexual misconduct' (homosexuality was illegal in Canada from 1867 until 1969; (Kinsman, 1995) would have also been considered ineligible for this state funded benefit.

The *Family Allowances Act* (1944) is another piece of welfare state legislation that helped to sustain and reinforce these classed, gendered, and racialized structures of settler colonial society. Often referred to as 'Canada's first universal welfare program' this piece of social legislation was intended to increase the purchasing power of families by providing mothers⁵ with a monthly allowance for every child under the age of 16 (Madison, 1964). However, as a number of scholars have pointed out (e.g., Bernhardt, 2001; Finkel, 2006; McKeen & Porter, 2003), the family allowance was just another mechanism by which the state was able to reinforce the maintenance and reproduction of the 'normal' family. By tying assistance directly to a woman's role as a mother, the family allowance not only reinforced the

⁵ Quebec was the one exception to this rule. There, the family allowance was paid to fathers. This was consistent with other patriarchal systems in Quebec. For example, women also were not able to vote until the 1940s.

notion that women were naturally and necessarily mothers, it also further secured a monopoly for men in the workforce by providing little to no support for mothers who wanted to work.

Therefore, just as unemployment insurance privileged the “white male-breadwinner” (Bernhardt, 2001, p. 1), the family allowance (which remained relatively unchanged until 1978) was also a (hetero)patriarchal mechanism by which the traditional (read white, heteropatriarchal, Christian) family was the norm.

In addition to reifying norms of (hetero)patriarchy, family allowances were also part of the larger biopolitical project that sought to maintain the active subordination of Indigenous peoples. Unlike the majority of families who were trusted to use this assistance ‘appropriately’ – that is, for “medical, dental and nursing service, more nourishing food, adequate clothing and shelter” (Department of National Health and Welfare, 1945, n.p.) – the department of Indian Affairs did not trust Indigenous families to ‘properly’ utilize the funds (Mosby, 2013). Therefore, despite being the first major benefit program to actually include Indigenous peoples, the Department of Indian Affairs placed tighter controls on their support. Mosby (2013) described this unequal treatment when he wrote:

[Indian Affairs] prevent[ed] Indigenous families in the North from collecting [family allowances] as cash, as all other Canadians were entitled to do, and instead established a separate, in-kind system of payment...Purchases were limited to certain items of clothing and “foods of high nutritive value.” (p. 157)

The differential treatment experienced by Indigenous peoples was even more pronounced by the fact that family allowance payments were “conditional on the child’s attendance at school” (The Hamilton Spector, 1948, n.p.). Recognizing that this was the case for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, residential school was still mandatory for Indigenous children. As a result, in order to access these supports parents had to surrender the legal custody of their children by sending them to schools that have since been described as “internment camps for Indian

children” (Fournier & Crey, 1997, p. 49). Therefore, just like the colonial state, the welfare state also used a number of harmful policies and practices to further secure the cultural extinction of Indigenous peoples.

Other ‘non-preferred’ races were also impacted by pieces of legislation that were enacted during the so-called ‘golden age’ of welfare state. Take as an example, the *Canadian Citizenship Act* (1946). Formally titled *An Act Respecting Citizenship, Nationality, Naturalization and Status of Aliens*, this piece of legislation gave legal status to the term “Canadian” by detailing who was, and who could become, a Canadian citizen. As outlined by the Act, all British subjects living in Canada prior to 1947, whether they were born a British subject or naturalized by the Crown, were automatically granted citizenship. That being said, naturalization was not an option for all non-British subjects. According the *Act Respecting British Nationality, Naturalization and Aliens* (1914), it was only those non-British subjects who were deemed to have good “moral character” and also have an “adequate knowledge of either French or English” that were eligible for naturalization (p. 292). Anyone who did not meet these criteria, as determined by the Secretary of State, or was deemed to be “under disability” (p. 293) – which at the time meant having “the status of a married woman, a minor, lunatic or idiot” (p. 299) – were ineligible for naturalization. Furthermore, Indigenous peoples could not simultaneously be classified as British subjects and Status Indians. Therefore, in order for Indigenous people to become naturalized subjects they had to relinquish their Indigenous status and any treaty rights afforded to them. Between 1914 and 1947, naturalization was, therefore, a process primarily reserved for ‘healthy’ men of European descent.

After the *Canadian Citizenship Act* (1946) was passed and all British subjects living in Canada legally became Canadians, the only subjects to be automatically granted citizenship were

those categorized as ‘natural born.’ This included anyone born in Canada (with the exception of Indigenous people, who were denied citizenship until 1956) or anyone born to a Canadian father outside of Canada (another example of the state’s (hetero)patriarchal practices). Immigrants could apply for citizenship five years after having been “lawfully admitted to Canada for permanent residence” (Canadian Citizenship Act, 1946, p. 71). However, as was the case with naturalization, in order to be granted citizenship immigrants were required to be “of good character” and have “an adequate knowledge of either French or English” (Canadian Citizenship Act, 1946, p. 71). Thus, between 1919 and 1976, what constituted a ‘desirable’ immigrant and what constituted an ‘undesirable’ immigrant remained relatively unchanged. The Secretary of State was clear on this point when introducing the *Canadian Citizenship Act* (1946) in the House of Commons in 1946:

If there is one thing from which we in Canada have suffered, to the detriment of this magnificent country, it is from a feeling of divisiveness-lack of that fervent and urgent unity that can make a people work together as a great community with conviction that the welfare of all is the goal of their effort....No matter where we come from or what our origins, French, English, Scandinavian, Scottish, Ukrainian, Irish or whatever else, one thing at least we can all be, and that is Canadians. (King, 1946 as cited in Golz, 1993, p. 30)

Within these statements, the absence of non-Europeans is notable. By naming only white individuals from European countries, the Secretary of State made clear who was to be united under the category of Canadian citizen, and who was not. Therefore, despite the *Canadian Citizenship Act* (1946) being described as a way to “alleviate racial and ethnic tensions...and foster a sense of unity amongst [an] increasingly diverse population” (Van Dyk, 2021, n.p.), once again it was primarily white Europeans that were to be united.

Census numbers provide a more accurate account of how these “Keep Canada White” (Thobani, 2007, p. 92) discourses materialized even after the Second World War. Between 1941

and 1961, for example, just under 92% of the Canadian population had descended from Western European countries. More specifically, the distribution of the population ‘by ethnic groups’ was as follows: 43.8% British, 30.4% French, 17.7% Western European, 4.9% Eastern European, 1.2% Indigenous, 0.7% Asian, 0.2% Negro, and 1.1% not stated (Statistics Canada, 2009). And while there is no way to determine exactly how many people from each ‘ethnic group’ were Canadian citizens at the time of the Census, both the criteria in the Canadian Citizenship Act (e.g., ‘moral’ character, fluent in English or French) and the small percentage of ‘non-desirables’ living in Canada between 1941 and 1961 can be read as proof that the welfare state further exalted the status of whiteness. Prime Minister Mackenzie King further demonstrated this point when he explicitly highlighted how whiteness was perpetuated and internalized by the welfare state during the 1947 House of Commons Debates:

With regard to the selection of immigrants, much has been said about discrimination. I wish to make it quite clear that Canada is perfectly within her rights in selecting persons who we regard as desirable future citizens. It is not a “fundamental human right” of any alien to enter Canada. It is privilege. It is a matter of domestic policy.... There will, I am sure, be general agreement with the view that the people of Canada do not wish, as a result of mass migration, to make a fundamental alteration in the character of our population. Large-scale migration from the Orient would change the fundamental composition of the Canadian population. (p. 2645)

From these statements it can be concluded that only those immigrants ‘regarded as desirable’ were worthy of the rights afforded by Canadian citizenship. Thus, just like the racist immigration legislation (which remained relatively unchanged between 1919 and 1976), the *Canadian Citizenship Act* (1946; which also remained unchanged until 1977) was a key mechanism in organizing the unity and solidarity of European settlers. As Thobani (2007) has noted, during the ‘golden age’ of the welfare state it was “citizenship [that] exalted Canadians and their [normal, white] families as deserving subjects, worthy of the entitlements they could claim as a right” (p. 107). Therefore, while Canada’s welfare state is often positioned as being both compassionate

and humane, the expulsion of ‘degenerate’ Others was still deemed necessary in order to maintain the health and security of a white, Christian, (hetero)patriarchal Canadian population.

When compared to the social reform era, Canada’s welfare state era has both similarities and differences. Throughout both eras, a number of policies and programs were used to exclude, oppress, and eliminate everyone constituted as ‘abnormal’ (e.g., racialized, Indigenous, disabled, queer, trans, and other economically ‘unproductive’ people), while simultaneously including and protecting everyone constituted as ‘normal’ (e.g., white, heterosexual, cis, economically productive people). However, during the welfare state era, overt racism was no longer acceptable. Therefore, instead of explicitly protecting the health and security of the Aryan race, the Canadian state pivoted (although only slightly) and began to protect the health and security of the Canadian family. This shift, although small, reconceptualized the family as the principle site of socialization for future citizens. Positioned as a the primary component of a ‘healthy,’ ‘post-racist,’ society, the state was now less interested in the contribution families could make to the eugenic ‘fitness’ of the population, focusing instead on how families, as (hetero)patriarchal units, could further secure both the relationships between men and women in terms of marriage, parenthood, and labour force participation as well as the relationships between citizens and the state in terms of rights, solidarity, and collective responsibility. Barry, Osborne, and Rose (1996) articulated this shift from a hereditary family framework to a collectivizing family framework when they wrote,

The family, then, was to be instrumentalized as a *social machine* – both *made* social and utilized to *create* solidarity – implanting the techniques of responsible citizenship under the tutelage of experts in relation to a variety of sanctions and rewards (p. 49).

It was, therefore, within this new collectivizing family framework that issues such as unemployment, poverty, and ill health came to be understood not as biological pathologies in

need of cure or correction, but as collective issues to be controlled, regulated, and managed at the level of the ‘normal’ family (a construct that reinforced the well established classed, gendered, and racialized hierarchies of the colonial era).

I will use the rest of this section to detail some of the ways recreation was positioned by the welfare state as a technique that sought to “‘socialize’ both individual citizenship and economic life in the name of collective security” (Barry, Osborne & Rose, 1996, p. 48). More specifically, I will demonstrate how ‘public’ recreation went from being a depression-era technique intended to alleviate the effects of unemployment, poverty, and ill-health on precarious Canadians, to a network of recreation centres that primarily served incontestable Canadians by operating according to a consumer-based logic of expressed need.

The Depression Era Recreation Movement: A Re-Reading

As demonstrated in previous chapter, between the late 1880s and the early 1930s public investments in parks and playgrounds were primarily a local responsibility. During this time, neither the federal nor the provincial government had any role in the construction, operation, management, or supervision of municipal recreation programs or facilities. This changed, however, in 1934 when the Government of British Columbia introduced ProRec (McFarland, 1970; Schrod, 1979). Canada’s first provincially funded form of recreation programming, ProRec was developed “with the aim of protecting the youths in British Columbia from the degenerating effects caused by enforced idleness” (Government of British Columbia, 1935, p 75).⁶ Code for the poverty, crime, and political unrest caused by involuntary unemployment

⁶ Addressing the enforced idleness of the unemployed urban youth was not the only objective of the ProRec Program. As Forsyth (2020) notes in *Reclaiming Tom Longboat: Indigenous Self-Determination in Canadian sport*, “in the early 1940s, some of these services were extended to residential schools throughout British Columbia...It was through these outreach programs that Eisenhardt [the director of the ProRec program] was introduced to the residential school system and developed his ideas about the problems and possibilities of establishing a broad program of physical education and recreation for Indigenous youth in Canada.

during the Great Depression, these “degenerating effects of enforced idleness” made unemployed men one of the most feared ‘social dangers’ during the 1930s. The magnitude of this fear was captured by Schrodtt (1979) in her history of the ProRec program:

...the fear [was] aroused by the single men who started to roam the country, illegally “riding the roads,” or freight trains, as they searched for employment. Large groups began to congregate on the outskirts of urban communities, or in slum areas within large cities, and “hobo jungles” became the only home for these wanderers... Throughout the Depression B.C. had more transients than any other part of Canada. (p. 33-35)

A narrative common to most histories of the ProRec program, these statements suggest that it was unemployed men that were “paradigmatically the persons in need of recreation” (Tillotson, 2000, p. 25). Positioned as both an alternative and compliment to work, recreation was meant to increase the health of productive bodies and decrease demoralization and political unrest. And while this historical assessment is indeed accurate, there were a number of other seemingly unrelated influences that contributed to the development of this particular depression-era program, beginning with the formation of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation.

