"<u>More People Are Dying</u>": An Ethnographic Analysis of the Effects of Neighbourhood Revitalization on the Lives of Criminally Involved Men

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation interrogates how residents of a Canadian 'ghetto'—Toronto's Regent Park neighbourhood—navigate the fears and dangers of residing in one of Canada's most disadvantaged areas during a period of mass neighbourhood change. Based on 156 interviews and over 10 months of ethnographic field work conducted over 4 summers, this project engages with criminological and sociological concepts to grasp the complex ways neighbourhood redevelopment affects those living in the midst of urban renewal, particularly in regards to criminal processes and structures. It explores how male residents have changed their navigation of social relations, space, and presentations of self since the onset of neighbourhood redevelopment, to better suit newer neighbourhood dynamics during this period of instability. First, contradicting common notions that view major criminal players as a purely negative phenomenon; my findings demonstrate that the presence of major criminal players in an impoverished neighbourhood can benefit communities (i.e., by controlling violence). The displacement of these actors due to neighbourhood redevelopment robs the neighbourhood of means of informal social control, leaving many residents feeling increasingly fearful about the supposed changes in predictability and nature of violence. Second, the displacement of many of the neighbourhoods' major criminal players has allowed for a new racialized gang to form, creating competition over status and resources between established groups and emerging ones, yet perhaps surprisingly, not leading to intra-gang violence. Here, the shared identity as Regent Park residents has suppressed intra-gang violence, with the groups drawing moral boundaries between each other, instead of drawing weapons. Finally, my results show that while neighbourhood gangs have usually been located in a set space, the proliferation of social media has expanded the consequences of gang-involvement, affiliation, and neighbourhood 'beefs,'

providing new insights into the nature of street dynamics and the street code. Overall, this dissertation demonstrates that the destabilization of the neighbourhood's physical and social fabric has also *destabilized* as opposed to *eroded* its criminal element—as was originally hoped with the revitalization— and this destabilization is considered to be far more dangerous by my participants during the neighbourhood's transitory phase. Accordingly, this dissertation offers caution about the optimism currently surrounding neighbourhood redevelopment initiatives, particularly regarding the alleviation of neighbourhood crime and gangs.

PREFACE

This thesis is an original work by Marta-Marika Urbanik. The research project, of which this thesis is a part, received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project Name "Revitalizing the 'hood': The Changing Nature of Crime in Regent Park," No. PRO00052729, 05/03/2015.

Some of the research conducted for this thesis was conducted as part of a research project with Dr. Sara K Thompson (Ryerson University), with Dr. Sandra M. Bucerius being the lead collaborator at the University of Alberta. The data comprising chapter 3 was conducted as part of this project. Data collection in chapter 4 and 5, and data analysis for 4 chapter, was my original work, as well as the literature review in chapter 2. Chapter 3 of this thesis has been published as Urbanik, Marta-Marika, Sara K. Thompson, and Sandra M. Bucerius. 2016. "'Before There Was Danger But There Was Rules. And Safety In Those Rules.'" *British Journal of Criminology* 57 (2): 422-440. I was responsible for the data collection and analysis as well as the manuscript composition, with Drs. Thompson and Bucerius contributing to concept formation and manuscript composition. Chapter 5 of this thesis was co-authored with Dr. Kevin D. Haggerty (University of Alberta). I was responsible for the data collection, with Dr. Haggerty assisting with concept formation and manuscript composition.

DEDICATIONS

This thesis is dedicated to my late mother, Grażyna Urbanik, whose endless love and sacrifice will never be forgotten.

It is also dedicated to the hundreds of Regent Park residents who so warmly accepted me into their community, shared their wisdom and stories with me, and were a source of continuous laughter and inspiration during fieldwork.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

"Homicide in Regent Park a half hour ago" read the text message I received on the night of January 30th, 2017. News about a shooting or homicide in Regent Park would make its way to me every few months, and sometimes, multiple times in one week. This time, like all the others, I knew someone had been shot and killed, but did not immediately know who the victim was. Not knowing was the most traumatic, and led to desperate phone calls to my participants, hoping that they would answer, followed by immediate panic if they did not.[1] I called one of my primary participants—Jermaine, to see if everyone I knew was safe. He had not yet heard about the shooting, and when I told him what the media shared (man in his 20's, shot dead in front of one of the townhouses on Sumach and Gerrard St.), he paused briefly, sighed, and said, "yea…that's one of our niggaz for sure." The buildings near Sumach and Gerrard St. are where Jermaine and my other participants spend most of their time, so he began naming off which of his "boys" could have been killed; in a tone so relaxed that he might have been reciting his grocery list. It chilled me how many times we had already has this conversation in a few short years, how habitual this was for him, and how 'normal' this was slowly becoming for me.

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[1] I am well aware of the irony of this statement, since the safety of those I know still means that someone's son, brother, father, friend, and/or neighbour has died and that a different group of individuals is left with the immense traumas of loss. While it may be human nature to feel strongest for those we know, any life lost to homicide is tragic. However, in a context where a homicide in Regent Park usually means I did know the victim—as I have, in the last 3 homicides—I tried to find a small glimmer of hope that maybe the victim was not a Regent Parker at all. While this would not diminish the trauma and darkness associated with the homicide, in a neighbourhood that has so frequently bourn the loss of a life taken far too soon, sometimes the most unlikely scenario is the only one that provides some temporary solace.

In a neighbourhood where funerals are considered more common than weddings (Davis 2009), gun violence is a lived reality. Despite becoming normalized for many neighbourhood residents, shootings in Regent Park continue to garner widespread media attention, further contributing to its stigmatization. Instances of crime and violence in the neighbourhood are rarely portrayed as events in themselves, and are instead depicted alongside Regent Park's reputation as a place for "prostitutes, drug dealers, and other criminals" (Blackwell 2002). Thus, a homicide in the area is often covered as a 'homicide in Regent Park,' while most homicides in other areas of the city do not carry the weight or reputation of an entire neighbourhood behind them. Media accounts, politicians, and even housing workers have all implicitly or explicitly accused Regent Park's concentrated poverty for breeding crime and violence in the area (August 2014a). Its widespread territorial stigmatization sparked pressures for poverty deconcentration efforts in the neighbourhood, and is currently fueling praises of Regent Park's subsequent and ongoing revitalization.

The idea that poverty breeds crime, violence, and various other social ills is not new, and informs academic scholarship, political discourse, and fears of the broader populous. *Spatially concentrated* poverty—as first coined by Wilson (1987)—in particular, has ignited the greatest concerns, with pervasive moral panics conveying urban 'ghettos' as anarchic spaces governed by gangs and drug lords (Henderson 1995). These fears are exacerbated for social housing projects, considered to be the epicentre —and most obvious example—of concentrated poverty 'breeding' welfare dependency, moral and familial decay, sexual promiscuity, lawlessness and crime (MacDonald 1997). As a result of growing moral panics about drugs, crime, and gun violence in

North America's most disadvantaged urban areas, social housing developments have become the target of various initiatives aimed at deconcentrating poverty, with the support of the broader public (Goetz 1996).

One of the most common policy interventions aimed at curbing concentrated poverty is neighbourhood redevelopment. Neighbourhood redevelopment involves the (partial or complete) demolition of lower income and social housing neighborhoods and the dispersal/displacement of poor residents in an effort to transform these areas into socially and economically improved or mixed spaces (August 2008, 2014b; Bridge et al. 2014; Galster and Zobel 1998; Walks and Maaranen 2008). These endeavours have been referred to as: neighbourhood/urban "renewal," 'regeneration,' 'gentrification,' 'restructuring,' and 'revitalization.' While these initiatives vary,[2] these terms are often used interchangeably (Levine 2004; Pomeroy 2006). In Canada, the preferred label is 'neighbourhood revitalization'—which is the country's principal approach to deconcentrating poverty and 'fixing' distressed neighbourhoods. Packaged and sold to the broader public as the best avenue through which to address neighbourhood decay (Cars 1991; Keating and Smith 1996),the strongest driver for neighbourhood redevelopment is the belief that

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[2]There is limited scholarly agreement on the definitions of these terms (Temelova 2009). Neighbourhood revitalization has been described as an "investment to remodel or rebuild a portion of the urban environment to accommodate more profitable activities and expand opportunities for consumption, particularly retail and housing for middle- and upper-income households" (Beauregard and Holcomb 1981:1). Gentrification most commonly refers to urban (class and racial) succession in impoverished and distressed neighbourhoods, and usuallyinvolves "invasion/succession displacement" of lower-income citizens (Wyly and Hammel 1999: 717, see also Levine 2004). Some have defined urban regeneration more broadly as economic and physical renewal of distressed areas via development of and investment in property (McGreal et al. 2004), or as a policy initiative directed at improving the area's economic activity, its environmental quality, and making neighbourhoods more socially inclusive (Couch et al. 2003). An emphasis on social improvement of disadvantaged neighbourhoods has been generally referred to as urban renewal (Cowman 2005), with neighbourhood restructuring being defined as the rehabilitation of the residential environment and housing stock located within impoverished inner-city neighbourhoods to draw middle class consumers into the area (Wyly and Hammel 1999:13).

neighbourhood restructuring will deconcentrate poverty, thereby reducing local crime and violence (Goetz 2011; Katz 1993; Venkatesh 2002).

Despite the propensity with which neighbourhood redevelopment projects are being undertaken across Canada, and the Western world, empirical research on the impact of these projects on the social interactional aspects of neighbourhood life are scant. In particular, almost nothing is known about how neighbourhood redevelopment *affects crime and criminal networks* within affected areas. Thus, although it is hoped that the deconcentration of poverty via neighbourhood restructuring will eliminate 'contagious social ills' in these urban space like crime and violence (Wilson 1987), it is unclear whether and to what extent redevelopment initiatives produce these outcomes.

The research presented in this dissertation demonstrates several unintended and unpalatable consequences of neighbourhood redevelopment in Regent Park—one of Canada's most disadvantaged neighbourhoods. The primary objective of this dissertation is to illustrate the effects of mass neighbourhood change on criminally-involved men that I met in the area. Neighbourhood redevelopment is a long, and tedious process of displacement, demolition, rebuilding, relocation and/or repopulation, taking years and sometimes decades to complete. As such, redeveloping neighbourhoods are left within prolonged periods of change and instability. My doctoral research illuminates this period of change, and:

1. Provides the first sustained empirical investigation of the 'criminal' element (gangs, drug dealing, violence) in a Canadian 'ghetto';

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2. Provides the only ethnographic analysis of criminally involved men during the largest urban restructuring program in Canadian history;

3. Traces how the revitalization has altered hierarchies, physical location of activities, types of violence, perceptions of safety, and adherence to the street code of criminally-involved men within Regent Park; and ;

4. Points to changes in the physical orientation of criminal gangs and the street code in an environment of changing information technology via social media.

In short, this dissertation is about how gang-involved men navigate their safety while living in a ghetto during neighbourhood redevelopment.

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This chapter introduces the subject matter and presents a broad outline of the debates, arguments, research questions, methods, and discussions of the three self-contained journal article-style papers. Despite exploring different questions and producing unique findings, each article—which comprises chapters 3, 4, and 5—stems from the themes of concentrated poverty and neighbourhood redevelopment, as outlined in this first chapter. Albeit based on distinct topics (erosion of the street code, emergence of new racialized gangs, and movement of gang set-space to social media), all three articles illuminate the importance of the context in which they are occurring: a Canadian ghetto undergoing neighbourhood redevelopment. Thus, I draw upon the academic scholarship on ghettos to anchor my project, as it offers a vital theoretical

framework for understanding and theorizing the topics that my three substantive chapters explore.

Research Objectives and Guiding Questions

Essentially, my dissertation provides an *ethnographic analysis of how neighbourhood change, specifically neighbourhood redevelopment, affects both the established and upcoming criminal structures within that neighbourhood.* It reveals: i) changes to existing criminal networks in the area as a result of neighbourhood change; ii) the emergence of new criminal groups as a result of neighbourhood change and their relationships with existing criminal groups; iii) how neighbourhood change has affected violence in the area because of changing criminal group dynamics and; ix) the street code's importation unto the virtual world, and the real life consequences of this convergence. It highlights the complexity and fluidity of neighbourhood revitalization in affecting neighbourhood dynamics, explores the various ways these dynamics shape local levels and types of crime and violence, and cautions against overly optimistic views about neighbourhood redevelopment.

The study of gangs is typically reserved for criminologists. However, given the breadth of this project, my research may be of interest to a diversity of audiences, particularly those interested in neighbourhood poverty, urban studies, crime in disadvantaged areas, as well as policing, criminal justice, and communications. It also contributes to policy developments pertaining to neighbourhood revitalization, and may be particularly insightful for urban planners, law enforcement agencies, government, community organizations, and NGOs.

What are Ghettos?

To understand the context in which my dissertation takes place, I first outline ongoing debates about 'ghettos' in the American tradition, and discuss some of the most prominent developments for our understanding of ghettos. I then articulate the state of ghetto studies in the Canadian context, problematizing the limited scope of existing research and its consequences for our existing knowledge of some of Canada's poorest areas. Given the lively debate of the American literature on the intersection of ghettos, criminality, and victimization, and Canadian scholars' general inattention to the topic, I ground my dissertation research upon the established American tradition.

Despite seemingly universal acceptance about the problems that 'ghettos' pose, sociologists have spent the past two decades debating what 'ghettos' *are,* and how to define them. Scholarly interest in the ghetto first emerged in the early 1900s with explorations of Jewish ghettos in American cities (i.e., Hapgood 1902; Wirth 1927), and rose to prominence during the Nazi occupation of Europe (i.e., Apenszlak, et al. 1943; Goldstein 1947; Valtin 1941). With the rapid decline of American inner cities post-WWII, academics became attuned to the despair in black ghettos (i.e., Clark 1965; Moynihan 1965). Entering the academic mainstream in the 1960's, the study of American ghettos ignited ongoing debates about the formation, persistence, qualities, and territorial boundaries of the ghetto. For example, Wilson (1996) argues that ghettos are spaces of concentrated poverty created by economic restructuring. Yet, Massey and Denton (1993) contend that ghettos are areas exclusively "inhabited by members of one group within which virtually all members of that group live" (p.4). While Pattillo (2003) pushes to expand the territorial boundaries of the ghetto to "the *entirety* of the spatially segregated and contiguous black community" (p.1048), Wacquant (2011) suggests scholars deploy a more

restrictive framework and argues for four constituent elements: stigma, constraint, spatial confinement, and institutional parallelism (p. 7). Thus, scholars trying to determine whether specific areas qualify as ghettos have no uniform guidelines to employ in ghetto classification, leading to the over and under classification of disadvantaged areas as ghettos. And yet, irrespective of ongoing debates about how best to classify ghettos, scholars agree that ghettos are a staple of many American inner cities.

Public housing projects have come to represent the epitome of ghetto life. Not all social housing projects are ghettos, and not all ghettos include social housing, and yet 'ghetto' and 'social housing' has become virtually synonymous in the public imagination. News media, popular culture, and academics equate public housing with run-down projects in dilapidated neighbourhoods, plagued by social disorder, chaos, crime, and violence (Bickford & Massey 1991; Holzman 1996; Sampson 1990; Wilson 1996). The *physical design* of these projects has itself intensified their racial/ethnic segregation, poverty, and social isolation (McNulty and Holloway 2000: 707), further perpetuating moral panics associated with crime and gangs in these vicinities (Crump 2002; Haworth and Manzi 1999). Cities like Chicago, Detroit, New Orleans, Atlanta, California, Brooklyn, Los Angeles, and New York are notorious for having some of the highest crime rates and most derelict projects and ghettos in the United States (Hirsch 2009; Jargowsky 1997; Long 2007; McNulty and Holloway 2000; Wilson 2012).

In addition to garnering widespread media attention for being hubs for violent gangs, areas like Harlem, Brooklyn, Compton, and 8 mile in Detroit's inner city, have been celebrated by popular media for their 'ghetto' and 'gangster' reputations. Movies like *Boyz N the Hood*

(1991), Menace II Society (1993)*, 8 mile* (2002)*, Get Rich or Die Tryin'* (2005)*,*
Notorious(2009), and *Straight Outta Compton*(2015), and popular rap artists like ASAP Rocky,
Tupac Shakur, Immortal Technique, Biggie Smalls, Fat Joe, Jay-Z, Nas, and P-Diddy,
illuminated the realities of American project and ghetto life for the broader public. Rising to
fame for their gritty portrayals of urban violence, gang warfare, drug problems, and deplorable
conditions of American inner cities, apart from commodifying racialized poverty, these mass
media productions have also provided a counter-narrative to the typecasts of their
neighbourhoods. Though they also present (and oftentimes, glorify) the 'social ills' that afflict
their areas like crime and gangs, these portrayals also depict the realisms of American ghetto life
that are often hidden from public view, most notably, limited life chances, over-policing, and the
cycle of poverty.

Ghettos in Canada

In Canada, areas like Toronto's *Regent Park* neighbourhood, Vancouver's *Downtown*
Eastside, Winnipeg's *North End*, Edmonton's *Boyle Street,* Regina's *North Central*, and
Aboriginal reserve communities like *Hobbema/Maskwasis* have garnered national reputations for
being impoverished, racialized, crime and drug filled 'ghettos'. The Canadian news media is
principally responsible for their stigmatization, propelling the 'external representations' of these
areas (Purdy 2005) according to the *consequences* of their social and economic dilapidation—
crime, gangs, and victimization—without explaining the *sources* of their disadvantage. Unlike
our American counterparts, Canadian popular media has not (yet) commoditized racialized

poverty (we have no comparable big picture movies or famous rap groups[3] portraying their

'inside story'), delimiting their 'internal representations' and counter narratives to those

intimately familiar with these neighbourhoods. As a result, broader public knowledge of some of

Canada's poorest areas is skewed towards the manifestations of 'social ills' within these spaces,

often neglecting the conditions that our most vulnerable populations struggle with.

In comparison to American scholarship on dilapidated neighbourhoods, Canadian

research is scant. A number of neighbourhood-based studies have focused on health and drug use

(Boyd, Johnson, and Moffat 2008; Wood et al. 2004), suicide (Carstens 2000), the

commodification of poverty (Burnett 2014), and financial exclusion (Buckland et al. 2011).

There is also an assemblage of research on Regent Park itself, exploring territorial stigmatization

(August 2014a; Dunn 2012; Purdy 2003, 2005), income polarization (Hulchanski 2012), urban

redevelopment (James 2010, 2015), and experiences of social mix, displacement, and the

revitalization's effects on social networks (Dunn et al. 2014; Rowe and Dunn 2015; Thompson et

al. 2013). Despite notable efforts to expand our understanding of life in some of Canada's most

disadvantaged neighbourhoods, there is a dearth of criminological inquiry into these areas (with

the exception of Comack et al. 2013). In particular, we currently have no ethnographic accounts

of 'on the ground' realities in these impoverished and racialized areas. Thus, while Canadian

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[3] It is important to note that Canada has had, and continues to have, an active underground rap and hip-hop scene that describes the hardships of 'ghetto' life, and criticizes broader structural factors for the challenges that ethnic and racial minorities are faced with. Despite gaining popularity within certain neighbourhoods, or even across disadvantaged neighbourhoods, these groups/songs did not previously garner national or international attention for their music, with their popularity being delegated to smaller subsections of the Canadian population. More recently however, the experiences of Canada's dispossessed groups via rap and hip-hop have began to garner national and international attention—like a number of rappers from Regent Park—a phenomenon that I would attribute to the rise of social media (see Chapter 4).

media depictions of distressed spaces in Canadian cities have emphasized their criminal component, existing academic explorations have focused predominantly on their despair, with little acknowledgment of the relationships between neighbourhood distress and crime. As a result, Canadian criminology still lacks a holistic understanding of how the conditions of these areas influence crime, violence, and victimization.

When it comes to studies exploring the existence of high-poverty areas in Canada more broadly, the limited research that we have is subject to serious limitations. Much of our existing knowledge on ghettos and residential segregation in Canada is drawn from quantitative studies, which, apart from Kazemipur and Halli (2000)[4], have uniformly proclaimed that *ghettos do not exist in Canadian cities* (Balakrishnan et al. 2005; Bauder and Sharpe 2002; Murdie and Ghosh 2010; Qudeer and Kumar 2006; Walks and Bourne 2006). Despite documenting residential racial segregation—a critical feature of the ghetto according to Wilson (1987), Massey and Denton (1993), Pattillo (1998), and Wacquant—in some of Canada's most disadvantaged neighbourhoods, Canadian scholarship has not seriously considered the negative implications of residential segregation. In fact, existing Canadian literature has emphasized the extent of *voluntary* or *strategic* forms of segregation (ethnic enclaves, ethnic communities, ethnoburbs, etc.)[5] in Canadian cities, concluding that even those living in the most impoverished residentially segregated areas make the decision to live there (Murdie and Ghosh 2009: 307).

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[4] They posit that recent immigrants from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean, as well as Aboriginals, are increasingly likely to live in "ghetto" neighbourhoods, using "ghetto" and "high poverty neighbourhood" interchangeably, adopting Wilson's class-based definition where "ghettos" are characterized as areas with poverty rates of 40% or greater.

[5]There are important distinctions between the ghettos cited in the American literature and the ethnic enclaves/communitiescovered in Canadian scholarship. According to Walks and Bourne, *ethnic enclaves* (neighborhoods with a high concentration of one ethnicity) are areas in which residence is *voluntary*, and ethnic communitiesare the desired residential endpoint (where a single racial or ethnic group is dominant and prosperous). This distinction is important in terms

These studies employ different methodologies and definitions of concentrated poverty, isolation, ethnic concentration, and ghettos, making it difficult to draw broad conclusions about the (in)existence of ghettos in Canada. Further, reliance on indexes of dissimilarity of exposure as evidence that Canadian urban areas are not ghettoized does not allow scholars to distinguish between ghettos and ethnic enclaves (Walks and Bourne 2006). Thus, despite acknowledging, "many of these new immigrant groups live in declining inner-suburban neighbourhoods that are increasingly characterised by concentrated poverty, disinvestment and less service provision than other parts of the city" (Murdie and Ghosh 2010: 308), existing Canadian literature has not thoroughly or critically examined the coercive, involuntary, and often-inescapable grasp of racial segregation and isolation within our most disadvantaged neighbourhoods.[6]Irrespective of whether or not scholars adopt the 'ghetto' terminology to describe such areas (this terminology may exacerbate stigmatization—see Hancock and Mooney 2013), without in-depth qualitative research on dilapidated Canadian neighbourhoods, we cannot conclude that quantitative differences between Canadian neighbourhoods and American 'ghettos' results in qualitatively different neighbourhood experiences for residents of these areas. As a result, knowledge about 'ghettos' in Canada remains shallow, despite increasing racialized poverty, and concentration of

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of the residual neighbourhood hypothesis: neighbouring provides a critical form of socializing for individuals without access to broader networks (i.e., low-income families, ethnic minorities, etc.) (Logan and Spitze, 1994). Networks depend on a number of factors including strength of ties, and social capital (see Burt 1992; Granovetter, 1973/1982; Lin & Bian, 1991; Putnam, 2000, 2001), which are affected by neighbourhood conditions and demographics (see Rankin and Quane 2000; Sampson et al. 1999; Wilson 1987,1996).

[6] These studies briefly acknowledge that decisions pertaining to neighbourhood residence may be limited by the exclusion of certain groups from certain areas, and claim that this is particularly true for 'visible minorities' in Canada. However, the emphasis on voluntary and strategic forms of segregation reduces the importance of factors that constrain residential options, particularly since financial restraints rather than residential preferences produce high ethnic concentration in certain areas (i.e., Ihlanfeldt and Scafidi 2002).

visible minorities[7] and Aboriginals in impoverished urban areas (Balakrishnan et al. 2005; Bauder and Sharpe 2002; Murdie and Ghosh 2010; Qudeer and Kumar 2006; Walks and Bourne 2006).

Not only has the criminological oversight or outright dismissal of the existence of ghettos in Canada limited our understanding of the ghetto experience in Canada, but it has also been particularly problematic for understanding one of society's greatest concerns surrounding the existence of ghettos- the preponderance of crime and gang violence. The criminological neglect of Canada's most disadvantaged neighbourhoods leaves many empirical questions as to their everyday lived realities, and perhaps most importantly, about their relationships to, and experiences of crime, victimization, and gang activity unanswered. The barriers of gaining access to neighbourhood-crime statistics in Canada further exacerbate the lack of insight. Further, the lack of ethnographic criminological academic insight into social housing projects in Canada has left scholars with few analytical tools to examine the relationship between social housing, crime, victimization, gangs, policing, and structural and social disadvantage, as it plays out 'on the ground' in Canadian inner cities.

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[7]'Visible minority' refers to "persons who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour and who do not report being Aboriginal" (Statistics Canada 2015).

The Importance of Neighbourhoods for Crime and Gangs

The importance of neighbourhoods in contributing to crime and gangs cannot be overlooked. Neighbourhood characteristics have a variety of consequences on risk of offending and violent victimization (Morenoff et al. 2001; Parker and Pruitt 2000; Sampson et al. 1997), revealing thatenvironment contributes to deviance. Neighbourhoods have a *contextual* effect on crime and violence, in addition to the *compositional* effects of resident characteristics (Elliot et al. 2006; Simcha-Fagan and Schwartz 1986). Neighbourhoods play such a critical role in gang emergence and distribution that neighbourhood context and neighbourhood social processes are the foundation of numerous etiological explanations of crime and gangs (i.e., social disorganization theory, social control theory, conflict theory, strain theory, subculture theory).

Locality is particularly important for our understanding of gangs, with street gangs long being considered to be a "signature attribute of ghetto life" (Venkatesh 1997:82). A number of (predominantly American) gang studies provide rich insight to the environments in which these gangs exist, emphasizing the importance of space to gang formation and persistence, again highlighting that the context in which gangs are found is critical to understanding gang phenomena (Tita et al. 2005: 273). Research reveals that gangs are usually located in set spaces, generally occupying a particular neighbourhood (in whole or in part), comprising their territory. Gang members themselves acknowledge the importance of locality in their collective groupings, viewing the gang as an embodiment of the neighbourhood (Garot 2007; Grannis 2009). As such, gang identity and gang behaviours are intimately rooted in the neighbourhoods in which gangs operate, with neighbourhood spaces birthing gangs, but also providing the setting of collective memories, with immense loyalty to the neighbourhood (Decker 1996: 258).

A recurring theme in gang studies is the role that concentrated poverty plays in producing neighbourhood gangs. Yet, this explanation is too simplistic, because vast differences exist in terms of crime and gang presence, even amongst the most impoverished neighbourhoods. The preponderance of crime and gangs, like poverty and other social phenomena, is complicated and influenced by multiple factors (individual, structural, cultural) with neighbourhood organizational structures, informal processes, access to formal institutions, and the presence of different cultures and lifestyles, all affecting gang formation (Elliot et al. 2006). The overall lack of understanding about precisely how neighbourhood context shapes gangs has contributed to the general belief that areas of concentrated poverty are a breeding ground for crime and gangs. As such, efforts aimed at targeting gangs and gang violence, have been directed at efforts of poverty deconcentration, which has taken different forms since WWII.

Concentrated Poverty: Policy Initiatives

Irrespective of whether the word "ghetto" has been accepted by Canadian academics, politicians, police, the media, and residents refer to some of Canada's poorest areas as 'ghettos,' 'inner-cities,' 'disadvantaged neighbourhoods' or 'slums.' But moving away from rhetoric surrounding concentrated poverty, concentrated poverty itself has been a great concern across Canada, the United States, and Europe since the Second World War. Approaches to addressing the 'social ills' of concentrated poverty can be traced to 3 distinct periods:

1) *Interventionist Slum Clearance*

This period involved the development of 'slum' districts before and during WWII, which were believed to be fertile grounds for deviance stemming from the intersection of environmental decay and social isolation (Purdy 2004, 2005). These areas were highly

stigmatized as cauldrons of criminality and despair and their residents were over-pathologized (Jacobs 1961), with many city officials arguing that that slum demolition was necessary for the wellbeing of growing cities.

2) *Building of Social Housing + Gradual Decay*

The slum clearance movement led to the construction of high-density social housing projects for the city's poor, and was initially believed to benefit low-income residents (Purdy 2004). Built with great optimism, this attempt at urban renewal was founded upon dominant white, middle-class family and community values, with alternative ways of life considered deviant and requiring intervention. Despite claims about the success of the newest endeavour to house the city's poor, the modernist planning approach to public housing across Canada and the United States increased poverty concentration and began to draw criticisms. Government policies in the 1950s built the social housing projects in racialized neighbourhoods, already plagued by structural disadvantage (Hirsch 1983). Thus, when broader socioeconomic and structural transformations (i.e., suburbanization, industrialization, segmentation of the labour market, outmigration of industry, the flight of economically and politically powerful constituencies to suburban areas, and the evisceration of public institutions) took hold, social housing residents were particularly vulnerable to their consequences (Anderson 1999; Bourgois 1995; Venkatesh 1997; Wilson 1987). Thus, by the 1960s, "the projects themselves began to resemble the slums they were built to replace" (Hirsch 1998), and were soon portrayed as epicenters of concentrated poverty, violent crime, joblessness and social decay (Goetz 2011: 269).

3) *Neighbourhood Redevelopment/Revitalization*

Given the moral panic associated with deteriorating social housing projects, the current initiative at addressing concentrated poverty is neighbourhood redevelopment. Neighbourhood redevelopment efforts generally involve the partial or complete demolition of lower income and social housing neighborhoods, with the aim of transforming them into socially and economically improved or mixed areas (August 2008b, 2014; Bridge et al. 2014; Walks and Maaranen 2008).This often involves the temporary or permanent *dispersal or displacement* of low-income residents to other areas in the city (Galster and Zobel 1998; Fraser et al. 2002). Various interchangeable terms have been used to refer to such initiatives including neighbourhood 'renewal,' 'regeneration,' 'restructuring,' and 'revitalization,' though these terms have different meanings (Pomeroy 2006). In Canada, the preferred term for these efforts is 'neighbourhood revitalization,' which is now the country's number one initiative to address concentrated poverty and higher levels of crime. Although the focus of neighbourhood redevelopment initiatives has long been sold as an attempt to address overall neighbourhood decay (Cars 1991; Keating and Smith 1996), one of the strongest drivers of neighbourhood redevelopment is the hope that neighborhood restructuring will reduce local crime (Goetz 2011; Katz 1993; Venkatesh 2002).

Each new policy directed at deconcentrating poverty has sparked a resurgence of academic research into these areas (see below). However, despite the fact that the a reduction of neighbourhood criminality, victimization, and gang presence is sold as a primary justification for area reform and for disrupting the lives of residents, the bulk of academic research has ironically *not* considered the intervention's effect on local levels or types of crime and violence.

Social Isolation, Social Disorganization and Social Mix

One component of poverty de-concentration is the 'social mix' model, employed across Canada and Europe (Van Wilsem et al. 2006). A form of population engineering, social mix seeks to transform social housing developments into 'inclusive' socio-economically mixed environments (August 2008; Walks and Maaranen 2008). This approach is rooted in Wilson's (1987) social isolation thesis, which holds that spatial segregation of the poor results in their social isolation from the middle-class, leading to the development of cultural norms that are incompatible with mainstream, pro-social values and society. According to Wilson, middle class residents will provide social and economic resources to disadvantaged areas, enforce standards of 'prosocial' behaviour, and provide 'positive' role models for poor residents (Galster 2007b; Musterd and Andersson 2005; Ostendorf et al. 2001; Wilson 1987). Social mix theory therefore depends on and assumes that relationships will form across classes—which research has widely discredited (see Christensen 2015; Galster et al. 2015; Tach 2009).

This social mix model is based upon the assumption that lower class neighbourhoods lack collective efficacy, with residents having difficulty mobilizing and intervening on behalf of the common good (Sampson et al. 1997). Reminiscent of Shaw and McKay's *Social Disorganization Theory* (1942), which attributes delinquency and crime to neighbourhood social disorganization, this idea also applies to gang emergence, since "nearly all theories of gangs emerge from the assumptions associated with theories of social disorganization" (Jankowski 1991: 22). Concerns about mechanisms of informal social control (or lack thereof)—and therefore crime—are particularly salient for social housing projects, since high-rise, high-density projects hinder residents' ability to foster meaningful relationships with each other, thereby encumbering

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defensible space principles (Newman 1972). Weaker relationships hinder a community's ability to monitor and control the use of public spaces, and, when combined with fear of crime, erode the trust essential for informal crime control (Newman & Franck 1982). Thus, one of the main arguments for social mix is "that the presence of higher income residents—particularly homeowners—will lead to higher levels of accountability to norms and rules through increased informal social control and thus to increased order and safety for all residents" (Joseph 2006: 222).

Research demonstrates that neighbourhoods with a high level of social organization and collective efficacy have lower crime rates (irrespective of their poverty levels), demonstrating that a neighbourhood's social organization can influence crime and neighbourhood gangs (Jankowski 1991: 22). However, scholars have cautioned against drawing conclusions about the non-existent, or 'disorganized' structure of impoverished neighbourhoods. Whyte (1943), Sampson and Groves (1989), and Venkatesh (2000), among others, demonstrate that neighbourhoods that appear to be socially disorganized, may have complex and intricate organizations of their own. For example, Whyte (1943) reveals that the 'socially-disorganized' neighbourhood he studied had a defined web of social organization, featuring social hierarchies, obligations, and a guide for social relations. Further, other research has found that even socially organized neighbourhoods afflicted by crime and gangs (Bursik & Grasmick 1993; Horowitz 1983; Pattillo 1998; Suttles 1968; Whyte 1937), thus questioning the benefits of an alleged increase in social organization and collective efficacy supposedly imported into disadvantaged areas by middle-class residents, and deflating one of the justifications for social mix.