Founded in 1932, the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) was a coalition of farmers, labourers, and socialists that wanted economic reform related to anti-monopoly action (Rusch, 1950). Guided by the values of Christianity, democratic socialism, and labour-agrarian radicalism the members of the CCF believed that the right to a quality life should not be reserved for the wealthy (Kidd, 2006; Rusch, 1950). Frequently denouncing the rapacious forms of capitalism that primarily served those who owned and controlled property and production (i.e., incontestable Canadians), the primary objective of the CCF was to reduce the inequalities experienced by the workers, farmers, and small businessmen. As such, their policy platform was comprised of a number of social security programs including minimum wage, workers compensation, universal public pensions, universal health care, children’s allowances,

unemployment insurance, farm security, and public ownership of key industries (Naylor, 2016).

For both Liberals and Conservatives, many of the social security programs promoted by the CCF were seen as a threat to the market-based ethos of settler colonial capitalism. Arguing that such extreme measures were an attack on the dominant values of liberty, freedom, and market-based governance, opponents of the CCF strategically equated their political philosophy to Soviet Communism. For example, just prior to the 1935 federal election Gerald McGreer – the Mayor of Vancouver, who later served as a liberal MP – publicly stated, “If you elect those people, they'll take away your home, they'll take away your car, and burn down your churches. Furthermore, they'll nationalize your women" (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), 2001, n.p.). Suggesting that the CCF were a threat to capitalism, Christianity, and traditional family structures, McGreer’s statement not only ideologically misrepresented the CCF’s brand of socialism (the CCF were firmly against authoritarian socialism, believing that democratic elections could transform government systems; Kidd, 2006; Naylor, 2016), it also positioned their fight against unfettered capitalism as an economic, political, and social threat.

Despite the ongoing messaging that the formation of CCF was “proof that Soviet Communism had entered Canada through the back door” (CBC, 2001, n.p.), seven of their members were elected to parliament in 1935. Having become an electoral force in just three years, their approach to poverty reduction was increasingly supported by farmers and labourers, especially in the West (Naylor, 2016; Rusch, 1950). Blaming the extreme rates of unemployment on structural conditions, rather than on individual men, members of the CCF condemned the other two parties for their indifference to the workingman. A quote by the CCF’s party leader, J.S. Woodsworth⁷, captures this charge perfectly:

⁷ It is worth noting that this is the same J.S. Woodsworth whom clearly distinguished between (white) ‘desirable’ immigrants and (non-white) ‘undesirable’ immigrants in his book *Strangers Within Our Gates: Coming Canadians*.

A severe condemnation still rests upon indifference... We have tried to provide for the poor. Yet, have we tried to alter the social conditions that lead to poverty?... You can't separate a man from his surroundings and deal separately with each other. What nonsense we talk! We allow a false psychology or a narrow theology, or a misapplied logic to carry us into all kinds of absurdities. (Woodsworth, 1902 as cited in McNaught, 2001, p. 26)

Highlighting the ineffectiveness of reforms that did not account for the root causes of inequality, these statements emphasize the need to move beyond educational and environmental reforms and intervene directly in the capitalist regime.

Aware of how many farmers and labourers supported this denunciation of capitalism, members of both the liberal and conservative parties soon realized “repression alone [would] not be sufficient to preserve the existing system against the threat of socialism” (Finkel, 1977 p. 351). Thus, beginning around the mid-1930s, most political elites began to support the growth of provincial and federal government assistance in order to ensure the market, not the State as the CCF was advocating, remained the country’s dominant institution. In a recreation context, the first major program to stem from this growing support for government assistance was the previously mentioned ProRec program (Schrod, 1979). Introduced in 1934, when municipal budgets for parks and playgrounds were almost non-existent (McFarland, 1970), this low-cost program⁸ was intended primarily for “those who did not have enough money to join agencies such as the YMCA, YWCA, church clubs, or private gymnasiums” (Government of British Columbia, 1935, p. 75). Or has Johnson (1964) has noted in his history of the ProRec program, this new scheme of public recreation was intended to “keep physically and psychologically fit the thousands of people who might otherwise become as depressed emotionally as they were economically” (p. 13).

⁸ Between 1934 and 1941 no membership fees were charged. During this time, however, members were expected to purchase the regulation uniform, which was sold for 2 dollars (an equivalent of \$37.54 today). In 1941 a membership fee of 50 cents was also introduced, making the cost to participate the equivalent of \$45.95 today (Schrod, 1979).

The fact that the ProRec program was introduced in 1934 is of significance to this analysis. In 1933, when just under 30 per cent of all wage earners in Canada were unemployed, British Columbia held a provincial election. Ousting the provincial Conservative Party, which had held a Majority for the previous four years, voters returned control to the Liberals who were now officially opposed by the CCF. Fearful that the CCF was rapidly gaining support across the province, the Liberals spent the next four years attempting to maintain the support of precarious Canadians (i.e., the white working class) by delivering on their campaign slogan of “Work and Wages” (Schrodt, 1979, p. 37). Thus, it was under this charge that ProRec became a part of the social liberal platform introduced by the Liberal government. Considered “a partial answer to the social...and economic dislocation of the 1930s” (Schrodt, 1979, p. 26), ProRec was not only positioned as part of the Liberal governments promise “to further the health, education and wellbeing of [the] people [of British Columbia]” (Johnson, 1964, p. 67); it was “the only thing that the Liberal government had to offer to the people of B.C.” (Brandreth, 1977 as cited in Schrodt, 1979, p. 388) without actually intervening in market structures.

Strategically located in lower class areas of east Vancouver, the first ProRec sites were originally intended to serve only unemployed young men over sixteen years of age who were not attending high school (Johnson, 1964; Schrodt, 1979). However, the public demand was so great that after just a few days, registration became available to young women (Schrodt, 1979). Between 1934 and 1945 the program grew to include 249 centres and had seasonal registrations between 2,768 and 26,831 (Schrodt, 1979). At the majority of these centres, the activities offered were what Schrodt (1979) has called “the basic ProRec programme” (p. 80), which included “exercises, apparatus gymnastics, sports, and dance” (p. 80). These activities were, however, not equally available to men and women. The standard three-hour session for men incorporated

sports and fundamental gymnastics (e.g., tumbling, vaulting, rings, parallel bars) and weightlifting (Government of British Columbia, 1938a). For women, the standard three-hour session incorporated dance, remedial gymnastics (e.g., tumbling and calisthenics) and other less strenuous games (Government of British Columbia, 1938a). Thus, while it was recognized that physical activity could improve the health and fitness of women as much as men, ProRec perpetuated the moral and social reform traditions that suggested women were biologically, anatomically, and temperamentally ‘unfit’ for intense physical activity. The logic behind these misogynistic views can be seen in the 1938 Maclean’s article:

The nature and characteristic of boys and girls differ very widely, and therefore care should be taken to foster activities from which the greatest benefits might be derived.

Nobody would wish to see a return of mid-Victorian fainting and fragility and the traditional headaches of the era. There are numerous activities suitable for girls and women, without the necessity of using these types of competition which call for such intensive concentration and effort as many which are now being promoted.

We need more, not less activity for our girls and women, but let these be suitable to their physical and mental natures. Let us have more concentration upon the needy ninety percent instead of spending our time and energy upon the highly specialized ten per cent.

The tendency for girls to ape the activities of boys is regrettable. In most cases, it is physiologically and psychologically unsound and many be definitely harmful.

Play, recreation and competition, are just as essential for our girls as for our boys, but this must in no way be interpreted to mean that intensive competition with its excessive emotional and physical stresses is the type which should be participated in by girls and women. (Ferguson, 1938, p.32)

Originally penned by A.S. Lamb (the ‘father’ of modern physical education in Canada), these statements reinforced the notion that sport, due to its emphasis on physical and mental strength, was antithetical to feminine characteristics of fragility, passivity, and grace. Thus, as was the case in earlier decades, throughout the 1930s and 40s, women were encouraged to better both their health and character by participating in physical activity, so long as it did not threaten their

ability to perform their ‘motherly’ or ‘wifely’ duties.

Despite further securing the heterosexist notion that vigorous and competitive sport were “no good for [women’s] looks, dignity or health” (Ferguson, 1938, p. 9), recreation professionals have heralded ProRec “the most outstanding development in public recreation ever undertaken in [Canada]” (Lamb & Lang, 1944, p. 6). A primary reason for this is because it was the first senior level investment in recreation that “stressed the provision of activities for the *ordinary* person” (Schrodt, 1979, p. 236 italics added). Focusing on improving the mental and physical health of “the many, rather than the few,” ProRec centres not only welcomed “the unskilled” and “the unfit,” they were able to do so “at a very low cost” (Schrodt, 1979, p. 236). This was a major political win for the newly elected liberal government; not only were they able to distance members of working class from their social and economic woes for a few hours a day, such cost effective programming made it politically appealing to middle- and upper-class voters, as demonstrated in an editorial in the *Vancouver Sun* (1936):

If the Pattullo Government had done nothing else to justify its existence, this promotion of physical education among the young people of British Columbia would have stood out as a vital and splendid piece of government. (p. 6)

As demonstrated by this statement, the public were clearly in support of this ‘splendid piece of government.’ So much so, that members of the liberal government often used ProRec as a political talking point. During a 1937 campaign speech, for example, the liberal member for Victoria called ProRec “one of the outstanding contributions of the present government to the health of the province” (Victoria Daily Times, 1937, p. 10). That same year *The Gymnast*, a monthly publication produced by the Ministry of Education, stated:

[I]t is only a question of time before this pioneer recreational work is extended to all the other Provinces of Canada and that its ultimate form will retain all the best features of the present British Columbia plan. (Government of British Columbia, 1938b, p. 4)

And while these statements advocating for a pan-Canadian ProRec scheme were never fully realized, it was because of the success of the ProRec program that recreation became part of two federal funding initiatives meant to “maintain in working order the faculties and capacities of the unemployed” (Tillotson, 2000, p. 23).

The first federal policy to provide funding specifically for recreation was the *Unemployment and Agricultural Assistance Act* (1937). Enacted in 1937, this piece of federal legislation provided provinces with financial assistance to train unemployed youth in skills that would increase their capacity for future employment (McFarland, 1970; Schrodt, 1979). Physical training and recreational projects were one of the four categories eligible for financial assistance (Government of Canada, 1937). It was therefore under this program that British Columbia, Alberta, and Manitoba were able to access two years’ worth of funding for their respective ProRec programs (McFarland, 1970; Schrodt, 1979).

In 1939, the *Unemployment and Agricultural Assistance Act* (1937) was repealed and the *Youth Training Act* (1939) was introduced. Much like its predecessor, this new Act also enabled financial transfers between the federal and provincial governments “for the purpose of promoting and assisting in the training of unemployed young people to fit them for gainful employment in Canada” (p. 269). Programs eligible for funding were those that targeted “male or female individuals between sixteen and thirty years of age, inclusive, not gainfully employed and whose families [were] not in a position to pay the full cost of their training” (p. 269). And because recreation was still considered an activity capable of fitting youth for ‘gainful employment,’ British Columbia, Alberta, and Manitoba were able to continue to access assistance for their ProRec training courses under this Act (McFarland, 1970). Nova Scotia also accessed this federal assistance in 1939 and began to train community recreation leaders until the pressures of the

Second World War became too great (McFarland, 1970).

If we compare the funding provided by federal and provincial governments in the 1930s with the recreational investments made during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, we see a major difference in the role of the State. Up until the 1930s, public recreation funding came directly from local governments. Outside of leasing or annexing sections of land to municipalities in the mid-19th century, senior governments assumed no responsibility for recreation programming. But when the Depression hit in the early 1930s, millions of men (and women) were left destitute causing many members of society to question both the effectiveness of senior level governments and the capitalist modes of production of which they were in service. This forced senior levels of government to begin to actively “govern from the centre” (Rose, 1999, p. 131). The result as articulated by the leader of BC’s liberal party was a new form of “socialized capitalism” (Hutchison, 1934, p. 16).

A direct response to the social unrest caused by the Depression, this new form of ‘socialized capitalism’ became the dominant political ideology across the country. Recognizing the need to address issues such as poverty, ill health, and unemployment, supporters of this ideology stressed the need for increased government intervention. This intervention, was, however, to occur at an individual and not a structural level. That is, rather than making the legislative changes required to ensure all members of society had access to a basic income, housing, and employment, senior level governments reinforced the notion that progress (economic and social) would be served if the working class acquired the physical, moral, and economic skills needed to succeed within a Christian, (hetero)patriarchal, capitalist society. As a result, they invested in a number of programs and policies that would teach unemployed men and women “how to keep fit, how to keep healthy...and how to serve best” (Government of British

Columbia, 1935, p. 75).