Benefits of Neighbourhood Redevelopment

While there remains a dearth of studies into the impact of social mix in social housing neighbourhoods (Joseph 2006; Kleinhans 2004), existing research has documented advantages and disadvantages of social mix for lower-income residents. Studies have documented that both lower-class and new residents are satisfied with their newly built environments (Dunn et al. 2014; Smith 2013), and that neighbouring relationships can form across income groups, though these relationships are minimal (Kleit 2005; Rosenbaum et al. 1998). In looking particularly at the Moving To Opportunity (MTO) program in the United States, Leventhal and Brooks-Gunn (2003) found that parents and boys who were relocated to less impoverished neighbourhoods experienced less emotional distress, less anxiety and depressive episodes, and less dependency problems than parents and boys who remained in high-poverty areas. Further, Katz et al. (2001) found that voucher-receiving households reported improvements in relation to safety, health among household heads, and less behavioural issues among boys, as compared to a control group. For children, these benefits included a reduced likelihood of injuries, asthma attacks, and victimization by crime. The benefits of relocation to lower-poverty neighbourhoods were particularly salient for those displaced as young children (before age 13), who had increased future college attendance rates and earnings, whereas moving as an adolescent had slightly negative effects on youth (Chetty et al. 2016). Some benefits have also been noted in regards to criminality. Smith (2002) found a reduction in criminality in neighbourhoods transformed into mixed-income housing. In addition, Kling et al. (2005) found that relocation to lower-poverty areas reduced arrest rates for female youth for both property and violent crime, and arrests for violence in males for the short term, though they did increase problem behaviours and property crime arrests for males.

Criticisms of Neighbourhood Redevelopment

Despite being sold as an ideal, socially conscious and respectful method to deconcentrate poverty, neighbourhood redevelopment has increasingly garnered criticisms. Concerns about neighbourhood redevelopment and social mix emerged long before the proliferation of these initiatives across North America, with Holcomb and Beauregard (1981:3) rejecting Lowry's (1960) and Smith's (1971) predictions that the benefits of neighbourhood redevelopment would 'trickle down' and better the lives of lower class residents. More recently, Venkatesh (2008:8) has turned a critical academic gaze to these policies, arguing that the demolition of social housing projects is rooted in beliefs that housing residents' values and behaviours are far removed from mainstream society, and demolition will force their integration. Goetz (2011) too, has highlighted the power relations inherent in these new urban policies. In studying the dismantling of social housing in the United States, he found that the removal of public housing was more strongly correlated with negative connotations associated with concentrated poverty than with the prevalence of concentrated poverty itself; crime was strongly correlated with changes in public housing stock while the extent of concentrated poverty was not. Removal of public housing was also tied to economics; cities where market rents were significantly higher than public housing rents witnessed more demolition. In addition, Goetz emphasizes the importance of race in social housing decisions, arguing "just as the placement and maintenance of public housing was based on considerations of race, so too might its demolition" (p. 275), as he found that removal of social housing was much higher in cities where blacks are disproportionately represented as public housing tenants. The revitalization of Regent Park has also garnered similar criticisms, with Kipfer and Petrunia (2009) arguing that "the redevelopment project of Regent Park is best understood as a three-pronged, profoundly

racialized economic, social, and cultural strategy to recolonize a long-pathologized and segregated, but potentially valuable central city social space in the name of 'diversity' and 'social mixity.'"

Apart from denunciations about the underpinning premises of neighbourhood redevelopment, research has also uncovered a plethora of negative consequences for poor residents affected by revitalization projects. For example, in examining revitalization in San Diego, Karjanen (2016) found that the initiative failed to improve conditions for the working-poor or to address inner-city poverty, contrary to neo-liberal reasoning that the benefits of economic and urban development would trickle down to the working poor (Hackworth 2006; Harvey 2008). Giroux (2014) echoes this point, arguing that social mix models prioritizestate and corporate interests over the needs of the urban poor, with Harvey (2012) finding that poor residents feel that their neighborhood has been 'taken' from them. This is also consistent with Fraser's (2004) work which reveals that, apart from economic displacement, other factors contribute to the displacement and exclusion of certain populations from having a claim to neighbourhood spaces, highlighting the 'politics of space' (Purcell 2001) at play in redeveloping areas. Fraser et al. (2007) also confirm this point, demonstrating that the HOPE VI project in the United States did not serve the needs of lower-income households, in part due to diverging goals and inadequate capacities of the local public housing authority, public stakeholders, and private sector residents. Other studies have also found that the socioeconomic, physical and political benefits that social mix was intended to deliver to lower-incomes residents did not materialize (i.e., Atkinson and Kintrea 1998; Collins et al. 2005; Jupp 1999; Popkin et al. 2004; Salama 1999; Varady et al. 2005), with some scholars questioning the possibility that mixed-income

housing can actually reduce poverty for lower-income families (Brophy and Smith 1997; Kleinhans 2004; Smith 2002; Wilkins 2002).

In addition, research consistently shows that only a small number of displaced residents end up moving back into the redeveloped area (Buro et al. 2002; Marquis & Ghosh 2008; Wilen & Nayak 2006), with the majority usually relocating into other highly impoverished, racially-segregated neighbourhoods (Clampet-Lundquist 2004; Comey 2007; Goetz 2010; Fischer 2003; Oakley & Burchfield 2009). Further, despite relocating out of lower-income neighbourhoods, social housing residents typically maintain connections with their old networks, having limited interactions with middle-class residents in their new areas (Briggs 1997; Fauth et al. 2007). Research has also found that new upper-class residents do not extend their social networks to lower-income residents in meaningful ways that provide lower-class residents with upward social mobility (Arthurson 2012; August 2008; DeFillipis 2013). In fact, Tach (2009) discovered that homeowners "actively resisted the formation of social ties with their neighbours and adopted daily routines that minimized their own and their children's contact with neighbours and neighbourhood space" (p. 291).

As discussed earlier, a critical pillar of diversifying neighbourhoods via social mix is the supposed improvement to informal social controls stemming from the arrival of middle and upper class residents. Yet, a small handful of studies exploring the effects of neighbourhood redevelopment on collective efficacy and informal social controls have produced mixed results. Buron et al., (2002) found that residents had similar perceived levels of social control in their neighbourhoods irrespective of their housing status. Alternatively, Tach (2009) found that

incoming upper-class residents weakened a neighbourhood's informal social control since upper-class residents chose not to intervene on behalf of the common good or call the police upon witnessing criminal activity in their area. Given the variable findings of existing research on neighbourhood redevelopment and social mix, perhaps it is best to take Dunn's (2012) advice that the expectation that intimate relationships will form between housing and middle-class residents is undue, and instead, "the success of a mixed neighbourhood may ultimately be little more than harmonious co-location" (p. 102), which does little to actually improve a neighbourhood's level of informal social control.

Given that the revitalization of Regent Park was the first neighbourhood redevelopment project in Canada, other scholars have also studied its effects on the lives of social housing residents. For example, Dunn (2012) maintains that the introduction of social mix has not affected the material conditions of low-income residents in a meaningful way. In studying community meetings about the redevelopment, August (2014b) found that public-housing tenants were on the receiving end of antagonism during decision-making processes and community meetings. In addition, research by Thompson et al. (2013) documents that the revitalization destabilized social networks, community supports, and increased young people's fears of violent victimization. All of these findings are consistent with what I observed while in the field. In light of the findings particular to Regent Park, and the notable amount of research revealing negative implications of neighbourhood redevelopment elsewhere, it is clear that overwhelmingly hopeful claims about the successes of planned, ongoing, and completed neighbourhood redevelopment initiatives are misplaced, and more research is warranted.

Thus, despite its hopeful branding and well-intended initiatives, existing scholarship—and my own doctoral research—suggests that "public housing redevelopment resembles nothing so much as another round of urban renewal, a means of removing a racially identified subgroup of the poor away from land that has become ripe for investment and a new round of profit-taking" (Goetz 2011: 283). And yet, neighbourhood redevelopment initiatives are being expeditiously undertaken across North America, Europe and Australia, and usually include some form of social mix (Dunn 2012; Galster 2007a). In Toronto alone, five other public housing projects are currently undergoing revitalization with at least one other redevelopment in the planning stages (TCHC 2017*b*). In Canada, neighbourhood redevelopment projects have permeated many provinces and cities including Vancouver's Little Mountain neighbourhood, Ottawa's Beaver Barracks and Somerset Gardens, Edmonton's Boyle street neighbourhood and the proposed revitalization of the Londonderry area, some of which have also received criticism.

While research demonstrates that there are *some* benefits of neighbourhood redevelopment, a growing collection of research suggests that neighbourhood redevelopment initiatives may not be as beneficial for lower-income residents as they are packaged to be, although anti-gentrification movements remain delegated to the margins of the political arena (Hackworth 2006). My doctoral research demonstrates that there are a number of other *unintended* and *undesirable* consequences for *some* social housing residents that can have serious implications for their own safety, as well as the safety of others in the neighbourhood. Nevertheless, despite limited research pertaining to whether the 'design intentions' of neighbourhood redevelopment initiatives such as the one currently underway in Regent Park meet their 'design outcomes,' and the existing research which demonstrates that it does not,

neighbourhood redevelopment continues to remain the primary urban reform policy for

distressed neighbourhoods in North America.

DISSERTATION STRUCTURE & OVERVIEW

My dissertation is organized into six chapters. Following this introduction, I present my

methods (chapter 2), and then three substantive chapters (chapters 3-5). Each of these chapters

(3,4,5) is its own analytical paper, which illuminates another aspect of living in an impoverished

neighbourhood undergoing redevelopment;

a) How the displacement of 'major criminal players' affects informal systems of criminal

governance in the neighbourhood (Chapter 3)[8];

b) How neighborhood restructuring initiatives have changed the nature of the neighborhood's

gang landscape: emergence of a new gang and relationship with existing gang (Chapter 4)[9]; and

c) How the importation of the street code online by criminal actors can have serious and fatal

consequences in the streets (Chapter 5).[10]

In Chapter 3 I argue that the displacement of 'major criminal players' from Regent Park

eroded the long-established codes of conduct they enforced and undermined informal systems of

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[8]This article is published in the *British Journal of Criminology*, and is co-authored by Dr. Sara
K. Thompson and Dr. Sandra M. Bucerius.
[9] This paper is currently in submission to a criminology journal.
[10] This paper is currently in submission to a criminology journal and is co-authored with Dr.
Kevin D. Haggerty.

criminal governance in the neighbourhood. As a consequence, young people were concerned about what they perceived to be a growing preponderance of violence in the context of a competitive rush to fill a power vacuum created by the displacement of neighbourhood 'Old Heads.'

Chapter 4 lays out the changing nature of the neighborhood's gang landscape resulting from neighborhood restructuring. It documents the emergence of a new rival gang within a territory previously dominated by established criminal groups. This did not result in the type of violence that the extant literature might predict, in part because the two groups shared a 'master status' (Hughes 1945) of being Regent Park residents, which served to buffer inter-gang violence. I argue that instead of drawing weapons, the established criminal groups expressed their frustration with the loss of their territorial monopoly to emerging groups by morally distinguishing themselves from the new groups—illuminating how boundary work (Lamont 1992) operates between criminal groups.

In Chapter 5, I argue how the increasing use of social media by those within and outside Regent Park that abide to the code of the street imports the street code online, disembedding it from its originating physical location and then occasionally re-embedding it back into the streets, though with different inflections. This chapter also reveals that although 'ghettos' have always been conceptualized as physically-bounded spaces, with the growing access to and use of social media platforms, 'ghetto' living has begun to go virtual, changing dynamics of the 'urban,'and providing new insights into the nature of the street and the street code.

Since each chapter (3-5) is its own empirical analysis, each of these chapters reiterates details about the fieldsite, the study's methodology, and outlines which data set(s) the analysis emerges from.[11] The concluding chapter amalgamates the research findings and illustrates how they build on one another to reveal the nuances and complexities of neighbourhood dynamics, particularly during a period of neighbourhood redevelopment. Lastly, it highlights the study's broader implications for academic scholarship, and presents policy recommendations and directions for future research.

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[11] Please note that the 3-article approach of this thesis, and small differences in data collection efforts necessitate some repetition within the three substantive chapters.

CHAPTER TWO

FIELDSITE AND METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Urban ethnography has a long history in the United States going back to the 1920's and 30's of the Chicago School. Notable works by William I. Thomas (1909) Robert E. Park (1921), Louis Wirth (1928), Harvey Zorbaugh (1929), and Pauline Young (1932) set a strong foundation for community studies, carrying momentum into the 1940's with William Foote Whyte's (1943) work. Establishing the Chicago school tradition, Park (1928) urged scholars to study the minutia of everyday life, claiming "in these great cities, where all the passions, all the energies of mankind are released, we are in a position to investigate the process of civilization, as it were, under a microscope" (p.890). By studying how social life and 'natural settings' of the urban environment shape human behaviour, the tradition holds that sociological knowledge can be derived from observing ordinary, everyday interactions and organizations of people in set time and space. Chicago School scholars were keen on discovering the dynamics, chaos, and rapid changes in values, attitudes, and behaviours in urban areas (Thomas and Znackieki 1918), and initially hoped that the 'melting pot' of the city would increase assimilation (see, Park 1937; vii). By combining the methodological foundation for ethnographic observation with theory, they began investigating the significance of social structure in the lives of 'Others.'

With the rise of quantitative research methods in the 1960's and 1970's, urban ethnographies of the Chicago school tradition dwindled, though the 1990's saw resurgence in ethnography (Duneir et al. 2014: 3). Some more recent urban ethnographies still adhere to the Chicago School tradition (i.e., Contreras 2012; Desmond 2016; Goffman 2014; Pattillo 1998),

while others ascribe to the symbolic interactionist approach (i.e., Jooyoung 2016, Katz 1988, Stuart 2016b). Nevertheless, recently there has been a marked return to ethnographic exploration of urban problems related to family, neighbourhoods, immigration, urbanization, and specifically, concentrated poverty, crime, and gangs.

Thanks to urban ethnographers like Sanchez-Jankowski (1991), Anderson (1999), and Venkatesh (2002), we have a comparably good understanding of gangs and 'ghettos' in the American context. However, this phenomenon remains largely veiled in Canada. Scholars have studied distressed neighbourhoods or 'ghettos' in Canada, like Africville (i.e., Clairmont and Magill 1999, Nelson 2008), Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (i.e., Boyd et al. 2008; Burnett, 2014; Linden et al. 2013) and Aboriginal reserves (Carstens 2000), yet urban ethnographies in Canada are rare, particularly those that explore criminological issues. Further, although a small number of Canadian researchers have explored the preponderance of gangs locally (i.e., Comack et al. 2013; Grekul and LaBoucane-Benson 2008; Wortley and Tanner 2011), no comparable ethnographic work on gangs in the Canadian context exists, leaving us with very limited understanding of gang presence and gang mechanisms in Canada's poorest areas.

Given the shortage of Canadian works on urban 'ghettos' and gangs, I aligned my work with the more established American tradition of urban ethnography. Hence, following the tradition of William Foote Whyte and Frederic Thrasher, among others, I engaged in traditional urban ethnographic research consisting primarily of "deep hanging out" (Geertz 1998), go-alongs and formal and informal interviews. I adopted a mixed-methods approach (Maxwell 2012) to ethnography (Brewer 2000; Desmond 2016), which provided the best avenue for developing a

deeper understanding of the realities of Regent Park residents. I spent a total of 4 summers (2013-2016)—10 months—in the field, and conducted 156 interviews, though my substantive chapters are informed by particular subsets of this data. I also collected data while away from the field, maintaining contact with my participants via the phone and social media, and monitoring neighbourhood news and developments.

In this chapter, I describe the Regent Park neighbourhood, providing a historical analysis and a description of its ongoing revitalization, and highlighting the neighbourhood's problem with gang violence. I then document the process of building rapport with neighbourhood residents, describe how I eventually established trust with a group of gang-affiliated men, and explicate my approach to interviews, ethnographic observation, data analysis, and coding. Lastly, I discuss my positionality in the field, commenting on my race, gender, and social class.

Research Site

Located just east of Toronto's financially prosperous downtown core (see Figure 1), Regent Park is Canada's oldest and—prior to its ongoing revitalization—was Canada's largest social housing project. Paradoxically, the neighbourhood was built in the 1940s via modernist slum clearance efforts, where the existing slum was expropriated and demolished, consistent with poverty deconcentration initiatives of the time (James 2010: 71). Spanning twenty-eight hectares and several city blocks, the project was erected to address the shortage of low-income housing for an upwardly mobile working class following the Second World War. Pre-

revitalization, Regent Park was home to approximately 7,500-10,000[12] Toronto Community

Housing Corporation (TCHC) residents living in 2,083 rent-geared-to-income social housing

units (City of Toronto 2007). The entire neighbourhood was dedicated to social housing, (TCHC

2016). Originally designed to provide struggling families with transitional housing, Regent Park

has since provided housing to generations of low-income residents and recent immigrants.
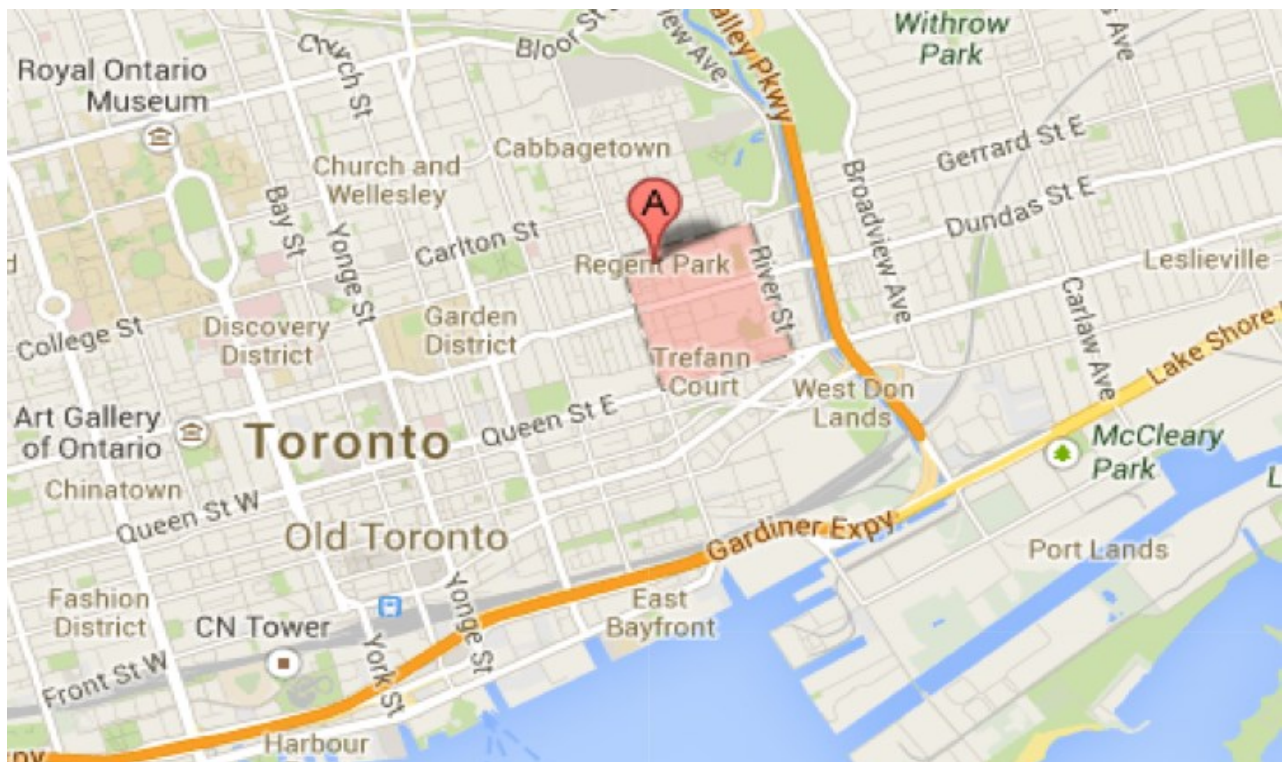
Figure 1: Map of Regent Park.

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[12]This estimation does not include the unaccounted population (homeless, undeclared family and
guests).
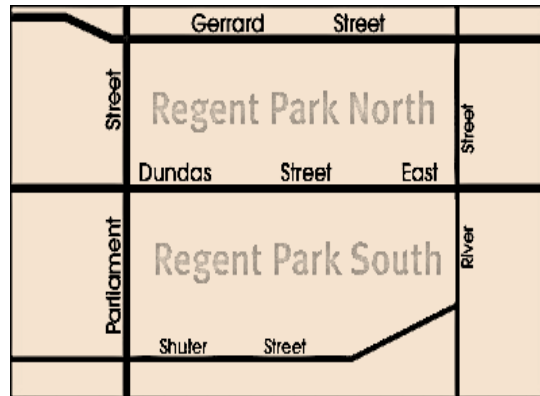
Figure 2: Borders of Regent Park.

As illustrated by Figure 2, the neighbourhood was divided into 'North' and 'South'
Regent by Dundas Street East (a main traffic artery). North Regent featured 4- and 6-storey
walk-up apartment buildings, and rows of townhouses (see Figure 5), while South Regent was
characterized by 15-storey high-rise apartments, shorter 4-storey buildings, and a small
scattering of townhomes (see Figure 6). All the structures were oriented towards interior
courtyards, with no public streets within the mega blocks, significantly limiting vehicular and
pedestrian traffic through the neighbourhood (City of Toronto 2013: 4), consequently closing the
neighbourhood off to outsiders.

Figure 3: Original Regent Park Residents, 1950s.

Figure 4: Children play in Regent Park, 1950s.

Figure 5: Aerial photo of low rise apartment buildings in North Regent, pre-revitalization, amidst the rest of Toronto's downtown core.

Figure 6: Aerial Shot of South Regent high-rise apartment buildings, pre-revitalization.

The newly built Regent Park was initially celebrated as a successful endeavor to house the city's poor, having transformed the distressed area "from slum to housing oasis" (Hilliard 1955). However, limited investment in the neighborhood's physical infrastructure, the consequent deterioration of its housing stock, and the increasing poverty and racialization of its residents quickly branded Regent Park as a failure (James 2015:17). In 1990, the average family income for Regent Park North was $20,645 (more than 50% below the national average), and $26,912 for South Regent, with 68% of residents in North Regent and 60% of residents in South Regent living below the low-income cut off line (TCHC 2007). By 2000, this proportion had increased to 77% of North Regent, and remained at 60% for South Regent (TCHC 2007). Comprising the lowest and second lowest income census tracts in the province of Ontario, Regent Park quickly epitomized an impoverished, highly racialized ghetto (Purdy 2003).

Regent Park's demographics at the onset of its ongoing neighbourhood restructuring in 2006 were just as stark. Almost 68% of households lived below the low-income cut-off, almost 22% of homes required major repairs, and unemployment rates were more than double the rest of the city (Statistics Canada 2007, as calculated and cited in Horak, p.7). Over 1700 youth lived in neighbourhood, 57% of residents were under the age of 24, and 37% of households were single parent (TCHC 2007). In addition, almost 80% of residents identified as "visible minorities," 78% of residents were foreign born, as compared to about 50% and 46% for the rest of the city (Statistics Canada 2007, as cited in Horak, p. 6).

Regent Park's poverty and racialization did not occur in a socio-spatial vacuum but was instead related to broader transformations across Toronto that altered the extent and distribution of poverty in the city. Transitioning from an industrial to a post-industrial economy, the city lost 30% of manufacturing jobs in the 1980's (Courchene 1999). In the 1990's, drastic welfare and

social benefit cuts and a spike in rental rates and housing prices further exacerbated income polarization, pushing poor families into distressed and dilapidated neighbourhoods (Horak 2010: 5; Ibbitson 1997). By the 2000's, concentrated poverty peaked, the number of "higher poverty" neighbourhoods surged, and a growing percentage of families lived in impoverished areas (UWGT 2004, 2011). Concurrently, Toronto experienced a steady racialization of poverty (Balakrishnan and Gyimah 2003; Kazemipur and Halli 2001; Picot and Hou 2003). The consequences of these broader structural changes were particularly salient for social housing projects, which are home to a large and growing proportion of visible minorities and recent immigrants, and have the highest rates of concentrated poverty and racial segregation (UWGT 2011).

Growing poverty and racialization was not Regent Park's only problem. In the 1990s, Regent Park's growing preponderance of drug-related and violent crime subjected the area to aggressive police strategies, including police blitzes, and home raids. Resident complaints of police mistreatment, harassment, and violence followed. In August of 1995, tensions between residents and police climaxed as a violent confrontation broke out between hundreds of Regent Parkers and 45 police cruisers after an officer called a black resident a racial slur during a police pursuit (Toronto Star 2015). The 'race riot' in Regent Park (see Figure 7) was highly publicized and brought the nature of Regent Park's racial segregation, 'criminality', and issues with police to the forefront of media attention, further stigmatizing the neighbourhood in the public's eye.

Brotherton (2015) posits "gangs emerge from the long-term struggles of a community against social suffering" (p.16). Given the hardships facing Regent Park residents, it is perhaps unsurprising that gangs eventually emerged in the neighbourhood. From at least 1988-2003, Regent Park had the highest homicide rates in Toronto (Thompson, 2009), with many of these killings attributed to its gang problem, fueling its stigma as "a haven for single mothers, welfare families and deviants…a magnet for crime and drug problems" (Purdy, 2005: 531). For years, news coverage of Regent Park was dominated by depictions of poor, young black males as violent gangbangers, perpetuating and being victimized by gun violence (Thompson et al., 2013), painting Regent Park's gang problem with a 'black' brush. Concerns about racialized 'criminal' Regent Park youth were exacerbated by the moral panic sparked by the Toronto police and local media about the city's broader "Jamaicanization of crime" (Tator and Henry 2006:142), with a large proportion of the city's gun crimes being attributed to Jamaican males (Mosher and Akins 2016: 343).

The Regent Park Revitalization

Regent Park's chronic racialized poverty, reputation for gangs and gun-crimes, and proximity to Toronto's commercial and tourist hub classified the neighbourhood as Canada's "most notoriously ill- planned community (Meagher and Boston 2003: 5). The extent of its social and physical decay had the housing authority, urban planners, politicians, and police believing that the *space* itself spawned crime and violence, mandating a drastic transformation (Regent Park Collaborative Team 2002). In 2002, a feasibility study calculated that an entire rebuilding of Regent Park would cost about 20% more than completing the necessary repairs to its aged infrastructure (Horak 2010: 7).TCHC decided to adopt an entrepreneurial spirit to address its $751 million repair backlog: selling off housing stocks to fund new developments, renting space to commercial tenants, and transferring properties to the private market (Hackworth and Moriah 2006). Between July and December of 2002, Regent Parkers were consulted on their opinions on

revitalizing the neighbourhood, and it was decided that the project would move forward in cooperation with the *Daniels Corporation*, TCHC's private builder-developer partner (Horak 2010; Meagher and Boston 2003).

Officially coined the 'Regent Park Revitalization,' the $1 billion initiative involves 5 phases of demolishing and rebuilding TCHC units, subsiding the costs by selling off sections of the neighbourhood for private condominiums, townhouses, and new retail spaces and amenities. The project began in 2005 and is slated for completion in 2020, with a projected population of 17,000 residents (including TCHC residents and private buyers) (City of Toronto 2013). It was originally planned that all 2,083 Rent-Geared-To-Income (RGI)[13]units would be replaced within Regent Park. However, to decrease poverty concentration and enhance the neighbourhood's

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[13]RGI units are subsidized units for which the rent costs are geared to income for those individuals who qualify for rent subsidies. RGI is about 30 per cent of your gross income (TCHC 2015*c*).

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market appeal, the plan was altered, to a projected 1800 RGI units and 210 new Affordable

Rental Units[14] built within Regent Park, with the remainder built nearby (Horak 2010:7; TCHC

2004:5; TCHC 2015b).

Figure 10: Newly revitalization section of Regent Park.

The most dramatic change to the neighbourhood is the slated building of 5,400 market

units—mostly condominiums—available for purchase by private homebuyers (TCHC 2015b). A

number of these have already been built, and many social housing residents have been displaced,

leading the 'new' Regent Park to be described as a "loose constellation of predominantly white,

new middle class gentrifiers, condominium dwellers, and edgy hipsters" (Kipfer and Petrunia

2009: 111). Apart from new housing stock, the neighbourhood is now also home to new

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[14]Affordable units are units for which rent is set at or below average market rent. In order to qualify for an affordable unit, an applicant's household annual gross income cannot exceed four times the annual rent of the unit (TCHC 2015*c*).

amenities such as the Daniels Spectrum,[15] the Regent Park Aquatic Centre, the Regent Park

Athletic Grounds, and new retail spaces like a Fresco, Rogers, Tim Hortons, RBC and Shoppers

Drug Mart.

Despite the hope that the Revitalization would reduce local levels of crime and violence,

news media maintain, "gangs, drugs, and guns still rule in Regent Park" (Toronto Sun 2013). A

number of high profile shootings of, and related to, Regent Park's young black men support this

claim. For example, the 2005 shooting death of innocent bystander Jane Creba (15 yrs.), or the

2012 shooting deaths of two of Regent Park's 'Sic Thugz' gang members by another associate in

a packed food court of North America's busiest mall—the Eaton's Centre (see Figure 8). Less

than a year later, widely broadcast video footage of the shooting death of one of the Eaton's

Centre victim's brothers brought Regent Park's gang problem back into the media spotlight. In

addition, multiple shooting deaths of young neighbourhood men, respectively Sealand White (15

yrs.) and Jermaine Derby (19 yrs.) in 2010, Tyson Bailey (15 yrs.) in 2013, and Yusuf Ali (18

yrs.) in 2017, amongst others, further devastated an already destabilized neighbourhood,

contributing to fear amongst residents about the growing unpredictability of lethal violence. My

thesis interrogates these shifts in perceptions of neighbourhood violence.

Building Rapport in an Isolated Neighbourhood

My dissertation developed during my work as a research assistant in the summer of 2013

for a separate project[16] examining how Regent Park residents were experiencing the

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[15] The Daniels Spectrum is a 60,000-square foot community "cultural hub" and is home to seven cultural organizations. Advertised as "rooted in Regent Park, open to the world," the Daniels Spectrum hosts events, performances and rents of exhibition space (Artscape 2011).
[16] Immense gratitude to Dr. Sandra M. Bucerius (University of Alberta) and Dr. Sara K. Thompson (Ryerson University) for allowing me to be part of their project and for providing me

revitalization, with a particular focus on the extent to which 'social mix' was being realized (see Thompson, Bucerius, and Luguya 2013). As the primary interviewer, my role was to recruit and interview neighbourhood youth (16-30 yrs.) about the revitalization's effects on social networks, sense of community, community events, and services and amenities in the neighbourhood. I was also inquiring about resident displacement and the presence of new private condo buyers. Prior to starting this project, I had never been to Regent Park before, but like many other Torontonians, I was aware of its notorious reputation and had heard many warnings about the dangers of venturing into the neighbourhood. Former CEO of TCHC, Derek Ballantyne, described Regent Park as "an island, there is an impenetrable line that you don't cross unless you live there" (cited in Gillespie 2002), an association echoed by many non-residents. Given Regent Park's reputation, I initially had some fears about conducting research in the neighbourhood alone, especially as a female, with popular concerns about robberies, assaults, and gun violence echoing in my mind. Yet as a Master's student (at the time), I was determined to gain research experience, and opted to try participant recruitment via fieldwork—essentially walking around the neighbourhood telling residents about the study and inviting them to participate. To facilitate recruitment, I also posted notices around the neighbourhood that described the study and provided my contact information for residents who were interested in sharing their experiences.

As a visitor to a neighbourhood that generally distrusts 'outsiders'—particularly those that could not be vouched for by trusted residents—my primary objective was to establish trust with local tenants. I understood that data collection would only be possible if I managed to

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with the necessary training and guidance in conducting empirical research. In addition, significant thanks are due for their permission to use some of the data collected as part of their research project for this dissertation.

establish trusting relationships from the onset of my fieldwork. I built rapport with the first few residents that I came into contact with by being honest and forthcoming about my identity and my purpose for being in the neighbourhood. I offered residents study information and consent forms, which explained the purpose of the study and confirmed my identity as a student researcher and provided contact information for the research ethics office overseeing the project. I recognized that some residents might be uncomfortable with my line of questioning, so I briefed each resident before starting the interview that I would not be asking about specific people and asked them not to identify other residents by name. I also emphasized that participants could share as much or as little information with me as they wanted, that they could skip any questions that they did not want to answer, and that they could stop the interview at any time and still receive the $20.00 honorarium. Following my formal questions, I invited participants to share any additional comments or concerns they had about the revitalization (including issues that were not covered by the research schedule), attentively listening to their experiences. While I initially believed that official paperwork (study information form and consent form) would make residents more comfortable with interviewing with me, I was surprised to find that my credibility as a researcher and residents' willingness to participate in the study were more influenced by other residents vouching for me to their friends, family, and neighbours, many of whom were recruited into the study.