As far as precarious Canadians were concerned, recreation therefore served an essential social purpose throughout the 1930s. A ‘second-best’ alternative to work, recreation was not only positioned as a technique capable of ensuring individuals were healthy enough for future capital accumulation, it was also seen a site where the social-politico role of the ‘traditional’ or ‘normal’ family could be further secured. As such, young men’s recreational activities were tied directly to wage-earning labour and citizenship. For young women, recreation was linked to ideals of feminine labour, which included the work of being a mother and a wife. Tillotson (2000) described this (hetero)patriarchal approach to recreation programming when she wrote:

In Depression-era recreation theory, the connections between women’s leisure and their family labour had been clearly acknowledged. Like the leisure of wage-earners (perceived as masculine), the leisure women enjoyed was defined in relation to their work. For women, the relevant work was the paradigmatically feminine labour of serving their children and husband. Recreation helped people do their work better and in doing so fulfill their social obligations....In its focus on nurturing and educative relationships, recreation in the solidarist tradition was modeled on a family ideal. (p. 32)

Within this framework of ‘a family ideal,’ recreation became part of a liberal regime that not only defined the family as “nuclear (with a male head), reasonably successful in a capitalist labour market (and thus not poor)...producing no offspring with mental or physical disabilities or antisocial attitudes, and of course...heterosexual” (McWhorter, 2009, p. 252); it also positioned this ‘normal’ family as the principal site for the socialization of future citizens. Therefore, even without explicitly evoking the concept of race, depression era recreation programs perpetuated many of the same moral and social reform traditions of the earlier playground and parks movements. For example, by linking recreation to the gendered practices of labour, the ProRec programs further secured the relationships between men and women in terms of marriage, parenthood, and the market economy, and in doing so reinforced the notion

that recreation was an activity intended to increase the health and security of precarious Canadians. This does not mean, however, that exclusion of the ‘degenerate’ Other was an explicit part of the ProRec program. Rather, as was the case with parks and playgrounds, these recreational opportunities were more widely available to precarious Canadians largely because of the structural conditions created by decades of state racism. Therefore, while there is no indication of racialized, classed, or ableist exclusions directly within ProRec programs there were a number of earlier state sanctioned practices that created the conditions for a recreation program that was never intended for ‘degenerate’ Others. For example, not only was the pass system still being enforced in the 1930s, residential schools were at their peak during this time (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015). Furthermore, Canada’s immigration policies remained explicitly racist and heterosexist until 1976 (Canadian Museum of Immigration, 2020). Add to this the institutionalization of many disabled people (Peers, 2015) or the fact that homosexuality was illegal in Canada until 1969 (Kinsman, 1995) and it is easy to see how urban centres (recreation facilities included) were sites where able-bodied, heterosexual, whiteness was re-secured. Indeed, a quick scan of the online article, *The Pro-Rec Program: 1934-1953* (Vanalogue, 2015) reinforces this idea. Of the twelve images used in the article, all of the staff and participants appear to fit the ‘normal’ (read white, able-bodied, cisgendered, heterosexual) family ideal.

When we combine the social liberal ideals of the ‘normal’ family with the logics of settler colonialism and capitalism, we can see how Canada’s depression-era recreation programs were much more than disciplinary sites intended to teach men and women “how to keep fit, how to keep healthy” (Government of British Columbia, 1935, p. 75). Positioned as an efficient and effective way to deal with the threat of socialism, these techniques of social liberalism served the

economic and political elite by providing precarious Canadians with opportunities to improve both their health and their future industriousness. Therefore, much like the earlier technologies of social medicine, ProRec, and the federal funding programs that followed, can be read as part of larger biopolitical project intended to address the social and health inequalities created by capitalism, without significantly disrupting the well-established classed, gendered, and racialized hierarchies of the colonial era.

The Community Centre Movement: A Re-Reading

In a recreation context, depression-era programs can be read as the first mechanisms by which senior level governments began to centrally govern “a whole variety of micro-locales” (Barry, Osborne, & Rose, 1996, p. 49). Positioned as sites where issues such as unemployment and ill health could be managed and controlled, the depression-era recreation movement positioned professional knowledge, training, and skills, as a particular form of social liberal insurance. Thus, when discussions about the need for national health insurance began in the early 1940s, the federal government had a blueprint from which to develop the *National Physical Fitness Act* (1943).

Introduced in 1943, the *National Physical Fitness Act* was part of a federal funding program intended to “promote the physical fitness of the people of Canada” (Esienhardt, 1945, p. 186). Considered to be part of a preventative health insurance plan recommended by the *Heagerty Report* (Committee on Social Security, 1943), the Act provided funding to “train leaders, lecturers, and demonstrators; and to organize sports and athletics on a national scale” (Esienhardt, 1945, p. 187). Tillotson (2000) has nicely articulated the specific objectives of this Act:

[T]he National Physical Fitness Act of 1943 [was] established [as] a physical fitness program that was intended to be part of a proposed national health insurance system. Its

advocates argued that if the state was to secure its citizens against the financial risks of ill health, then it had an interest in promoting good health. The state also had an interest in fostering a healthy military force. Armed forces recruiters had rejected between 16 and 33 per cent of applicants for basic training during the Second World War. Ian Mackenzie, minister of pensions and national health, claimed that a physical training program like the popular Pro-Rec program in his hometown of British Columbia was therefore in the public interest. Not only would Canadian men be better suited for war and for work, but as an afterthought he argued, as well, that more physically active women and children would enjoy improved 'intellectual and social morale.' (p. 45-46)

As demonstrated by these statements, the objectives of the Act did not differ much from earlier forms of public recreation. Like all of the other recreational innovations discussed up until this point, the *National Physical Fitness Act* reinforced the objectives of social medicine.

Furthermore, just as earlier reformers had stressed the importance of moral, mental, and physical health, so too did the supporters of the Act. Paul Martin (1947), after becoming Minister of Health and Welfare, clearly articulated this notion of 'total fitness' when he stated,

I think we should have a broader view of the concepts of fitness and what the programme should entail. No narrow definition will be adequate. It should be broad enough to include mental and cultural fitness as well as the more narrowly physical. One of the aims should be the social integration of the various types of people who make up this nation. (as cited in McFarland, 1970. p. 53)

Within this new definition of fitness, the language had indeed changed, but the objective remained exactly the same. As stated by Martin (1947), the 'social integration of various types of people' (a post-racist phase that meant the assimilation of the precarious, the dangerous, or undesirable) was deemed an essential part of securing a mentally (previously morally) and culturally (previously biologically) fit nation. Therefore, as was the case with playgrounds, parks, and the ProRec program, the primary objective of the *National Physical Fitness Act* (1947) was an assimilative form of productive, Christian, whiteness.

At a local level, this assimilative approach to fitness was, however, met with a great deal of resistance. Responding to concerns about authoritarian regimes, many local recreationists took

issue with how the *National Physical Fitness Act* (1943) gave a federally organized National Council the ability to intervene in other jurisdictions by providing consistent reminders that the “programs of Hitler and Mussolini were examples of the dire results of using leisure for ulterior purposes... Youth-serving and other recreation agencies, literature, radio, music, drama, and all other cultural and recreation resources were early targets for control in their master plan” (Fitzgerald, 1951, p. 5). Therefore, despite the federal government’s desire to continue to use recreation as a way to (re)secure the health and colonial security of the nation, recreationists working at the provincial and municipal level fought to position recreation as “a symbol of Democracy” (Ross, 1948, p. 164).

Within this view, to continue to offer recreation as a social reform or an alternative to work was to distort its meaning. Public recreation was now by definition, an entitlement of citizenship. Thus, while the majority of provinces entered into agreements under the *National Physical Fitness Act*⁹ (1943), provincial and municipal recreationists still attempted to distance themselves from many of the normalizing discourses and techniques being promoted by the federal government by positioning public recreation as something desirable, freely chosen, and self-directed (Fitzgerald, 1951, Ross, 1948). An employee of the Government of Ontario affirmed these new links between recreation and the democratic ideals of rights and freedoms when he said, “it is the right of the individual to choose his leisure time activities” (Tett, 1950 as cited in Tillotson, 2000, p. 43).

Within this new social contract, public recreation became a technology of government intended to assist, rather than prescribe. This assistance, now justified on the basis that recreation

⁹ Quebec and Yukon did not sign agreements with the federal government under the 1943 National Physical Fitness Act. According to elected officials Quebec’s opposition was based on “federal interference in education, and the determination to maintain provincial autonomy generally” (National Council on Physical Fitness, 1945, as cited in McFarland, p. 54).

was an indispensable human right, was considered the most effective way to maximize recreational opportunities, while respecting both the freedom of individual citizens and the freedom of the market. Tillotson (2000) described this ideological shift when she wrote:

The democratic civil service, in this formulation, responded to public demand and did not impose programs from above, ultimately deferring to the authority of individual choice...Such a policy reflected the public recreationists' sensitivity, as [social] liberals, to criticism that their work illegitimately invaded the privacy of civil society. It also expressed their aversion to their predecessors' reputation for stuffiness and Victorian prudishness. (p. 45)

As demonstrated by these statements, it was 'the people' not the state who were to guide decisions related to their leisure-time activities. This did not mean, however, that there was no longer a role for the state. Both the provincial and the federal governments were still expected to ensure the health and happiness of Canadians by investing in recreation programs and facilities. But rather than the senior levels of government continuing to use the knowledges of medicine and social science to dictate which programs and facilities were to be developed in each community, these decisions were to be made by the 'expressed needs' of the people living in that community using recreation boards and advisory committees. Thus, for post-World War Two municipal recreationists it was the process and not the objective that had changed. They were still interested in ensuring the "constructive use of leisure" (Brown, 1956, p. 88), but instead of making decisions strictly on the basis of health and security, public investments were now determined using the logics of "expressed need" (Tillotson, 2000, p. 34).

As a guiding rationality, expressed need can be understood as a new form of recreational theory that centred both personal pleasure and community solidarity. Linked directly to the democratic notion that citizens had a right to live according to a set of common societal standards (Berend, 2005; Foucault, 2008, Rose, 1999), this new notion of expressed need was intended to maximize both individual choice and personal freedom during leisure time.

Consistent with Article 24 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, public recreationists who supported this recreational theory reinforced the notion that “everyone has a right to rest and leisure” (United Nations, 1948, p. 6). But in order to be afforded this right, they also had to assume a number of new democratic responsibilities: responsibilities that would ensure freedom for both the individual and the market (Rose, 1999). It was therefore around the late 1940s, public recreation was no longer positioned as a form of social welfare intended to mitigate the negative effects of capitalism (e.g., unemployment, poverty and ill health). The primary reason for this shift, as noted by Tillotson (2000), was because “social welfare carried a stigma” (p. 69). As a result, provincial and municipal recreationists attempted to distance themselves from the assimilative and reformatory discourses that sought the production of healthy and productive precarious Canadians, committing instead to services that promoted freedom, self-direction, and individual happiness. John Tett, a provincial recreationist working in Ontario noted the need for this discursive distancing when he stated, “whilst the federal government is fostering a sports and physically active programme with the goal of physical fitness, this province is fostering an all-round recreational programme with a goal of happiness” (Government of Ontario, 1950, n.p.). Within this view, it was only during one’s leisure time that they could ‘truly’ exercise their individual freedom, be fully self-directed, and realize true happiness. As a result, the primary responsibility of the post-war public recreationist was to provide, sponsor, or assist in developing the recreation programs, facilities, and services that would meet these new leisure needs.

Speaking in the same political language as Tett, other provincial and municipal recreationists began to reject the utilitarian view of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, suggesting instead that a primary goal of recreation, within a free society, should be happiness, pleasure, and enjoyment (Fitzgerald, 1951, Ross, 1948). This did not mean, however, that those

who supported this new approach to recreation reduced it to an activity that was about ‘just having fun.’ While pleasure for its own sake was indeed endorsed by this new generation of public recreationists, so too was the making of “better citizens, better communities, and a better country” (Tillotson, 2000, p. 51). Therefore, in order to ensure recreation programming still “reflect[ed] the moral philosophy of the people” (Fitzgerald, 1951, p. 4), local advisory boards were introduced.

Positioned as a more ‘democratic’ form of public decision-making, these local advisory boards were meant to limit the possibility of prescriptive or authoritarian programming, while still acting as auxiliaries of the welfare state. In other words, as a new form of citizen participation, advisory boards were mechanisms that sought to bring community members (primarily middle to upper class European settlers) into relation with the state in a way that not only promoted the notion of individual rights and freedoms, but also stressed the importance of civic responsibility within settler colonial towns and cities. A passage from *Leadership in Recreation* – a book that could be checked out of Alberta’s Recreation and Cultural Development library during the 1950s – clearly articulates the ways these rights and responsibilities were discursively linked in a recreation context:

The individual in a democratic society has responsibilities as well as rights. One of these duties is to use his leisure so that it contributes to expanding his personality to the end that he is a more competent member of society. In this sense recreation is everybody’s responsibility. As an essential community service closely related to social needs and the development of good citizenship, recreation places a responsibility of another type upon the individual – the responsibility to support community recreation agencies through taxes and voluntary contributions. (Fitzgerald, 1951, p. 8)

As demonstrated by these statements, public recreation was considered a right, but it was a right reserved for ‘responsible’ citizens who not only used their leisure time appropriately, but were also in a position to support their local community efforts through ‘taxes’ (meaning they could

not be unemployed) and ‘voluntary contributions’ (meaning some of their leisure time was to be spent volunteering). Therefore, while the community recreation movement tends to be remembered as “providing accessible recreation opportunities for all citizens” (Cureton & Frisby, 2011, p. 7), it was primarily middle to upper class European settlers that were able to access these community-based recreational opportunities.