Since I recruited participants from all areas of Regent Park, at varying times (between 10am and 9pm), seven days a week, I came across a diversity of neighbourhood residents.

Participants often walked me[17] to their recruitees, which increased my visibility in the neighbourhood as I was often seen with a neighbourhood "insider," and I quickly developed a reputation as "the girl who does the interviews" which enhanced snowball sampling (Warren 2001:8). Travelling with participants also exposed me to corners of the neighbourhood I may not have been able to easily or safely penetrate alone (e.g., hang out spots behind schools, behind ice rinks, in parking lots), further expediting recruitment. My typical interview locations consisted of front porches, backyards, park benches, basketball courts, and to a lesser extent, people's homes. This hyper visibility and frequent casual interactions were the catalyst for establishing rapport with many neighbourhood residents and community stakeholders, including community social workers, program leaders, and neighbourhood 'mother hens.' In addition to generally 'being around' the neighbourhood, I also attended community meetings (e.g., about the revitalization, meetings with police about violence) and community events (e.g., Sunday in the Park, The Regent Park Grand Opening, and weekly 'Show Love' gatherings). Attending community events served as a springboard for initiating informal conversations with other residents and community stakeholders, with many of these individuals eventually participating in the study.

Soon after initiating fieldwork, I realized that my initial concerns about walking through Regent Park alone were largely unfounded. I was pleasantly surprised to find that residents were extremely open to sharing their experiences with me. In fact, not a single resident that was eligible for the study declined participation, and apart from a few initial comments that I might be an undercover police officer, I did not have a single negative interaction in the neighbourhood during the entire course of my research, and was never threatened, assaulted, or asked to leave

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[17] I made a point early on to navigate the neighbourhood on foot instead of by car, which would increase my visibility and exposure to the neighbourhood.

the area. From the onset, my experiences in Regent Park revealed the vast disconnect between *external* representations of the neighbourhood via media depictions, and *internal* representations stemming from on the ground realities (Purdy 2005; Wacquant 2007: 67).

After conducting just a few interviews, it became clear that irrespective of who I was speaking with, residents were less interested in the presence of private condo buyers in their neighbourhood and were instead preoccupied by fears about increasing neighbourhood violence. Many participants expressed how mass resident displacement during the razing and rebuilding of Regent Park also removed some of the neighborhood's major criminal players and consequently, destroyed criminal networks. According to them, this had—perhaps paradoxically—profound and negative implications on neighborhood life and community safety. Although the vast majority of residents I came into contact with were law abiding citizens, I increasingly came into contact with individuals who were either involved in, or in charge of, Regent Park's informal economy.

Gang Members? Rappers? Major Criminal Players?

Despite interacting with and interviewing a large number of Regent Park residents, I spent most of my time in the field with a group of 20 men, between the ages of 16-47, with most being around 25 years old. All but two of these men were racialized 'minorities,' predominantly of Caribbean[18] or Somali background. Most sold drugs to customers from both inside and outside the neighborhood, including marijuana, crystal meth, crack, powder cocaine, Oxytocin, and Percocet. While a few had managed to avoid being charged with a criminal offence, others had

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[18] The umbrella term of 'Caribbean' was used to refer to members of Regent Park's existing criminal groups.

lengthy records pertaining to drug trafficking, weapons charges, organized crime, robbery, and even murder.

A number of these men self-identified as current and/or former members of neighbourhood 'gangs,' most notably of two neighbourhood 'gangs' that I will refer to as *Original Strikers* and *The Young Soldiers*. Defining and identifying gangs and gang behaviours remains a critical point of contention within academia and beyond. Criminologists, policy markers, and law enforcement agencies have mobilized different definitions in determining what groups should be classified as gangs, with disagreements pertaining to suitable gang characteristics such as age restrictions, structure and hierarchy, size, turf, solidarity, conflict, descriptors, criminal behaviours and/or delinquency, non-random association, self-identification, and durability (for reviews see: Decker and Kempf-Leonard 1991; Esbensen et al. 2001; Prowse 2012; and Spergel 1995). Apart from experts providing significantly different guidelines as to how gangs and gang behaviour (i.e., gang homicide) should be characterized, most experts find flaws with nearly every proposed definition (Esbensen et al. 2001: 106). Gang scholars caution against adopting too wide or too narrow of a definition of gang-membership, with the vast discrepancy in definitions demonstrating that "One person's gang may be another's peer group, street-comer group, crowd, clique, hanging group, club or simply youth group" (Johnstone 1981:355). Thus, scholars (such as myself) looking for a concrete way to determine whether particular groups classify as gangs are often frustrated with the plethora of available definitions, with some definitions unquestionably designating groups as street gangs, while others deny them gang status.

One of the most controversial elements of gang classification is the extent to which groups need to have formal and/or enduring organizational structure to be classified as street gangs. Increasingly, scholars have documented the existence of unstructured, and fluid gangs across North America (see, Katz and Jackson-Jacobs, 2004: 92; Prowse 2012). Prowse (2012)refers to these groups as 'new age' gangs, which she defines as "street gangs that have evolved on the North American scene over the past 15 years and have increasingly exhibited the dimensions of fluidity among participants and mobility across geographic jurisdictions" (p. 1). According to Prowse, 'new age' gangs are only loyal to the money that they make, and not necessarily to their respective groups; a marked difference from traditional understandings what 'gangs' are and how they operate. The 'gangs' in Regent Park operated in a similar fashion, differentiating them from the stereotypical American gangs such as the Crips, Bloods, and Latin Kings. In Regent Park, 'gang' members did not have strict hierarchies, did not surrender their individual criminal proceeds to the group, did not have formal expectations to care for the gang member's families when they were imprisoned, did not have membership rituals of being beaten in, and so on (Wortley 2010, Barows and Huff 2009). Thus, officially designating the groups operating in Regent Park as gangs is entirely dependent on which gang definers one adopts.

Young (1976) argues "[g]angmembership is neither rigid nor final" (p.5), which was certainly true for the men I studied. Participants who did not self-identify as gang members engaged in similar activities and behaviours (e.g., collective violence, robberies, drug dealing, 'reppin,'—identifying with, supporting, and standing for a particular cause, group, or neighbourhood) as the men who self-identified as gang members, at least at some point during data collection, and often engaged in these behaviours alongside self-identifying gang members.

This made the designation of these groups as street gangs complicated. These men were all involved in crime and engaged in collective violence to support their criminal activities, but 'gang member' was not consistently their master status; some certainly saw themselves as being part of a 'gang,' while others resisted this label, preferring to be seen as hustlers or rappers who were involved in crime, drug dealing, and assorted forms of street-level hustling as a way to survive. This is in keeping with Short's (1968) finding that "…in most cases gangs and subcultures are not coterminous…and the behaviour of gang members is a function not only of participation in the subculture of the gang, but of other subcultures as well…" (p.11). This was also the case in Regent Park where gang members, neighbourhood drug dealers, and 'Old Heads' fed into the broader subculture of the street code, and many of the gang members/drug dealers were also aspiring rappers.I interviewed and spent time with my participants irrespective of how they self-identified, since the men who did not identify as gang members (at the time) closely associated with self-proclaimed gang members, having intimate familiarity and contact with 'gangs,' therefore possessing invaluable insights on the groups (Hagedorn 1988).

Given the lack of agreement on gang definitions and the immense variability of 'gang' structures, this thesis does not engage in definitional debates. Definitions are important, but scholarly attempts to reach a definitional consensus have been rather fruitless and have further complicated the matter. Apart from not having a universal definition of gangs or gang behaviour, we are also lacking firm understandings of 'gang' variance, including membership, structure, values, behaviour, and experiences. As such, this thesis is more interested in conveying and analyzing the lived realities of my participants than in classifying them into distinct categories that do not accurately reflect their veracities. Consequently, throughout this thesis, I refer to my

key participants as 'major criminal players,' 'Old Heads,' 'criminal actors,' and 'rappers', but also sometimes as 'gang members' since all of my participants adhered to, or self-identified as, at least one of these labels at certain points in time. When the subject matter is more fitting to their identities as either 'major criminal players,' 'Old Heads' (in Chapter 3) 'gang members' (in Chapter 4), and/or 'rappers' (in Chapter 5), I rely upon the most applicable terminology.

Gaining Access to Closed Off Groups

Given Regent Park's rather incubated nature, those in charge of Regent Park's informal economy were immediately curious about who I was and what I was doing in their neighbourhood. This curiosity prompted many of them to 'check me'—approaching me themselves and asking why I was in Regent Park. My initial contact with the neighborhood's drug dealers and gang members was limited to short greetings as I passed their so-called 'chill spots' a basketball court, a place behind an ice rink, and the school yard—where the young men would sit together smoking weed, drinking, selling drugs, playing dice/cards for money, freestyle rapping, or shooting hoops. As the weeks passed, some of the young men talked with me at greater length, and it soon became clear that the young men were just as curious about me as I was about them. Here is an excerpt from my fieldnotes during the first few weeks of fieldwork in 2013:

[Fieldnote]: I am standing outside Walat's townhouse with him and we're trying to schedule a time for him to interview with me. He tells me he has basketball tonight and tomorrow night, but we can do it on Friday sometime. I agree to that, and as I'm giving him my cellphone number so he can text me if anything changes, a young black

(Somali?) man (maybe 19?) who looks a lot like him comes out the front door. He's dressed in baggy jeans, a Sean John hoody, and has white hightop Nike's on, and two other young black men follow him out. He looks at me and nods to his bro "yo, who you talkin' to?!" he demands, as his friends watch me intently. I am starting to get nervous. Walat explains that I do interviews in the neighbourhood about the revite. "Ohhhh, yea, yea- that's interview girl! You're the chick that does the interviews. You interviewed my cousins last week." one of the other men calls out to me. I smile and tell him that that was me. "What fuckin' interviews?!" demands the other guy, with a confused look on his face. I explain to him who I am, and what the project is about. He smirks, and says, "Yo, if you wanna know about Regent, and get the real story 'bout this hood, you gotta roll with the real niggaz. Niggaz like us you know? (He signals to the two other men with him) My lil bro can't help you with that."

Little did I know, this surprise interaction introduced me to Freestyle—a staple of the neighbourhood's rap scene, who quickly became one of my key participants. Extant literature has documented the importance of enthusiastic and open key participants in conducting ethnographic work (e.g., Bourgois 1995; Bucerius 2014; Duneier 1999; Venkatesh 2000, 2008), and Freestyle's willingness to teach me about the 'hood' expedited my data collection as he diligently showed me around the neighbourhood and recruited many of his 'boys' into the study. I spent much of my free time in between interviews in 2013 with Freestyle and his inner circle, who became my key point of access into Regent Park's informal economy in the summer of 2014.

Given this unexpected level of access into the neighborhood's informal economy and my growing familiarity with these men, I became interested in understanding the Revitalization's effects on the neighborhood's criminal milieu on a much deeper level. Thus, in 2014, I decided to make Regent Park the site of my doctoral fieldwork, and I initiated more sustained ethnographic research which I combined with informal interviews, believing that a mixed method approach (Maxwell, 2012) would be the best avenue for developing an understanding their lived realities (Brewer, 2000). I returned to Regent Park again in the summers of 2014, 2015, and 2016 for additional data collection.

A critical part of establishing a mutually trusting relationship with those most heavily involved in Regent Park's informal economy was that I had spent the summer of 2015 volunteering at one of the most long-standing community centres in the neighbourhood. A well-respected figure of the community—Charles—ran most of the programs at the community centre, and was heavily involved in dispute resolution with the neighbourhood's major criminal players. He served as a mediator for conflicts pertaining to neighbourhood 'beefs,' gang violence, disputes with the housing authority, as well as court battles and encounters with police, prioritizing the safety and well-being of entire families. As a result, many neighbourhood residents respected and trusted him, and some of the neighbourhood's major players (and their families) felt indebted to him for his 24/7 open door policy when they found themselves in trouble, either as victims or perpetrators. Volunteering for the community centre involved things like assisting with community events, cleaning out and organizing the centre, and otherwise running errands to make sure that the programs ran smoothly. Although the community centre mostly served a much younger group (10-16 yrs.) than the men who became my core research

participants, volunteering at the centre and frequently being seen walking around the neighbourhood with Charles was essential to building trust in the community. While I had already met many of the neighbourhood's major criminal players before volunteering with Charles, my association with the centre and close relationship with Charles expedited building rapport with some of the men who were skeptical about my identity and presence. They trusted Charles and because Charles trusted me, they were more inclined to trust me as well:

[Fieldnote]: I'm walking past River Court to get back to the centre, when I hear "Yo! Come over here!" being yelled in my direction from the bench by the rink. I look to see who is calling me, and it's one of the OGs that I've seen before but never talked to. He's by himself and seems laid back, so I'm more curious than worried as I go up to him. "Hey, what's up?" I ask him. He looks me up and says, "Just chillin. So yo, who are you again? I see you here every day." I tell him I'm a student whose doing a project on the revitalization and that I also volunteer with Charles at the community centre. "Oh word! That was you that I seen the other day in the car with Charles?" he asks. I smile and nod, "yea, we were heading to get pop for the centre." He folds his arms across him, smiling, "Okay, okay. Well if Charles cool with you, then I'm cool with you. Charles [is] good people. So what's this project thing about?"

This interaction with Roxx (28yrs.), a neighbourhood rapper who became a key participant before he was murdered in 2016, was just one of many instances where my affiliation with the community centre (and Charles in particular)expedited building trust with the neighbourhood's major criminal players. Once I realized the street capital that my connections to

the centre had granted me, I often referenced my affiliation when meeting and/or interacting with Older Heads who were unfamiliar with me, or who were still skeptical of my presence. Some of my key participants also mentioned my relationship to Charles when introducing me to others in the area, and in addition to informing their friends that I had "hung out with the boys" in Regent Park for many years, referred to my connections to the community centre to assure their (initially) distrustful friends that I was "legit."

These initial interactions became the springboard for longer conversations, and these frequent exchanges eventually made the young men relatively comfortable with having me around. Soon I was spending more and more time in-between my scheduled interviews "hanging out" with them in their "chill spots"- a basketball court, a place behind an ice rink, the school yard, a makeshift rap studio, and various benches in and around the neighbourhood. Spending time in these locations with some of the men was the primary way in which I met some of my other key informants. Here is how I met Chops:

[Fieldnote]: We're sitting on the cement barrier in front of the building by the Boardwalk, while the guys are passing around a joint and watching the cars driving by, making sure no one's rolling through the neighbourhood that isn't supposed to. It's still pretty tense from last week's drive-by, and I wonder whether this is why we're hanging out here today and not at River Court. I see an older Bengali man struggling to get a grocery cart up the 3 or 4 steps. When Comps [A neighbourhood Old Head and one of Regent Park's most prolific drug dealers] sees this, he immediately rushes over and lifts the entire, and mind you- full- shopping cart up the stairs, gets it through the door and

even helps the older man with it way into the hallway. I notice this on my own and think that this is quite the spectacular sight. Its not everyday you see a big-time drug dealer helping out a random man. Suddenly, the guy I've seen a few times before but had never talked to turns to me and says "See- that's what the old Regent Park was like! That's what we used to do, and some of us- still do that! You see a Regent Parker whose struggling and you help 'em! Doesn't matter who they are- their background, race, religion, whatever- you help 'em…" I am surprised that he's talked to me, and it's evident he knows who I am what I am doing hanging out with all of them (did he ask them about me? Did they tell him on their own?), and am pleased that he wanted to contribute his expertise of Regent Park. I smile and stick out my hand, formally introducing myself "hey, I'm Marta." He smiles, "I know, I'm Chops," he says as he offers me a beer.

Interviewing

I conducted a total of 156 formal interviews with Regent Park residents between the ages of 16 and 52. The first 100 interviews were conducted in the summers of 2013-2014 with neighbourhood residents between the ages of 16-30, as part of the research project mentioned earlier. The questions for these interviews were vast in breadth, though the questions most salient to my dissertation research pertained to feelings of safety and changes to neighbourhood crime and violence (see Appendix A). Although most of these participants were law-abiding, I also interviewed individuals who were strongly involved in, or affiliated with, Regent Park's informal criminal economy. These interviews attuned me to the complex ways that the revitalization was affecting perceptions of local crime, violence, and gangs. Thus, I began deviating from the

original questionnaire, increasingly pursuing themes relating to how the revitalization was affecting criminal processes and structures in Regent Park.

I conducted the subsequent 56 interviews in the summers of 2015 (40 interviews) and 2016 (16 interviews). I adopted a semi-structured, open-ended approach to interviewing, asking about how the revitalization had affected their lives, with a particular focus on perceptions of safety, informal governance and street codes, criminal hierarchies, gang presence and composition, dynamics between residents and criminal groups, dynamics amongst criminal groups, police search and seizure practices, neighbourhood 'beefs,' and social media. Respondents were between the ages of 18-52, and though I interviewed a few community workers charged with youth outreach and violence prevention, the vast majority of these interviews were conducted with 30 heavily gang involved individuals. Those who were most proximate to Regent Park's informal economy were interviewed every summer. All 2016 interviews were conducted with my gang-involved key participants, with fewer formal interviews conducted in place of more rigorous ethnographic observation and informal discussions.

I adopted an informal approach to interviews, and encouraged participants to share as much or as a little about their experiences as they wished. My participants determined the time and location of their interviews, though most took place in the early evening, at various places in the neighbourhood such as at the basketball court, on neighbourhood benches, in favourite 'hangout' corners, in front and back yards, and to a lesser extent, inside people's homes.

Interviews ranged from 20 minutes to over 3 hours. I recorded all of my interviews, and subsequently transcribed and coded them using Nvivo 10.

Given that my research was carried out over the course of 4 years, and my project's focus shifted according to changes in the neighbourhood itself, the 3 substantive chapters of this dissertation rely on data from different points of data collection. Chapter 2 is comprised of interviews I conducted during the summers of 2013 and 2014, in addition to 50 interviews conducted by another research assistant. The data comprising Chapter 3 stems from data collected during the summer of 2015, and the data from Chapter 4 is drawn from a combination of data collected during the summers of 2015 and 2016, with those most involved in the neighbourhood's informal economy. Each substantive chapter describes my research methodology more thoroughly.

Participant Observation

Because I wanted to generate a more holistic account of how mass neighbourhood change has altered criminal structures and processes in Regent Park, I pursued an ethnographic approach in addition to formal interviews, since this would be the best course of study for gathering "empirical insights into social practices that are normally 'hidden' from the public gaze" (Reeves, Kuper, and Hodges, 2008: 514). For approximately 3 months each summer I spent about 5-8 hours a day, 5-6 days a week in Regent Park, partaking in 'deep hanging out' (Geertz 1998). I immersed myself into the neighbourhood to 'get inside'the way that men in Regent Park see and experience the world (Hammersley 1992), with the hopes of unmasking the subtleties of neighbourhood life during a period of neighbourhood transition.

I entered the field guided by the belief that "everything is data" (Dunn 2009: 280). In

keeping with Emerson et al.'s (1995) advice, I took detailed fieldnotes on:

1) observations about the lived realities in Regent Park (i.e., behaviours, routines);

2) informal conversations with participants;

3) neighbourhood spaces;

4) situations that occurred that I was told about or witnessed myself, and;

5) various community meetings and events.

I wrote detailed fieldnotes immediately upon leaving the field. When situations arose where I felt that a moment or conversation was particularly important and needed to be precisely documented, I relied upon common ethnographer tactics such as excusing myself to 'use the bathroom' (see Emerson et al. 1995; Venkatesh 2008), allowing me to discreetly make quick jottings during fieldwork. I also took 'condensed' fieldnotes (Spradley 1980: 69) while on my way home from the field, verbally recording key phrases or descriptions of interactions to enhance the accuracy of my extended accounts once I arrived home. Since participant observation can sometimes miss "the biographical meanings of observed interactions" (Gubrium and Holstein 2002: 85), formal interviews helped me fill in key points that I could not gather from mere observation alone, and allowed me to confirm/strengthen my interpretations and analysis. As such, I drew upon formal interviews and ethnographic observations in tandem in order to better understand the lived realities of my participants.

Conducting participant observation allowed me to study people's behaviour in everyday contexts. My data collection was flexible and unstructured, which helped me to avoid

predetermined categorizations of people's behaviour, and enabled me to extract meanings from their actions as opposed to solely from what my participants said (Atkinson and Hammersley 1998:110). This way, I could identify and understand the connections between various social phenomena uncovered in my interviews which I would not have been able to do through interviews alone (Reeves et al. 2008: 514). For example, I would have missed important aspects about my participants' conscious navigation of, and movements through the neighbourhood if I had not spent time sitting with them in various locations and moving along when certain places or certain people were 'hot' (at increased risk). Although I asked participants about how they make decisions about where to hangout, or which route to take home, their responses were rather limited and did not uncover the interplay of factors (e.g., police presence, bail/probation conditions, presence of new neighbourhood gang, presence of individuals who are 'hot,' threats from rival neighbourhoods, aftermath of a shooting), that went into group decisions about locations and routes that were 'safe' one day, and 'unsafe' the next. This only became known to me upon 'hanging out' with my participants at these locations and asking about these decisions in real time (e.g., Why are we hanging out in front of this particular building today and not at the basketball court? Why is Comps staying especially close to the building door right now?).

Data Coding and Analysis

I employed an inductive approach to data analysis, letting the data guide my analysis (Charmaz 2006), and pursuing new themes as they arose until I reached thematic saturation (Guest et al. 2006; Small 2009). I coded interviews and field notes according to theme. Given the breadth of my project, many themes arose during data analysis. Some of these themes are not presented in this dissertation, but will be unpacked in future work. Since my research objective

for the purpose of this dissertation was to interrogate the effects of the Regent Park revitalization on criminal structures and processes within the neighbourhood, my data analysis and coding was particularly focused on perceptions, experiences of, and reactions to changes supposedly brought about by the revitalization.

Data analysis for Chapter 3 surfaced from rudimentary and broad coding that revealed feelings of safety have decreased in Regent Park since the onset of the revitalization. Another research assistant and I coded these data. To ensure intercoder reliability (Lombard et al. 2002), we randomly selected 10 interviews, coded them separately, compared our coding categories, and decided on a coherent and consistent coding scheme. Broadly grouped as 'changes to perceptions of safety,' transcripts revealed that when participants were probed about why they felt less safe since the revitalization, they attributed these changes to greater 'unpredictability' and greater 'ruthlessness' of violence. Deeper coding revealed that this was due to the 'disintegration of informal systems of governance,' which was further unpacked and coded as 'weakening street code,' with participants expressing particular concerns about: 1) the displacement of Old Heads, and 2) emergence of younger criminal actors, which became subcodes, and were then cross-coded as 'criminal power vacuum.'

Data analysis and coding for chapters 4 and 5 was conducted in a similar fashion, although different themes were identified. For example, the basic theme for chapter 3 was 'emergence of new gangs' with subthemes of 'relationships with existing gangs,' which bled into 1) 'competition,' and 2) 'resistance,' with 'resistance' being divided into 'non-violence' and 'boundary work,' and 3) 'master status' which intersected with 'non-violence.' Coding for

chapter 5 was based on 'increased visibility' divided into 'greater risk' (both personal and affiliation based), with subcodes 'social media,' 'the rap game' (bleeding into 'street code' and 'neighbourhood beefs') and finally, 'agency over risk.'

Positionality: My Role as a Researcher

Qualitative researchers—and ethnographers in particular—are part of the social worlds that we study (Hammersley and Atkinson 2007: 14), despite the fact that ethnographers are often far removed from the worlds in which we conduct research. During my own fieldwork, my status as an outsider was ever present and always salient, particularly on three distinct yet related fronts. First, as a Caucasian in a neighbourhood in which a large proportion of the residents identified as 'visible minorities,' and more specifically, amongst my key participants who were mostly black men. This leads to my second marker as an outsider—my gender. I was a female spending the majority of my time with men in a hypermasculine environment. And third, my status as a graduate student, which was a stark reminder of my immensely privileged social, political, and economic position in relation to most Regent Park residents—and my key participants, in particular.

Like many ethnographers who study disadvantaged areas or criminal groups, I was initially met with distrust and suspicions that I was an undercover police officer. Apart from being an outsider to the neighbourhood, this suspicion was largely tied to me being a Caucasian female. Early on in my research, one of my participants said "some of the guys think you're a cop cause what else would a white girl like you be doin' here?"—a sentiment I heard often. In order to surpass these suspicions, I was careful to emphasize that I was more interested in specific phenomena (e.g., violence, gangs, the drug trade) than in *who* was involved in what.

Further, given that police were almost always present in Regent Park during the first few summers of my fieldwork, I did my best to distance myself from police while in the neighbourhood, usually not acknowledging their presence whatsoever, though sometimes this involved things like giving my participants a 'heads up' about a police car in the area. I was also initially over-cautious not to fixate on illegal activities that I witnessed or experienced while in the field, for example, turning my eyes away during drug deals, or not probing too much about the specifics of drive-by shootings, assaults. One of the participants I met during my last summer of fieldwork and who was sceptical about my identity, actually told me that if I was indeed an 'undie' (undercover police officer), I deserve a raise because I'm 'very good' at what I do. Once I established more rapport and trust with my participants, I could ask more direct questions about specific events and people, becoming privy to more confidential information, and learning details about illegal activities. Undoubtedly, suspicions that I was an undercover police officer were the most significant hindrance to my data collection efforts, and the greatest challenge to overcome.

Criminological ethnographies are dominated by male ethnographers (Bourgois 2003; Contreras 2013; Venkatesh 2009). When female ethnographers have studied criminal subcultures, the participants are often female (Miller 2008; Maher 1997) or the female ethnographer is accompanied by a male research partner (Adler 1993). Criminological ethnographies on male dominated criminal subgroups conducted by a female ethnographer working by herself are almost non-existent –with the exceptions of Bucerius (2014), Goffman (2014), and Horowitz (1996). Looking more broadly to anthropological and criminological accounts, sexualization of female researchers by their male participants has been widely documented (Bucerius 2014; Lee 1997; Maher 2000; Pini 2005; Presser 2005).

As a young woman studying a hypermasculine group of men, I was immediately sexualized by my participants, although the nature and extent of this sexualization changed during the course of my research. At first, many of my interactions with the men in my study were dominated by them seeing me as a possible sexual conquest. I was conspicuously checked out, and specific features of my body were commented on, usually in front of a group. I was asked out on dates, and faced explicit public assertions that I "must love big black dick" because "why else would a white girl be hanging out with Regent hoodmans?"I dismissed courting and sexual invitations, and laughed off or disregarded comments about my appearance or sexual preferences. Sometimes, I responded with sarcasm, another method women employ when they are uncomfortable. I consciously tried to steer conversations away from my potential as a sex partner to present myself as a somewhat desexualized researcher (see Maher 2000). I believe that I was successful because most of the men in my study simply gave up actively trying to pursue me as a conquest.

My discomfort in some of these situations was noticed by some of the other men in my study who began to police each other's behaviour and comments in my presence, insisting that they should to be 'respectful' in front of me. This included things like 'teaching' their friends about what they believed was the proper etiquette in dealing with me, such as telling their friends to limit foul language in my presence, having their friends give up a seat for me, or even offering me a marijuana joint or beer. The emphasis on my deservingness of 'respect' from the men in Regent Park was also, perhaps unsurprisingly, tied to my positionality in terms of race, gender, and sexual decisions while in the field. I believe that my participants granted me greater respect than they did to Regent Park women by virtue of me being a white female student. Nevertheless,

this respect was contingent on my lack of sexual relationships with my participants, as Musta (24 yrs.) explains:

"At first some of us thought you was undercover. Then we realized that you wasn't, and you wasn't some snobby ass white girl, but you also wasn't a hood rat. You know? You chill with us niggaz, you know, the hoodest of the hood niggaz, no problem. You have no fear. You walk right up to us by yourself and post up wit' us on the block! Ain't no white girls do that! […]And, and you ain't even fuckin' none of us! […] You're a lady, you know? A cool bitch that can chill but isn't a hoodrat like all the other fucking hoes around here. You're straight business. So that's how you got our respect."

Once this respect was established, my potential as a sexual conquest was dismissed, or at least came secondary to my identity as a researcher or simply a woman that could hang out with the 'boys'. While my gender was always salient (see Arendell 1997; Presser 2005), continuously removing the option of a sexual encounter between myself and some of my participants seemingly removed a roadblock to data collection, whereas the men came to view me more as their minor historian (Scheper Hughes 1993:22) than as a woman to pursue.

As other ethnographers have documented (Bourgois 1995, Bucerius 2013, Goffman 2014), I found that the fact that I was 'different' aided my data collection efforts in the long term. As the 'naïve researcher' (Gokah2006), my lack of knowledge about Regent Park allowed me to ask basic questions and legitimized my curiosity about social processes that were intuitive to them. Many of my participants found my naivetés both fascinating and humorous, and seemed

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to enjoy being 'experts' of their neighbourhood. In this sense, my participants were my teachers and I was their student (Spradley 1980: 4). My research approach and the relationship that I formed with my participants meant that I was 'learning from people' (Spradley 1980: 3) instead of studying them.

Despite being different from my participants on many fronts, my participants and I shared some similarities. First, I lived in a neighbourhood with a reputation for being disadvantaged, impoverished, racialized, and crime-filled. In many disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Toronto, an answer to the question 'where you from?' carries strong connotations about a person's identity, way of life, and affiliations, a phenomenon that has also been noted elsewhere (Garot 2007). My response to the 'where you from?' question was therefore pivotal in establishing some sort of rapport—especially as a white woman—with many Regent Park residents who saw me as 'less different' than if I had lived in a more privileged 'white part' of the city. Second, I entered the field with a firm grasp of hip-hop culture and rap music, so I was familiar with cultural scripts, references, and demonstrations of the hip hop or 'gangsta' lifestyle that many of my participants adhered to. This familiarity revealed itself to various degrees at different times (e.g., having firm opinions about iconic rappers, being able to rap along to songs, knowing how to compliment/insult someone in a culturally appropriate way), but was probably most salient in how I spoke and in my overall demeanor. Some of my participants claimed that I didn't "talk or act like a white girl" because my speech included some African American Vernacular English, something that I would credit to both the neighbourhood that I grew up in, but also to my cultural

knowledge of and admiration for hip-hop.[19] The combination of these characteristics seemed to

moderate my difference in terms of race and social class, although these dissimilarities

undeniably affected my positionality and relationships in the field.

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[19] For a discussion on the appropriation of AAVE by whites and the role of hiphop, see Cutler, 1999.

CHAPTER THREE

'BEFORE THERE WAS DANGER BUT THERE WAS RULES. AND SAFETY IN THOSE RULES': EFFECTS OF NEIGHBOURHOOD REDEVELOPMENT ON CRIMINAL STRUCTURES[20]

ABSTRACT

Research has shown that 'street codes' often govern behaviour and violence in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. However, little is known about what happens to established street codes in a context of massive neighbourhood change. In our research in Regent Park, Canada's oldest and largest public housing neighbourhood currently undergoing neighbourhood restructuring, we suggest that the displacement of 'major criminal players' from the neighbourhood has eroded the long-established codes of conduct they enforced and has undermined informal systems of criminal governance in the neighbourhood. As a consequence, young people express concern over what they perceive to be a growing preponderance of violence in the context of a competitive rush to fill a power vacuum created by the displacement of neighbourhood 'old heads'.

Introduction

Over the past decade, the United States and Europe have witnessed a growing trend toward neighbourhood redevelopment initiatives, which typically involve the partial or complete

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demolition of lower income and social housing neighbourhoods, with the aim of transforming them into socially and economically mixed or improved areas (Bridge et al. 2014; Galster 2007a; Walks and Maaranen 2008). Oftentimes, one of the primary motivations for these projects is the hope that neighbourhood restructuring will reduce crime in the vicinity (Goetz 2011; Venkatesh 2002), consistent with Wilson's 'social mix' thesis that concentrated poverty breeds crime and various other 'deviant' behaviors (Wilson 1987). Indeed, the hopes of a reduction in local levels of crime and violence has been one of the primary drivers in the planning and development of Canada's first public housing 'revitalization project' in Toronto's Regent Park. While neighbourhood restructuring projects almost always have the advantage of improving the built environment – by replacing the existing and often deteriorated housing stock with new buildings - the social outcomes and benefits of these projects are less clear, and, perhaps not forthcoming. Indeed, in their review, Goetz and Chapple (2010: 223) argue that there are "conspicuously no benefits in employment, income, welfare dependency or physical health. Further, many of the families suffer significant interruptions in their social networking." To date, there is little empirical data that speaks to the impact of neighbourhood redevelopment projects on the social interactional aspects of neighbourhood life, particularly with respect to the effects that massive neighbourhood change may have on crime and criminal networks within affected areas. Nevertheless, such initiatives have quickly gained momentum across the Western world.

Spanning the course of four years, our research has closely monitored the progression of the Regent Park Revitalization, and demonstrates that apart from having negative effects on what we are calling "prosocial associations" (i.e. mainstream, non-criminal) (Thompson et al. 2013, see also August 2014a), the revitalization has also had important effects on the neighbourhood's

criminal structures and networks, or what we will call "alternative social associations.[21]" Given the intricate and deeply interconnected relationships that exist between residents in Regent Park who are involved in the criminal aspects of neighbourhood life and those who are not, our research reveals that large-scale neighbourhood redevelopment can have a multitude of highly complex, and often unintended consequences for both non-criminally involved residents as well as those embedded in alternative social networks, at least during the transitional period of neighbourhood restructuring.