Take Vancouver’s Sunset Memorial Centre as an example. Constructed in 1950, this new community centre was one of Canada’s many “living war memorials” (McFarland, 1970, p. 45) that was built and supported through a combination of public investments and voluntary contributions. Like most other community centres constructed during this time, the most significant public investments came from land donations and government grants. For example, in 1945 a portion of Sunset Park was promised by the Board of Park Commissions “as a building site, if and when [the Sunset Community Association] raised the necessary funds” (Thomas, 1950, p. 3). Additionally, the City of Vancouver granted the Sunset Community Association \$20,000 (the equivalent of \$230,000 today) in 1949. However, the rest of the \$125,000 (the equivalent of over one million four hundred dollars today) required to construct the centre came from community donations, raffles, carnivals, and concerts (Thomas, 1950). Thus, while the members of the Community Association did indeed “work closely with the parks board and particularly the superintendent” (Thomas, 1950, p. 16), the successful construction and management of the centre was primarily attributed to citizen engagement and the local efforts of “Mr. and Mrs. Citizen” (Thomas, 1950, p.11). The president of the Sunset Community Association stressed the importance of this citizen engagement when he wrote:

“Plans for the future” must of necessity rest on the desires and needs of the local community. Such plans will depend on the actions of your board, committees, staff, and you – Mr. and Mrs. Citizen. Operation of a successful community centre is “big business,” and requires the support of ALL its citizens, in the capacities in which they

can most efficiently function. (Thomas, 1950, p. 11).

Three phrases within this quote require further scrutiny. The first is the phrase ‘*of ALL its citizens.*’ As previously noted, to be legally designated as a Canadian citizen in 1950 one had to meet the racist criteria outlined in the *Canadian Citizenship Act* (1946). For immigrants, these criteria included being “of good character” and having “an adequate knowledge of either French or English” (Canadian Citizenship Act, 1946, p. 71). For Indigenous people there were no criteria. They were simply denied citizenship under the Act until 1960. Furthermore, throughout the first half of the 20th century the vast majority of the Canadian population was of European descent. Of the approximately 14 million people living in Canada in 1951, 0.01% were Indigenous, 0.005% were Asian, and 0.001% were Black (Statistics Canada, 2009). Therefore, despite the Sunset Community Centre being described as a place where “all citizens irrespective of religious belief, colour, or nationality... [could] congregate” (Thomas, 1950, p. 11), years of legislation intended to “Keep Canada White” (Thobani, 2007, p. 92) made it so these ‘citizens’ were defined, almost entirely, as white individuals from European countries.

The second statement that requires further scrutiny is “the capacity in which they can most efficiently function” (Thomas, 1950, p. 11). As stated in the Centre’s 1950 *Program of Events*, “The Family That Plays Together, Stays Together” (Sunset Community Centre, 1950, p. 2). Thus, as was the case with so many other programs being promoted by the welfare state, the ‘normal’ family was positioned as the principal site of socialization. As a result, staffing, volunteer positions, and program offerings were all organized in a way that resecured the relationships between men and women in terms of marriage, parenthood, and labour force participation. For example, of the seventeen officers that made up the Association’s executive in 1950, only one (the secretary) appears to be a woman (Sunset Community Centre, 1950).

Additionally, when the centre opened, they hired Jack Hopkins, a former member of the Air Force, to be the full-time Director. Compare these prestigious appointments and full-time jobs, with the unpaid domestic duties (e.g., catering) provided by “Mrs. *Robert Fleming*” (Thomas, 1950, p. 10) and her volunteers in the Ladies Auxiliary and we can see how, the Sunset Community Centre reproduced the gendered and sexist structures of ‘normal’ family life. Programming at the centre further reinforced this notion of gender-based ‘capacities.’ While the activities for men and boys were primarily physical (e.g., soccer, boxing), programming for women and girls was more social or familial (e.g., square dancing, baking). Thus, as was the case in other Canadian communities, ‘effective functioning’ meant “most women and girls experienced leisure as something less individual...leisure, and especially married mothers’ leisure, was more likely to be family-centred” (Tillotson, 2000, p. 30).

The last statement made by the president of the Sunset Community Association that requires further scrutiny is, “a successful community centre is ‘big business’” (Thomas, 1950, p. 11). According to this statement, the Sunset Community Centre was conceptualized as a business and was therefore managed according the rules of the free market. Thus, despite being discursively positioned as a right, access to these recreational opportunities was never universally available. If community members wanted to exercise their right to recreation, they first had a “responsibility to support [the centre] through taxes and voluntary contributions” (Fitzgerald, 1951, p. 8), which meant that access was still largely determined using a “labour control factor” (Quadango, 1990, p. 14). It was only those communities and individuals who ‘fulfilled’ their obligations as responsible citizens and laboured (in both paid positions as taxpayers and unpaid positions as volunteers) who were considered worthy of the right.

When taken together the analysis of the aforementioned three statements demonstrate

how the Sunset Community Centre reified a number of racialized, classed, and gendered power structures. By “generat[ing] in city neighbourhoods a form of popular organization that would bring people together and empower them in relationship to city government, large property owners, powerful merchants, and big businesses” (Tillotson, 2000, p. 107), this recreational centre reinforced the ideology of a liberal, rather than a social democratic, welfare state. In doing so, this Sunset Community Centre, which was indeed part of the broader community centre movement, contributed to an overarching political strategy that sought, not the redistribution of wealth and security, but the development of a coordinated network of practices that further secured the white supremacist logics of settler colonialism, capitalism, racism, and (hetero)patriarchy. Thus, while the involvement of citizens in the development of community centres was intended to contribute to a “new sense of cultural and social purpose” by providing “in each city and town a meeting place where all citizens [could] make their contribution to social life” (Claxton, 1945, as cited in McFarland, 1970, p. 94), this new formulation of recreation provision was in many ways indistinguishable from the recreational reforms of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. As was the case with the playground movement, the reform park movement, and the ProRec movement, community centres across the country were sites where the raced and gendered expressions of (hetero)patriarchy were reproduced and the industrious habits required to thrive in a market-based economy were promoted.

Despite reinforcing many of the objectives of the colonial state, the subjects intended to benefit from the welfare state’s investments in recreation were however significantly different. No longer interested in simply containing the dangers posed by precarious Canadians (e.g., unemployment, poverty and ill health), public recreation facilities were now intended to serve ‘all the people.’ Therefore, instead of offering programs based on the pre-determined needs of

the nation, public recreationists attempted to respond to the expressed needs of individual citizens. However, just as the *Canadian Citizenship Act* (1946) determined who had access to recreation by virtue of being legally categorized as a ‘citizen,’ the market-like forces of ‘expressed need’ made the scope and content of public recreation more exclusive. Tillotson (2000) clearly explained this shift towards a new and more exclusive form of recreation provision when she wrote:

The shift in recreation theory away from its moral reform and social welfare origins towards a ‘modern’ liberalism arranged the elements of recreation theory according to the model of the marketplace. The subject of recreation theory became the individual consumer...The community role was to serve responsibly, not to exert collective direction or control. Although this view of recreation services left the community a role as provider it represented an increased individualism in recreation theory. [And]...in the early 1950s, individualism in its fullest extent was still reserved normatively for the male social role. (p. 32)

Therefore, while it would be an oversimplification to suggest that other groups did not consume leisure during this time, the ‘sex roles’ reified by sociologists like Talcott Parsons meant that most public recreation facilities upheld an unequal model of white, middle-class, male participation. Tillotson (2000) further elaborated on this point when she wrote:

However grotesquely these sex roles may have misrepresented the range and variety of human possibility, they indicated a typology of gender that was common in the white, middle class...[b]eing a breadwinner earned a father a right to his free time, a space for personally chosen pleasures. On balance, then, compared with the female list of traits, the male role in the predominant language of social description of the 1950s was more oriented to self than was the female role. In this context, when recreation theorists began to describe recreation as any activity pursued for the sake of individual enjoyment, they were urging that recreation be reconceptualized to suit the focus of a free self that was deemed appropriately masculine. (p. 33)

As demonstrated by these statements, the freely-choosing, self-directing, individual consumer was neither classless, genderless, nor raceless. By reinforcing the notion of the conjugal (or nuclear) family, recreation practices and policies were part the post-war welfare state that was built around the norm of a white, middle-class, male, breadwinner. As such, the assumption that

the “market-like forces of demand would invisibly produce a program that served everyone’s needs” (Tillotson, 2000, p. 57) did not hold true. While much of the volunteer resources that supported the development of community recreation centres came directly from middle-class white women, decisions related to facility allocation and programming increasingly favoured the expressed needs of middle class white men and boys (Tillotson, 2000). Therefore, while municipal parks departments across the country continued to promote gender appropriate *family* recreation through the construction of pay-per-use swimming pools and community recreation centres¹⁰, investments in sporting facilities for hockey and baseball (both sports which perpetuated the exclusion of women and racialized individuals; Adams, Field, & Vigneault, 2021; Glover, 2007; Greenham, 2021; Ramshaw, 2010; Theberge, 2002) privileged middle and upper class white men and boys.

Ramshaw (2010) provides an example of how these gendered, raced, and classed inequalities played out in his analysis of Edmonton’s community league rink system:

Community league officials petitioned for an indoor ice hockey arena beginning in 1955 after another season of lost ice hockey due to weather...By autumn of 1966, the city was swayed by the League’s arguments and began plans to build more indoor rinks for ice hockey. By the early 1970s, after 15 rinks were constructed by the city over a 12-year span, community league ice hockey had, by and large, moved indoors. [And] [a]lthough hockey, had, by the mid 1960s, become an indoor activity, figure skating was still primarily taking place at the outdoor rinks. Despite having nearly 2,000 girls enrolled in figure skating programs in 1964, only 64 hours per year of indoor ice was allocated to figure skating programs. Even when figure skaters had to rehearse for indoor shows, they had to practice outdoors despite the conditions...[This] allocation of indoor ice times, as well as the attitude that girls’ sport and recreation is less important than boy’s hockey and, therefore, can use facilities deemed substandard for “serious” sport, re-enforces the idea that these community league facilities were also sites of gender-based power relations...In the case of Edmonton’s community league rink system, the outdoor rinks were substandard for serious sports like boys’ hockey, but perfectly suitable for less-important and fringe sports such as girls’ figure skating. (p.33-35)

¹⁰ According to a Globe and Mail (1954) article, the estimated revenue from two pools in North York was \$185,000 a year (the equivalent of 1.8 million today). Furthermore, it was stated in 1965, “Toronto is the only municipality in North America that doesn’t charge for the use of outdoor artificial rinks” (Globe and Mail, 1965, p. 27).

This excerpt, which is indeed an excellent example of how the community centre movement directly influenced the development of municipal sporting facilities, also demonstrates the ways ice rinks reified a number of gender-based power relations by promoting, and unequally supporting, forms of movement that were explicitly gendered (i.e., figure skating versus hockey). What is less explicit within this excerpt, however, are the ways these public recreation facilities also marginalized lower class and racialized individuals. As facilities predominantly located in suburban neighbourhoods (Ramshaw, 2010; Tillotson, 2000) these recreation facilities not only facilitated the exclusion of many non-white and lower class people simply by virtue of their socio-economic geography, the lack of public skating opportunities also meant that one had to be part of a figure skating club or an amateur hockey team to fully appreciate these ‘public’ facilities.