Based on 150 in-depth interviews with youth and young adults (aged 16-30) in Regent Park over a period of 4 years, we argue that the focus on pro-social associations that currently dominates in research on neighbourhood change should be expanded to include examinations of changes to alternative social associations and their consequences for neighbourhood life as well. Given that the most acutely disadvantaged neighbourhoods are generally the ones selected for redevelopment, crime and violence, and by extension, alternative social associations, often characterize the lived realities of many neighbourhood residents. As such, understanding the operation of alternative social associations *prior to* redevelopment, and how these associations may be affected by redevelopment can illuminate how massive neighbourhood change can shape levels of crime and violence within affected areas. This knowledge may also be useful for influencing neighbourhood restructuring policies, mitigating some of their unintended consequences, and meeting restructuring goals.

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[21] We are using the terminology of "alternative social associations *or* networks" instead of "criminal networks" to indicate that these networks do not necessarily solely define and/or organize themselves around criminal activity. This may be true for some networks but for others, criminal activity may just be one of many activities in which the people belonging to the network are jointly engaging, with the networks primarily based on ethnic or family ties, friendships or other commonalities.

This article proceeds as follows: we first discuss the literature on the effects of neighbourhood change on pro-social networks and on local levels of crime and violence. Next, we provide some background information on the revitalization project in Regent Park and our methodology, followed by a discussion of our findings. We argue that neighbourhood change – though intended as a positive change for residents by policy makers – has significant effects on the neighbourhood street code as well as the composition of criminal networks in Regent Park, decreasing the perceptions of safety among a vast majority of residents. We conclude with a call for future research to examine the effects of neighbourhood redevelopment on alternative social associations (associations, in which criminal activity may play a minor role or be the main focus of the network), and the relationship between these associations, in order to better understand the complexity and fluidity of neighbourhood dynamics and the ways in which they shape local levels of crime and violence, particularly in relation to neighbourhood restructuring.

Effects of Neighbourhood Change on Crime and Social Networks

To date, much of the literature on neighbourhood change has examined its' effects on positive or mainstream social networks and has paid close attention to the question whether neighbourhood redevelopment has positive or negative effects on such networks (e.g., August 2014b; Bridge et al. 2014; Goetz and Chapple 2010). Barrett, Geisel and Johnston (2006), Clampet-Lundquist (2004), and Goetz (2003), find that the large-scale displacement that attends redevelopment has negative effects on social networks, as few households are able to rebuild social ties in their new neighbourhoods, prompting the attenuation of supportive relationships and the subsequent and increased isolation of children. Additionally, Venkatesh (2002: 266) has found that the "atmosphere of perpetual change" associated with neighbourhood redevelopment

hinders the maintenance of relationships which provide material resources, protective services and emotional support. Previous research found that neighbourhood restructuring (in Regent Park) had had a destabilizing effect on previously dense networks of friendship and support, thereby diminishing some of the benefits that stem from such ties (August 2014b).

The bulk of research that examines alternative social networks tends to examine them in a relatively static neighbourhood context that is typically characterized by multiple forms of disadvantage (Bucerius 2014, Contreras 2012, Harding 2009). This literature highlights how alternative networks often become the primary peer and identity network for young adults living in such neighbourhoods (Harding 2009), shaping attitudinal and behavioural norms (Contreras 2012), and making it hard for members to imagine a life outside of their friendship circle/alternate social network (Bucerius 2014). Little is yet known about whether and how these very networks are affected by massive neighbourhood change.

Research conducted in the United States and in Europe has found that the gentrification process –especially the long and drawn out period of instability that accompanies this process – can lead to an increase in local levels of crime and violence, due to the destabilization of social networks among residents that previously operated to keep the neighbourhood safe (e.g., Atkinson 2000; Van Wilsem et al. 2006).[22] Taylor and Covington (1988) assert that crime levels

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[22]Kirk and Laub (2010: 464) found that gentrification leads to a short-term increase in crime rates due to resident displacement and neighbourhood instability, followed by a decline in crime rates in the long term as neighbourhoods stabilize and informal social controls form again. Kreager, Lyons and Hays (2011) found gentrification increased property crime in the short term, but decreased over time and violent crime decreased in neighbourhoods that had undergone gentrification as compared to those that did not. They argue that gentrification should be viewed as a temporal process that can have varying effects on crime depending on the stage of

in 'improving' neighbourhoods are higher than in their more 'stable' counterparts, and argue that

neighbourhood destabilization is intimately connected to increases in local levels of crime and

violence. They argue that rapid neighbourhood turnover or racial change promotes disorder, even

when this change is under the 'positive' guise of gentrification. McKenzie (1968: 63) further

elaborates explaining, "Rapid community turnover also plays havoc with local standards and

neighbourhood mores. It is impossible to have an efficient local opinion in a neighbourhood

where the people are in constant movement, the decay of local standards is a pertinent cause of

moral laxness and disorderliness." Furthermore, Atkinson (2000: 321) found that the breakdown

of community due to the transitory nature of gentrification and empty property diminished a

neighbourhood's social fabric, thereby leading to increases in crime and anti-social behaviour.

As such, it has been established that during a neighbourhood's 'transitional periods,' crime,

violence and general disorder increase given blows to social networks and informal social

controls.

Though the extant literature focuses solely on what we call prosocial networks, we

hypothesize that the destabilizing effects of neighbourhood change may also operate to

undermine alternative social associations and informal social control during the long and drawn

out transitory phases that characterize the revitalization process. It is precisely this period that is

the focus of our study.

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gentrification. The general consensus is that neighbourhood change, when directed at
socioeconomic improvements, generally destabilizes neighbourhoods and reduces informal
social control, leading to an increase in neighbourhood crime, at least in the short term (Kirk and
Laub 2010: 441; Van Wilsem et al. 2006). It is plausible that an increase in crime rates may be
short-term and that crime rates may stabilize once social stability is restored, as remains to be
seen in Regent Park.

The Regent Park Revitalization

Built in the 1950s, Regent Park is Canada's oldest and largest public housing complex. As one of Canada's most socio-economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods,[23] and, as a consequence of deeply stigmatizing media coverage, it has achieved dubious notoriety in the public imagination as "thoroughly ghettoized" (Purdy 2003: 47), and "a haven for single mothers, welfare families and deviants…a magnet for crime and drug problems" (Purdy 2005: 531). Common stereotypes about Regent Park, coupled with the physical deterioration of the housing stock therein, likely played a key role in its selection to be the first of many public housing neighbourhoods in Canada to undergo 'revitalization' to the social mix model. This process involves demolishing the neighbourhood's existing and deteriorated housing stock and replacing it with new townhouses and condominium buildings. Unlike the 'old' Regent Park, which was entirely comprised of public housing units, it is being transformed into a "mixed-income, mixed-use community", with around 63% of the new buildings being offered for sale on Toronto's booming real estate market (TCHC 2014).

The Regent Park Revitalization, which began in 2005, takes place over five phases during which sections of the neighbourhood are razed and subsequently rebuilt. During this process, residents are displaced to other public housing projects throughout the city, with the "right to return" to the neighbourhood when construction is complete. The underlying theoretical

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[23] In 2006, between 68 and 76 % of Regent Park residents lived below the low-income cut-off, in comparison to the citywide average of 20%.Over 80% of Regent Parkers self-identified as belonging to racialized group(s). Additionally, 91% of 15-19 year olds and 78% of 20-24 year olds in Regent Park were visible minorities. This is compared to 56% of 15-19 year olds and 54% of 20-24 year olds living in the rest of Toronto (Statistics Canada, 2010). Lastly, the original Regent Park had a disproportionately high number of youth, with over 1700 youth aged 15-24 in the community (Statistics Canada 2010).

proposition upon which the revitalization is based is that engineered population change – the shift from concentrated poverty to 'socially mixed' neighbourhoods - will have positive effects on lower class residents. This idea - first proposed in 1987 by Wilson - argues that the source of urban social problems (crime and delinquency, teenage pregnancy, school drop-out rates, etc.) stems from spatial concentrations of poverty and isolation of residents living in ghettoized areas. For Wilson (1987), residents in such areas are isolated from mainstream, middle-class standards of behavior which allows for the development and transmission of 'underclass behaviors' across generations. Through the introduction of social mix, middle class home owners are hypothesized to reduce the social isolation that attends high levels of poverty, act as `positive role models` to original residents, and transmit mainstream social norms. Proponents of the social mix model argue that cross-class interaction will also foster social capital for original residents and eventually provide opportunities for upward social mobility. To date, however, research does not provide empirical support for this claim, and a small but growing number of studies (including our own) are finding evidence of crime amplifying effects that stem from the shift to social mix.

Methodology

We originally became interested in Regent Park as a research site because two of the authors were involved in separate research examining resilience to criminal behavior among young adults in the neighbourhood. A key finding was that the tight social networks in which many residents were embedded, combined with high levels of perceived collective efficacy in the neighbourhood operated in tandem to keep young residents of the public housing neighbourhood 'out of trouble' (Thompson et al. 2013). However, participants also reported that the very networks that helped them to stay out of trouble were being undermined by the ongoing

revitalization, decreasing their perceptions of safety in the neighbourhood and increasing their perceived risk of violent victimization. Participants also reported in great detail how the mass displacement of residents during the razing and rebuilding of Regent Park prompted the removal of some of the neighbourhood's major criminal players, the destruction of existing criminal networks – which has, perhaps paradoxically, had profound and negative implications on neighbourhood life. As such, we became interested in looking more closely at the effects that the ongoing revitalization has had on criminal networks.

To that end, we interviewed a total of 150 Regent Park residents (between the ages of 16 to 30) during the summers of 2013 and 2014. The interviews were conducted with 73 male and 77 female participants of varying ethnic backgrounds. The semi-structured interview guide was designed to explore the various consequences of the revitalization process. Participants were asked about their perceptions of the revitalization and its effects on community, social networks, the built environment, services, feelings of safety, crime and policing within Regent Park. Participants were also asked more open-ended questions which provided them the opportunity to freely express their opinions on issues that were most salient to them. In addition to the interviews, the data in this paper is also based upon 6 months of ethnographic work within the neighbourhood, consisting of 'deep hanging out' with some of the interview participants and involvement in community events.

We[24] recruited our participants through fieldwork within the neighbourhood which included hanging out and walking around in Regent Park, telling people about the study and

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[24] The interviews were conducted by the first author and a community-based research assistant.

asking if they were willing to participate (upon eligibility, which was determined by age and length of residency[25]). To reduce selection bias, we recruited participants from all areas of the neighbourhood at varying times (between 10am and 9pm), seven days a week. We interviewed participants in an area of their choice, which was oftentimes at a bench, on their porch, in their front/back yard, and sometimes in their homes. In addition to these active recruitment strategies, we also relied on snowball-sampling techniques.

Given our sampling methodology, some of our participants were 'street-involved' residents who had criminal records and were closely associated with alternative social associations in the neighbourhood. Others, however, had limited or no experience with criminal activity. Many participants were succeeding in high school and university, while others had just been released from prison and/or were heavily involved in Regent Park's criminal networks and activities, providing us with diverse perspectives.

We asked participants a series of open-ended questions, allowing them to share as much or as little about their thoughts on the revitalization process and its effects on the criminal structures in Regent Park as they wanted. We also used new themes that arose during the interviews as a basis for forming new questions and building them into the interview schedule. We aimed for an informal and relaxed interview experience. Most interviews lasted about an hour, with some lasting almost 2 hours, demonstrating the willingness of participants to share their experiences with the revitalization. Not a single eligible person approached during

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[25] In the larger project, we also interviewed the new middle-income residents, displaced residents, and returned residents (after displacement). For this article, we rely on interviews with 'original' residents, many of whom have lived in Regent Park their entire lives.

fieldwork declined to do the interview. In return, participants were given $20 cash and could be compensated with $10 for a referring an interview participant (maximum of 2), with about 60% of our participants referring at least one person to our study. The interviews were anonymized, digitally recorded, subsequently transcribed and coded using Nvivo 10.

Given that Canadian police typically do not disclose data on crime and violence at the neighbourhood-level, it is difficult to ascertain the impact that the revitalization of Regent Park has had on local levels of crime and violence. The only 'official' declaration in this regard was a brief statement by the Toronto Police Service's 51 Division (the division in which Regent Park is located) made in 2012, stating that "Violent crime has declined in Regent Park since the revitalization began in 2008" (TCHC, 2012). However, this statement is problematic given that a) the revitalization began in 2005 and not 2008 and extends beyond 2012; b) it is unclear what crimes are considered 'violent'; c) it says nothing about changes to other types of crime; d) there is no publically available data presented to verify its accuracy; and e) it does not speak to "displacement effects" – that is, changes in levels of violent crime in other neighbourhoods affected by the revitalization process.

The inaccessibility of this data hinders our ability to 'confirm' not only 51 Division's statement, but also the 'accuracy' of our resident's perceptions. Based on the assumption that "if a person perceives a situation as real, it is real in its consequence" (Thomas & Thomas 1928:572), our study was designed to elicit resident *perceptions* of how the revitalization has affected crime and violence in the neighbourhood, since perceptions, not necessarily 'facts' influence how individuals behave. In other words, if residents *perceive* that crime and violence in

Regent Park is increasing and becoming more random and unpredictable, this belief in and of itself may alter their behaviours, regardless of whether the data would confirm or discredit their beliefs. We did, however, attempt to find evidence that could provide support for participants' perceptions that violent crime had increased since the start of the revitalization. First, a time-line of criminal incidents in Regent Park was created. By scouring various media sources from 2005 to the present, we compiled a time-line of violent crime incidents in Regent Park, which included both media-reported and non-media reported violent crimes that could be reasonably confirmed.[26] This time-line provides a relatively accurate representation of the more serious crime occurrence in Regent Park since the onset of the revitalization, revealing that violent crime (assaults, robberies, stabbings, etc.), and gun violence in particular, is still occurring within the neighbourhood, with relative frequency (every couple of months), with spurts of gun violence whereby homicide shootings and drivebys can occur within just two weeks of each other. It was these types of more serious violence, specifically gun violence- that our participants most commonly spoke about. Further, personal correspondence with members of 51 Division, as well as with members of the senior command, have confirmed 'spikes' in crime rates since the revitalization, not only in Regent Park but also in the neighbourhoods to which Regent Park residents have been displaced. Taken together, these sources confirm the perceptions of many young people in the neighbourhood – that the destabilization that attends the revitalization process may well have amplification effects on crime and violence in the neighbourhood.

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[26]This information was gained through directly witnessing the event (i.e. being present in the neighbourhood at the time of a drive-by shooting, having residents show bullet holes from recent shootings, etc.), or by residents reporting these incidents (confirmed by multiple residents), in order to further triangulate the data. Although violence in Regent Park (and other impoverished Canadian neighbourhoods) is not as rampant as in many American communities, when it occurs in disadvantaged neighbourhoods it is not considered unusual and is often not covered in the news media.

Findings and Discussion

Since the onset of revitalization, Regent Park has undergone significant physical changes. It has also changed socially. The mass displacement and subsequent return of original residents that has accompanied the revitalization process has produced a population that is more in flux than it is stable. For example, throughout the revitalization process, many original residents are displaced *within* the neighbourhood itself, moving from an old unit to another old unit, consistent with phased demolition; some original residents who return to Regent Park following a period of displacement re-settle in different parts of the neighbourhood; others have not yet returned to the neighbourhood, and still others have been displaced indefinitely or have decided not to return to Regent Park.[27] This in- and out-migration, coupled with the internal redistribution of residents, has significantly altered the neighbourhood social structure. These shifts do not only have effects on the so-called 'positive' social associations or networks (e.g., residents have voiced that they have lost their go-to neighbour when it comes to child care or borrowing a loaf of bread – *see* Thompson et al. 2013), but they have also had significant effects on the criminal social structure in Regent Park. Our findings suggest that the displacement[28] of some of the 'major criminal players'– those who control local criminal networks - has prompted the deterioration of long-established codes of conduct they enforced and undermined informal systems of criminal governance in the neighbourhood.[29] As we will discuss below, an overwhelming majority of our

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[27] Unfortunately, data from TCHC on resident composition, turnover, etc. is not publically available.

[28] Although some residents have been displaced to other downtown areas, many have been relocated to areas in opposite ends of the city that are relatively rather inaccessible via public transit (a 1.5 hour commute to Regent Park).

[29] Since the revitalization is divided into five phases, some of these major players were relocating to, or merely 'couch surfing' in units that were not yet subject to demolition. According to our participants, this upheaval already weakened their power as the neighbourhood is quite vast and so the changes to territorial control initiated instability in alternative networks. By the time that

participants – over three quarters – report being fearful of what they perceive to be increasing levels of indiscriminate violence, which they attribute to power vacuums created by the displacement of major criminal players that have presented opportunities for younger, more reckless individuals to penetrate the criminal structure of the neighbourhood.

Increased Violence and Fear of Violence

The vast majority of participants—about three quarters—believe that the overall destabilization brought on by the revitalization has disrupted and undermined the informal social controls that once protected residents from criminal victimization and offending. As Damon (16yrs.) reports: "Like in the old Regent everybody knew each other. Everyone was talkin', but like ever since the new buildings, no one's talkin'. It's just like, um, watchin' and stuff. Everyone's walkin around with guns." A perceived increase in gun violence was concerning for Nicky (17yrs.) as well, who, when asked whether crime in Regent Park has changed since the beginning of the revitalization, said: "Yea, it was like more like family-wise around here [prior to the revitalization], and then after, like a couple things happened 'cause of like gangs and stuff, and now it's just like, people are just getting' shot for nothin'."

It is important to note that our respondents believe that the increase in violence in the neighbourhood has to be understood in the context of the high resident turnover, i.e., as a counterintuitive and unintended effect of the revitalization. Teagen (26yrs.) explains:

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our study was underway, a few stages had already been completed and about a quarter of the neighbourhood was already demolished. As such, many of the major players were permanently displaced in the sense that they did not have a home in Regent Park anymore, and with increased police attention, many simply "stopped coming back."

"Like, I was 18 months into living here, and that coincided almost directly with people starting to be moved out of phase two and then after phase two demolition which I would venture guess was about a third of our neighbourhood and the residents in it, the violence has increased exponentially. And there was a time when my employer was advising me not to walk out the back door of my house because people, like, there was gun fire there, like drive-bys happening very, very frequently."

Marcus (19yrs.) goes even further, expressing his continued fears of violent victimization in the new Regent Park:

"Before they even put up the new buildings, right, or even before they thought of construction, I felt safe anywhere [in Regent Park]. I can sleep in like a dark alley at night and only have to worry about somebody taking my shoes and my wallet, right? Now, if I fall asleep at this bench, right? I'm thinking I'm gonna wake up with a knife in the back, right? Like, you can't trust anybody unless you always have a third eye behind you somewhere."

Unfortunately, these fears materialized for Marcus who reported that he had been randomly and violently victimized in the neighbourhood a few months prior to being interviewed, something that according to him, would have never taken place prior to revitalization. Our data suggest that Marcus' story is not exceptional: other participants also shared stories of recent violent victimization in Regent Park, which for them was a vast departure from their experiences in "the old Regent Park." It also appears that fears of violent victimization

are not limited to youth and young adults *living* in Regent Park – in our earlier research, youth and young adults in Regent Park also reported increased victimization in the neighbourhoods to which they had been displaced (Thompson, Bucerius, & Luguya 2013*)*. This suggests that their (street) reputation may follow them across neighbourhood boundaries, whereas social support systems and protections do not – rather, they are geographically restricted (as has also been discussed in the works of Anderson 1999; Bourgois 2013; Bucerius 2014). Accordingly, even the possibility of future displacement did not offer participants the hope of a greater sense of safety in the future.

Perceptions of safety are important in light of research that has found that fear of crime can have adverse effects at both the individual- and neighbourhood-levels. One consequence of fear of crime is physical and psychological withdrawal from the neighbourhood, and a weakening of informal control mechanisms (Bursik 1988; Markowitz et al. 2001; Morenoff and Sampson 1997), which can further compromise neighbourhood safety. Research demonstrates that fear of violent victimization can undermine resident willingness to collectively engage in informal social control and decrease their attachment to the neighbourhood, thereby potentially increasing the likelihood of crime and violence (Skogan 1986, 1990; Taylor 1996). Among residents of public housing projects, fear of crime intensifies mistrust of neighbours, reduces the strength of mutual supports, weakens the sense of community, and can even hamper social relations, further undermining informal social controls (Newman & Franck 1982; Rohe and Burby 1988). Moreover, in neighbourhoods where relationships between residents and formal agents of social control are strained – as is often the case in extremely disadvantaged public housing developments - residents may choose to bypass agents of the formal system altogether,

relying instead on informal methods to redress interpersonal disputes (Anderson 1999; Kane 2005; Kubrin and Weitzer 2003). In other words, a feedback loop may operate in such neighbourhoods, where the fear of crime and mistrust amongst residents reduces community involvement and impedes resident intervention, further increasing crime because informal social control is weakened (Kelling and Coles 1996; Skogan 1990). As such, fear of crime may be both a cause and effect of elevated rates of crime and violence in the neighbourhood.

Targeted Violence

Although resident depictions of life in the 'old' Regent Park are somewhat romanticized, portraying the neighbourhood as, in the words of one of our participants, "a safe haven from the rest of the city", residents are not naïve to the prevalence of crime and violence in the neighbourhood prior to revitalization. All of our interview participants spoke of the normalcy of violence in the old Regent Park, and many indicated that the identities of the neighbourhood's major criminal players were well known. Nevertheless, the vast majority of participants—85%— insisted that they felt safer in Regent Park *before* the onset of revitalization. Perhaps ironically, participants attributed these feelings of safety to the presence of major criminal players, most notably neighbourhood 'older heads,' high ranking gang members and drug dealers—and the existence of, and adherence to, a street code that kept local levels of crime and violence in check.

An important component of residents' perceived safety in the pre-revitalization period was the belief that as long as young people in Regent Park 'kept to themselves' and did not become involved in the neighbourhood criminal structure, they were relatively safe from the risk of victimization. In other words, residents believed that *they* determined their *own* levels of risk by either participating in or refraining from criminal involvement in the neighbourhood. For

example, James (25yrs.) describes the advice he received when first moving into Regent Park, several years before the revitalization started:

"The message was, when I arrived [in Regent Park], if you're not involved in anything, if you're not involved in any criminal activity and you're not trying to set up yourself as anything on the block, you will be essentially ignored. And it was true (laughs). I was ignored, or I was, like I said before, tip of the hat for some of those guys who were runnin' the block and they recognized who I was and why I was here, and that was fine."

This perceived (or actual) control over their safety enabled residents to navigate their neighbourhood with relative ease, and allowed for trusting relationships to be formed among and between criminal as well as non-criminal elements, as exemplified in the following comment by Tyson (17yrs.):

"People that don't live here they think it's usually like a bad area, like, full with gangs and violence. There are gangs and there is violence but it's not like, all that. Like if you lived here, as long as you weren't like messin' with people then you're good. If you ain't tryin' to mess with business or like mess with any of their friends or somethin', then they wont bother you."

However, study respondents explained that while these protections were in place prior to the revitalization, they were quickly diminishing as a function of the destabilization that attends the revitalization process. Clarrisa (26yrs.), a white social worker from the area, echoes these sentiments:

"It used to be that like you didn't get in trouble unless you were somebody who was, kinda like, into it. So that's why I said like, four years ago I was 9/10 in safety. Now, like even as of two years ago [i.e. since the revitalization began], you could not be a man walking around with a hoodie on. Like, that put a target on your back. Or especially being a young, black male. The shootings have become, like they used to be targeted to A PERSON and like, you'd kinda hear that it was coming. Now it's just like, you could just be a black male walking around the neighbourhood and you're gonna get shot at by virtue of being a black male."

Tyson's, James' and Clarrisa's comments exemplify the perception that while violence was certainly perceived to be an issue in Regent Park before the revitalization, residents understood the risk to be largely restricted to those individuals enmeshed within criminal networks. Similarly to what Venkatesh found in Chicago, law-abiding residents tended not to feel threatened by illegal activity in the neighbourhood so long as it occurred with relatively minimal public visibility (2009: 87), as our respondents report that it generally did in the old Regent Park. Like Clarrisa, residents could differentiate between the targeted risk associated with shootings directed at one criminal actor (which, for them was indicative of the pre-revitalization period), and the more generalized risk associated with random drive-by shootings (more common since the revitalization began) (As also noted by Venkatesh 2009: 176).

The Street Code and Informal System of Criminal Governance

While residents understood that crime and violence was a lived reality in Regent Park prior to revitalization, they reported that it was typically confined to a small number of

criminally involved individuals, due in large part to the presence of major players who protected

the neighbourhood and its residents. More specifically, the presence of these actors ensured the

maintenance of an informal social structure that served a protective function for the area.

According to residents, Regent Park's criminal structure was characterized by well-established

and vigorously defended informal rules or a so-called "street code" (Anderson 1999). Although

Anderson's conceptualization of the street code promoted and necessitated the use of violence

and retaliation in order to gain respect and ward off future victimization (see also Brezina et al.

2004; Brookman et al. 2011; Gunter 2008; Sandberg 2008), our data highlights another aspect of

a 'street code'- a series of guidelines over when *not* to use violence – that is, when the use of

violence was discouraged or viewed as unacceptable. As such, our analysis focuses on the part of

the street code that *discouraged*, *limited* or *controlled* neighbourhood violence. These informal

rules regulated interpersonal behaviours, primarily with regard to the use of violence, deeming it

as either approved/acceptable or unapproved/unacceptable (Anderson 1999: 33). Premised on

respect, toughness and retribution, participants described the ways in which these rules not only

governed the behaviours of street-oriented and criminally-involved actors, but also served to

minimize harm to criminally as well non-criminally involved residents more generally. This is

because members of both groups understood the possible repercussions of "code transgressions"

(Ibid). As such, these rules are quickly learned and adopted by almost all neighbourhood youth,

as it is widely understood that adopting the street code- a kind of shield- should increase one's

safety from victimization (Ibid: 92).

As Tyson's, James', and Clarissa's narratives highlight, knowledge of and adherence to

these established informal rules assisted even uninvolved residents in navigating the dangers of

their neighbourhood. All but one of our participants who mentioned the street code spoke very positively of the presence of these informal rules- specifically the protective aspect of these rules-, regardless of their connections to the neighbourhood's criminal structure. As Samantha (22yrs.) reported: "There was a code[30] and it wasn't all bad and actually some of it was quite protective and that doesn't quite exist anymore." Eric (24yrs.) also spoke of the diminishing strength of the 'code': "Like, there's still people in the street like, who live by certain codes but yeah, definitely down here, the street code's a lot weaker." Study respondents consistently stated that the temporary or permanent displacement of the neighbourhood's major players has attenuated the strength of the street code. Changes to the informal rules have jeopardized the ability of criminal as well as non-criminal residents to safely navigate the neighbourhood and has, as a consequence, reduced feelings of safety among young residents. Dylan (27), a resident who works closely with neighbourhood youth acknowledged the presence of the street code and expressed his concerns about its disintegration since the onset of revitalization: "Before there was dangers but there was rules. And safety in those rules. And now that doesn't exist and I'm hearing from parents, I'm hearing from youth, I'm hearing from kids that 'we don't feel as safe anymore and we don't feel like we can trust people as much as we used to be able to trust people, because you just never really know.' There's definitely an increased sense of fear.*"

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[30] We asked interviewees "Research suggests that in certain neighbourhoods there are various informal rules or codes that certain residents abide by. Do such rules exist in Regent Park?" Thus, though we initially introduced the notion of an informal code in our interviews, participants – uniformly – knew what we meant. Participants generally used "code" as an umbrella term to encompass the various rules that residents abided by.

The Importance of Criminal Leaders

In addition to the existence of informal rules that govern behaviour in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, research has established that certain individuals often enforce these rules and exert informal social control throughout the neighbourhood (i.e. Bourgois 2002; Pattillo 1998; Venkatesh 2002). As yet, however, little is known about the effects of removing criminal leaders from these roles. Some studies have documented the adverse effects of gang interventions. Vargas (2014) demonstrates that for a gang that is disorganized, the arrest of the leader resulted in turmoil and increases in violence, as it initiated a process of competition with rival gangs. In Vargas' work, the intervention was police-based, as it resulted in the arrest of the gang leader. Examining the impact of federal gang prosecution on neighbourhoods, Papachristos (2001) argues that mass arrests of a gang's key players resulted not only in the gang's difficulty to maintain control over their territory and affected its structure, but also led to the displacement of members to other gangs, resulting in the growth of other gangs. Similarly, in discussing what happens when you arrest a gang leader, Brotherton and Barrios (2004) talk about how the arrest of King Tone – the leader of the Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation in New York City who had steered the group away from its violent past to move towards a more legitimate grass root movement – brought the street organization into a state of uncertainty, leading to in-fighting that stemmed from a lack of leadership, and ultimately rendering what was once a tightly controlled organization into one characterized by inner chaos and related increases in crime and violence.

These studies highlight the importance of considering how changes to the leadership structure of one gang may have collateral consequences, both within and outside the group. However, relatively little is known about what happens when the 'major criminal players' are not

necessarily gang members who control a specific gang or territory, but who may nevertheless

exert influence and control over an entire *neighbourhood*. It is here, where our paper makes a

unique contribution by exploring what happens to neighbourhood residents, as opposed to a

gang, when you remove the major criminal players.

Rebecca (26yrs.), another youth worker living and working in Regent Park, goes even further

when talking about the 'senseless' violence occurring in the neighbourhood:

> "I feel less safe because as I say, with gang violence in the neighbourhood. The older
>
> guys being present in the neighbourhood actually kept the balance of violence in
>
> check…This is gonna sound totally twisted. I feel less safe about some of those older
>
> gang members being moved out because that's why there's been this eruption of
>
> violence where 15 year olds are getting killed, it's crazy."

Rebecca's concerns were echoed by most of our respondents, who insisted that a recent

outbreak of violence (much of which occurred in the summer of 2012 and throughout 2013 and

2014) was not typical of the social order that previously governed behavior in the community.

This spate of violence lends further support to residents' belief that Regent Park has become less

safe since the revitalization, but it also demonstrates the strength of the normative codes that

were in place prior to the revitalization. Like many of our participants, Rebecca understood that

there was a 'system' in place that operated to keep crime and violence in check, and that since

the destruction of this system, young people in Regent Park perceive the risk of violent

victimization to be not only increased, but also diffused to residents not involved in the

neighbourhood's criminal structure. This is because, in a context where safety is uncertain due to compromised informal social control in the neighbourhood and a lack of faith in the efficacy of the criminal justice system, some young residents may choose to carry a weapon for protection, which increases the risk of violence in affected neighbourhoods (Kane 2005; Kubrin and Weitzer 2003).

Younger Actors and the Changing Nature of Street Life

Young residents report their belief that the displacement of major players who used to control drugs, violence and other crime in Regent Park has also created a power vacuum in the neighbourhood's criminal structure, which seems to have contributed to the perceived increase in violence. As Marshall (24yrs.) explained "It's like, a free market, you know? Anybody has a chance to step up, like you know?" The perceived upsurge of 'senseless' violence in the neighbourhood is thought by many to be directly related to competitions among young 'up and comers' jockeying for positions at the helm of local criminal networks. As Will (30yrs.) explains:

> "Growing up here, you've always had a hierarchy. And I'm not talking the police, or
> the MPP, or anything, there's always been a person who's been in charge of, they're not
> in charge of life, but like it's that person everybody looks up to, and you know when
> they talk, people listen. So, let's just say when the revitalization started, they took away
> those people, they didn't arrest them but those people had to leave and nobody comes
> down here no more. Once that happened it was open season, so you had guys that didn't
> know better, didn't know the code of the streets."

Dylan adds:

"Crime and gang activity and violence happened here but there was the guys at the top who ran the block, made sure that you know, that happened within reason. It didn't happen in your own backyard and um, now that those guys are no longer here, no longer operating under the same structures, it's 13 year olds running around with guns, right? So instead of you know, being older guys on the block who made sure that young punks weren't being young punks, now its young punks who are controlling even younger ones…And there's no rules and the guys I know who have lived here their entire lives, who I'm really close to, who are you know, 17, 18, 19, um, they're expressing to me for the first time ever they feel afraid."

In a similar vein and when asked about changes to Regent Park's criminal structure and levels of violence in the neighbourhood since the revitalization, Mike (30yrs.) reports:

"Some things got worse. Certain things for the younger kids got worse, you know what I'm saying? The kids get into it a lot younger around here now….Like it ain't nothin' to see a 12 or 13 year old kid out here maybe doin' some shit. When I was younger that wouldn't happen. The older guys wouldn't let that happen - but I mean now, it's just different."

When asked why he believed that violence in the neighbourhood was on the rise Nick (17yrs.) responded: "Because the older head only woulda turn into an older head by doin' somethin', you

know what I mean? So, like, this is them doin' something…That's when the violence comes. When they're tryin to step up." Will (26yrs.) goes even further to say:

"[…]Without those generals no more, everybody's just taking up those pockets and becoming bosses. There's a lot more home invasions and stuff. Back in the day that never happened. You try to rob somebody in Regent and you're a Regent Parker you'd feel the wrath of a lot of people, right? It was a very tightknit community. There was like three posses, and everybody knew who was who, and everybody respected the words of those generals. Those people are gone now so what you have right now are like 16-year-olds running shit and with 16-year-olds running shit they don't understand anything so they're like robbing people. Like ever since the revitalization I swear there's been more robberies in Regent with little kids, that never happened."