An article published in *The Globe and Mail* (1964) further demonstrates the ways “figure skating and minor hockey leagues monopolize[d] almost all available ice time” (p. 25). Stating that “public skating has been abandoned almost entirely” the article quotes the “management of each rink” who claimed they were “compelled to eliminate open skating as an economy measure” (p. 25). While the arenas charged children 25 cents (the equivalent of \$2.13 today) and adults 50 cents (the equivalent of \$4.26 today) for free evening skating, the “hockey teams and figure skaters rent[ed] the ice for \$25 per hour” (the equivalent of \$213.04 today). Due to these large discrepancies in hourly revenue, it was “the impression of most rink managers was that outdoor facilities...were more than adequate to take care of casual skaters” (p. 25). Therefore, while the gendered inequalities that were constructed and maintained by indoor ice rinks were both produced by, and reinforced, the heterosexist hierarchies of colonial society, the politics of exclusion should be read as extending well beyond gender. As recreational facilities that

primarily served figure skaters and hockey players (both sports where participants were almost entirely white and predominantly middle class¹¹), race and class also contributed to the ways these community ice rinks “foster[ed] a sense of community through the serving of the social and cultural needs of a neighbourhood” (Torrance, 1949, p 8). Mary Louise Adams (2004) explained exactly how these relations of power both produced and were reproduced in the context of Canadian ice rinks:

To think of ice rinks in terms of the ‘spatial organization of society’ is to think of them as implicated in – rather than just the setting for – a broad net of human activities and relationships. Ice rinks are not simply the state upon which class or gender [or race] inequalities play out, rather they help structure them. Moreover, social relations of class and gender [and race] are among the conditions that made ice rinks possible. The space of the rink is not simply that which can be measured in square meters, it is also symbolic and, hence, ideological and political. (p. 58)

Recognizing that ice rinks are just one example of how the politics of exclusion materialized after the Second World War, the ways in which whiteness has operated as a technology of normalization in sport and recreation has been well documented throughout the literature (e.g., Arai & Kivel, 2009; Davidson, 2014; Floyd, 2007; Peers, 2015; Mowatt, 2020; Tink & Peers, 2021). Therefore, while the aforementioned example is specific to indoor ice rinks, it is my argument that beginning around the late 1940s, the majority of Canada’s public recreation facilities contributed to this politics of exclusion by privileging incontestable Canadians. As noted by McFarland (1970), “across Canada encouragement for community centre development was given...meetings were held to provide guidelines...included were sketches of a variety of centres suitable for different situations” (p. 45). Therefore, while the ‘democratic’ mechanism introduced varied from city to city (some developed community leagues or community associations, others developed local recreation boards or committees), the

¹¹ A 1965 Globe and Mail article stated, “youngsters in organized leagues (affiliated with the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association) wear equipment that costs up to \$50” (p. 27). That is the equivalent of \$418.37 today.

general pattern of development for municipal recreation facilities, even in Quebec¹², was essentially the same: citizen groups, with funding from both public and civic sources, worked directly with public sector employees to develop a network of recreation facilities (primarily swimming pools, ice rinks, baseball diamonds, tennis courts, and community centres) capable of offering programming that could be consumed by individual citizens, making individual choices.

No longer focused on the pathologies of precarious Canadians – as that was now a responsibility of the social worker – public recreationists now sought to “enhance the development of free and creative human beings” (Manning, 1967, p. 18) by “provid[ing] or sponsor[ing] whatever leisure activities, facilities, or services its clients express[ed]” (Beres, 1981, p. 128). This did not mean, however, that the normalizing objectives of social medicine were completely eliminated from recreational sites. Across the country, public assistance was still provided to voluntary organizations (e.g., YMCA, YWCA, Boy Scouts, Girl Guides) as well as other state-run agencies (e.g., residential schools and other ‘correctional’ facilities) to continue to develop recreational programs that aimed to “make citizens more competent members of society” (Fitzgerald, 1951, p. 4). Therefore, while municipal recreationists were attempting to develop a comprehensive program of service using the market-like forces of demand, senior levels of government continued to invest in policies and practices that sought to eliminate the societal problems such as juvenile delinquency, ill-health, and other forms of social discord. A speech given at the 1951 Ontario Recreation Association provides an example of how the

¹² In his book *Public and Civic Leisure in Quebec*, Andre Thibault (2008) explained the parallels between recreation development in Quebec and the rest of the country:

During the 1960s, playground programs, recreation centers, diocesan leisure federations, and sports organizations (mainly in ice hockey and baseball) that had come under lay control asked municipalities and the provincial government to step in and invest in leisure...A diverse array of associations came into being in response to public needs and desires and the growing popularity of certain activities. (p. 6-7)

knowledge generated by the ever-growing human sciences reinforced these normalizing discourses of social reform/welfare:

Many psychiatrists feel that the only real way of combating the Communist and the revolutionary is to avoid too much frustration of individuals – and to provide adequate means of expressing their aggressive tendencies through recreation – wholesome recreation is an antidote to strife at the community, national, and international level. (Ontario Recreation Association, 1951 as cited in Tillotson, 2000, p. 37)

A second example of how recreation continued to be positioned as a normalizing technique capable of reducing individual pathologies can be found in a paper delivered to the Canadian Federation of Mayors and Municipalities. Speaking to the Federation in 1950, the National Director of Physical Fitness stated, “a lack of organized recreation tends to create and encourage individual and social pathology” (Lee, 1950, p. 1). In both cases, organized recreation is positioned as a remedy to physical, moral, and social ‘deviation.’ Therefore, while municipal recreation professionals were attempting to distance their field from the moralizing practices of social reform/welfare, the normalizing logics of human science were still used by provincial and federal governments to justify public investments in programs and policies that sought to intervene in the lives and behaviours of those constituted as dangerous, risky, or at-risk.

Despite municipal recreationists actively distancing themselves from the emerging field of social work throughout the 1940s, it did not take long for them to realize these disciplinary discourses were required to avoid the elimination of public recreation services. Throughout the 1950s and 60s, as anxieties about welfare state spending were amplified, the discourses of human and social science were increasingly used to justify the social utility of municipal recreation investments. A primary reason for the growing circulation of these expert knowledges was that “neither the moral panic nor the commitment to universal social rights that surged briefly at war’s end was proving sufficient to sustain recreation as a secure element of the welfare state”

(Tillotson, 2000, p. 65). Therefore, while municipal recreationists had no intention of returning to their origins of social reform/welfare, they knew the growing concerns surrounding public spending were threatening the backing for recreational activities that, just a few years earlier, were positioned as public investments that “did not have to seek justification [because] the dividends [were] self-produced” (Romney, 1947 as cited in Tillotson, 2000, p. 54).

Beginning in the 1950s, the disciplinary discourses of medicine, psychology, criminology, sociology, and economics were therefore increasingly used to justify the need for public recreation programs. Connecting ‘positive’ recreation experiences with a number of individual and collective benefits, these discourses further secured the view that the best hope for social progress lay in knowledge of experts. Thus, just as the discourses of both medical and social science was used to justify the need and placement of playgrounds and parks during the social reform era, new forms of rational and objective knowledge were once again used to (re)affirm the value of and need for recreation in settler colonial towns and cities. An example of this can be found in the textbook *Leadership in Recreation*:

Recreation can contribute effectively to good mental health...Repression or denial of fundamental needs results in personality distortions and emotional unbalance. Basic drives can find expression in recreation. But care must be taken not to place too heavy a burden on recreation; it makes its best contribution when it is accompanied by efforts to correct factors in other life areas that condition personality adjustment. (Fitzgerald, 1951, p. 8)

Consistent with the discourses developing within the emerging field of psychology, this passage is an example of how recreation was once again positioned as a site within which “the conduct of citizens could be problematized and acted upon in terms of norms that calibrated personal normality in a way that was inextricably linked to its social consequences” (Barry, Osborne, & Rose, 1996, p. 49). In other words, using the powers afforded to the positive knowledge of social and human science, recreation was once again positioned as site where particular standards of

healthfulness could be achieved.

Instrumentalized as a one of many social ‘enclosures’ capable of addressing a number of social and political concerns (e.g., mental health, physical health, good citizenship), public recreation professionals not only used the discourses of human and social science to ally themselves with political authorities; these scientific discourses also provided the rationale for the development of university programs capable of producing professionals by giving them the skills to “legitimate recreation’s claim on tax funds” while simultaneously “serving social welfare goals” (Tillotson, 2000, p. 17). Therefore, beginning in the early 1960s – after a number of unsuccessful attempts to formally institutionalize learning (McFarland, 1970) – universities across the country introduced undergraduate programs for students wanting to make a career working in recreation. McFarland (1970) provides a chronological account of these flagship programs:

Other than through short courses and conferences, there was little opportunity for persons accepting employment in public recreation to obtain training specifically related to their field until after World War II. Consequently, many of those who entered the recreation field prior to and following the war came from the teaching profession, YMCA work, and from a variety of other disciplines...However, with the rapid expansion of public recreation services in the 19540s and 1950s, the number of trained and experienced people willing to accept positions in a young and untried profession were far fewer than the positions available. As a result, government and universities turned their attention to possible solutions...In 1960 the University of British Columbia announced a four year “programme for specialization in Recreation” as a pattern leading to the Bachelor’s degree in Physical Education. In 1962, the University of Alberta announced commencement of a Bachelor of Arts program in Recreation Leadership to be offered in the School of Physical Education...The University of Waterloo began a four-year degree program “the first of its kind in Canada” in September, 1968. Students were to alternate terms on and off the campus, gaining practical experience in recreation work situations as they progressed toward their degrees. In 1969, the University of Ottawa approved a degree course in Recreology. (p. 65)

As revealed by this account the recreation profession was largely the product of the new formula of the welfare state. Formally institutionalized throughout the 1960s, recreation degree programs

were yet another state-sponsored technique with its own “logics, criteria of judgment, professional codes and values” (Rose, 1999, p.133). Finally positioned as a discipline in its own right – one fully separate from social work – recreational professionals entered into a kind of double alliance with the welfare state: they would ally themselves with experts in the human and social sciences by translating expert knowledges and social norms into the vocabulary of leisure and recreation, while simultaneously reinforcing the logics of accounting, management, and economics using the market-like forces of demand.

Part of a proliferating network of what Rose (1999) has termed a new “bureaucratic complex” (p. 150), recreation professionals were, by virtue of their new qualifications, granted a new authority by the welfare state. However, this authority was not equally distributed. Just as other elements of the welfare state were “built around the norm a white male-breadwinner” (Bernhardt, 2015, p. 1), so too was the newly constructed recreation workforce. Considered to be beyond the competence of most women and racialized men, recreation directors were described as needing an “active, aggressive entrepreneurial behaviour...to develop professional and community contacts and to gain access to men of power” (Wilensky & Lebeaux, 1958, p. 323). And while it could likely be argued that excluding women and racialized men was not an explicit goal, the suggestion that one needed to have ‘access to men of power’ (read middle to upper class, white men) meant that recreation directors had to be of equal standing. Therefore, despite the presence of women and racialized individuals (although to a significantly lesser degree) at the programmatic level, leadership positions were coded white, masculine, and middle class. In order for anyone else to be taken seriously at this level, they had to demonstrate a particular level of super-performance. As an example, before Elsie McFarland was appointed Director of the Government of Alberta’s Health and Recreation Branch, she had to prove herself to the Deputy

Minister by 'acting' as the Director "for a one-year period" because he "was reluctant to promote a woman as a permanent Director" (Baka, 1978, p. 144).

Much like most other policies and practices introduced by Canada's welfare state, the community centre movement reinforced a patriarchal model of society that sought to protect the security of the (white) male wage earner. As sites that reified the notion of the *normal* family, these recreational facilities not only favoured middle-class, white men when it came to employment opportunities, they also privileged the recreational activities of middle-class, white men and boys. Thus, while this particular era of Canada's recreation history is often remembered as being organized according to the "principle of equal opportunity" (Smale & Reid, 2002), some groups benefited more than others. As facilities run almost entirely by white, heterosexual, middle to upper class men, community recreation centres reinforced the dominant belief that "'housekeeping' and the care of children is the primary functional content of the adult feminine role" (Parson, 1943, p. 34). Furthermore, because many of the community recreation centres erected during this period were constructed in suburban neighbourhoods and combined the goal of a socially identified citizen (i.e., white, heterosexual, able-bodied, Canadians) with the market-based logics of expressed need, they actually intensified the division between who was to be included and who was to be excluded. As part of the new approach to recreation programming, those who were considered pathological in relation to social norms (i.e., degenerate Others, struggling precarious Canadians) were to be dealt with outside of the public recreation system. Social work programs, non-profit organizations, and other state-run facilities were where these 'problematic' individuals were to be educated and reformed. Public recreation facilities, on the other hand, were where socially responsible citizens (i.e., incontestable Canadians, thriving precarious Canadians) could choose to take responsibility for their health

and leisure through active involvement in ‘gender appropriate’ activities. Therefore, just as playgrounds, reform parks, and ProRec sites reinforced the white supremacist logics of settler colonialism, capitalism, racism, and (hetero)patriarchy, so too did community recreation centres. In this new configuration, however, investments were no longer intended “to control the health and the bodies of the needy classes, to make them more fit for labor and less dangerous to the wealthy classes” (Foucault, 2003d, p. 336). Instead, they were seen as a way to maximize the health and individual freedoms of the better off in an effort to build the best possible Canadian citizen.

A Biopolitical Summary

As demonstrated throughout this section, both the ProRec movement and the community centre movement served the interests of Canada’s social liberal welfare state. Positioned, during the depression era, as a form of governance capable of minimizing the social, political, and economic consequences of a market economy, recreation was one of many programs offered by senior governments unwilling to intensely pursue the redistribution of wealth. Within this social liberal ideology, programs such as ProRec and the *Youth Training Act* (1939) were deemed an effective way to deal with social and health inequalities without having to significantly alter the classed, gendered, and racialized hierarchy established by the colonial state. Therefore, while the concept of biological purity was no longer a national goal, depression-era recreation programs were still entangled in the histories of Indigenous peoples, immigrants, and race science. As sites intended to mitigate the negative effects of poverty and unemployment, these recreational programs were part of the ongoing biopolitical program primarily intended to maximize the economic security of middle to upper class capitalists (i.e., incontestable Canadians) by instilling in the working class (i.e., precarious Canadians) the subjectivities needed to further secure a

white, Christian, capitalist nation.

The community centre movement further contributed to the unequal distribution of these (quality of) life chances. Beginning around the late 1940s, the division between who was to be included and who was to be excluded in public recreation facilities intensified. Focusing on the ‘expressed needs’ of those who could take responsibility for their leisure time activities, public recreation facilities no longer targeted the unemployed, the socially deviant, or the physically ill. Leaving the work of training, educating and reforming these ‘internal threats’ to other professionals (e.g., social workers, non-profit organizations), municipal recreationists used a number of market-based logics in an attempt to position recreation as something desirable, freely chosen, and self-directed. However, as previously discussed, this consumer-based, individualist approach privileged middle-class, white men and boys. Therefore just as other areas of the welfare state have been criticized for doing “little in the way of maximizing the equality and minimizing poverty, insecurity, and ill health” (Rose, 1999, p. 141), it is my argument that public recreation should be added to list of welfare state programs that gave white, primarily male, middle class citizens the ability to “further their own interests by making repeated demands for funding to extend their own [recreation] empires” (Rose, 1999, p. 141). In other words, it was this recreational bureaucracy that created the conditions for the exclusionary recreation system we have today.

In the next section, I will demonstrate how these conditions contributed to the emergence of ‘big box’ recreation facilities (i.e., large, pay-per-use facilities often located on the peripheries of towns or cities). In doing so, I will also begin to challenge the legitimacy of how we know and experience public recreation in contemporary society, so that we might begin to think about, and practice, recreation differently.

SECTION 4:

INTERROGATING THE PRESENT SO THAT WE MIGHT REIMAGINE THE FUTURE

Chapter 10: Health as an Individual Responsibility: Recreation as a Form of Neoliberalism

\$1,356 + GST. This is the price for a family recreation pass at public facilities in Edmonton, Alberta.¹³ That is, if you can afford to purchase your recreation services a year in advance. A monthly pass, for those who do not have this much disposal income, is 156 dollars. Multiply that by the 12 months of the year and the annual cost for a family living on a monthly budget is 1,872 dollars. That's an increase of 516 dollars over the same 12-month period for the family living month to month. It, therefore, appears that even our public recreation facilities support a system in which 'the rich get richer.'

An aphorism born from the 19th century poetry of Percey Bysshe Shelley, the phrase 'the rich get richer and the poor get poorer' is commonly used to describe the ways capitalism produces economic inequality. And, while this phrase is still extremely relevant today — the owners of capital still accumulate their wealth at the expense of those who labour for them — the effects of capitalism extend well beyond material wealth. Mental, physical, and spiritual suffering are also linked to the oppressive public policies used to sustain our hyper-capitalist economic, political and social systems (McGibbon, 2011; Sell and Williams, 2019). As Paul Kivel (2007) argues:

In the United States, 1 percent of the population controls about 47 percent of the net financial wealth, and the next 19 percent of the population controls another 44 percent. That leaves 80 percent of the population with just 9 percent of the remaining financial wealth...[And] it is this majority...the bottom 80 percent, which produces the social wealth benefiting those at the top. Laboring in factories, fields, classrooms, homes,

¹³ This was the price for an annual pass as advertised on September 24, 2020 (City of Edmonton, 2020). It is also worth noting here that the City of Edmonton does have a Leisure Access Program that is intended to provide individuals living below the low-income cut-off (LICO) access to recreation programs and facilities at a discounted rate. However, critics of these leisure access programs and policies have challenged the conception that they uphold the principle of equitable access. For example, Reid (2004) highlighted how the application process required to 'prove' levels of poverty (i.e., living below the LICO) is both invasive and insensitive. Additionally, a number of authors have highlighted the inadequacy of providing financial subsidies given the other cultural and institutional barriers to participation (e.g., transportation, child care, unfamiliarity with facilities, perceived ability, racism, and other forms of discrimination; Collins & Kay, 2014; Donnelly & Harvey, 2007; Kingsley & Spencer-Cavaliere, 2015; Kingsley, Spencer-Cavaliere, & Tink, 2017).

sweatshops, prisons, hospitals, restaurants and small businesses, the individuals composing this enormous class keep our society functioning and productive. Meanwhile, entire communities remain entrapped in endless cycles of competition, scarcity, violence, and insecurity that those at the top are largely protected from. (p. 130-133)

This passage, although specific to the United States, is also pertinent in Canada. According to the Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer (2020) the top one percent in Canada owns the same share of total wealth as the poorest 80 percent. And while the long-held myth of meritocracy suggests that those benefiting from this upward distribution of wealth do so because of their hard work, tenacity, talents, and intelligence, the reality is with “so much wealth concentrated at the top of the pyramid there are not enough jobs, not enough housing, not enough health care, and not enough resources devoted to education for most people to get ahead” (Kivel, 2007, p. 141). Therefore, in addition to continually reinforcing the notion that those who fail within a capitalist system are simply lazy, undisciplined, and/or unintelligent, this myth of ‘the self-made man’ reinforces the logics of individualization which require people to find personal solutions to what are, in effect, the problems caused by centuries of settler colonialism, capitalism, racism, ableism, and (hetero)patriarchy.

Recognizing that individualization has indeed been a disciplinary practice used by both the colonial state and the welfare state, a number of scholars have suggested the discourses and strategies that support this self-actualizing or self-seeking behaviour increased in late 1970s when new forms of neoliberal governance were introduced (e.g., Barry Osborne, & Rose, 1996; Brodie, 2007; Foucault, 2008). Neoliberalism, as outlined in Chapter One, can be understood as a political rationality that aims to increase profitability, efficiency, accountability, and individualization in all areas of society. Seeking various forms of distance between the state and other social actors, this rationality (which became the dominant political rationality in Canada beginning around the late 1970s) uses the processes of decentralization and privatization to

extend ‘freedom’ to all institutions, corporations, and individuals (Foucault, 2008; Rose, 1999). In cases where decentralization and privatization are not an immediate possibility, the rationalities of audit, accountability, profitability, and consumer demand are used to promote competition (Barry Osborne, & Rose, 1996; Foucault, 2008; Rose, 1999).

It is important to note here, that freedom in the context of neoliberalism does not equate to the absence of the state or a lack of governance. Rather, the concept of freedom (or ‘market freedom’ as is the case here) provides the rationale for the state to be “marketized to its core” (Gane, 2012, p. 627) and for all of its governmental techniques to intervene on society in such a way that the market principles of competition and individualization “play a regulatory role at every moment and every point in society” (Foucault, 2008, p. 145). To demonstrate how the concept of market freedom came to govern all forms of social, political, and economic life, we can look specifically at individual health and sickness. As demonstrated in the previous section, for both the colonial state and the welfare state, health and sickness were essential elements of political, economic and social (in)security. Thus, a certain level of state intervention was deemed necessary. Under neoliberal rule, however, health and sickness are primarily measured in terms of cost (Donzelot, 1991; Foucault, 2008). Therefore, rather than directly intervening in matters of health and sickness, the state leaves these services to be governed (and justified) by the market.

Explaining this new approach to marketization Rose (1999) wrote:

[Contemporary governance] seeks various forms of distance between the political and the expert machines: an apparent devolution of regulatory powers from “above” – planning and compulsion – to “below” – the decisions of consumers. In its ideal form, this imagines a “free market” where the relations between citizens and experts are not organized and regulated through compulsion but through acts of choice. It addresses the pluralization of expertise, not by seeking to adjudicate between rival claims of different groups of experts, but by turning welfare agencies – social service departments, housing departments, health authorities – into “purchasers” who can choose to “buy” services from a range of options available... Transforming activities – operating on a patient, educating a student, providing a social work interview for a client – into cash terms

establishes new relations of power... Not merely in the setting of the budget, but in the very “budgetization” of the activity, the terms of calculation and decision are displaced and new diagrams of force and freedom are assembled. (p. 54-55)

In other words, the result of this new approach to governance was, and still is, both an increase in consumer-based privatized services and the proliferation of techniques such as measurement, audit, and cost-reduction for institutions that cannot be privatized.

In a recreation context, the introduction of neoliberal governance has indeed resulted in our contemporary public facilities being marketized to their core. Beginning around the 1980s, all levels of government began to reduce recreation expenditures by cutting budgets and reducing the size of the public recreation bureaucracy (Andrew, Harvey, Dawson, 1994; Cureton & Frisby, 2011; Harvey, 1988; Smale & Reid, 2002). Interestingly, however, these cuts to our public bureaucracy did not slow the construction of multi-million dollar recreation facilities. Instead, we saw, and continue to see, major investments in leisure centres that are managed and evaluated according to the principles of consumer demand, profitability, and accountability. In 1985 for example, the City of Toronto Parks and Recreation Department published a *Strategic Marketing Report*, which read, “...planning would benefit from the integration of a strong marketing component...Planners could learn a great deal about marketing goods and services from retailers who understand their clientele’s needs and characteristics” (City of Toronto, 1985, p. 7). Suggesting that the Recreation and Parks Department should operate in the same way as businesses, these statements not only centre the ‘client’, they also arrange the elements of recreation programming according to the model of the market place. A more explicit example of how recreation departments continue to align themselves with the market-based logics of private business can be found in public-private partnerships (P3s). Defined by the City of Calgary (2020), as a contractual agreement between a public authority and a private entity for the

provision of infrastructure or services” (p. 2), this approach to facility development permits “a private sector participant to assume the responsibility for financing part or all of the project” (p. 2), allows “the City to transfer risks that it would normally assume, based on the private sector participant’s ability to better manage those risks” (p. 2), and ensures the partnership “extends beyond the initial capital construction of the project” (p. 2).

Recognizing that there is still a lot of debate around the benefits of public-private partnerships when it comes to recreation facilities (for example, in 2007 Public Interest Alberta argued against using a P3 model to build a recreation complex in Edmonton suggesting that they “ultimately end up costing the tax-payer more, provide poor-quality service...[and cost cities] millions of dollars to rescue projects”; Public Interest Alberta, 2007, n.p.), this controversial approach to facility development continues to be proposed by municipalities across the country. Reinforcing the neoliberal notion that private businesses and corporate funders can, and should, become the sponsors and benefactors of public services, this approach to ‘public’ recreation provision not only provides the economic justification for these capital investments, it also prioritizes the individual choices of autonomous, consumer-like citizens (Foucault, 2008; Rose, 1999). Understood this way, individuals are much more than simply clients or consumers of public recreation programs. Now constituted as self-actualizing enterprises, each individual is required to make adequate provision of their own human capital (Brodie, 2007; Foucault, 2008; Rose, 1999). Described by Gordon (1991) as the “business of living” (p. 44), this new approach to governance requires that individuals adopt a calculative attitude in order to minimize risk and maximize individual (and therefore municipal, provincial, and national) health, wealth, and security (Foucault, 2008). The link between individual health and national wealth and security was clearly articulated in *A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing*:

According to an analysis by the Conference Board of Canada (October 2014), small changes in physical activity and sedentary living can have substantial benefits. By getting 10% of Canadians with suboptimal levels of physical activity to be more active and less sedentary, the incidence of chronic conditions would be substantially reduced. With Canadians living healthier, more productive lives, GDP could increase by a cumulative \$7.5 billion between 2015 and 2040. In addition, health care spending on hypertension, heart disease, diabetes and cancer would potentially be reduced by \$2.6 billion within this same timeframe (ISRC & CPRA, 2015, p. 21).¹⁴

Ignoring all of the social, moral or spiritual reasons for participating in recreation, this statement only has meaning in relation to sickness and cost. Individuals choosing to be physically inactive are not only increasing their risk of chronic conditions, they are contributing to a 2.6 billion dollar health care bill. Therefore, despite defining recreation as “the experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative, and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing,” *A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing* reifies the neoliberal notion of individual-as-enterprise. Participation in physical recreation is not only part of the ‘business of living,’ it is one of many ways we are supposed to make adequate provision of our own human capital in order to contribute to increases in the nation’s GDP and decreases in its health care costs.