When talking about the old heads, Shawn (29yrs.) echoed Will's concerns "They never wanted us to see them slangin', never wanted to. But now these kids are tryin' to be the older head and they think that's the way to come up….They don't care who they got to blast, they're gonna blast anyone to get to the top."

When asked why younger players privilege the use of violence, almost all participants cited both instrumental and symbolic reasons. That is, they claimed that young people trying to penetrate and/or rise within the ranks of the neighbourhood's criminal structure likely feel they have much more to prove with respect to their ability to successfully carry out crimes, but also in terms of their perceived 'toughness' and 'fearlessness'. Younger players also have much less to

lose compared to 'older heads,' who often have well-established reputations, and much deeper ties to both the neighbourhood and its non-criminal residents (i.e. through having their own children). Accordingly, while 'older heads' have a much greater stake in conforming to a street code to minimize unnecessary violence and police attention, thereby protecting uninvolved residents and themselves, younger players seem to be more focused on 'coming up' in the criminal world, establishing their claims to territory and their position within Regent's criminal hierarchy.

It is important to emphasize that an informal set of rules that governs criminal behaviour *continues* to be present in Regent Park – and that young, criminally involved residents adhere to them - but the rules that are currently in place are qualitatively different from those in the 'old' Regent Park. More specifically, the violence that the younger kids are participating in is directly a product of adhering to a different street code- where the *protective* elements of the previous code, do not exist. Our data show that a key means of moving up through the ranks in the Regent Park's criminal hierarchy involves the use of violence – that is, respect is now equated with the extent to which a younger actor literally fights for it. One of the most significant aspects of the Anderson's code and the informal rules governing Regent Park center on "respect," which our participants equate with "being treated 'right' or being granted ones 'props'(or proper due) or the deference one deserves" (Anderson 1999: 33).

Respect is difficult to attain and easy to lose (Anderson 1999: 33, *see also* Brookman et al. 2011), and it is what provides residents in disadvantaged neighbourhoods with status. The previous criminal players in Regent Park had already gained their respect from many community

residents, thus they were able to develop and continuously and strictly maintain the street code in the neighbourhood. The younger residents, however, must work hard to achieve the success of their predecessors, and may therefore rely more heavily on public displays of crime and violence to do so. Though it may seem counterintuitive that adopting the violent demeanor emphasized by the street code may reduce victimization, this persona might indeed discourage others from 'testing' or 'challenging' their street demeanor and reputation. Empirical studies suggest that street codes can affect victimization in surprising ways, by either promoting violence against others, by outlining appropriate and inappropriate targets, and by proscribing means by which to resist victimization (Bourgois 2003; Miller, 2008; Pattillo 1998). In Regent Park, this vacuum exists precisely because of the "population engineering" aspect of the revitalization (displacing old residents out of the neighbourhood- including 'major players'), which creates immediate vacancies for younger kids to fulfill leadership roles, as opposed to having them organically rise in the ranks by 'putting in time' and 'proving' themselves.

Undeniably, the pressures on younger residents attempting to 'rise in the ranks' in Regent Park's criminal world are high. The street code is premised upon a tough and violent demeanor and willingness to retaliate against various forms of 'disrespect' (Anderson 1999: 73). These youth recognize that their failure to present themselves as tough and *ready*, as well as *able*, to defend their honor will effectively represent an invitation for their attack and insult by others (Rich and Grey 2005). Jacobs (2004) found that offenders relied upon the threat of future retaliation to reduce their risk of violent victimization, as well as to earn, maintain and enhance respect. Since "word on the street travels fast and reputational damage can be severe and long-lasting" (Jacobs 2004: 297), dismissing even minor transgressions demonstrates that one is soft

and weak, necessitating a strong response to any and all affronts (Anderson 1999; Courtwright 1996; Jacobs 2004; Rich and Grey 2005). When such challenges occur, the use of violence is considered to be appropriate and in some cases, even mandatory (Anderson 1999; Rich and Grey 2005). In fact, youth have been known to initiate altercations in order to create possibilities for building their respect on the streets (Anderson 1999: 72). Thus, some youth would rather risk their own lives than have their respect or image compromised (Ibid, 92), as appears to be the case in Regent Park.

By successfully presenting themselves as individuals who demand respect, these young residents in Regent Park understand that they can deter others from attempting to victimize them, and the ability to negotiate violence is considered to be one of the primary resources in gaining respect, street credibility and status (Wilkinson 2003). Accordingly, the desire for increased status, for increased respect and deference as the old heads maintained throughout the neighbourhood for so many years drives these younger kids to aspire to fill the shoes of their role models. However, because younger criminal actors often have less experience on the street and within criminal networks, are not as familiar with the code and possibly do not understand the importance of adhering to the beneficial aspects of the code in gaining the respect and trust of their neighbours, they may be more likely to engage in senseless and much more reckless violence than their older counterparts, as our respondents fear.

In sum, many of our participants articulated the belief that changes in the nature of violence within Regent Park are directly tied to the displacement of the 'older guys' who 'kept the balance of violence in check.' In their absence, residents fear that criminal networks have

been penetrated by 12 or 13 year olds who are not only engaging in crime and not adhering to the previously existing protections for uninvolved residents, but are also falling victim to violence associated with such activities.

CONCLUSION

To date, research on neighbourhood restructuring has focused on 'prosocial' social networks, and in so doing, has overlooked the effects of change on long-established criminal networks in the context of massive neighbourhood transformation. To the best of our knowledge, our research is the first to explore how a period of instability initiated by neighbourhood restructuring has affected a neighbourhood's criminal structures and networks, and to illuminate the effects of this intervention on the lives of both criminally, and non-criminally involved residents. Although there has been extensive academic exploration into informal rules and the "code of the street," and its functions and effects on criminal structures and neighborhoods, little is known about what happens to criminal structures and neighbourhoods when these informal rules are compromised or when certain facets of the street code change. The intricate relationship between changes to the criminal structure and its demographics and preemptive or consequential changes to the street code has previously been unexplored. Our research demonstrates the multiple, complex ways in which neighbourhood restructuring can affect a neighbourhood and its criminal structure. It also illuminates that the deterioration of a street code in a neighborhood such as a Regent Park can lead to adverse effects of perceptions of safety, decreased trust in other residents, and possible increases in crime and violence in the neighbourhood. Of course, such perceptions can set off a vicious cycle: distrust in one's neighbors and friends leads to suspicion, paranoia and sometimes, preemptive and/or retaliatory violence. To be sure, the

revitalization of Regent Park may confer benefits to social housing residents, particularly in terms of improvements to the built-environment. However, it has also resulted in unintended social and criminal consequences that undermine safety and quality of life in the neighbourhood. Indeed, our findings suggest that while criminal social networks and the informal social controls they upheld have long played an important and positive role in the community, the destabilization of these networks has eroded the informal controls, creating a power vacuum that young people are literally dying (and killing) to fill.

Given the popularity of neighbourhood restructuring initiatives in public housing developments, there is much to be learned about the varying ways in which criminal networks are affected, and the consequences that these changes have for the community more generally. Vargas (2014: 144) recommends that law enforcement interventions that target criminal group leaders should consider the actions of criminal groups with whom the targeted group has either collaborative, or competitive relations with. By illuminating how neighbourhoods- and criminal and non-criminal neighbourhood residents- are affected by the removal of the neighbourhood's (highly influential) major criminal players, our research leads us to recommend that *any* interventions that may affect a criminal structure- not necessarily police oriented (i.e. gang leader's arrest) – take into consideration the ways in which changes to the affected (and not necessarily targeted) criminal group may affect other criminal groups with which the targeted group has relations with, but also how this may result in the emergence of other criminal groups or individuals.

Our findings warrant further elaboration in future studies that can either surpass some of our methodological restraints (i.e. inaccessibility of police data), or can adopt a mix-methods, longitudinal approach whereby victimization surveys can be conducted pre, during and post restructuring initiatives. We encourage academics to explore the ways in which street codes change depending on the composition of the criminal structures in the neighbourhood: how do changing demographics of criminal actors affect the street code? Can changes in the street code lead to changing demographics of criminal actors? Does the 'code' (in its original or changed form) prevent some forms of violence or crime while making other forms more likely or more visible? We recommend that future studies examine whether neighbourhood redevelopment initiatives change the types and/or frequency of crime and violence, and further tease out the relationship between redevelopment, a neighbourhood's street code, and its criminal incidents.. Explorations into these questions can be very illuminating and can have important policy implications for future neighbourhood restructuring efforts.

CHAPTER FOUR

DRAWING BOUNDARIES OR DRAWING WEAPONS? MASTER STATUS

SUPPRESSING GANG VIOLENCE[31]

ABSTRACT

Criminological scholarship on gangs has documented that the attempt to take over territory and drug markets under the control of another gang can be a primary motivation of inter-gang violence. However, little is known about situations where competition over territory and drug markets comes from *within* the territory itself, or about instances where gang competition *does not* lead to violence between criminal groups. Drawing on over 140 interviews and over 9 months of ethnographic fieldwork in Canada's oldest social housing project—Regent Park—this article describes and analyzes the changing nature of the neighbourhood's gang landscape resulting from neighbourhood restructuring initiatives. In particular, it examines why the emergence of a rival gang within Regent Park did not incite violence as the literature would lead us to expect. The paper outlines how the emergence of a new rival gang within a territory previously dominated by established criminal groups did not result in the type of violence, in part because the two groups shared a "master status" of being Regent Park residents, which served to buffer inter-gang violence. Further, it argues that instead of drawing weapons, the established criminal groups expressed their frustration with the loss of their territorial monopoly to emerging groups by morally distinguishing themselves from the new groups. This paper concludes by

casting a scholarly spotlight on the means through which boundary work develops between criminal groups.

Introduction

Criminologists have portrayed street gangs as atypical fixture of life in many depleted, impoverished, and often racialized inner-city neighbourhoods across North America (Cloward and Ohlin 1960; Cohen 1955; Comack et al. 2013; Harding 2014). Often viewing their existence as an embodiment of the neighbourhood (Garot 2007; Grannis 2009), many gangs pay tribute to their locality by naming themselves after their neighbourhood or particular streets (Adamson 1998; Bucerius 2014; Vigil 1988), or otherwise giving back to their communities by providing struggling residents with material or financial resources, and even serving as agents of informal social control (e.g., Papachristos et al. 2013; Pattillo 1998; Sobel and Osoba 2009; Whyte 1943). Gang identities are embedded in local friendship groups and draw upon collective memories tied to neighbourhood spaces, resulting in deep and continued loyalty to the neighbourhood even after relocation (Decker 1996: 258). As such, a gang's identification with a specific turf or territory can be so strong that scholars have considered it to be one of the gang's most defining elements (Aldridge et al. 2011; Brotherton and Barrios 2004; Moore 1991; Spergel 1984), which accentuates the importance of viewing gangs as both products of, and contributors to, the neighbourhoods in which they emerge (Brotherton 2015: 15).

The neighbourhoods in which gangs form and operate generally constitute, in whole or in part, the gang's turf or territory. As such, apart from these constitutive and symbolic elements, neighbourhoods also often provide gangs their primary financial means of gang sustenance and maintenance (Papachristos et al. 2013). One of the greatest advantages of the connection of gang

members to their neighbourhood is both their access to, and control of this turf, particularly in

regards to drug sales. Given that the major illegal enterprise of most gangs is drug trafficking,

especially in impoverished, minority communities (Curtis 2003; Densley 2014: 520; Spergel

1995), not only do gangs benefit from the territorial control of these underground markets, but

they can also impose a money-making monopoly, ensuring they are the only group that

financially benefit from criminal enterprises within the area (Skolnick 1990: 5; Varese 2010). As

such, protecting gang turf is crucial for gang members, and turf wars are often motivated by

financial competition—essentially, conflicts about who can and who *should* make the most

money from the neighbourhood in question (Skolnick 1990; Toy 2011).

The intimate relationship between gang identity and its locality—the neighbourhood, its

turf, barrio, or block—often mandates that any perceived or actual threats need to be met with

strong resistance and defense of territory (Decker 1996; Densley 2012; Horowitz 1983;

Papachristos, Hureau, and Braga 2013). In fact, vehement 'protection' of the locality has been

referred to as the primary motivation for gang warfare, with gang members even rationalizing

such violence as demonstrating their 'love' for the places they come from (Rodgers 2002: 5).

Accounts of gang warfare across American cities like Los Angeles, Chicago, and Detroit have

exposed not only the serious harms associated with gang violence, but the continued importance

of locality as a precursor, or even the primary reason for inter-gang violence. Although the

motivations initiating gang wars often vary in both severity and nature, they generally involve

attacking or *protect*ing a neighbourhood (Rodgers 2002: 5). This feature of gang membership

has not been studied to the same level as drug-motivated violence, but has a noted place within

scholarly debates. For instance, Decker writes, "Gangs have a strong spatial structure; they claim

particular turf as their own and are committed to its "defense" against outsiders. The prospect of

a rival gang 'invading' their turf and violating its sanctity is likely to evoke a violent response,

leading to the spatial clustering of violence" (1996: 245). These neighbourhood 'beefs'[32] can be

long-lasting and intergenerational, to the point where modern-day combatants may have no

knowledge about the original cause of the conflict (Harding 2010: 33), demonstrating the deeply

ingrained commitment to territorial 'defense' in many of today's inner city neighbourhoods.

The existing research on this topic is scattered with accounts of gang violence stemming

from competition and battles over territory, where one gang is typically portrayed as 'invading'

another's turf (Klein and Maxson 1987; Maxson 1999; Toy and Stanko 2008; Vargas 2014).

However, little is known about what happens when new gangs emerge *within* (as opposed to

coming from outside) the neighbourhoods or territories previously occupied by other gangs,

thereby creating intra-neighbourhood competition for status and resources (Brotherton and

Barrios 2004). Some research demonstrates that gangs can co-exist peacefully within the same

neighbourhoods. For example, Goddard (1992) describes a situation where four major gangs and

a number of 'sub gangs' occupied the same area without conflict, with territorial boundaries

delineated by infrastructural or natural features. Additionally, Phillips (1999) outlines how

Chicano gang members frequently hung out with African American Crips within the same

neighbourhood. When asked about the lack of animosity between the two racialized groups, the

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[32] It is important to emphasize that these neighbourhood 'beefs' need not be associated with 'gangs' per say. Sullivan warns about this generalization/distinction, and found that 'beefs' stemming from, or related to, area of residence may not be exclusively related to gangs, but to 'blocks' or 'crews' (2005: 181). Further, the 'beefs' are so pervasive, that they may affect all youth residing in an area, irrespective of their willingness or 'participation' in the beef or criminal involvement. For example, these youths must monitor their movements within, and especially outside of their neighbourhoods, being careful about going to school or to the store and encountering someone from a rival area which may lead to violence (Harding 2010: 45).

members claimed that they "had grown up in the same area, gone to school together—and that there was never any reason for them not to get along" (p. 345). Phillips also argues that a surprising number of racialized gangs get along in many gang neighbourhoods and that they "find it beneficial to coexist, trade, do illegal business together, and back each other up if necessary" (p. 346). While it is certainly not unheard of for gangs to peacefully co-exist within the same neighbourhood, in accounts of peaceful coexistence, it is clear that territorial boundaries are firmly drawn and adhered to or, competition between the gangs over territory and financial gain is a non-issue. In the majority of accounts where conflicts over territory exist, the literature predicts an eruption in gang warfare.

Thus, although we know quite a bit about why violence *occurs* between gangs, not much is known about why violence *does not occur* between gangs operating and *competing* within the same turf. It is this research question that this paper engages with. In this article, I draw upon ethnographic data to demonstrate how the shared 'master status' (Hughes 1945: 357) of neighbourhood residency helps to suppress inter-gang violence. In this case, competition over turf and drug dealing between two competing gangs in Toronto's *Regent Park* neighbourhood did not culminate in violence, but was characterized by Michele Lamont's (1992) extension of 'boundary work.'

This article proceeds as follows: First, I describe Toronto's *Regent Park* neighbourhood, its reputation as a crime and gang haven, and its on-going neighbourhood restructuring initiatives. I then present my methodology and discuss my findings. I explore how the emergence of a new Somali Canadian gang on the 'turf' of existing Caribbean Canadian gangs sparked

competition between the two groups over drug-dealing territory, and question *why this competition did not lead to inter-gang violence* as the literature would predict. I argue that the shared 'master status' of neighbourhood residency of both of these gangs suppressed the prospect of inter-gang violence, with Regent Park's established gangs dealt with the loss of territory control by drawing distinctive 'us vs. them' moral symbolic boundaries between themselves and the new Somali gang. I conclude with a call for future research to further examine competition over gang turf in different settings, to better understand the complexity of inter-gang dynamics and competition, and analyze the potential of neighbourhood identity and belonging in suppressing gang violence, particularly in relation to criminal groups operating within the same milieu.

REGENT PARK, TORONTO

Like other Toronto residents, I grew up exposed to stigmatizing news media and popular representations of Regent Park as a dangerous 'ghetto'—a neighbourhood that outsiders must never venture into, even accidently. Erected in the 1950's, Regent Park is Canada's oldest and – until its restructuring – also largest social housing project, with 100% of the neighbourhood's 69 acres initially intended to provide short-term, low-income housing for a temporarily impoverished, working class. Although originally designed to serve as a transitional community, Regent Park has provided housing to countless waves of low-income residents and recent immigrants, with many families remaining in the neighbourhood for generations. Initially celebrated as a successful endeavor to house the city's poor, an ongoing pattern of limited investment in the neighbourhood's physical infrastructure, the inevitable deterioration of its housing stock, and its being populated by impoverished and racialized residents pushed Regent

Park to be branded as a failure in the eyes of city planners and many Toronto residents (James 2010: 70). It soon amassed a near-mythical reputation as a decrepit neighbourhood plagued with crime, violence and other social ills. Media representations branded it as "thoroughly ghettoized" and "a poster child for poverty" (citedin Purdy 2003: 46). Many of my participants described life in Regent Park as mirroring the struggles of African American ghetto-dwellers in the United States.

Demographic information supports such stereotypes. Up until 2005, the two census tracts the neighbourhood covers comprised the lowest and second lowest income census tracts in the entire province of Ontario, Canada's most populated province.[33] In 1990, the average family income of Regent Parkers was more than 50% below the national average, with 64% of residents living below the low-income cut off line. By 2006, this proportion increased to 67.9%, as compared to 24.5% for the rest of the city of Toronto (TCHC 2007). Unemployment rates were double those of the rest of Toronto, and 37.3% of households were single parent, with the ratio of female-to-male single parent families being 9 to 1 (TCHC 2007). In addition, almost 22% of households required major repairs (Horak and London 2010:7). The neighbourhood was also extremely racialized. In 2006, 78% of residents were foreign born, primarily arriving from the Caribbean, Africa, and Eastern and Southern Asia, respectively. Accordingly, almost 80% of residents self-identified as belonging to a visible minority (Horak and London 2010: 6). This racialization was particularly prominent among young people. Of the 1700 youth, 91% of 15-19 year olds, and 78% of 20-24 year olds identified as members of visible minorities (Statistics

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[33] Both these census tracts extend into neighbourhoods that border of Regent Park, which are much more affluent and therefore likely 'improve' the demographical portrait of the neighbourhood itself.

Canada 2010).

Given the hardships facing Regent Park residents and the fact that "gangs emerge from the long-term struggles of a community against social suffering" (Brotherton 2015: 16), the rise of neighbourhood gangs in Regent Park was perhaps unsurprising, something that further fueled its stigma as "a haven for single mothers, welfare families and deviants…a magnet for crime and drug problems" (Purdy 2005: 531). Further, Regent Park had the highest homicide rate in Toronto between 1988 and 2003 (Thompson 2009), which many residents attributed to spikes in gang violence. Although peak homicide levels between 1988-1992 were followed by a precipitous decline (Thompson 2009), the media continued to sensationalize the violence, especially following multiple high-profile shootings involving racialized young men from the neighbourhood during the last decade. For years, news coverage has been dominated by depictions of poor, young black males as violent gangbangers, perpetuating and being victimized by gun violence, painting Regent Park's gang problem with a 'black' brush. This was exacerbated by the moral panic about the "Jamaicanization of crime", sparked by the Toronto police and local media (Tator and Henry 2006:142), particularly in regards to a large proportion of gun crimes being attributed to Jamaican males and the broader rhetoric surrounding black crime in the city (Mosher and Akins 2016: 343).

My perceptions during my first day in the neighbourhood were informed by many of these stereotypes and media depictions of Regent Park. The buildings were decrepit, windows were broken or boarded up, graffiti and memorials for youths lost to gun violence decorated the sides of buildings, rap music played loudly from cars in parking lots, and residents hung out on

the front steps of their townhouses, often sharing a joint or beer with their neighbours. Within just a few hours of being in the neighbourhood, I witnessed a young man drawing a gun and pointing it at another man's head as I walked by, an altercation—that I later learned to be—between local gang members. Indeed, the violence and victimization that characterized its reputation was associated with the struggles faced by neighbourhood residents, and neighbourhood youth in particular. In a Regent Park documentary—Invisible City—one schoolteacher exemplifies this, explaining "you know you're a product of the projects when you've been to more funerals than you've been to weddings" (see Davis 2009). However, as is typical with news media accounts (Simmons 1993) the struggles facing minorities in the neighbourhood and the reasons for the decay—namely, structural disadvantage, concentrated and generational poverty, unemployment, racial profiling and police brutality leading to police mistrust, and a lack of investment into the maintenance and upkeep of property—were rarely conveyed to those outside of the neighbourhood. Such news coverage cast an extremely negative and stigmatizing light on the majority of Regent youth—and black youth in particular—who had no involvement in gang life or criminality. Simultaneously, many of the neigbourhood's positive elements (e.g., namely a strong community cohesion amongst residents, commitment to local activism, a plethora of well-regarded community programs, a steadily increasing rate of high school completion, and many youth succeeding in academic, professional, and musical careers were not portrayed, demonstrating the large disconnect between *internal* and *external* representations of the neighbourhood (Thompson et al. 2013; Wacquant 2007: 67). Yet, after having spent only a couple of weeks in the area, I found that positive elements vastly overshadowed the darker sides of neighbourhood life.

THE REGENT PARK REVITALIZATION

Regent Park's 'crime problem' contributed to it being selected as the first social housing complex in Canada to undergo neighbourhood restructuring – or what the City of Toronto has referred to as "The Regent Park Revitalization." Comparable restructuring initiatives have become popular in North America and Europe, championed as a means to de-concentrate poverty, and consequently, expunge it's related 'social ills' such as crime and violence (Wilson 1987), These revitalizations essentially involve demolishing and rebuilding severely disadvantaged areas in hopes of transforming them into mixed-income spaces, where middle-class residents live alongside low-income residents in previously decrepit, and now gentrified, areas (Crump 2002). Efforts to artificially engineer 'social mix' (Wilson 1987) in Regent Park and transform it into a "mixed-income, mixed-use community," mean that about 63% of the new townhouses and condominiums are now sold on the private market (Toronto Community Housing Cooperation [TCHC] 2015).

The revitalization began in 2005 and is slated for completion by 2020 (TCHC 2016). As such, during my fieldwork from 2013-2016, the neighbourhood was undergoing a vast physical and social transition. The social engineering process was already underway when I entered the field, with many middle-income residents having moved into Regent and many social housing residents having been temporarily, or permanently displaced to other social housing complexes across Toronto. It is important to appreciate the neighbourhood's instability in order to gain a full understanding of the context in which local residents found themselves during my fieldwork. Although the mixed-income model was expected to reduce local levels of crime and violence (Katz 1993; Wilson 1987), news media maintain the theme that "gangs, drugs and guns still rule

Regent Park" (Toronto Sun 2013).

METHODOLOGY

My interest in the topic of this article emerged during data collection for a separate project where I recruited and interviewed Regent Park residents about their experiences of the Revitalization in the summer of 2013. Although most of the residents I interviewed were law-abiding citizens, I increasingly came into contact with individuals who were clearly involved in, or in charge of, Regent Park's criminal underworld. Much like other disadvantaged neighbourhoods, Regent Park was rather isolated and well-protected in the sense that outsiders were 'checked' almost immediately upon entry by individuals or groups who took it upon themselves to monitor the presence and movement of unknown individuals who ventured into the neighbourhood. Those most involved in the neighbourhood's criminal underworld were immediately curious—and suspicious—of who I was and what I was doing in their community, and watched me intently during my first few weeks in Regent Park. Concerns that I was an undercover police officer or informant actually expedited me forming relationships with the neighbourhood's major criminal players as they quickly approached and questioned me about my identity and why I was in the area, wanting to know what a young white woman was doing roaming the streets of a 'ghetto' like Regent Park by herself. In those situations, I explained that I was conducting interviews on resident perceptions and experiences of the Revitalization, and would be recruiting participants for the next few months. I quickly got the sense that both the criminal and law-abiding residents were satisfied with my intentions and enthusiastically supported my data collection efforts.

My initial contact with the neighbourhood's drug dealers and gang members was limited to short greetings as I passed their so-called 'chill spots'—a basketball court, a place behind an ice rink, and the school yard—where the young men would sit together smoking weed, drinking, selling drugs, playing dice/cards for money, freestyle rapping, or shooting hoops. As the weeks passed, some of the young men talked with me at greater length. Initially these were attempts at flirtation, which ceased over time, and it soon became clear that the young men were just as curious about me as I was about them. These increasingly frequent exchanges eventually made the young men relatively comfortable with having me around. Soon I was spending more and more time in-between my scheduled interviews hanging out with them as they enjoyed the warm days and worked the vibrant summer drug trade. Given this unexpected level of access into the neighbourhood's criminal underworld, and my growing familiarity with these young men, I became interested in understanding the Revitalization's effects on the neighbourhood's criminal milieu on a much deeper level. Thus, I decided to make Regent Park the site of my doctoral fieldwork, and I initiated more sustained ethnographic research which I combined with informal interviews, believing that a mixed method approach (Maxwell 2012) would be the best avenue for developing an understanding of their lived realities (Brewer 2000).

To that end, I spent the summers of 2013, 2014, and 2015 conducting interviews and ethnographic fieldwork in Regent Park.[34]Comparable urban ethnographies typically involve the researcher being immersed within one field site and remaining in the field until the data collection process is completed (i.e., Bucerius 2014; Contreras 2012; Goffman 2015). Given my

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[34] The interruptions in my fieldwork were due to the fact that my University is located across the country and I had to return there during the school year to take classes and complete various exams associated with my Ph.D. program.

frequent entry into and exit from the field, my research differed from that more familiar

approach, as I had to re-establish access and re-negotiate my role as a researcher in the

community on multiple occasions (Gold 1958; Snow et al. 1986). Yet being highly visible and

having a prior history in the neighborhood made each re-entry relatively easy. For approximately

3 months each summer I spent about 5-8 hours a day, 5-6 days a week in Regent Park, partaking

in "deep hanging out" (Geertz, 1998) to more fully understand the neighbourhood's criminal

dynamics. I adopted the perspective that "everything is data" (Dunn 2009: 280), meticulously

taking field notes on lived realities in Regent Park, informal conversations with participants,

neighbourhood spaces, events, community meetings, and situations that arose (Emerson, Fretz,

and Shaw 1995).

As is common in many urban ethnographies, I had key participants with whom I spent

most of my time in the field. These individuals changed from year to year between the two

criminal groups mentioned below, although this analysis is based on the summer of 2015, which

I spent with the Caribbean Canadian group. This group consisted of about 10 young men

between the ages of 18-46, although most of the men were approximately 25 years old. All but

one of the men were members of racialized minorities, either of 'Caribbean' (specifically,

Jamaican), Guyanese, or Trinidadian descent.[35]Most had lived in Regent Park their entire lives,

and they dominated much of the gang activity in the area prior to the emergence of a new

'Somali' gang—*The Young Soldiers*.[36]The Caribbean young men were deeply embedded within

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[35] The umbrella term of 'Caribbean' was used to refer to members of Regent Park's existing
criminal groups.
[36]Gang name changed to protect its identity. Members of this group comprised my second set of
key participants, especially during the summer of 2014. This gang is comprised of males
between 16-24, most of which are either first or second generation Muslim immigrants mostly

the neighbourhood's social structure, oftentimes having most of their immediate and even extended families living in the area. Some of these men were referred to as "Old(er) Heads"—a term used by both law-abiding and criminal residents to describe older gang members, oftentimes in surprisingly positive ways (Urbanik et al. 2016).

The Caribbean and Somali groups were similar in size, although members of the Somali group were quite a bit younger (16-24 yrs.), had less established street reputations, were less armed, and were less capable of organized violence than the Caribbean groups. Although the Somali groups were increasingly resorting to violence for their criminal and reputational purposes, the Caribbean groups in Regent Park were still more skilled and more 'powerful' in violently responding to any threats to themselves or to their respective group. Thus, despite the emergence of the *Young Soldiers* within Regent Park, the Caribbean groups had more 'street cred' in the neighbourhood and beyond. This was also evidenced by the violence that the groups were responsible for and/or victimized by, with violence by the Caribbean groups being much more brazen, high-profile, and serious than the violence attributed to the Somali group. Nevertheless, as sections of their neighbourhood were demolished as a result of the revitalization, both groups were forced to hang out and deal drugs in the still untouched areas of Regent Park, meaning that they would sometimes 'chill' together. Some men had clean criminal records, while others had long lists of charges and convictions associated with drug trafficking, weapons possession, gun violence, gang membership, and even first degree murder. During the course of my research, several members of the Caribbean and Somali groups were incarcerated, some badly beaten or stabbed, and a few were murdered.

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from Somalia, though some are of Eritrean, Ethiopian or Djibouti descent, though they were identified by most criminal and law-abiding residents as "Somali."

I became particularly close with a few members of the Caribbean Canadian group, who were eager for me to "roll" with them so that I could get the 'real story' of Regent Park. Extant research has documented the importance of enthusiastic and open key participants in conducting ethnographic work (e.g., Bourgois 2003; Bucerius 2014), so their insistence on showing me the 'true' Regent Park was encouraging. Once we established a mutually trusting research relationship (Maher 2000), I devoted the entire summer of 2015 to spending time with them. My days primarily consisted of just sitting around and talking to the young men as they hung out at a neighbourhood basketball court that served as their 'home base,' where they played basketball, gambled, drank, and smoked weed. This basketball court was also the primary headquarters for their drug trafficking where they sold crystal meth, powder cocaine, Oxytocin, Percocet, marijuana and crack to customers from within and outside the neighbourhood. Some of the men were aspiring and talented rappers, heavily involved in Toronto's rap scene, which meant that I also spent many hours hanging out in a makeshift rap studio while the men recorded and produced their music. Almost all of the men were unemployed and most of their daily lives involved hanging out within Regent Park's boundaries. On the rare occasions that they ventured outside of Regent Park (usually in search of beer, food, rolling papers, or to visit neighbouring housing projects), I would accompany them, also known as "shadowing" (Kusenbach 2003).In order to "fill in the biographical meanings of observed interactions" (Gubrium and Holstein 2002: 85). I complemented my observations with informal interviews, where I directly asked the young men about aspects of their lives that I did not fully understand from my observations alone. During these interviews the young men could be more open with me, as many of the interviews were done in private and away from their friends.

The findings that I present here stem from the participant observation and the 143 interviews I conducted with neighbourhood residents between the summers of 2013-2015. Existing research has highlighted the importance of building rapport prior to conducting formal interviews (Desmond 2007; Venkatesh 2000). Thus, the bulk of the data in this article are derived from ethnographic observation and interviews conducted with the neighbourhood's major criminal players—specifically, my Caribbean Canadian key informants—in the summers of 2014 and particularly with the young men in my sample in 2015, which tend to be much richer than those conducted earlier in the research process. I initially used a semi-structured interview guide, but with time, the interviews became more free flowing and open ended. Interviews were anonymized, digitally recorded, subsequently transcribed, and coded using Nvivo 10.

FINDINGS

My research suggests that the gang landscape of Regent Park has undergone drastic changes since the onset of the Revitalization in 2005. In many of my formal interviews and informal conversations, neighbourhood residents expressed concerns about significant changes to the nature and preponderance of neighbourhood violence, which they attribute to the emergence of new gangs (of predominately Somali Canadian background) on the turf of long-established neighbourhood gangs (of predominately Caribbean Canadian background). As I will show, my findings demonstrate that despite the emerging competition stemming from these new groups, and Caribbean groups' loss of monopoly over 'control' of their turf, perhaps surprisingly, the established groups did not violently defend 'their' territory. Frequently noting that the Somali groups are "from the same 'hood" and "you don't shoot up your own 'hood,'" the established Caribbean Canadian gang members in my sample highlighted the importance of neighbourhood

as master status and as a deterrent to inter-gang violence. Instead of turning to violence as an avenue of defense or to demonstrate their frustrations with their loss of status, the Caribbean Canadian gang members in my ethnography drew a distinctive 'us vs. them' moral boundary between themselves and the newly formed Somali Canadian groups, shedding light on an important precursor to boundary work between criminal groups.