Despite what could be described as the recreation field’s acceptance that recreation programs are simply part of the “business of living” (Gordon, 1991, p. 44), a number of scholars have questioned the marketization of municipal recreation programs and services (e.g., Cureton & Frisby, 2011; Dawson, 2010; Mair, Reid, & Arai, 2010; Smale & Reid, 2002; Taylor & Frisby, 2010; Whitson, 2011). Blaming neoliberal ideology for the current pay-per-use model, these scholars not only discussed the negative impacts of a consumer-based recreation system, they suggested that the profession’s ‘business-like’ practices should be of concern because they

¹⁴ All Provincial and Territorial Ministers, excluding Quebec, endorsed *A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015*. In 2008, however, the Direction de la santé publique de Quebec issued a similar diagnosis on the physical condition of Quebecers, which stated “46% of the population aged 15 and older does not attain the recommended level of physical activity” (Thibault, 2008, p. 68).

are in direct opposition to the field's historic mandate of 'equal opportunity' for access. For example, in their account of leisure policy in the early 2000s, Smale and Reid (2002) wrote, "even the more socially oriented governments have either privatized or drastically cut back public services, including recreation...much of the pressure for change can be attributed to the adoption of a neoliberal (sometimes called a neo-conservative) ideology..." (p. 179). Similarly, Cureton & Frisby (2011) stated, "the implications of the rise of a neo-liberal ideology in municipal recreation are significant for municipal recreation staff because prioritizing entrepreneurship-like values is in opposition to the field's historical social liberal roots" (p. 9).

The suggestion that municipal recreation needs to reconsider the current 'business-like' practices because they are in opposition to the field's social liberal roots has not been limited to recreation and leisure scholars. A number of recreation practitioners have also suggested that the recreation profession needs to return to its historical roots of 'public good.' For example, in *Canada's 2011 National Recreation Summit Proceedings Report* (Mahaffey, 2011), it was suggested that public recreation's existing "business model in which if you pay you play...runs the risk of actually increasing disparities in health and other quality of life measures" (p. 25). Critical of how much "energy has been devoted to operating facilities that serve the upper middle class," those attending the *2011 National Recreation Summit* stressed the "need to get back to our roots and ensure equitable access" (Mahaffey, 2011, p. 25). The *2015 Framework for Recreation in Canada: Pathways to Wellbeing* (ISRC & CPRA, 2015) further emphasized this desire to return to a golden age when the recreation profession served entire communities, not just "the portion of the population who could afford to pay" (p 18). Calling for a sectoral return to recreation's roots as a public good, the *Framework* included the following paragraph in the section titled *Values and Principles of Operation*:

Through much of the 20th century, public recreation was regarded as a “public good.” The emphasis was on accessibility for all, outreach to disadvantaged groups and a belief in the universal benefits to the whole community, not just to users. In the 1990s, recreation departments and organizations came under increasing pressures for cost recovery and revenue generation, including increases in user fees. The community development and outreach functions that were historically part of the mandate of public recreation were often quietly marginalized, as the field shifted its focus to meet the demand from that portion of the population who could pay. Leaders in recreation have continued to stress the need for equitable recreational experiences for all, with a call for the renewed importance of public recreation’s historic mandate of addressing the inclusion of vulnerable populations (p. 18).

A central assumption underlying these calls for the recreation profession to return to ‘its historical roots’ is that municipal recreation services, until late ‘80s and ‘90s, were available to *all* members of society. And although I applaud the desire to make recreation access far more equitable, as I demonstrated in the previous section, this often-repeated narrative of a more inclusive era in recreation’s past is a revisionist and romantic account. As a biopolitical technique that was both produced by, and reinforced, the logics of Western exceptionalism, settler colonialism, capitalism, and (hetero)patriarchy, ‘public’ recreation sites have always been sites where racism, ableism, heterosexism, and class privilege were reified. As such, there is reason to be critical of traditional histories that glorify the field’s social liberal roots without paying attention to the ways Canada’s public recreation system has and continues to sustain white supremacy.

It is not a coincidence that *A Framework for Recreation in Canada* (2015) constitutes women and girls, Indigenous peoples, racialized people, disabled people, gay people, trans people, old people, and people living in poverty (along with the multiple intersections of these identities) as marginalized others in need of inclusion. As sites intended to (re)secure the health, wealth, and security of the Canadian population, ‘public’ recreation sites have always been part of the complex combination of economic, political, and social struggles that rendered white

supremacy an active process in the formation of the Canadian state. It is therefore my argument that while neoliberalism has indeed contributed to an increase in individualized, privatized recreational opportunities, Canada's 'public' recreation systems were excluding large numbers of people long before the 1980s. As sites that were originally intended to improve the health and industriousness of precarious Canadians, our earliest public recreation facilities sought to instill the subjectivities needed to maintain a white, Christian, (hetero)patriarchal, capitalist nation. Operating primarily as a form of social medicine, the parks and playgrounds of the late 19th and early 20th centuries were originally intended to facilitate the production of a 'biologically fit' (read white, Christian, able-bodies, and (hetero)patriarchal) and 'economically productive' (read docile, healthy, and industrious) lower class. This objective changed very little throughout the 1930s. While biological purity was no longer an explicit goal of the colonial state, the notion of a superior white race was simply replaced with the notion of the normal family. Therefore, instead of continuing to operate for the benefit of the superior white race, biopolitical management and normalization techniques began to facilitate the propagation of the *normal* (read nuclear, white, heterosexual, Christian) family.

In a recreation context, the transition from protecting the white, Christian, heterosexual race to protecting the white, Christian, heterosexual family still targeted precarious Canadians. Throughout most of the 1930s and into the early 1940s, depression-era recreation programs were part of a larger social liberal agenda that sought to maintain the principle of 'productive' labour by "contain[ing] the dangers posed by the worst-off and reinforce[ing] the security and individual freedoms of the better-off" (Rose, 1999, p. 135). Using this social liberal ideology, programs such as ProRec or the *Youth Training Act* (1939) were deemed an effective way to minimize the social, political, and economic consequences of capitalism, without having to

significantly alter the classed, gendered, or racialized hierarchy established by the colonial state. However, after the Second World War, the consequences of capitalism were to be dealt with by social workers outside the ‘public’ recreation system. Therefore, rather than continuing to govern the unemployed, the socially deviant, or the physically ill, public recreationists sought to “enhance the development of free and creative human beings” (Manning, 1967, p. 18) by “provid[ing] or sponsor[ing] whatever leisure activities, facilities, or services its clients express[ed]” (Beres, 1981, p. 128). In doing so, they not only further secured the classed, gendered, and racialized hierarchy of the colonial state, they also reconfigured ‘public’ recreation so that now it centred white, middle to upper class, heterosexual, able-bodied men, and to a lesser degree, women.

Returning now to the question that is at the heart of this research, we can see how, and why, public recreation came to serve such a small slice of human variation. As part of a much larger network of biopolitical management, public recreation has been shaped by, and served, the white supremacist logics of Western exceptionalism, settler colonialism, capitalism, racism, ableism, and (hetero)patriarchy. Therefore, while recreation scholars and practitioners are right to be critical of how neoliberalism has contributed to our exclusionary recreation practices, this retrospective gaze stops 150 years too early. As a biopolitical technique originally intended to protect and enhance the lives of those accepted as part of the national community (i.e., incontestable Canadian, precarious Canadians), *Canada’s Recreation Industrial Complex* began long before Eisenhower popularized the term in the early 1960s.

The term recreation industrial complex is important to unpack here. As I’ve demonstrated throughout this dissertation, Canada’s recreation system has been, and continues to be, a site where economic interests overlap with scientific knowledges, where government legislation

reinforces particular cultural hierarchies, and where public and private objectives interlock. And while the profit motive may not be as explicit in recreation as it is in other industries (e.g., the military, the prison system), the political and economic interests must not be ignored. Just like other industrial complexes, the recreation industrial complex has been, and continues to be one of many biopolitical techniques that “allows government to make war, expand punishment, and proliferate market economies” (Smith, 2007, p. 9). Therefore, while it could be argued that public recreation facilities currently offer little in terms of private profit-making, the ways in which they have facilitated, and continue to facilitate, an institutional space committed to centering the health, wealth, and security of those who own and control the majority of our country’s resources (i.e., incontestable Canadians) means that public recreation can, and should, be read as a bureaucratic structure that perpetuates the inequitable practices of capitalism, while simultaneously (re)securing the racist, ableist, and (hetero)sexist objectives of the colonial state.

To overlook the historical presence of logics such as Western exceptionalism, British imperialism, settler colonialism, capitalism, racism, ableism, and (hetero)patriarchy in Canada’s public recreation, as many contemporary recreation professionals tend to do, not only ignores the historical conditions that gave rise to what I argue can be called the *recreation industrial complex* (see Figure 2 for a visual representation of some of the legislation, policies, and discourses that have shaped Canada’s recreation industrial complex); it also (re)secures the systems of knowledge and power that constitute everyone except white, middle to upper class heterosexual, cisgender, able-bodied, boys and (younger) men as an excludable type in need of inclusion (ISRC & CPRA, 2015).

If we are ever going to dismantle the systems that have sustained, and continue to sustain, a public recreation system that centres the health, wealth, and security of those who own and

control capital, both scholars and professionals must put aside the nostalgic tendencies that position earlier forms of public recreation as sites of “equal opportunity” (Smale & Reid, 2002, p. 179) and acknowledge how public recreation was both produced by, and reproduced, the white supremacist logics of Western exceptionalism, British imperialism, settler colonialism, capitalism, racism, ableism, and (hetero)patriarchy. It is only once we have acknowledged the political, economic, and social acts of white supremacy that have created the conditions for a public recreation system that still centres and exalts economically useful, heterosexual, able-bodied people of European descent that we can begin to ask questions about how recreation and leisure could, in fact, be otherwise.

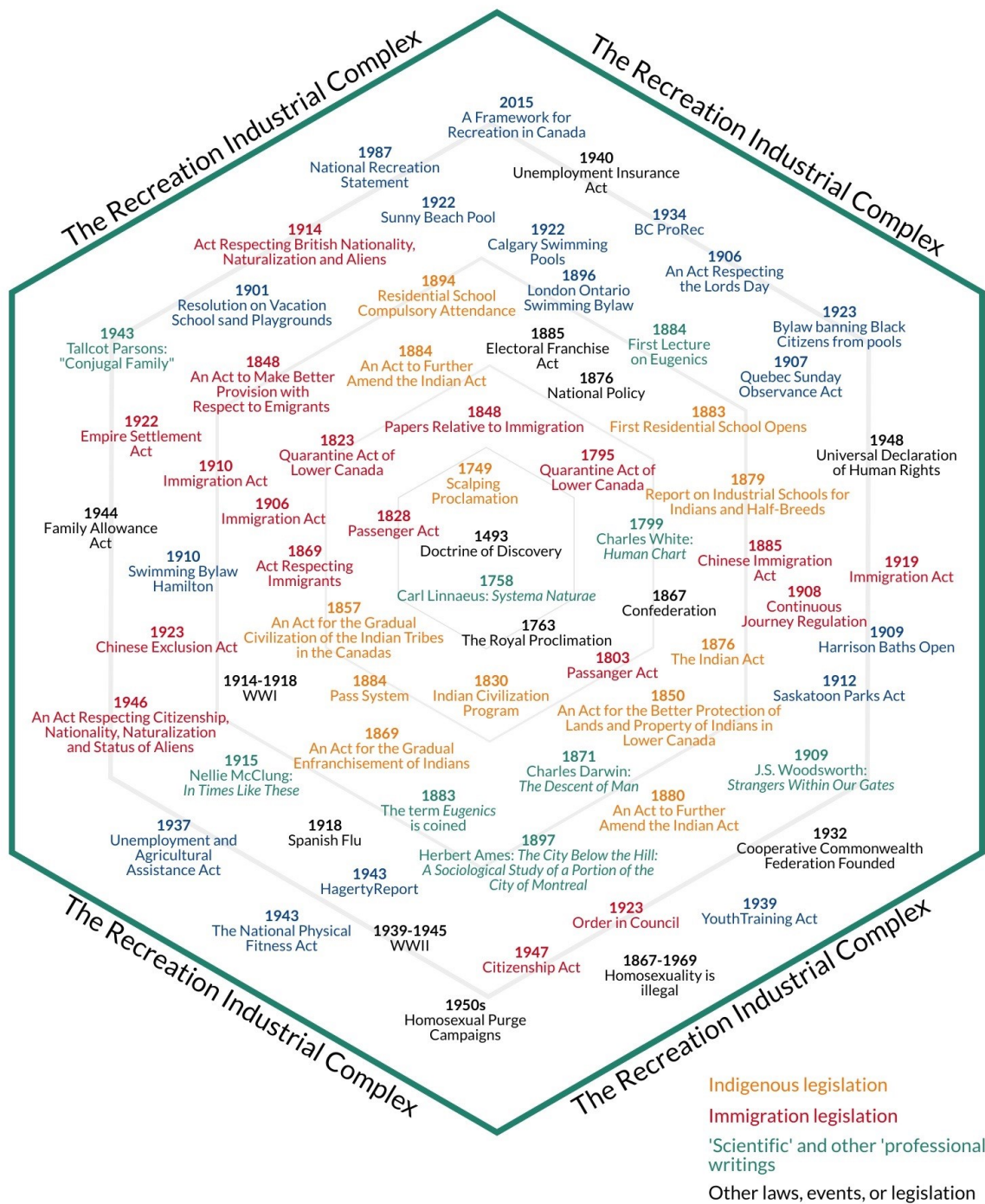


Figure 2. The Recreation Industrial Complex: Some Conditions of Possibility

Chapter 11: Beyond the Recreation Industrial Complex: A New Politics for Health

As highlighted in the previous chapter, contemporary recreation literature has an abundance of calls to return to a golden age when recreation was considered a ‘public good.’ Whether authors of this literature are calling for “outreach to vulnerable people, families, and communities” (ISRC & CPRA, 2015, p. 7) or for a return to the “social liberal values [that] have historically driven municipal recreation” (Cureton & Frisby, 2011, p. 5), the underlying message is that we need to return to a time when recreation was an activity for ALL Canadians. What gets lost in this revisionist account, however, is that recreation has historically been part of a broader nation-making project that sought to “Keep Canada White” (Thobani, 2007, p. 97). As a result, the activities and facilities that have come to define Canada’s contemporary recreation facilities are not only intricately linked to the white supremacist logics of Western exceptionalism, settler colonialism, ableism, racism, capitalism, and (hetero)patriarchy, they are conditioned by them.