A CHANGING GANG MILIEU

Despite the gangs in Regent Park historically being primarily 'black,' or more specifically—Caribbean, my research participants believed that the displacement of many neighbourhood residents simply *changed* the ethnocultural composition of the neighbourhood's criminal actors, rather than *dissolving* the neighbourhood's criminal element as was hoped by the Revitalization planners. Having lived in the neighbourhood his entire life, 31-year-old Jévon[37] describes this change:

> "They started this whole revite, revitalization bullshit or whatever they wanna call it
> 'cause they wanted to get rid of the all the crime and violence and drugs here. They saw
> it as a black problem, right? And honestly, yo, like it was. A lot of the shootings and
> drugs and robberies were because of the black guys that ran the block here. So they
> thought that by tearin' down the 'hood and movin' out those black families that Regent
> Park would stop being so ghetto and violent. But… naw…I mean, look what's

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[37] In order to protect the identity of my participants, all names used in this article are pseudonyms. In addition, in certain instances, other potentially identifying features (i.e. age) have been changed to further protect the anonymity of my participants.

happening. They may have moved some of the black gang guys out, but now we gots

these Muslim or Somali gangs up in this bitch!"

Jévon and many others I met were acutely aware and critical of the supposed failures of

the 'cleaning' up Regent Park, vis-à-vis the Revitalization. Many gang-active residents

understood that one of the Revitalization's intentions was to reduce local levels of crime and

violence. Jévon shared the concerns of many of my participants in regards to the *consequences* of

this shift in the neighbourhood's criminal milieu, attributing much of the recent violence to these

new groups: "Look, all the shootings and violence and heat 'round here right now is cause of the

Somalians. It's all on them! You never know what could happen here now cause of how they go

about their business. It's a lot more dangerous cause of these fools." Claiming that these new

Somali Canadian groups are growing numerically, have many 'beefs', and engage in intra-group

violence, many of my non-Somali participants said that for the first time in their lives they feel

afraid living in Regent Park. My participants were also adamant that both the preponderance and

nature of violence of the newly-emerging gangs was distinctively different from the criminal

behaviour of the criminal groups that previously governed the neighbourhood, and that it was

these differences which made them most fearful. Twenty-two year old Shawn exemplified this

concern about the growing preponderance of neighbourhood 'beefs', especially in regards to in-

group fighting. He shares:

"They're [The Somali Canadian groups] starting a lot of shit. They're going to different

neighbourhoods. Starting a lot of shit. People are smiling in your face, eh? As soon as

they hear "yo, we can make this much money off of this person," "yo, we'll go do it

together" and then I'm gonna blast you so I can get the rest. Isn't that crazy? And we're

all from the same neighbourhood."

The rise of the new gangs was attributed to the weakening of the Caribbean Canadian

groups that had previously dominated the neighbourhood's criminal world as a result of the

Revitalization. Born and raised in Regent Park, 42-year-old Jermaine is a staple of Regent Park's

criminal underworld, well-versed in the neighbourhood's dynamics. He put this into greater

perspective for me:

"Now hear this, aight? Before all these fuckin' changes, before this revitalization

bullshit or whatever they wanna call it. WE ran shit. It was all us, the black guys. This

neighbourhood was run by Jamaicans. Its not like we didn't roll with the whites, or the

Asians, or the browns. Nah, Regent Park was always, always like one. But most of the

guys at the top were black. But now, look around, girl. Where the Jamaicans at? We

still here but most of us have been moved out. So now who do you see standin' around

in packs all 'round here? Now, who do you see startin' all this shit and bringin' the

cops in? It ain't really us no more. Its those fuckin' Somalis."

When talking about a recent spate of violence in Regent Park, 32 year old Tamicka—a lifelong

resident connected to the criminal groups in Regent Park—reports: "You see, anytime you hear

a shooting or anything 'gwan around here, just know it's a Somalian or one of them. It's the

truth- they're the ones running Regent Park, they're the ones selling the drugs, they're the ones running Regent, it's no longer us, the black people."[38]

Jermaine and Tamicka's comments about the change in the visual ethno-cultural composition of the neighbourhood's criminal actors were consistent with what I witnessed. Over the summers I spent in the neighbourhood, the most noticeable change, apart from changes to the neighbourhood's physical features, was the marked differences in the ethnic and racial composition of the guys "running the block." My field notes for the ensuing summers document the near disappearance of Jamaican Canadian guys 'running' the neighbourhood and the increasing predominance of younger Somali Canadian actors in the neighbourhood's gang scene.

Causes and Consequences of Changes to Gang Competition

My participants attributed the emergence of Somali Canadian gangs to the broader changes in the neighbourhood. Many participants said the change happened because a good number of the original Regent Park residents of Caribbean and Jamaican descent who had been heavily involved in the local gang landscape were moved to other social housing neighbourhoods in Toronto. Interestingly, both law-abiding and crime-involved residents largely believed that the housing authority in Regent Park was *not* impartial in displacing residents, and argued that while Caribbean families were being displaced *outside* of the neighbourhood,[39] Muslim and Somali families were being displaced *within* it. When I asked 32-year-old Ricky why new gangs were

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[38] Despite the fact that my Somali participants are 'black,' my non-Somali participants did not consider them as such given their Muslim background.

[39] Some Regent Park residents have been displaced to other social housing units in other sections of the downtown core. However, many residents have been relocated to social housing units on opposite ends of Toronto, many of which are over 1.5 hours away via public transit, making visiting their family or friends or accessing various services rather cumbersome.

forming in the neighbourhood, he stated: "I would say they're coming up because the Old Heads aren't here. There's that space for them to come up because you know there's nobody here to protect, you know?" Residents believed that the displacement of the neighbourhood's long standing criminal players prompted by the revitalization created a power vacuum where new groups could emerge onto the newly vacant criminal landscape (Urbanik et al. 2016).

Deeper probing, however, uncovered that the shift in the neighbourhood's criminal milieu was more complex than the simple emergence of one group because another was displaced. Indeed, the displacement of *some* of the neighbourhood's major criminal players to other sections of the city vacated positions in Regent Park's criminal underworld that opportunistic younger actors quickly rushed to occupy (Urbanik et al. 2016). In a later conversation in-between basketball games, Ricky clarified to me:

"Its not like the Old Heads are ALL gone…,Most of 'em are gone, for sure. But some of 'em are still here. They still out here hustlin', they still out here protectin' the hood, they still makin' money. They still in the hood. The Old Heads are pissed though. These Somalian guys are taking their business. They're takin' their customers, they even movin' more product [narcotics] through the hood than the Old Heads. They movin' up in the Six [Toronto] for sure, they makin' a name for themself. And on top of all that, they bringin' heat [Attention from the police] to the hood…"

Ricky's depiction certainly resonated with me, as I had spent considerable time talking to, and hanging out with, the Older Heads within the neighbourhood. Aside from being merely present however, it was clear from multiple observations that the Older Heads *continued* to pursue their

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criminal endeavors, and had not necessarily been pushed out of their positions by the relocation of their peers or by a complete takeover by Somali Canadian groups. Ricky's comment echo the views of many of my participants that the emergence of the Somali Canadian groups within Regent Park was seen as an encroachment and violation of the territory previously dominated by Caribbean Canadian groups, and exposed competition between the groups, both in terms of finances and status. Existing research has documented how competition over gang territory in particular, is intimately connected to inter-gang violence and has found that despite variability in type and preponderance of gang violence, the strongest predictors of such violence are conflicts over gang turfs, retaliation, and threats to identity and honour (Hughes and Short 2005).In fact, competition and/or retaliation between gangs over status and territory is a primary way through which gangs relate to, and interact with each other (Decker 1996; Rymond-Richmond 2006; Sanchez-Jankowski 1991). Papachristos (2009) outlined that gang murders are more common when gang territories intersect or overlap, and research from Los Angeles found that gang violence is concentrated in areas where gang territory borders meet (Brantingham et al. 2012; Tita and Greenbaum 2009; Tita and Radil 2011). Further, Vargas (2014) explored how conflicts and competition over gang territory in a Chicago neighbourhood following the arrest of one of gang leader resulted in an increase in gang violence. Other research has found that the actual or threatened loss of status can invite violence, and that violence can be used to either demonstrate bonds to social groups or to prevent the loss of valued aspects (such as status) (Pedersen 2004: 120). As such, it is clear that the physical and temporal intersection of gangs oftentimes results in violent clashes.

Given what we know about gang competition, we might expect that Regent Park would also see violence between its established neighbourhood gangs and the newly emerging groups.

Yet, none of my participants spoke about such inter-group violence, and I never observed such violence while in the field. However, my data also reveal that the shift in which groups were 'running the block' was nonetheless consequential. My data demonstrate that the Caribbean Canadian gangs which were seemingly loosing power to the emerging Somali Canadian groups were angry about their loss of status, yet did not physically assault their competitors.

The lack of inter-group violence is particularly intriguing given that gangs in Regent Park have a citywide reputation for maintaining their territory and preventing other gangs from infiltrating their areas. Thirty-four year old 'J-Dawg,' put it to me this way: "Yo, you know Regent's the baddest hood in the entire City! How many times have other hoods beefed with us and tried to run us out?! Too fucking many! But they never could. Ain't nobody that wasn't from Regent able to come through here and run shit. We would shut that down real quick, boy!" he said, laughing as he imitated cocking and firing a gun.

Indeed, the idea that Regent Park was 'the baddest hood' and impenetrable by other groups is common knowledge to many Toronto residents. As such, I did not fully understand why the Older Heads, some of whom were still present in the neighbourhood and obviously upset with the emerging Somali groups, did not live up to their reputations for violently protecting their turf despite having the ability to be violent and go to war. That is, until one sunny afternoon when two of my participants clarified the issue for me.

A couple of us were just sitting around near the Boardwalk as the guys enjoyed a beer and a joint, their favorite rap songs blasting from a cellphone speaker. One of the 'leaders' of the

Somali group sped through the Boardwalk in a Jaguar—an action that was extremely frowned upon because of the large number of children that played in and around the Boardwalk. "Fuckin' Malli's man, no regard for nobody 'round here. Not for the kids, not for the grannies, not for the Old Heads. Nobody. They just do whatever the fuck they want," 'Chops' said, shaking his head. Confused as to how the emergence of Somali groups was possible if the Old Heads were indeed still present and a force in Regent Park, I asked him "So if the Old Heads are still here, why would you guys just let any other guys come up and start taking over?" 'Z,' overhearing our conversation, chimed in: "Now hear this, ain't no motherfucker, no group, no gang, woulda try to come up in here and take us on, aight? That woulda never happened! We woulda all came together and run those bitch ass niggas out! Shot 'em all up. Ain't nobody woulda been messin' wit' our block, our money, ya' hear? "

This response made me contemplate whether the older guys were unwilling to resort to violence in 'defense' of their territory, status, or in the informal codes of conduct because they were now older and therefore less interested in violent conflicts. Early research on gang violence postulates that gang membership is predominantly associated with young men. These gang studies posited the "gang age" (Klein 1971) to be anywhere from the ages of 10-25 (Klein 1971; Kantor and Bennett 1968; Miller 1975), with only a few older gang members holding rather negligible positions (Spergel 1983; Thrasher 1927; Whyte 1943; Short 1964). Subsequent gang research however, has challenged the assumption that gang membership is purely a youth phenomenon, with scholars noting how the post-industrial era has blocked many opportunities for youth to "age out" of gangs, as avenues of desistance—namely, legitimate employment, marriage, and family life—have become increasingly inaccessible to those residing in the most

marginalized areas (Hagedorn and Macon 1988). Criminological scholarship on "OG"s (old guys, older gang members, Original Gangsters, or Veteranos) has documented not only the existence of gang members in their 30s or 40s, but also the prominent, or even dominant, roles they play within gangs (Fagan1990, 1989: 639; Hagedorn and Macon 1988). In fact, research has documented that OG's generally occupy the highest positions in gang hierarchies. Given their long-standing demonstrated loyalty to the gang, willingness to participate in turf wars, reputations of being ruthless, and injuries from gang violence, they are oftentimes those who call the shots (Patton 1998: 56). The same was true in Regent Park, where the Old Heads controlled much of the neighbourhood's criminal world and informally controlled the use of violence by strictly enforcing a street code (Urbanik et al. 2016). Initially however, I interpreted the lack of interference on behalf of the Old Heads in Regent Park as an "aging out" of violence effect (Blumstein 1973; Sampson and Laub 1993, 2005; Steffensmeier et al. 1989; Warr 1998).

When I suggested this interpretation to Jermaine and Chops, they quickly dispelled this notion. The three of us were sitting at the basketball court while some of the other guys were hustling near the buildings. Once again, we were talking about their concerns about the new gangs in Regent Park, when I asked whether they were not doing anything about the rise of the new groups because they themselves felt too old to engage in violence. "Don't lie though, it's because you're all a bunch of old farts now! Ya'll can barely walk quickly these days!" I said, laughing. Chops smirked, shook his hand at me and responded: "Yo, if we was too old to take these motherfuckers out, we would have been too old to take out other motherfuckers. And we ain't! Ain't nobody comin' to take over our hood!" Jermaine added to this, "Yo, real shit! If we too old, how come we fucked up Dean's boy the other day? The man was actin' up, so we had to

put him in his place, know what I'm sayin'?." Jermaine was referring to an incident where the men supposedly attacked and stabbed another young man they claim was being disrespectful of some of the Older Heads, though I was not able to confirm this incident actually occurred. During the course of my research, I had heard about many instances of violence at the hands of the Older Heads, which demonstrated both their ability and willingness to use violence against individuals and behaviours they did not approve of. I was also aware that although there was agrowing number of Somali men involved in gangs, and growing concerns about their supposed increasing use of violence, the Older Heads retained their 'power' in the criminal hierarchy of Regent Park, and were still physically more dominant. They knew—as did other neighbourhood residents—that they could defend their turf (and win) if they wanted to.

Given the continued ability of the Older Heads to try and quell the existence of, or otherwise control, the behavior of the Somali gang, I continued to be perplexed at their lack of response to the groups, especially given their passionate disapproval of their activities. "Okay wait, so if you guys don't like what's happening, and you can do something about it, why haven't you?" I pressed. Surprised at my naivety, Teston explained:

> "Look, we aint fuckin' happy 'bout it, right? But at the end of the day, they from here. They are. They're Regent Parkers, too. They came up with this 'hood. They don't follow the street code, and they do stupid ass shit, and some of them are pieces of shit - no doubt, but they from here too. So we let them be. You shouldn't be shootin' up peoples from your own 'hood, even if they are competition!"

The importance of "coming up in the same hood" was further clarified for me in a subsequent conversation with Ricky. The two of us were sitting on a bench outside one of the

apartments that had been converted into a makeshift rap studio, waiting for some of the other guys to join us.   I told him about my earlier conversation with Teston, and asked what he thought about it. He shrugged, "Yea, I mean, its clear they tryna take over Regent Park and peoples is super pissed about that. But like, we haven't started shootin' or robbin' each other or nothin' like that. I mean, they do that to each other, but we haven't' pulled our burners [guns] on them." I asked him to explain why that isn't the case. He shrugged, replying:

> "I don't know man, there isn't that kinda beef between us. They came up here, they seen what we seen, they been through what we been through. They grown up 'round us. They products of the same hood. Yea, this is our hood. It aint like they from some other hood. They from Regent Park. But this is they hood too. They tryna hustle to make a living just like us. Every man's gotta eat. Don't matter if they black, Somali, Asian, whatever."

NEIGHBOURHOOD AS MASTER STATUS

Individual identities are composed of a multitude of factors related to how others react and respond to them. Not all of these characteristics are equal however, with some being more influential and taking precedence, or diluting the importance of other traits (Meithe and McCorkle 1997: 410). The importance of these traits is not static; that is, at certain points in people's lives, some traits become more important in fashioning one's self-identity than others. According to Hughes (1945), the characteristics that are more dominant and trump and neutralize other traits as they relate to a person's identity comprise the person's "master status." Criminologists have examined how a "master status" related to race, gender, and class may result

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in differential treatment within the criminal justice system (for reviews see Miethe and Moore 1986; Peterson and Hagan 1984; Wilson 1978). Research has explored how deviance and criminality can become a person's "master status" and the consequences of this situation. Undeniably, for some the label of "gang member" is their master status, as Zatz (1985: 15) has explored.

Sometimes less obvious characteristics—such as neighbourhood affiliation—can work as a person's master status. Apart from shaping friendship networks and affecting access to economic, social and cultural resources (Sampson et al. 2002; Shaw and McKay 1942), neighbourhoods also sometimes provide a strong sense of identity (Bucerius 2009, 2014; Schiffauer 2004). This may be particularly true for individuals living in disadvantaged areas, like Regent Park, where neighbourhoods have been identified as a significant factor in group formation, individual behaviour patterns, and identity formation. This seems to be particularly the case for young men (Anderson 1999; Hannerz 1969; Liebow 1967). Disadvantaged youth may find it difficult to find other sources of membership such as sports clubs, so they rely on their neighbourhood as a primary marker of identity, which thereby becomes their 'master status.'Most of the research exploring how neighbourhood works as an important aspect of identity stems from work in the United States and South America. Despite limited explorations in Canada, it is clear that—at least for residents of Regent Park—neighbourhood is an important aspect of identity formation.

My research demonstrates that for many residents, Regent Park is not just where they live, it's a *modus vivendi*. Their shared status of 'Regent Parker' trumped various aspects of

distinction. This was true for many criminal and non-criminal residents alike, who often emphasized their similarities as 'coming from the same place' as opposed to focusing on their differences in terms of the extent to which they were involved in crime. As noted above, Regent Park's major criminal players believed that the shared status of neighbourhood residency was integral in suppressing violence between two groups who differed in terms of ethno-cultural composition, and apparently also in 'acceptability' of criminal behaviour and 'legitimacy' of violence. Despite the existence and *significance* of group differences that my participants continuously brought to my attention, it was their shared identity as Regent Parkers, including a shared history, shared struggles, and shared 'hustle' that helped to buffer violence that one might predict would result from inter-group competition and conflict.

INSIDERS, YET OUTSIDERS-DRAWING SYMBOLIC BOUNDARIES

While my participants did not try and violently suppress the new groups working on their territory, they repelled these new Somali groups in other ways. In particular, they turned to non-violent methods to express their frustrations; instead of drawing weapons, they drew stark distinctions between themselves and the emerging Somali groups. When talking about the Somali guys, 28-year-old Daniel put it to me this way:

"They have no respect. They're crazy. They don't care. They're killers. Some are 13, 14, they aint scared to shoot. They don't care who you are. They don't care if you're an Old Head. No respect man. The blacks, they know what's worth it and what aint. They THINK about it, they calculate. But these Somali kids? They don't give a flying fuck. They shoot each other. You got boys jumping each other, guys from the same gang

robbin each other, stabbing each other, setting each other up, like what happened to

Fig..."

Fig is a 16 year old Somali male who was beaten into a coma by a group of men immediately after he exited a vehicle. Given Fig's general street smarts, and how he was clearly 'lured' to the spot where he was beaten, neighbourhood residents were convinced that he knew his assailants. It was widely believed that it was his own Somali best friends who delivered the beating. The Caribbean guys used Fig's victimization as yet another example of how the Somali groups were less legitimate and less honorable because they engaged in intra-group violence.

Daniel was one of the first to cite Fig's victimization as an exemplar of distinction between his Caribbean boys and the Somali group. I thought this was particularly interesting as Daniel was also one of the young men most boastful about the violence he and his boys engaged in against "anyone who was actin' up." As such, I pushed him on this issue, asking how, in his opinion, the behaviours of the Somali groups are different from those of the Caribbean groups, Daniel angrily explained to me: "Yea, we did shit. Fuck, we still do shit! But we do shit differently! We ain't like these fuckin Somalis. We don't go after our own! We're loyal like that. Real shit." J-T overhead this conversation, and chimed in:

"Fuck yea, we couldn't have nobody runnin up on us. That's why I said before- the blacks, we were always packin' [carrying guns]. We still be packin'. But, we packin' for the right reasons, you know? We only go after those who need a little lesson, know what I'm sayin? (laughs). The Mali's round here though, they go after whoever. That's why we have respect 'round here and that's why they don't. Can't respect people who

shootin up the hood for no reason!"

The objections to Fig's victimization at the supposed hands of his closest boys may at first appear laudable. My fieldwork however, revealed that apart from being somewhat more willing to use random violence—a factor most likely associated with their younger age (see Arnett 1999: 321; Feld 2008; Gardner and Steinberg 2005; Scott 1992; Steinberg, et al. 2008; Balocchini and Chiamenti 2013; Casey, Jones, and Somerville 2011; Scott 1992) —the nature of the violence exerted by the Somali groups was not all that qualitatively different from the violence of, and between, members of the Caribbean groups. In fact, multiple residents alerted me to the fact that intra-group violence *did* occur prior to the Revitalization, something that I remember hearing about in news media while growing up in Toronto. Further, a few of my Caribbean participants showed me scars from beatings and stabbings at the hands of some of the other Caribbean guys from Regent Park. And yet, my Caribbean participants seemed to gloss over this fact, though only when it suited their interests; boastful bragging about their histories of violence and 'beefs' (even intra-group or intra-neighbourhood) when it made them appear 'harder,' yet drawing normative distinctions between 'legitimate' and 'illegitimate' uses of violence when it would save face for a group with diminishing power and status in the neighbourhood. Indeed, it became clear that the value judgments of Somali groups on behalf of the Caribbean groups helped them rationalize and take the sting out of their dwindling positions.

Efforts by Caribbean group members to distinguish themselves from the Somali groups were not limited to the Somali's supposedly more reckless use of violence, but also included their drug trafficking patterns. On one of the cooler summers days, Chops, Andrew and I were

sitting in the laundry room of one of the old buildings trying to get warm after a long walk back from the beer store. I knew that many of the laundry rooms were used as ideal stash locations for narcotics in Regent Park. Laundry rooms allowed dealers to have large amounts of drugs readily at hand for larger purchases or for days with high-sale volumes, lessening the need to carry large quantities on their person, thereby reducing the financial losses of potential robberies or more serious drug seizures and charges during police searches (see Bucerius 2014: 109). While sitting in the laundry room, Andrew started complaining about the garbage, saying that he was sick of the Somali guys leaving their trash where residents wash their clothing. I asked how he knew the Somali guys were responsible and he said it is because they had also begun to use the laundry rooms to stash their drugs:

> "I tell you, these Mali's man, they be choppin' here, choppin' there, no regard for nobody. No regard for the people that been 'round here. See, us? We don't shit where we eat, know what I'm sayin'? We keep our business [drug trafficking] to ourselves. But, they? They ain't give a flyin' fuck about anyone who ain't from one of they own countries! And even then, they be sellin' their drugs by the Mosque with all the kids runnin' around - I seen it! Yo- tell her we seen that just the other day!"

Chops nodded to confirm Jermaine's account. This exchange was particularly interesting given that my Caribbean Canadian participants also sold drugs within the neighbourhood, often with children of various ages within eyesight, from many of the laundry rooms, and even right outside the front doors of one of the neighbourhood's churches. As such, attempts to distinguish themselves from the Somali groups on the basis of drug dealing behaviors that they themselves engaged in further exemplifies how selective memory, or, selective reporting, affected their accounts in an attempt to improve their self-image, and presentation to others in a climate of

dwindling status, revealing how gangs construct their identity in relation to rivals (Papachristos et al. 2013: 5).

By providing a psychological explanation for identity formation via intergroup discrimination, social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner 1985) can help us understand why participants were so negative about the new groups in their neighbourhood. Arguing that "pressures to evaluate ones' own group positively through in-group/out-group comparison lead social groups to attempt to differentiate themselves from each other" (1985:16), Tajfel and Turner posit that the emphasis on differentiation is motivated by a desire to either achieve, or preserve 'superiority' over an out-group (see also Hogg and Abrams 1988). Recent scholarship (i.e., Kefalas 2002; Lamont 2000; Newman 1999; Van Eijk 2011) has significantly expanded on the processes of identity construction through negative comparisons of the 'out group,' resulting in a "boom in boundary studies" (Wimmer 2008) that has demonstrated the universal nature of social categorization (Bowker and Star 2000).

Criminological research has also documented how people draw symbolic boundaries *between* law abiding and criminal actors, as well as *amongst* criminal actors. This work casts a particularly interesting spotlight on how disadvantaged groups differentiate themselves from groups who are similarly deprived. For example, numerous studies of disadvantaged neighbourhoods have found clear moral distinctions between law-abiding and criminally involved residents, albeit to various extents given complex neighbourhood dynamics and relationships (i.e., Anderson 1999; Bourgois 2003). Studying sex workers in Brooklyn, Maher (2000) noted that the women drew distinctions between themselves on the basis of race/ethnicity, which allowed some groups to capitalize on their status and stereotypes associated with their

classification. Philippe Bourgois(2003) suggests similar processes amongst Puerto Rican and Mexican drug dealers in East Harlem, who drew symbolic boundaries between each other to project their superiority, despite being similarly disadvantaged. Further, in a study of Muslim drug dealers in Germany, Bucerius (2014) found the dealers drawing distinctions amongst themselves based on notions of 'purity' about the narcotics they sold, categorizing themselves as honorable dealers in contrast with other 'immoral' dealers.

Despite the smattering of criminological scholarship unmasking the boundary work that operates between criminal groups, little is known about *how* these symbolic boundaries emerge. My participants of Caribbean descent provided multiple reasons why the emerging groups are qualitatively different than them. Citing the use of violence, the initiation of neighbourhood 'beefs', intra-group fighting, and drug trafficking patterns by Somali Canadian gangs, Caribbean Canadian gang members vigorously distinguish themselves from the Somali groups in Regent Park. While there can be solid reasons for differentiating amongst criminal groups, the arguments put forth by the Caribbean Canadian gang members are ultimately inconsistent with their own criminal enterprises, since both groups engage in the *same types* of violence and criminality—drug dealing, robberies, intra-group assaults, physical rivalries with 'beefing' neighbourhoods, drive-by shootings, and homicides, and the Caribbean gang members have still maintained their dominance in the neighbourhood. Thus, the Caribbean Canadian gangs find themselves navigating a double-standard, where they present their actions as virtuous while simultaneously denigrating the same behaviors when undertaken by Somali groups (Densley 2014: 526). Cohen writes "Boundaries enclose elements which may, for certain purposes and in certain respects, be considered to be more like each other than they are different" (2013: 14),

which seems to be the case in Regent Park. When these similarities are brought to light, my Caribbean Canadian participants emphasize the supposed differences in the *nature* or 'legitimacy' (though not necessarily type of) criminality the Somali Canadian groups supposedly engage in, as a basis for differentiating themselves from the Somali Canadian groups. Differentiating one's gang from another on the basis of using only 'legitimate' violence consequently marks one's use of violence as more 'honorable' or 'legitimate,' thereby reducing the potential stigma attached to the use of violence by one's group. Such differentiation and legitimization may be especially important in a context where status and reputation are being lost because of a period of instability given the neighbourhood Revitalization.

Undeniably, the Revitalization's impact on long-established gang structures within Regent Park (e.g., member displacement, shrinking territory, uncertainty), combined with the emergence of Somali Canadian groups who are now increasingly dominating Regent Park's criminal milieu, has diminished the status and produced a compromised sense of identity amongst my Caribbean Canadian participants. In an attempt to resist and/or cope with this perceived or actual loss of status, my Caribbean Canadian participants were latching onto any point of comparison or departure for which they *could* control the narratives about them and their competition. They used these narratives to advance their standing in their own eyes, as well as in the eyes of others. Thus, in the context of Regent Park, drawing moral divisions was initiated by, and intimately related to, the loss of status experienced by Caribbean Canadian groups as a result of the instability of the Revitalization, and less motivated by *actual* differences in the types and/or nature of violence and criminality in which the groups engage. Cohen (2013:12) writes "not all boundaries, and not all the components of any boundary, are so objectively apparent.

They may bethought of, rather, as existing in the minds of their beholders." To some degree then, it is irrelevant whether there are *actual* differences in the behaviors of Caribbean and Somali criminal groups in Regent Park, as just being able to draw these symbolic boundaries certainly benefits those who hold these views—the Caribbean Canadian gangs— a situation that casts an exploratory light on the dynamics of boundary work amongst street gangs.

CONCLUSION

Most academic work exploring relationships between neighbourhood gangs has examined this relationship through the lens of competition over turf and status as a catalyst for inter-gang violence. As such, little is known about how competing gangs relate to each other *outside* of violence. Given that street gangs are embedded within social networks with other gangs (Vargas 2014: 146), it is necessary for criminologists to uncover the diverse relationships amongst gangs, especially when competition over turf or status is at issue and yet does not instigate inter-gang violence. My research demonstrates the complexity of inter-gang relations, revealing the importance of neighbourhood status as helping to suppress gang violence, and how drawing symbolic boundaries can help to mitigate the loss of status within a neighbourhood. Additionally, findings from Regent Park highlight the amorphous nature of neighbourhood gangs, and also the fluid and contextual nature of the distinction between insiders and outsiders; with my Caribbean participants on the one hand considering members of the new Somali gang as insiders, a situation which helps to suppress inter-group violence. On the other hand, they view the emerging Somali gang as different from them, essentially, as outsiders, allowing them to draw important symbolic boundaries that help them maintain their own perceptions of status within the neighbourhood. Further, the boundary work distinctions drawn by my Caribbean

participants actually serve to further the 'groupness' or collective identity of the Caribbean

Canadian gangs. So it remains to be seen whether this competition and loss of status will

manifest itself violently in the future, since studies have found that 'groupness' exacerbates gang

mentalities and behaviours (i.e. mutual protection), which is largely responsible for gang

violence (Hughes and Short 2005; Short and Strodtbeck 1965). The findings of this research

warrant further elaboration among criminologists—and gang researchers in particular—to

explore factors preventing inter-gang violence associated with competition over turf and status,

as well as to unmask not just the existence of symbolic boundaries between criminal groups but

how, when, and why these symbolic boundaries are drawn.

CHAPTER FIVE

"IT'S DANGEROUS": THE ONLINE WORLD OF DRUG DEALERS, RAPPERS, AND THE STREET CODE[40]

ABSTRACT

As the digital divide has narrowed, the internet and social media have become more accessible to disadvantaged populations, including drug dealers, gang members, and street hustlers. These individuals increasingly publicize their activities and associations via social media networks. Little is known, however, about the dangers criminal actors face in using social media, and how they manage those risks. Based on interview data and ethnographic observation of criminally-involved men in Toronto's Regent Park neighbourhood, we argue that the men both reproduce and reinforce many of the dangers of life on the urban streets, while fostering new strategies for managing those risks through an ongoing process of online impression management. In the process, the code of the street goes virtual, dis-embedded from its originating physical location it circulates on new media platforms, and occasionally becomes re-embedded onto those same streets, but with different inflections and implications

Drug Dealing, the Street Code, and Social Media

In this paper, we analyze how a group of men in Toronto, Canada, involved in hustling, drug sales, and other forms of street-level crime and violence, manage the risks presented by

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using social media. In doing so, the men both reproduce and reinforce many of the dangers of life on the urban streets, while fostering new strategies for managing those risks. In the process, the code of the street goes virtual; the code is dis-embedded from its originating physical location to circulate on new media platforms, and occasionally becomes re-embedded onto those same streets, but with different inflections and implications.

Existing research demonstrates the extent to which street criminals—particularly gang members—use information technology. In a study of 585 gang members Pyrooz and his colleagues found that 45% of their sample used information and communication technologies to commit crimes within the previous 6 months; selling drugs and stolen property, and threatening and harassing others (Pyrooz et al. 2015). In interviews with 30 gang members in Israel, Sela-Shayovitz (2012), found that her participants engaged in a range of online offending, including non-stereotypical gang activities such as hacking and sending viruses. Gang members also use the internet to advance their personal reputation and the reputation of their gang. In a survey of gang members' online habits, King, Walpole and Lamon (2007) found that 74% of self-identified gang members created and used a website to "show or gain" respect for their gangs. Likewise, Patton and his colleagues (Patton et al. 2016) found that gang members used Twitter to threaten rival groups, intimidate law enforcement, and brag about their status and street credibility.

To date, however, we lack sustained research into how such populations navigate life online, which would complement research into how marginalized individuals identify and manage the risks of their urban environments (Anderson 1990; Sharkey 2006; Stuart 2016a). In our analysis of precisely this issue, we draw attention to how, in part, this risk management is

reminiscent of Erving Goffman's (1959) suggestion that social life is akin to a stage, where individuals continuously manage their self-presentation. People modify what they say, how they behave, and the signs they give off, in anticipation of how different audiences will respond to such performances. For our purposes, we draw attention to some of the impression management strategies our research participants employed in navigating the distinctive risks they faced in using social media. As will become apparent, this online presence is not an idiosyncratic or marginal aspect of life on the streets. Instead, it is an increasingly central part of the identities and activities of the men we studied, raising new questions for the locus of studies of street-involved populations.

Setting and Methods

For four summers (2013-16) Urbanik conducted research in Regent Park. Located east of Toronto's downtown core, Regent Park is Canada's oldest and, at the beginning of the research, largest social housing project. Prior to its revitalization in 2006, the neighborhood's 69 acres were entirely devoted to social housing, providing a home to approximately 10,000 people. At that time, Regent Park comprised the lowest-income census tracts in the province of Ontario. In 2000, 77% of residents in the northern section and 60% living in the south had incomes below the low-income cut off rate (Toronto Community Housing 2007). The average family income was $20,645(CAD), more than 50% below the national average of $50,091 (CAD)(Toronto Community Housing 2007). Approximately 75% of residents on the 2011 neighborhood census identified as members of visible minority groups, primarily of South Asian (2,965), Black (1,750), Chinese (1,245), and Southeast Asian (520) background (City of Toronto 2014).