In a recreation context, white supremacy not only reinforced (and continues to reinforce) a number of racialized exclusions and discriminations, it also reified (and continues to reify) a comprehensive system of knowledges and power relations that gives priority to men over women, straightness over gayness, cis-gender over transgender, abled bodies over disabled bodies, skinny bodies over fat bodies, the economy over humanity and the environment, and Christianity over all other faiths. Therefore, while neoliberalism is indeed entrenching itself all around us, it is only one of many subsystems being produced by, and reproducing, this dominant form of Western European thought. Recreation and health professionals claiming to “enhance individual and community wellbeing” (ISRC & CPRA, 2015, p. 4) must therefore do more than simply rail against this political ideology. In order for a new, socially just politics of health to be realized we must adopt a critical historical ontology and take into account the ways the various

components of white supremacy intersect in our health promoting discourses and practices (see Figure 3 for a visual representation of some of the intersecting components of white supremacy), while simultaneously recognizing that these harmful discourses and practices are not fully determining. New ways of thinking about and practicing recreation (and other health promoting practices) are indeed possible if we declare health a matter of social justice and commit to fundamentally transforming the foundational structures and knowledges upon which the recreational industrial complex has been built.

I will use the rest of this section to outline three strategies that might act as starting points for a new, socially just politics of health: one that not only takes into account the ways the various components of white supremacy intersect in our health promoting discourses and practices; but also suggests that leisure, in its truest sense, can offer a radical vision for a healthier future.

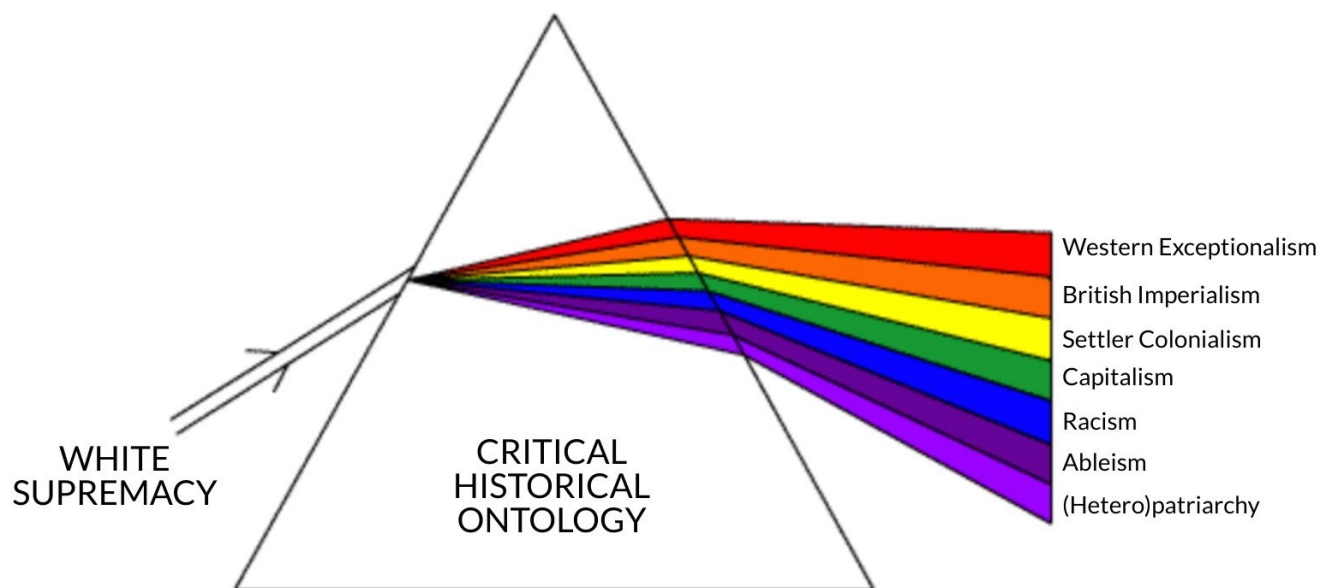


Figure 3. The Component Parts of White Supremacy

Resistance Strategy #1 – Do the Work of Learning/Unlearning

It is not enough for recreation and health professionals to continue to “ensure the provision of supportive physical and social environments” (ISRC & CPRA, 2015 p. 5) or “develop and implement strategies [of inclusion]” (ISRC & CPRA, 2015, p. 22). As McGibbon (2012) has acknowledged, inserting the language of inequity without interrogating the systems that have created these inequities “enables policymakers, researchers, educators, and research funding bodies to play the [social determinants of health] game without a consistent commitment to progressive social change” (p. 20). A new politics of health, therefore, requires recreation and health professionals to recognize that a more equitable future does not lie in a quest for inclusion into our existing systems. Rather, a new more equitable politics of health must aim to fundamentally transform the white supremacist logics and structures upon which these political, economic, and social systems have been, and continue to be, built.

For centuries racialized people, Indigenous peoples, disabled people, gay people, trans people, and people living in poverty have been extensively researched and comprehensively pathologized. Using a series of experiments, tests, and studies, those considered to be “authoritative agents of knowledge” (Sholock, 2012, p. 8) have not only come to know those constituted on the margins, they have set out to cure them, fix them, and eradicate their abnormalities through programs, policies, and interventions. Recognizing, however, that the criteria for who can rightly *know* and *govern* those situated on the margins is historically rooted in the logics of white supremacy, it is essential that we begin to problematize the other side of this pathologizing equation. It is only once we reverse this gaze and interrogate the ways Western exceptionalism, settler colonialism, capitalism, ableism, and (hetero)patriarchy have collectively contributed to a ‘racism against the abnormal’ (Foucault, 1997; McWhorter, 2009)

that we will be able to reconceptualize our health promotion practices in ways that actually reduce existing forms of physical, mental, and spiritual suffering.

A new more equitable politics of health, therefore, requires recreation and health professionals to recognize that the goal of social justice work is not a finished report but an ongoing process of unlearning. Among other things, white supremacy has created the conditions for a public recreation system that naturalizes, centres, and exalts white, middle to upper class, heterosexual, able-bodied men. In order to advance the contemporary call to “increase inclusion and access to recreation for populations that face constraints to participation” (p. 5), recreation and health professionals must, therefore, contend with the injurious legacies of white supremacy by engaging in battles against the exploitation, exclusion, discrimination, marginalization, and violence inherent in this Western, European system of knowledge/power. It is only once we have acknowledged that public recreation (and health promotion more broadly) is part of a larger biopolitical project that has created deep divides in access to resources and (quality of) life chances that we will be able to carefully strategize about how best to improve the health, wealth, and security of those directly impacted by racism, classism, ableism, and (hetero)sexism.

Resistance Strategy #2 – Politicize and Choose Leisure

In Western society, we unchoose leisure in hundreds of ways. Whether it is through the glorification of hyper-productivity, a focus on energy expenditure over joy, competition over creativity, or the exploitive labour practices that leave the majority of the population too tired and/or too broke to engage in meaningful leisure experiences, capitalist hegemony forces us to both consciously and unconsciously unchoose leisure. Despite this ongoing act of unchoosing, however, leisure remains an important time for rest, resistance, and reconnection. A health politics that intends to improve the quality of life of those directly impacted by racism, classism,

ableism, and (hetero)sexism must, therefore, recognize that leisure is not only directly connected to one's quality of life, but that promoting and enabling leisure cannot be separated from a political commitment to social justice.

Leisure (and therefore recreation) is political. How, where, when, and why we rest, move, or reconnect with our bodies, minds, and souls is largely determined by the structural conditions that have been produced by settler colonialism, capitalism, racism, ableism, and (hetero)sexism. Finding common cause with political agendas that seek to meaningfully address the harmful and exploitive practices that are (re)produced by these interconnected systems of white supremacy is, therefore, essential to a health politics that actually allows for “freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative, and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing” (ISRC & CPRA, 2015, p. 4). It is only when recreation, and other health promotion professionals, recognize that leisure is a social justice issue more than it is an individual or behavioural phenomenon, and begin to find common cause with some of the most important political agendas of our time (e.g., Truth and Reconciliation, Black Lives Matter, prison abolition, wealth redistribution) that a health politics that centers rest, resistance, and reconnection will be realized.

Resistance Strategy #3 – Position Universities as Locations for Critique and Resistance

Universities have played no small role in the development and maintenance of the white supremacist systems and structures that created, and continue to create, deep divides in access to resources and (quality of) life chances. Largely focused on training practitioners capable of developing, implementing, and evaluating programs, health promotion programs (including recreation, leisure, and sport) remain primarily task-focused and largely uncritical in nature. Providing little in regard to what McGibbon (2012) has termed the “political economy of health

inequities” (p. 20), the majority of health promotion programs teach about the social causes of health inequity (i.e., the social determinants of health) with little mention of how these inequities have been, and continue to be, directly shaped by a political and economic ethos of white supremacy (e.g., Western exceptionalism, settler colonialism, capitalism, ableism, (hetero)patriarchy).

Recognizing that universities do indeed remain important locations for generating critique and resistance, academics that claim to be committed to the principles of equity, diversity, and social justice must not only take account of the ways the various components of white supremacy have shaped, and continue to shape, their own research programs, they must also bring into their classrooms the political, theoretical, and ethical frameworks that could take their students beyond “a relatively superficial treatment of health inequity concerns” (McGibbon, 2012, p. 20). In other words, rather than continuing to answer questions such as, “What action could we take?” or “What is to be done?” academic programs in the areas of public and clinical health, recreation, sport, and kinesiology could be redesigned so that one of the primary objectives is to teach students how to uncover what is inherently problematic, difficult, and dangerous in the discourses, practices, and policies that govern our everyday behaviors (Foucault, 2003b). The ultimate goal of this restructuring would be to ensure that individuals working in areas of health, recreation, sport, and leisure do so with the understanding that,

The real political task in a society such as ours is to criticize the workings of institutions that appear to be both neutral and independent; to criticise and attack them in such a manner that political violence that has always exercised itself through them will be unmasked, so that one can fight against them. If we want right away to define the profile and the formula of our future society without criticizing all the forms of political power that are exerted in our society, there is a risk that they reconstitute themselves... (Chomsky & Foucault, 2006, p. 41)

Concluding Thoughts

Moving beyond the singular identity analyses that tend to dominate the recreation and health literature (e.g., Arellano, Friis, & Stuart, 2019; Flanagan, 2010; Wilkinson, Harvey & Tabbane, 2019), this genealogical analysis not only traces the many ways public recreation facilities have been, and continue to be, sites of raced, classed, gendered, (dis)abled, and sexualized normalization; it also provides an example of how “genealogy-based politics” (McWhorter, 2009, p. 382) can be used to expose the ways health promotion discourses, practices, and policies are part of a broader biopolitical project that has created deep divides in access to resources and (quality of) life chances. Written at the intersection of hope and resistance, this theoretical re-reading of Canada’s public recreation system is not intended to provide a complete historical picture nor is it intended to be wholly determining. Rather, each section should be read as a piece of a larger mosaic that has been intentionally crafted in an attempt to encourage recreation, and other health professionals, (myself included) to be brave enough to acknowledge the harms implicit in our ‘health promoting’ practices, and open enough to explore new and creative approaches to old problems.

As the historian Robin Kelley (2002) wrote in *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination*, “social movements do not simply produce statistics and narratives of oppression; rather, the best ones do what great poetry always does: transport us to another place, compel us to re-live horrors and, more importantly, enable us to imagine a new society” (p. 9). It is, therefore, my hope that this genealogy encourages you to commit to an undoing. An undoing within the systems and institutions that continue to reinforce white supremacist ways of thinking and acting, as well as an undoing within yourself. It is only when we are able to actively subvert the normalized ways of knowing and experiencing both the world and ourselves that a radical

vision for a healthier future can be imagined and realized.

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