Regent Park is notorious as one of Canada's most crime-ridden areas (August 2014a).

While the Canadian police do not publish crime statistics at the neighborhood level, independent research by Thompson (2009) revealed that 37 people were murdered in Regent Park between 1988 and 2003 (13.85 per 100,000). This was considerably more than any other Toronto neighborhood. Local journalists have consistently pointed to such violence in their depictions of the area as "a haven for single mothers, welfare families and deviants…a magnet for crime and drug problems" (Purdy 2005: 531), resulting in it being "symbolically denigrated" (Wacquant 2010) in the minds of many Torontonians.

Urbanik[41] first came into the neighbourhood in 2013 as a research assistant working on a separate project studying community members' perceptions of the revitalization initiative (Thomson et al. 2013). That revitalization culminated in the City of Toronto demolishing a good portion of the neighbourhood. Some areas have been rebuilt as a 'mixed-income, mixed-use' community. In 2014, Urbanik initiated a separate research project, focusing on how the revitalization was altering the structures of the local groups involved in street crime and drug dealing. For 3 months in the summers of 2015 and 2016 she spent 5-8 hours a day, 5-6 days a week in Regent Park, where she 'hung out' (Geertz 1998) with the neighborhood's major criminal players to gain a richer perspective on the neighborhood's street-level criminal structures. She conducted semi-structured interviews (Brewer 2000;Gubrium and Holstein 2002; Lamont and Swidler 2014), and also followed several of her participants on social media. This latter strategy gave her a regular online presence while away from the field, and allowed her to stay current with her participant's lives, networks, rap careers, legal battles, and various intra and inter-neighborhood 'beefs' (confrontations, grievances and animosities).

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[41] The second author helped to conceptualize this research foci, analyze the data, and write up the findings.

In 2014, her research participants became particularly concerned about social media. This was prompted primarily by a series of emerging neighbourhood 'beefs' that originated online. She incorporated questions about social media into her interview schedule, pursuing this topic until reaching thematic saturation (Guest et al. 2005; Small 2009;). Interviews lasted from 45 minutes to several hours, and participants were paid $20 to compensate for their time. The interviews were digitally recorded, anonymized, and transcribed. Field notes and interviews underwent several rounds of coding via Nvivo 10. For the purpose of this paper, these themes included social media, the internet, online identity management, the street code, violence, and risk management. Thus, the data for this article are drawn primarily from 56 interviews conducted in the summers of 2015 and 2016 with the core participants and a handful of 'prosocial' neighbourhood actors in Regent Park (e.g., mothers, community workers). It is also informed by the many hours of ethnographic research undertaken in the neighbourhood and by monitoring the social media of several of Urbanik's key participants.

The primary research participants were a group of 20 men, aged 16 to 47, with an average age of 25, predominantly of Caribbean and Somali backgrounds. Almost all of them sold drugs (marijuana, crystal meth, crack, powder cocaine, Oxytocin, and/or Percocet) on the streets inside or near Regent Park. Several had lengthy records pertaining to drug trafficking, weapons, organized crime, robbery, and even murder. Some carried handguns. While homicide rates in Toronto are far below those of comparably-sized American cities, the prospect of violent victimization was a constant concern for this subset of men. During the course of the research, four of Urbanik's participants were shot and killed, allegedly by rival groups.

Many research participants were also heavily involved in Toronto's vibrant rap music scene: performing, filming music videos, and/or appearing in videos filmed in Regent Park to accompany their own or other people's rap songs. Some sought careers in the rap industry, and a handful were reasonably successful. One local rapper had garnered approximately 30 thousand followers on social media, and over a million views on YouTube. Several participants saw rapping careers as one of the few viable options for them to 'make it out of the hood" (Sköld and Rehn 2007).

Rapping, for them, was entertainment, an identity, a potential career, and a form of resistance to structural barriers (Lee 2016). It was a way to display their solidarity with each other, their neighbourhood, and other marginalized groups (Kubrin 2005;Martinez 1997). Rapping also occasionally had more somber overtones, as they memorialized friends and relatives who had been incarcerated or killed. Their raps and music videos also had real world consequences. Rappers and their 'crews' (groups of associated musicians, friends, and hangers-on) could be, and often were, held accountable on the street for their lyrics, and how they portrayed themselves and their crews, in person and online.

Gaining research access to these men was not easy or quick, as they initially suspected Urbanik was an undercover police officer. Slowly, several factors combined to allow the men to get past this concern. The fact that Urbanik had previously spent time conspicuously walking around Regent Park doing interviews related to the neighborhood revitalization project helped, in that it had given her a profile and identity in the neighborhood; she was widely known as 'the interview girl,' even to people who had never seen or spoken to her. She also volunteered at the

local community centre, publically associating with some of the neighborhood's most respected community leaders. As a young white woman, she was also something of a curiosity within the boundaries of Regent Park, and was initially seen by many of the men as a potential romantic partner. As the men questioned her about who she was and what she was doing in their neighbourhood, her standing in their eyes was often bolstered by the fact that she grew up in a region of the city that also had a reputation for being 'hard.' Urbanik's extensive knowledge of rap music and culture also helped to break down barriers, quickly providing a common vernacular and shared frame of reference. That said, they only became comfortable with her presence over a prolonged period of hanging out with them at their favorite spots, where the men would listen to music, gamble, freestyle rap, drink, play basketball, and smoke and sell drugs. Being in regular contact on social media with many of the men over a period of months and years also helped to normalize her status and identity.

We find it difficult to adequately characterize these men. In particular, are they 'gang members?' The problem here is twofold. First, there are multiple and often incompatible definitions of 'gang' and 'gang member' (Esbensen et al. 2001; Prowse 2012). According to some definitions, the men in this study would easily be classified as gang members, in that they were part of a self-identified or identifiable group involved in a criminal enterprise, which used violence and intimidation to control others and their territory (Klein et al. 2006). Other definitions, however, would not position them as gang members, as they did not surrender their individual criminal proceeds to the group, did not face formal expectations to care for gang member's families when they are in prison, did not have a formal hierarchy or membership rituals, and so on (Wortley 2010 et al. 2009). The second difficulty is that 'gang member' was

not consistently their primary self-identity. Some prided themselves as being part of a 'gang,' while others resisted this label, preferring to be seen as rappers or hustlers who were involved in crime, violence, drug dealing, and assorted forms of street-level hustling as a way to survive. As such, differentiating between neighborhood rap crews and criminal groups was difficult and sometimes futile, as their relations and memberships were fluid and overlapping. Consequently, we refer to these men as drug dealers, hustlers, rappers, and criminal actors, as these designations focus more attention on what they *do* rather than on how they may or may not be classified.

Street Identities in a Online Environment

In terms of social media platforms, our participants used Facebook and Twitter, but most predominantly used Instagram and SnapChat. Similar to Twitter, but unlike Facebook, Instagram's platform (and perhaps success) is based upon the fact that the default relationship between users is non-reciprocal. User A can 'follow' user B without user B gaining automatic access to user A's profile. People can have fast paced discussions via Instagram, and use hashtags (#) to precede search terms (i.e., #toronto) to increase a post's visibility. Depending on settings, these can be searched and viewed by approved 'followers,' or by any Instagram user. People can be 'tagged' in pictures, displaying associations with others, further expanding the post's exposure. SnapChat differs from Instagram in that photos and videos shared are designed to quickly self-destruct,[42] although viewers can 'screenshot' photos and save them permanently on their devices. Many of our participants used SnapChat to send messages, photos, or videos directly to each other with added captions.

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[42] Photos received on SnapChat can be viewed for a maximum of 10 seconds before self-destructing.

All of our research participants had smart phones. Most of them regularly used social media to connect with friends and family, but also with unknown strangers who followed their accounts. Regent Park's rappers used social media to heavily promote their raps and videos, often at minimal cost, which is in keeping with the new technologically-enhanced ability for celebrity to be mass produced, as ordinary citizens using new communication technologies can potentially reach millions of viewers (Marwick and boyd 2010; Page 2012; Turner 2006).

How these men portrayed themselves online was connected to their desire/need to convey ahyper-masculine gangsta-rap image (Kubrin 2005; Patton et al. 2013). This identity revolves around the persona of the urban gangster or hustler (Morales 2003; White 2011) and is focused on respect, toughness, and sexual prowess. These attributes are themselves derived from the 'street code' (Anderson 1999; Mullins 2006) which promotes and sometimes necessitates the threat and/or use of violence to gain or maintain respect and avert future victimization(Brezina et al. 2004; Brookman et al. 2011; Gunter 2008;Katz 1988; Sandberg 2008; Wilkinson 2001). This code is often adopted by both street-involved and non-street involved men (and some women, see: (Brunson and Stewart 2012)) in marginalized neighborhoods, but it is by no means inflexible, nor do people necessarily deploy it in a uniform or straightforward manner. Nonetheless, it presents a persistent normative force that can rarely be ignored. In both their street-level and online displays, our participants also often connected with what Mukherjee (2006) refers to as the 'ghetto fabulous aesthetic;' a form of urban style characterized by conspicuous displays of cash, expensive alcohol, clothes, jewelry, and cars. Such representations were often augmented by gang-related themes (Jeffries 2011).

The rappers in Regent Park were particularly eager to capitalize on the cultural capital that they could accrue from being (or associating with) violent criminals. Consequently, their association with crime and violence are prominently displayed in their lyrics, social media messaging, photographs, and videos. The themes in their lyrics and music videos often revolved around guns, women, producing and selling drugs, crime, violence, stacks of cash, shooting rivals, and generally 'repping' their neighborhood – with 'repping' referring to identifying with, supporting, and standing for a particular cause, group, or neighbourhood.

While it was possible for them to exaggerate their street and criminal credentials on social media, in rapping culture, and the code of the street more generally, questions of authenticity are paramount. Faking or misrepresenting one's reputation or street credibility (known as 'fronting') can prompt a hostile and sometimes violent response. Such accusations can also undermine a rapper's careers. For his part, Wavy[43] (26 yrs.), laments the superficiality of these online performances: "They have [this] fucked up culture of just displaying everything, you know?... It's talk about how much chains [jewelry] did you have, how much cars. How much girls did you have. And within... at least within the younger age group that's involved in that, that's what they wanna show; all the grills that they can have in their mouths. They wanna show how much chains."

Wavy's comments resonate with the familiar dynamic whereby individuals who were not raised with social media tend to be critical of a younger generation for publicizing so much of their lives online. This was particularly true of some of the more senior high ranking and widely

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[43] Pseudonyms are used throughout the paper and some details about our participants have been changed to protect their identities.

respected drug dealers, colloquially known as the 'Old Heads' (See Urbanik et al. 2016). Those men often criticized the younger generation for living out their 'gangsta' identities on social media, as doing so clashed dramatically with how their generation attempted to conceal their criminal activities. Wavy's friend Brandon (28 yrs.), however, pushed past his own belief that it is counterintuitive for the younger generation to post details of their criminal activities and persona on social media, to note that he also "understands [it] in terms of status, in terms of trying to position yourself amongst your peers and amongst everyone else. Those pieces I get."

Our participant's online activities occasionally involved 'edgework' (Lyng 1990), a form of risky performance that was appealing to them, in part, because it offered opportunities to confront and navigate danger. Skilled performers could augment their street credibility by displaying an exaggerated sense of bravado on social media, and adopting an indifferent or impervious stance to the risks they were taking. Individuals who posted such images or videos often suggested that they and their 'crews' could handle whatever trouble they might have stirred up in the process. At the same time, however, even those men who adopted the most aggressive social media profiles took a number of steps to mitigate their risk, as we outline in the following sections.

One serious and high profile example of going 'too far' in such displays occurred when Linx (21 yrs.)—one of Regent Park's most famous contemporary rappers—posted numerous videos 'calling out'[criticizing and pushing for a response from] another rapper and his associates from outside the neighbourhood. He accused them of being inauthentic, and of owing him money. Linx posted inflammatory videos, photos, and screenshots of private conversations on an almost hourly basis. He not only insulted and accused the other rapper, but also tagged the

individuals he was provoking. These exchanges garnered thousands of views, and viewers reposted them on other media platforms such as YouTube, further publicizing the confrontation. The following week, a group of men viciously beat Linx, which Linx suggested was in retaliation for his accusations on social media—something numerous research participants confirmed.

How skillfully the men in Regent Park manage these tensions has become part of the normative evaluation of their credibility. Their friends and associates recognize both the benefits of, and the pressures towards, adopting an occasionally risky 'thug life' social media persona. But if their social media postings crossed a contextually specific line towards being unnecessary risky, their peers censured them for foolishly and needlessly putting themselves, their crews, and the neighborhood, at risk.

Managing Risks

Historically, residents managed assorted localized risks in part through a loose structure of neighborhood surveillance. Tyson (32 yrs.), who is the younger brother of one of Regent Park's most famous older and more established criminal actors ('Old Heads') describes this process:

> T: You could find out anything about anyone, you know? If I wanted to watch people I would just walk home a different way every day. Pay attention… who's wearing what, see what time they hang around. That's what they used to do back in the day. Someone used to sit on the corner and watch, that was their job. There was a hierarchy back then,

you know? There was two guys and it went down the chain. And you had to show your

loyalty to move up, you know? You stand on the corner and you watch.

U: Watch for cops?

T: You watch who's walking by, you watch for an undercover, you watch for whatever

you're watching for, and you report back. That's your job.

Such street-level surveillance continued to preoccupy a large portion of the lives of many

Regent Park men, who were regularly on the lookout, but new media formats reorient such

monitoring. Residents are no longer predominantly focused on geographically delimited risks.

Increasingly, they use social media to keep abreast of up-and-coming rival groups and emerging

'beefs'. During our research, there were several instances where rival groups posted messages,

for example, that notified our participants that they were 'hot,' meaning that they had been

singled out for possible violence or retaliation. In such situations, the target would adopt a low

profile, sometimes exiting the neighborhood, city, or country, out of fear they would be severely

harmed.

Social media could also inadvertently communicate actionable intelligence to unwanted

audiences. Tyson gives a sense of this when he describes how images on social media can reveal

connections to objects, activities, and other people that can place individuals at risk when

broadcast widely:

"I could go on my Instagram right now and I'm not saying I'm gonna look at those

guys but I can go on my main page and see a picture of a gun, and the guy's page is

open…It may not be his, but it's a picture…. But you scroll down and you see him playing dice and you see him with money, and you see all these other things that could lead up to so many things. And you tag your friends in their picture and bam! You know who they are associated with. You know their faces. You know where they hang out. You know what I mean? So, it's like you're kind of dumb for that. Like you know you think people are not watching, but they're watching. People are always watching."

Identifying with the 'ghetto fabulous' aesthetic, individuals in these networks were inclined to post images of themselves when they are looking 'fly,' wearing expensive clothing, astride luxurious vehicles, and displaying their jewelry and wads of cash. This motif was particularly salient for people in the rap scene, becoming more pronounced as their rap careers advanced. For example, 23-year-old Usman's Instagram page became increasingly flashy and 'gangsta-esque' as he delved deeper into rapping and producing music videos. Today his profile shows him alongside well-known criminals and drug dealers, featuring gold chains, wads of cash, and expensive cars. His own music videos, as well as others in which he appears, portray him more and more like a ruthless gangster, which is in sharp contrast with his prior social media incarnation as a pro-social youth counselor.

Showy displays of desirable objects also advertised to a somewhat unknown and potentially wide audience the fact that you own things that other people might want to steal. Most people who use social media in Regent Park appear to share this concern, whether they are involved in crime or not. Here, Henny, a 23- year old up-and-coming rapper, reflects on the dangers of such conspicuous displays:

"I might have a lot more [possessions] than what they have… and [they] might want what I have. You never know what the next person is thinking when they see a picture of you, how you look, and stuff like that. Cuz I have friends that have took it that far. Like you know, we see a picture of somebody, and be like 'Yo, that guy has a lot of jewelry. Yo, you wanna ice [rob] that guy?' But he barely knows the guy! He just sees the guy in the picture, with his girl. 'Yo, when I see that guy, I might try to get that guy and take his jewelry.'"

Flaunting your possessions could be risky. It could also allow the poster to enhance his reputation. 'Hard' [tough] protected men do not fear being robbed; or at least did not countenance to such fears.

While some men cavalierly posted accounts and images of their criminal activities, others criticized this practice, pointing out that the police were undoubtedly monitoring their feeds. As Mikey, a prominent neighborhood drug dealer (31 yrs.), explained, "Social media, man, it's a bunch of bullshit. Social media was set up for the police. That's how enough of these young guys are getting cracked down now, cause everything they do or don't do, they speak about it on social media, which they are retarded for." Trix (18 yrs.) echoed these concerns, noting "The police are on Instagram. They have so many fake accounts. They could have a fashion account and follow you, and you never know."

In Regent Park, such police scrutiny extends to police officers watching rappers' videos. José, a 30-year-old ex-rapper and prominent drug dealer referenced this fact when explaining some of the strategies he used to avoid police identification and detection: "I used to rap. But it wouldn't be on my page. It would be on somebody else's page. And all the shit we would say, obviously, cops would take that and take it in and come to us and harass us for that… Before, I never post that shit up… Fake names, no pictures, just pictures of like, buildings."

Some police officers were not shy about publicizing the fact that they monitored the rapper's videos. Many of our participants said this was one reason they were reluctant to be featured in rap videos. Johnny (29 yrs.), observed, "It just causes extra harassment by cops," with 'Whiz' (24 yrs.) adding: "We know 100% cops watch that shit." When asked why they are so certain police monitor such platforms, Ty (23 yrs.) explained that the police would conspicuously walk through Regent Park rapping *their* songs: "They'll be rapping it; they'll be coming to us and rapping it in our face, trying to put us down kind of shit." The rappers and drug dealers took this as a form of police antagonism, a mocking reminder that they are being watched.

Drug dealers, gang members, and affiliates consequently face a situation familiar to all social media users.People's communications were previously defined by the fact that different audiences would receive different messages. On social media platforms such as Facebook or Instagram, however, individuals craft a persona through texts, images, links, and videos that they convey to audiences of friends, associates, or unknown others that were historically separate (Meyrowitz 1985). This situation—known as 'context collapse' (Marwick and boyd 2010)—means that messages are conveyed to a potentially vast but undifferentiated audience. It

markedly contrasts from the image of self-presentation outlined by Goffman (1959), who accentuated the multiplicity of distinct audiences, and the need for individuals to craft different presentational selves to address such diverse groups.

In the past two decades, the police in major North American cities have conspicuously enforced the litany of conditions often placed on a person's probation or parole as a way to control marginalized groups and city streets (Beckett and Herbert 2010). Poor and marginalized individuals are regularly brought into (or returned to) the criminal justice system for breaching such conditions (Goffman 2009). This situation was familiar to our participants, many of whom had outstanding warrants or who were bound by long lists of conditions on probation or parole orders. For them, being recorded drinking alcohol, smoking marijuana, standing in specific locations, or being in the company of particular people, at certain times of day, and so on, could be used as evidence that they were violating their conditions. Twenty-five-year-old Breezus highlighted this concern, cautioning that such social media posts are dangerous "Cuz some people may be on charges where they're not supposed to be in that certain location, or something like that." The fact that photographs on Snapchat could contain time stamps and geolocation data only added to their evidentiary possibilities.

Affiliation

For some, being seen online socializing with well-known criminals brought distinct benefits. Regent Park's aspiring rappers were particularly eager to display how many 'soldiers' [gangsters, heavies, 'thugs'] they are aligned with. Such connections bolstered their street credibility and would hopefully discourage physical attacks from rivals. Conveying a message of strength in numbers signaled that a rapper, gang, or neighborhood, was not easily intimidated, and that violence would be met with violence. This was particularly apparent in relation to the

style of gangsta rap videos produced in Regent Park, which often prominently featured numerous

drug dealers and hustlers (as well as other local residents) posing aggressively, and often

included imitating firing handguns at the camera. Such images are, in part, theatre. But as

prominent Regent Park rapper 'Ryda' (25 yrs.) explains, they also send messages to rival gangs:

"You never dare to think that person is gonna come to my neighborhood knowing that he just

seen a photo with 50 of my peoples. No one is gonna rob me, cuz I have these killers behind me

in a rap video. Sometimes it rhymes with killing."

Such representations, however, produce a number of serious risks. Even apparently tame

images of friends and contacts are potentially dangerous in an environment where there are

ongoing, serious and sometimes lethal inter-neighborhood 'beefs.' Here, people are expected to

'rep' their crew or their neighborhood, making it easy to inadvertently inherit someone else's

problems. Simply being seen associating with certain people could lead others to imply that you

were "down for each other"— basically willing to take on an associate's 'beefs.' Because of this

dynamic Ammir, a popular 19 year old who was not involved in crime, but was a close friend

with many of the neighbourhood's rappers and drug dealers, was careful not to appear in some of

the videos filmed in the neighborhood:

"If you're my boy, I'm not gonna be seen with you in a video if I know you have

problems. I don't know what your problems are. So, one day I'm gonna be walking

down the street… 'Hey I seen you in a video with that guy, now I have a problem with

that guy. Where is he?' 'I don't know. I really don't know where that guy is,' know

what I'm sayin? They might think you're lying. Next thing you know, you got a little problem. So, I don't wanna associate myself with no one."

Chops, a well-connected 37-year-old 'Old Head' experienced this first-hand when hanging out with a friend by the neighbourhood's newer townhouses. Unbeknownst to him, some men were filming videos in that area, and snippets of one video in which he appears were incorporated into a music video posted on social media. Since the video was shared by individuals 'repping' an up-and-coming crew, Chops' acquaintances and other residents saw this as a sign he was now affiliated with that group. For Chops, this was a serious concern given that the individuals he was photographed alongside were contributing to a lot of the turmoil and violence in Regent Park at the time. He consequently tried to have the video removed: "Then one of them posted me on fucking Instagram, and then I had 10 calls that I got!… Pictures! And I'm trying to fucking call that person and tell them to get me the fuck off of that, cause I'm not a part of your bullshit."

Chops' dilemma highlights how even individuals who did not use social media might have to make extensive efforts to control whether and how they might appear on *someone else's* social media. Individuals who were *not* affiliated with any group, or with a particular crew, or whose relationships were more friendship based, were especially anxious. They feared others might incorrectly view them as being associated with a particular crew, simply by virtue of being photographed in the wrong place, at the wrong time, with the wrong people; or by doing a friend a favor and appearing in his rap video.

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In neighbourhoods with reputations for inter-group violence, as is the case with Regent Park, the risk of being incorrectly labeled as being affiliated with these groups is particularly high. It has long been the case that such attributions could come from teachers, community workers, neighbours, and police, but increasingly anyone on social media can easily learn about what neighbourhood individuals are from. These labels are particularly difficult to navigate in Regent Park, where even law-abiding individuals have numerous friends, neighbours, and family members involved in crime, and/or who have criminal affiliations, histories, or serious 'beefs' with others. These tight social connections further increase pressures for individuals to demonstrate friendships and loyalties to acquaintances involved in crime, particularly when these acquaintances invite non-affiliated friends, neighbours, or family members to help them advance their rap career by appearing in their music videos.

Location

Participants in this study, like many residents, were proud of their deep connections to Regent Park (August 2014a). This is in keeping with the tendency for street-level criminals to identify with specific districts (Bucerius 2014) which they claim as their home turf. Consequently, it is common for residents to brag on social media about living in Regent Park, sometimes suggesting it is the 'hardest' [toughest], most impenetrable neighborhood. Both criminal actors and non-criminally involved individuals acknowledged that doing so also invited potentially unwelcome consequences. Similar to many large American cities, in Toronto there are often serious and long-lasting rivalries between neighbourhoods and social housing complexes. Displaying neighborhood pride risked being interpreted as 'repping,' suggesting to rivals that one was invested and/or involved in the neighborhood 'beefs,' and therefore a suitable

target for violence or intimidation. Even innocuously proclaiming "South Side!" or "North Side!" [sections of Regent Park] in pictures or videos, when featured alongside Regent Park's distinctive buildings—a common practice for Regent Parker residents who use social media—could be interpreted by outsiders and/or rivals as 'repping' the neighbourhood or its particular groups or crews.

Messages or images connecting people to Regent Park were reputational markers that traveled with the men as they moved around the city. When talking about some of the precautions he takes when posting about Regent Park on social media, Lemarcus (17 yrs.) noted: "If I'm gonna do that I wanna be aware with who I'm following. So, it's like, say like Regent Park and PO [another social housing complex in Toronto] had this beef. So, if I'm following guys from PO, or they're following me, and I'm postin' up stuff about Regent—if they see me [in person] it's gonna be a problem" Antonne reiterates this concern:

"People would post pictures with Regent Park signs in the background, or their neighborhood signs in the background. But the problem with that is, when you go places, let's say I wanna go to a basketball tournament, but it's in Jane and Finch [another social housing area in Toronto], all of sudden it's not that I'm here to play basketball—I'm from Regent Park and they wanna know who I am. I'm posting that on Instagram and stuff like that. They want a problem."

Although Regent Park is only a short distance from Toronto's waterfront and prominent urban attractions, the men in this study rarely moved about the city, and tended to do so

cautiously, anxious that they might encounter rival groups (Sharkey 2006). This is not an uncommon situation for gang members or drug dealers, but new communication technologies have exacerbated these risks. These men are drawn to social media in part because they allow them to communicate with far-flung and potentially global audiences. However, the types of messages they post or in which they inadvertently appear can enhance their risk of victimization in their travels through the city. As a result, many felt it was now more dangerous to leave the neighbourhood. Social media have elevated and distributed their profile and associations, making them more recognizable to hostile adversaries in other parts of the city. Posturing and provocations played themselves out in the interstitial spaces demarcating the physical street and online street, feeding back into spatially-grounded fears, further binding these men to their physical environments.

Even when sequestered in Regent Part, however, social media increasingly allows distant others to *precisely* locate users in space and often in real-time. That information can be derived from a fairly common and innocuous message like: "posting up on River Block [an area in Regent Park]." However, the structure of the medium further contributes to the ability to discern someone's location. Some platforms (like SnapChat) allow users to post images or videos that are broadcast immediately, allowing their followers to discern exactly where the people in the video or photo are *right now*. Even more precise data can be gleaned from the ability of some social media platforms (like Instagram) to display the poster's physical location on a map. The ready availability of online interactive maps (such as Google Maps) has also re-shaped the risk situation in Regent Park. It used to be that the labyrinth-like layout of Toronto's social housing projects made them hard for outsiders to penetrate surreptitiously, and even more difficult to

navigate once inside. Now, however, rivals from outside the neighbourhood can plan incursions and assaults online, using interactive, scalable, and 'street view' maps to scrutinize the neighbourhood's entrances, exits, hideouts, hangouts, passageways, and back alleys. All of this can be done without taking the risk of first having to physically reconnoiter the area.

Regent Park has experienced directed 'hits' on specific rivals, and drive-by shootings aimed indiscriminately at members of a gang or crew, or sometimes even at any young black man from the neighbourhood. Such violence can make it extremely reckless to widely publicize details of your whereabouts or associations. J-Dawg (23 yrs.), one of the local drug dealers and rappers, explains: "If you do have a lot of problems, I wouldn't really be using Snapchat, 'cuz you never know who you follow or who's following you type of stuff. So, if you're throwing up [representing], like if someone really has something against you, and you're Snapchatting where you are, or [posting] 'I'm chillin' over here on the block' you know, like someone can always just come through[44]… It's not that hard to find you." Someone who posted texts and images on their social media can (unintentionally) reveal to their followers where they are and who they are with *right now*. Shawn-T (17 yrs.) could not have been more adamant that this is a bad idea: "No, no, no, no! Don't do that! Don't do that!"

To deal with this difficulty, some research participants only posted pictures that offered no clues as to their location. Others posted pictures displaying location-specific details, but only after they had left the area where the picture was taken (colloquially known as a 'latergram'). Teston (21 yrs.), an aspiring rap artist, gives a sense of such considerations when explaining how

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[44]'Come through' is akin to 'run up,' referring to when a potential assailant enters the neighborhood to intimidate or be violent.

he broadcasts his rap videos, while simultaneously trying to remain safe: "On Instagram you turn off your location. Twitter, you never tweet where you are. Never ever. You shootin' a video, you don't do that. I don't do that! People don't do that!" When asked if he would ever announce on social media that he was shooting a music video in Regent Park in real-time, he answered: "No! No! No! No! Never, ever, ever! Or 'I'm here,' or my location's on. It's never on!"

In *On the Run*, Alice Goffman (2009) details how a group of men living in a Philadelphia ghetto keep on the move, not staying in one place too long for fear they might be located by the police, rivals, or even family members. This is similar to how the men in our study lived their lives, but with added concerns that social media augments their visibility. Here, Daniel (18 yrs.) gives a sense of his thought processes in relation to him hanging out at a popular basketball court in Regent Park: "... it's like if someone takes a Snap [posts on SnapChat] of me back there I'm not gonna stay there for long, cuz I know those aren't my people, the people that I'm with. Like, I'll be there for like ten seconds—about how long SnapChat is, and I'll keep it moving [move to another location]." The upshot is that while social media help confine the men in our study ever more tightly within the boundaries of Regent Park, it also contributes to their need to stay mobile *within* Regent Park, not settling in too long, even within neighbourhood spaces they previously deemed to be comparatively safe.

Provocation

Social media alter the spatial and inter-personal dynamics of contact among rival gangs. Bashir, (19 yrs.) accentuated this point, suggesting that: "Before I had to see you to cause a problem with you. Now I can just go on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram." In part, this is a

function of the increased speed of such communications. While rumors always travel famously quickly, the pace of interpersonal or telephone-based communications among street criminals in the era before social media now looks sluggish as compared to the rapid-fire posturing, challenging, and taunting that occasionally erupts on social media amongst rival street groups. Where face-to-face encounters on the street were previously a key flash point for confrontations between rival crews, these moments have been supplemented and exacerbated by social media platforms. New animosities emerge with a velocity and insolence with which many social media users have become accustomed, but take on added seriousness when they involve identifiable rival street criminals and their associates. As Antonne describes (26 yrs.), the immediacy of social media communications can contribute to almost instant rancor:

A: …this muthafucka is an enemy within a split second. Social media has now fast-forwarded those interactions completely.

U: The beefs?

A: Completely. Whereas before back in my day we didn't have all that stuff, you know what I mean. So, it was literally like things happened, got to that point, but it took a lot longer. It was a series of conversations before [things escalated]… and now it's 'boom!'… it happened.

The result can be what Harding (2014)characterizes as "viral contagion," where comparatively minor disagreements quickly escalate into major disputes. Such confrontations are now also conditioned by the increased size and dispersed nature of the audience. Historically, street level clashes played themselves out in real time and in front of perhaps only a handful of

onlookers. Antagonists could often creatively negotiate their way out of violence with minimal loss of face or street credibility (Garot 2010). Now, as provocations occur on social media, people can be called out in front of thousands of far-flung audience members, severely ratcheting up the pressure to respond in order to maintain respect.

Even physical confrontations, however, take on new characteristics in the social media era. Given the degree to which gangs and drug dealers lay claim to their turf, venturing into another neighborhood to challenge rivals or settle a score is a particularly risky and symbolically loaded act. The following two accounts from Charles and Marcus provide a sense of how rival neighbourhood groups now use social media to publicize that they have violated another group's territory, an act designed to spark confrontation, intimidate rivals, and enhance the intruder's reputation for being tough and fearless. Local residents are prone to interpret this as an affront to the entire neighborhood. Charles—a well-respected community leader—describes a type of social media cat-and-mouse game, where enemies enter another neighborhood, posting messages on social media to 'call out' (taunt) the locals who ostensibly own these spaces:

"With kids now it's like, 'uh, uh, uh, you just miss me [did not catch me] nigga, I'm out working the block, whadup!' You know what I mean? 'Come get me, I'm on River [street]!' And the kids would drive up to River, 'Uh, uh, uh you missed me again, dah, dah, dah!' And that's the conversation… *Where before, if you're looking for someone to hurt them, you have to go seek them out physically. But I think now with Twitter and the conversation on the phone it makes it more easier now for people to find you.*"[Emphasis added]

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In a related discussion, Marcus (24 yrs.) referred to Twitter posts from rivals who defiantly entered Regent Park, posting photos of themselves posing in front of distinctive local buildings, a move he saw as simultaneously bold, confrontational, and foolhardy:

"I'm seeing it all over Twitter. Like, what the hell… this guy is in front of 605 [a building in Regent Park], what the hell? This guy is here, this guy is there, and he is waiting. He is literally flashing his gun, you know what I'm saying? Flashing his gun in front of these buildings! This is frickin' dangerous. Anyone could get shot."

For the men who claim the streets of Regent Park as their own, broadcasting such incursions on social media is yet another example of disrespect, and a challenge to their reputation that calls for a serious response.

Discussion

It is not remarkable that our participants use social media platforms. What is notable is the range of distinctive and potentially dangerous risks this population must navigate in using social media. Some of these risks were familiar to individuals involved in street crime prior to the advent of social media, but now increasingly play themselves out online. Other dangers arise from the unique properties of social media, combined with the distinctive ways these men use these platforms.

The participants in our study reside in the fluid interstitial spaces that demarcate the physical street from the street as manifest online on social media. This is in keeping with the observation by Patton and his colleagues that "gang members now occupy two spaces: the

'streets' and the 'internet'" (Patton et al. 2013: 56). In fact, our research demonstrates that these are not two distinct locations. Online and offline environs are dialectically constituted. Socializing, grievances, and threats move back and forth from the physical street to the virtual street, often at a dizzying pace, sometimes prompting serious repercussions.

This new primacy of social media will be familiar to contemporary urban ethnographers who are increasingly encountering physical environments where 'on-the-ground' and 'online' social lives are hard to disentangle. More and more, the 'the urban' of 'urban ethnography' plays itself out online. Researchers need to foreground these mutually constituted online and offline environments if we are to develop a meaningful understanding of our participant's lived realities (Lane 2016).

For the men in our study, one aspect of this situation concerns new dynamics in how and where the 'code of the street' operates. As its name suggests, that code emerged 'on the ground' in specific disproportionately poor and racialized urban neighborhoods in the United States. In part, this was the consequence of a desire by the (predominantly) young men living in these neighborhoods to fashion a distinctive identity in a context where there was little prospect of social advancement thorough normatively prescribed means. The result was the emergence of a series of informal rules about how they need to carry themselves in street-based encounters, focused on projecting and protecting a hyper-masculine image of toughness and a refusal to back down from anything that might challenge their reputation. The men in our study played out this 'thug life' (Jeffries 2011) in different and often creative ways, often augmenting their self-

presentations by invoking the 'ghetto fabulous' aesthetic focused on a distinctively urban and racialized form of conspicuous consumption (Mukherjee 2006).

With their personal and criminal identities increasingly conducted online, the men in our study had new opportunities for self-promotion. Doing so involved contemplating and mitigating the potentially untoward online and street level consequences of such displays. In brief, they recognized that it was vital to their reputations that both their peers and adversaries see them take on certain risks in terms of how they portray themselves on social media. Such performances had to walk a delicate line; displaying bravado, without being heedless or foolhardy in a way that might prompt recrimination or retribution. Despite all their often-fatalistic talk about not fearing the consequences of their social media displays, the men in this study *did* work to mitigate what they saw as the untoward risks of being on social media. As our analysis demonstrates, our participants saw those risks clustering around issues of affiliation, location, and provocation. And while we have emphasized their risk-management efforts, part of the reason why our participants were attuned to such risks is because some have themselves employed social media as a vehicle to target victims, stir-up rivalries, and enact violence.

In conversations and interviews, a subset of our participants proclaimed that they would never use social media or appear in rap videos posted online. The risks were simply too high. In reality, not many could sustain such abstinence. For example, we noted above that Chops was vehement that he would not appear in videos for fear of how this might lead to him being inadvertently drawn into neighbourhood 'beefs'. In fact, he is one of many men who can now be prominently seen in several rap videos recently filmed in Regent Park and widely shared online.

He is not some background figure filmed surreptitiously, but is an active and prominent participant jamming to the music. A quick glance at the social media profiles of other participants suggest that Chops is not alone in this. A number of participants who had said they would avoid stereotypical gangsta-esque social media profiles have now adopted exactly those types of portrayals. This was particularly true for participants whose rap careers are beginning to flourish, and for those who were clearly rising in the neighbourhood's hierarchy of street criminals. The appeals of social media in terms of advancing their personal reputation sometimes required that they recalibrate their perceptions of risk. As social media have become increasingly central to social interaction, the men in this study seem to be ever-more drawn to using them to increase their street credibility, and to help out friends by appearing in their videos. Not using social media is increasingly untenable. The upshot is that the assorted micro-level techniques that we have identified above become ever more central to how our participants manage their distinctive risk profile.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

Slums, ghettos, and other areas of concentrated poverty have always been controversial, particularly when they are afflicted with crime, drugs, gangs, and violence. Efforts to de-concentrate poverty, and the current most popular policy—neighbourhood redevelopment—have been sold to the broader public as the most effective way to reduce the 'social ills' associated with these areas, with neighbourhood redevelopment initiatives taking off rapidly across North America. Although policy makers have painted neighbourhood redevelopment initiatives as unequivocally beneficial to all involved parties (social-housing residents, middle-income home buyers, housing authorities, partner-builder companies, and the city more broadly), I argue that there are multiple, negative unintended consequences of neighbourhood redevelopment that have not been adequately explored by researchers. Thus, rather than viewing these developments as unambiguously positive, academics, policy makers, city officials, and social housing authorities should temper the optimism surrounding these initiatives and should evaluate the serious and potentially lethal effects of neighbourhood redevelopment on local criminal processes and structures. In this thesis I have outlined some of these consequences, such as the erosion of informal rules governing neighbourhood life and safety (chapter 3), the taking over of drug turfs by new groups (chapter 4), as well the implications of social media in a changing 'urban' milieu (chapter 5). Below, I present additional potential implications. My findings provide a strong foundation that scholars, NGOS,

and policymakers can consult when considering some of the crime-related consequences of proposed and ongoing neighbourhood development initiatives elsewhere.

In Chapter three, I presented the broader systems of informal neighbourhood governance in Regent Park—most notably, the street code. I outlined how the displacement of the neighbourhood's 'major criminal players' compromised the longstanding informal codes of conduct that they enforced, thereby undermining systems of criminal governance within the neighbourhood. I presented how this affected neighbourhood youth, highlighting their concerns about the emergence of younger actors unto Regent Park's criminal sphere, and the perceived resultant spike in violence. While the bulk of criminological scholarship conceives of street codes in negative terms, I argued that Regent Park's informal rules served a positive protective function for neighbourhood residents. In turn, neighbourhood youth reported becoming more fearful once many 'Old Heads' were displaced since there were fewer individuals who were able to enforce the street code in Regent Park and safeguard its protective elements.

In Chapter four, I illuminated additional changes to Regent Park's criminal hierarchies as a result of neighbourhood redevelopment. I presented the neighbourhood's history of gang violence, and argued that despite what existing scholarly research would predict, the emergence of a new gang within a territory previously dominated by established criminal groups did not result in violence. I demonstrated how this lack of violence was attributable to both groups sharing a common 'master status' of Regent Park residency. Furthermore, I showed how the established criminal groups coped with their frustrations about losing their territorial monopoly by drawing moral boundaries between themselves and the newly emerging group.

Thus, this chapter also shed an academic spotlight on the boundary work that develops between criminal groups.

In chapter five, I examined how gang-involved men in Regent Park reproduced and reinforced many of the dangers of gang life on the urban streets through social media, while fostering new strategies for managing those risks through an ongoing process of online impression management. In particular, I provided a nuanced analysis of how Regent Park's gang members and gang-involved residents conceive of and manage both the benefits and potential detractions of being visible on social media platforms. I argued that through this process, the code of the street goes virtual, becoming disembedded from its originating physical location by circulating on social media platforms. I articulated how the street code occasionally becomes re-embedded onto the streets, yet with different nuances and implications.

In this final chapter, I provide a number of concluding observations. I again highlight the importance of studying neighbourhood redevelopment initiatives from a criminological and urban-ethnography perspective. I emphasize the need for academic exploration into the multiple ways that resident displacement destabilizes neighbourhoods, and particularly the broad-reaching and potentially serious implications of social network disruption for criminal and non-criminal residents alike. I then discuss the limitations of my research study, present guidelines for future research, and provide policy suggestions for neighbourhood redevelopment projects from a criminological perspective.

The Need for a Criminological Spotlight on Neighbourhood Redevelopment

As presented in the introduction, a number of notable works have explored the impacts of neighbourhood redevelopment on social housing residents. However, there remains a dearth of research into how neighbourhood redevelopment impacts local levels of crime and violence (during periods of instability and upon project completion). This is problematic, particularly given that a reduction of neighbourhood crime is a primary motivator behind these initiatives. Outside of this dissertation, we currently have *very little understanding* of whether the design intentions of neighbourhood redevelopment meet their design outcomes for one of the most prominent rationalizations of neighbourhood redevelopment—decreases in neighbourhood crime. Turning a criminological gaze to neighbourhood redevelopment is critical because the destabilization of *any* networks in a neighbourhood where criminal residents are embedded within informal 'systems' at play in disadvantaged neighbourhoods (Rose and Clear 1998: 457) and where criminal and non-criminal residents are closely tied, thereby also destabilizes a large proportion (or the entirety) of the community. The destabilization of these networks (whether via displacement, the arrest of a gang leader, or mass incarceration) can have serious consequences, since the breakdown of existing criminal structures does not solely affect residents that directly participate in the structures, but can have similarly serious and even fatal consequences for 'average/pro-social' neighbourhood residents (see for example, Brotherton and Barrios 2004; Urbanik et al. 2016; Vargas 2014). In a period of neighbourhood instability, social networks are destabilized, trust between residents is compromised, and previously existing codes of conduct quickly erode (Shaw and McKay 1942). This volatility may also translate to a neighbourhood's criminal element, making criminal players more likely to engage in more frequent/reckless

violence thereby compromising the safety of all residents (see for example, Rose and Clear 1998).

Disadvantaged neighbourhoods and their informal processes and structures (including criminal networks, the street code, and informal codes of conduct) are built upon complex interpersonal networks that provide residents with a system by which to understand and affect control over spaces that outsiders characterize as chaotic and dangerous. Thus, scholars of concentrated poverty, ghettos, and gangs, should employ empirical methods and theoretical tools to better understand the 'on the ground' realities (and their complexities) in areas undergoing neighbourhood redevelopment. This urban ethnography turns to a number of criminological and sociological theories to make sense of changing criminal dynamics and processes in Regent Park as a result of its ongoing redevelopment.

Like with other neighbourhood redevelopment initiatives, the widespread public and political support for Regent Park's revitalization was strongly rooted in the systematic stigmatization of the neighbourhood's racialized social housing residents (Bennett and Reed 1999). Garnering as much negative media attention as it did, Regent Park was one of the most feared areas in the city, with its external 'slum' representations presenting it as an outcast space; the epitome of crime and cultural depravity (Purdy 2005, 2003). It was these representations, combined with its levels of crime and violence (Thompson 2009) that prompted Regent Park's selection as Canada's first social housing complex to undergo neighbourhood revitalization. While some have branded Regent Park's ongoing revitalization a success (Dunn et al. 2014;TCHC 2017; Toronto Star 2014a), this conclusion is premature and highly debatable, given

that it depends on how we conceptualize and measure success, and who we consider to be the recipients of the 'successes.'

Most notably, Dunn et al. (2014) have documented a number of benefits of the revitalization for housing residents, pertaining to greater satisfaction with home and neighbourhood, lower levels of distress, and increased feelings of safety in the area. Looking at criminological markers specifically, Dunn et al. report that 73% of participants felt "somewhat" or "very" safe in the neighbourhood while living in their original Regent Park home, increasing to 95% when they were interviewed one year after relocating to their new unit. The study also documents positive changes to a number of factors pertaining to community safety: a) gang activity (34% as compared to 14%); b) drug activity (47% as compared to 19%); c) police treatment of youth (29% as compared to 7%); d) property of someone in household damaged or destroyed (22% as compared to 7%); e) greater police protection (53% as compared to 83%) and; f) overall feeling safer at night in home and in the neighbourhood. These reported improvements to criminological factors are impressive and suggest that the revitalization has left original Regent Park residents feeling much safer in their community. The study found no change to the number of respondents reporting that someone in their household was the victim of a crime within the past month, suggesting that crime incidence may not have decreased for the study's respondents. However, a number of methodological decisions affected this study's outcomes, differentiating the findings from my doctoral research.

First, it must be noted that Dunn et al.'s initial interviews were conducted in 2009-2010, with 59 displaced residents being interviewed again the following year. Thus, the study was

completed before the onset of my doctoral research in 2013, and occurred before a number of

extremely high-profile shooting deaths of neighbourhood men, mostly notably the infamous

Eaton Centre shooting deaths of Ahmed Hassan (24 yrs.) and Nixon Nirmalendran (22 yrs.) in

2012, Tyson Bailey (15 yrs.) in 2013, Yusuf Ali (18 yrs.) in 2014, Ceyon Carrington (29 yrs.),

Julian Weekes (27 yrs.), and Marcus Gibson (24 yrs.) in 2016, and Ali Rizeig (18 yrs.)[45]in 2017,

amongst others. The study also took place before a spurt of violence in the summer of 2015 when

five shootings that either occurred within Regent Park, or were related to Regent Park residents

within the span of two weeks. These shootings further devastated an already destabilized

neighbourhood, and contributed to fear amongst residents about the growing unpredictability of

lethal violence, as my doctoral research illuminates.

Second, almost 60% of Dunn et al.'s participants were relocated to a new unit in the

east downtown core *outside* of Regent Park. Perceptions of safety for residents relocated *within*

Regent Park are not specified in the report, thus it is unclear whether residents who remained in

the neighbourhood also experienced increased feelings of safety. Further, since the

redevelopment was conducted in phases, residents who were displaced into new buildings within

Regent Park would be relocated to a redeveloped section of the neighbourhood. These sections

have better vehicular and pedestrian accessibility, improved street and building lighting, and are

located next to market condominiums, all of which have private security guards working on the

premise. It is likely that increased feelings of safety can be attributed to CPTED and defensible

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[45] I document these murders with a heavy heart. A number of these men directly participated in
my study, while I knew some of the others in passing. Apart from these murders being
emotionally difficult to try to make sense of and accept for myself as a privileged researcher,
relatively far removed from the murders, the pain that their deaths caused to the broader Regent
Park community is unfathomable and I grieve equally as much for the family, friends, and many
other residents directly and indirectly affected by these deaths.

space principles (Newman 1972; Ray 1971) implemented in revitalized sections of Regent Park. I conducted the vast majority of my interviews and ethnographic observation in the old and (at that time) still un-revitalized sections of the neighbourhood, where CPTED principles were not yet implemented. Given the lack of CPTED initiatives, and the fact that many of the neighbourhood's major criminal players still either resided or congregated in the untouched sections of the neighbourhood, many residents and the men I spent most of my time in the field with understood that their immediate surroundings and the individuals who associated there were at the greatest risk of victimization. For the men in my study, and other neighbourhood residents that I interviewed, the revitalization has had a number of negative effects on their perceptions of safety because according to them, the displacement of Regent Park's major criminal players resulted in the emergence of younger, more reckless criminal players as well as new gangs, and when combined with the already present dangers of social media, has further exacerbated risks to their wellbeing.

Third, 61% of Dunn et al.'s respondents were female, which is important given that males (and specifically, young black males) are disproportionately represented as homicide victims in Toronto (Gartner and Thompson 2004), thereby their perceptions of safety may differ from female perceptions. Further, the racial composition of Dunn et al.'s participants is unclear. As such, the men in my study—the vast majority of whom were black—would likely have very different perceptions of safety than white residents. This also speaks to the point that Dunn et al.'s participants were older (42% were between 45-65 yrs.). Older individuals may have very different concerns about crime and violence than the young men that I spent most of my time in the neighbourhood with. Thus, Dunn et al.'s study focused on a particular subset of residents

whose specific demographics and relocation to a new home may have shaped their perceptions of safety in the neighbourhood. While these findings are promising, they are not representative of Regent Park residents as a whole. My dissertation research provides insights to a subset of residents that Dunn et al.'s study does not; unmasking the complex and different ways that neighbourhood redevelopment affects different groups of residents.

Future research projects should engage with a diversity of residents, providing academics and policy makers a more holistic understanding of how different subsets of residents are impacted by neighbourhood redevelopment in Regent Park, and the redevelopments of other social housing projects or disadvantaged areas. There is also an immense need for more ethnographic criminological explorations of neighbourhoods 'in transition.' This is particularly true in Canada, where—apart from this dissertation—we have no criminological ethnographic works on 'ghettos' like Regent Park. As a consequence, despite garnering widespread media and police attention, "the structural forces that caused the problems in certain public housing projects such as residential segregation and the use of public housing projects to warehouse those displaced in earlier waves of urban renewal and deindustrialization are hidden from view as much of the academic and public discourse focuses on the personal failings of the inner-city poor" (Crump 2002: 593). Thus, I echo Crump's warning that academics and policy makers must be wary about neighbourhood redevelopment policies—despite how 'dressed up' they come—as they are rooted in poorly conceptualized theories about urban space, and reduce complex socio-spatial problems into over-simplified 'key words' (i.e. concentrated poverty, social mix) that mask the power dynamics inherent in neighbourhood restructuring initiatives (Crump 2002: 593).

Throughout this thesis, I have highlighted the disruptive nature of Regent Park's revitalization on the lives of my participants. Consistent with other research findings that have documented similar turmoil during a neighbourhood's 'in transition' stages, it is important to emphasize that these disruptions are likely *temporary*. The TCHC residents that remain in Regent Park or return to the neighbourhood following displacement will eventually settle into their new homes, social structures, and routines. While they may reminisce on their lives in pre-redevelopment Regent Park, their everyday realities will ultimately become more structured, and their environment will feel less chaotic. Thus, while my thesis illuminates the instability caused by neighbourhood redevelopment in relation to criminal processes and structures, it cannot speak to the effects of neighbourhood redevelopment on crime and violence in redeveloped areas upon project completion (and perhaps more importantly, after a significant amount of time has passed since completion). Thus, it is possible that neighbourhood redevelopment in Regent Park and elsewhere may have positive effects on crime and violence in the long-term. However, decreases in neighbourhood crime and violence post-redevelopment are contingent on a number of factors pertaining to the demographics of social housing and private market residents, percentage of social housing residents, percentage of youth, financial situations of social housing residents, policing efforts, lack of criminality on behalf of private market buyers, neighbourhood resources, and broader patterns of crime and violence, which may or may not produce expected reductions in local criminality upon project completion.

Limitations

As is true for all research studies, there are a number of important limitations of my research that should be addressed. The first is a limitation common to all forms of qualitative and

specifically, ethnographic research: generalizability. Although my research methodology exposed me to hundreds of Regent Park residents, I only collected data in Regent Park. As such, this case study does not provide a universal account of neighbourhood redevelopment initiatives and their effects on criminal processes and structures. There are a number of particularities that shape everyday life in Regent Park including: the neighbourhood's physical layout; resident demographics; the influx of middle-class residents; the 'stages' of the redevelopment and their subsequent physical and social changes; immense stigmatization; a long history with gangs and violence; and established informal systems of social controls (i.e., a street code). These characteristics and the interplay between them might not apply to all other social housing projects undergoing neighbourhood redevelopment. Thus, the contextual effects at play in Regent Park, combined with the compositional effects of its demographics (Elliot et al. 2006; Simcha-Fagan and Schwartz 1986), may distinguish the neighbourhood from other otherwise comparatively similar social housing projects.

Further, this thesis focuses on knowledges produced by Regent Park residents—and particularly, gang involved men—and consequently, produces a picture that is biased towards how these particular residents conceive of the revitalization and its effects on their lives. While I formally interviewed and conducted ethnographic observation with of a diversity of residents within the neighbourhood, I spent most of my time in the field with gang-involved men. As a result, their perspectives and experiences of 'ghetto life' and neighbourhood redevelopment dominate the data presented in this thesis. Additional findings that emerged during my data collection efforts attuned me to the fact that the experiences and perceptions of the gang-involved men in my study differed (albeit only slightly), from the perceptions and experiences of

young (16-32 yr. old) non-criminally involved residents. This was because, as outlined earlier, all criminally involved and a large proportion of non-criminally residents adhered to the established 'street code' in Regent Park to varying degrees, depending on gender, age, and race. Thus, the experiences of my key participants that inform most of this dissertation, do not apply uniformly to all Regent Park residents, though it would be a worthwhile endeavour to further uncover the experiences and perceptions of non-criminally involved residents in the future.

Irrespective of questions about generalizability that exist with all qualitative research, I anticipate that the general findings of this study (namely that neighbourhood redevelopment projects have unintended consequences on crime and violence in the neighbourhood), would be similar to other North American neighbourhoods undergoing revitalization. Research demonstrates that disadvantaged neighbourhoods with similar systems of 'informal social control' and similarly close networks between 'criminal' and 'non-criminal' residents have comparable social organizations and micro-politics (see Anderson 1990, Bourgois 1995; Venkatesh 2000). Thus, while specifics may differ between different localities, these neighbourhoods are likely home to the comparable, albeit not identical, processes.Nevertheless,this dissertation is fashioned to provide a nuanced ethnographic account of how gang-involved men in a social housing project underdoing neighbourhood redevelopment navigate the changes associated with the revitalization of Regent Park, and is intended to provide the foundation on which to build theoretical understandings of these processes. It is not intended to provide broad representativeness for neighbourhood redevelopment everywhere.

Interviewing and ethnography has once again come under fire for its (in)ability to discern

and present 'truthfulness' and 'fact' (see, for example: Jerolmack and Khan 2014). As a critical realist, my dissertation aims to uncover the perceptions and experiences of the gang-involved men in my study and explores how these perceptions affected their realities. Thus, I adhered to Emerson et al.'s (1995) approach that my task as an ethnographer was "not to determine 'the truth' but to reveal the multiple truths apparent in others' lives" (p.4). I adopted an open-ended and more pragmatic approach to interviewing, I was looking to collect data not limited to behaviour, but also pertaining to classification systems, meaning-making, perceptions, beliefs, identity, boundary work, cultural ideals, and emotional states, all of which were rooted in a specific cultural context (Lamont and Swidler 2014: 157; Miller et al. 2015). This approach, coupled with ethnographic observations, granted me "privileged access to the immediate interactional situation and to many local codes or aspects of interactional style that may not be available to an interviewer" (Lamont and Swidler 2014: 160).

While I could not verify whether violence had increased in Regent Park since the onset of the revitalization like many of my participants claimed (Canadian police typically do not disclose data on crime and violence at the neighbourhood level), I was able to explore how their beliefs about a spike in violence impacted their day-to-day decision-making. Sociologists recognize that "if a person perceives a situation as real, it is real in its consequence" (Thomas and Thomas 1928: 572). If residents *perceive* changes to crime and violence in their neighbourhood—irrespective of reality—their perceptions will guide/alter their behaviour. Analyzing this process was a goal of this study. Hence, for the purpose of this thesis, questions pertaining to whether crime is *really* less predictable in Regent Park, or whether victimization is *truly* more likely than it was prior to the redevelopment bears no great methodological significance. Further, even if

crime rates and incidents of violence decreased during Regent Park's revitalization, my participants believed them to be rising and believed their safety in the neighbourhood was compromised. Thus, they resorted to taking more defensive measures in regards to where, when, and who they associated with, how they conveyed themselves on social media, and their overall presence in the public spaces of Regent Park and the surrounding city. Nevertheless, the fact that I was not able to assess the 'truth' of their claims against official crime data limited the conclusions that I could draw, and is an important area for future investigation.

I made significant efforts to validate my data. First, I relied upon member validation; I discussed my findings with participants to determine whether my understandings of what I heard and observed were correct and comprehensive (Brewer 2000: 236). To ensure that these discussions were not biased in favour of one viewpoint, I discussed my findings with a diversity of participants across broad age groups, including gang-members, gang-affiliated men[46], community workers, youth counselors, neighbourhood mothers, and non-criminally involved residents. Second, I triangulated my data (Denzin 1970) whenever possible to verify the accurateness of my findings. I confirmed my interview data and field observations through multiple means (i.e. interviewing individuals multiple times, asking multiple people about a specific incident, checking news reports, YouTube videos, Instagram and Facebook accounts, etc.) to determine whether I was gathering accurate representations of what my participants had shared with me (see Saukko 2003). For example, one of my participants told me about a shooting that had occurred in a schoolyard the night before where my participants often congregated. He told me multiple bullets penetrated the front windows of the school, which I found suspicious

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[46] 'Gang-affiliated' refers to participants that were not gang-members themselves but heavily associated with neighbourhood gangs.

considering the shooting was not featured on the local news, so I asked him to show me the bullet holes. Having seen these new bullet holes myself, I was then able to ask my other participants about this shooting with confidence that it occurred, to get a more nuanced understanding of the situation.

Further, my rather unorthodox approach to ethnography also had some methodological implications for my research. Comparable urban ethnographies such as those by Sandra Bucerius (2014), Randol Contreras (2012) or JooYoung Lee (2016) typically involve the researcher being immersed in the field until the data collection process is completed. My frequent entry and re-entry into the field differed from this more familiar approach as I had to re-establish access and re-renegotiate my role as a researcher in the neighbourhood every summer. Given my familiarity with many neighbourhood residents, I was able to re-immerse myself into the field relatively quickly every summer, allowing me to conduct intensive fieldwork over the months that I was in Regent Park, capturing the insider perspectives of my participants (Bernard 2006; Padgett 2008). Heeding suggestions about the importance of building rapport prior to conducting formal interviews (Desmond 2007; Venkatesh 2000), I forwent formal interviews until after a couple of weeks of intensive fieldwork each year, to re-acquaint myself with neighbourhood residents and my key participants before interviewing them. Nevertheless, exiting and re-entering the field limited the 'depth' of my ethnographic immersion, since continued presence was not possible (Block 2012: 380). However, this atypical approach to ethnography was beneficial for my project, by providing me clear and objective snapshots about how the revitalization had affected things on the ground level in Regent Park from year to year.

Policy Suggestions

Despite the fact that the Regent Park Revitalization is not yet complete and the full consequences of the initiative remain to be seen, TCHC has already initiated revitalizing some of its other housing projects, such as Lawrence Heights and Don Mount, amongst others (TCHC 2017*b*). In addition, various other neighbourhoods in Canada (as well as in Europe and North America) are currently underdoing similar neighbourhood revitalization efforts. Thus, despite knowing little about how these redevelopment initiatives actually affect local levels of crime and violence in these neighbourhoods—despite being championed as solutions to these problems—it is clear that poverty deconcentration via neighbourhood redevelopment remains the Western world's remedy for spatially clustered disadvantage and crime. I hope that my ethnographic work on the effects of the Regent Park revitalization on criminal structures and processes will incite scholarly debate and additional investigations into the often-veiled consequences of revitalization. Additionally, I hope that it will sensitize policy makers, community housing authorities, and neighbourhood organizations to the potentially unintended consequences of revitalization, leading to better, more informed policy decisions for future neighbourhood restructuring projects. A number of policy recommendations follow:

First, those in charge of neighbourhood redevelopment initiatives of disadvantaged and high-crime areas should consult with the major criminal players in that area. Although this may seem unconventional or counterintuitive, this proposition is not that preposterous. Research has documented the various ways that gang members and other criminal actors have willingly engaged in productive discussions with community members, groups, and even police about reducing violence and increasing neighbourhood safety (i.e., Braga and Hureau 2014; Pattillo

1998; Venkatesh 2009: 223). Consulting with individuals in charge of informal systems of social control can increase understandings of the 'protective' elements of these systems, which can shape redevelopment decisions and potentially minimize the destabilization of criminal structures and processes that enhance resident safety, at least during the neighbourhood's transitory period. These discussions should include the housing authority, community service workers, and perhaps even the police, to ensure that the safety of all residents remains a top priority for all involved parties. Major criminal players possess extensive street capital (Sandberg 2008), providing them with useful alternative lenses for understanding neighbourhood and street dynamics. Scholars like Foote Whyte (1943), Padilla (1992), Hagedorn (1998), Wright and Decker (2011), Stewart and Simons (2010) and Harding (2014), amongst others, argue that street culture should be understood as its own social system comprised of values and regulations that require particular knowledges and resources. As such, it is a neighbourhood's major criminal players that best understand the nuances and intricacies of neighbourhood and street networks and dynamics that housing authorities (like TCHC), builder-partners (the Daniels corporation), and police services cannot since they do not possess the same amount and types of street capital. Further, apart from intimately *understanding* these informal systems of governance, these players often also have the power to *affect* and *control* these structures in ways that housing authorities, community workers, and the police cannot, potentially enhancing neighbourhood safety during transitory periods.

Eliciting the cooperation of major criminal players is possible, though it may not be easy. In the examples noted above, criminal actors were strongly attached to their communities and other neighbourhood residents, which served as an incentive to ceasefire and reduce local

criminal activity. Though some conceive of major criminal players and gang members as unequivocally violent, reckless, and uncaring, research shows that many have deep connections to their communities and want to live in an area free of crime and disorder, though their circumstances may not be conducive to this goal (Pattillo 1998). While neighbourhood attachment may not prevent residents from gang membership and drug trafficking, it connects them to law-abiding residents who monitor their criminal involvement and can demand that they abide by neighbourhood norms (Pattillo 1998:754). Though invitations to partake in consultations may not be successful the first time around, once major criminal players recognize potential or actual problems and dangers of redevelopment, they may be more inclined to participate, especially if accompanied by pressures from pro-social family members, neighbourhoods, and community groups. Thus, buy in from respected neighbourhood actors, and trust and respect between these actors and the revitalization planners is critical to successful community engagement.

While some may be skeptical that major criminal players would be willing to engage in discussions about neighbourhood redevelopment, if done in the right way, with the right actors (trusted residents, respected youth counselors, etc.) at the table, these consultations can be successful. In addition, major criminal players may have a less altruistic motivation in participating in these consultations. They likely understand how neighbourhood redevelopment projects will disrupt their lives, their criminal and pro-social activities (i.e., where to hang out), and how changes to their physical environment (i.e., increased vehicular and pedestrian traffic, an influx of outsiders, etc.), places them—in particular—at increased risk since they are the most likely to be victimized. Thus, apart from personal attachments to specific residents (family

members, friends, neighbours, etc.) and connections/obligations to their communities, they may be inclined to cooperate with redevelopment planners to enhance their own safety during transitory periods.

Neighbourhood redevelopment's effects on criminal structures and processes do not just affect a neighbourhood's major criminal players. In fact, they can have serious and even fatal consequences for 'average,' law-abiding residents, as evidenced by the shooting deaths of innocent bystanders that have been officially (i.e., Jane Creba) and unofficially (i.e.,Peggy Ann Smith)attributed to Regent Park's criminal actors (Toronto Star 2014b; Toronto Sun 2017). In a period of instability and distrust, criminal actors are more likely to engage in reckless behaviour when codes of conduct and interpersonal networks are compromised by displacement. Similar to how the removal of major criminal players via the arrest of gang/cartel leaders can increase violence and expand criminal groups (see Brotherton and Barrios 2004; Papachristos 2001; Vargas 2014), the removal of major criminal players via resident displacement can have similar effects.

Second, neighbourhood redevelopment initiatives should include a diversity of social housing residents at all stages of the process. These consultations should include neighbourhood mothers, community workers, and criminal players alike. These residents would have different understandings of, and concerns about, the social and criminal structures of their neighbourhoods and how it may be affected by destabilization. In neighbourhoods where gang members and drug dealers are intimately incorporated into networks of law-abiding kin and neighbours (Horowitz 1987; Papachristos et al. 2013; Pattillo 1998), like Regent Park, law-abiding residents can also have fairly comprehensive understandings of the neighborhood's 'criminal' element. Regent

Park's ongoing revitalization has negative impacted the social fabric of the community and social networks (Thompson et al. 2013), which has, according to many of my participants, increased their vulnerability, at least during periods of transition. These periods of transition are particularly difficult to navigate for criminal and non-criminal residents alike, and, I would argue, the most dangerous times for neighbourhoods afflicted with gangs and violence. Thus, in addition to consulting with a neighbourhood's major criminal players, it is also important that neighbourhood redevelopment planners consult with other neighbourhood actors, who may be closely connected to, or otherwise impacted by, the neighbourhood's major criminal players in various ways. These insights can provide planners with invaluable knowledge about how the redevelopment can be accomplished in a way that keeps all residents safe.

Though efforts were made to engage social housing residents and ask for their input in the planning of the Regent Park revitalization (Horak 2010; Meagher and Boston 2003), these efforts were not far reaching enough. About 30% of neighbourhood residents participated in public engagement exercises aimed at getting resident feedback on the revitalization (Meagher and Boston 2003: 5). This figure is rather interesting given that only a very small handful of the hundreds of residents that I spoke to (both law abiding and criminal) claimed that they were aware of such efforts, with even fewer having provided feedback. Thus, claims about residents' 'overwhelming approval' of the Regent Park revitalization (Meagher and Boston 2003: 51) are either overstated or, applicable to a very small subset of Regent Park residents who were involved in the consultation process. The vast majority of residents that I spoke with expressed immense frustration about the lack of opportunities to provide their opinions, insisting that they were never informed of public forums, or that they had only heard about them after the fact.

While it is difficult to ascertain the extent of outreach and information sharing to housing residents by revitalization planners, the vast majority of Regent Park residents were not involved in the initial or ongoing planning stages of the redevelopment.

Further, the small number of residents who claimed that they participated in these forums told me that their efforts were fruitless and their involvement was therefore brief. They expressed that when they attended forums supposedly intended to elicit resident feedback, they were never given a legitimate opportunity to air their concerns and provide input on the revitalization. Having attended numerous community meetings on the revitalization during my time in the field, I witnessed residents attempt to have greater input in the redevelopment process. Approximately 20-60 residents attended these meetings, most of whom were middle-aged, East-African, Muslim parents. A good number of white seniors were also present, with a smaller scattering of middle-aged white and black residents. This was in addition to community workers, police officers, TCHC workers, Daniels Corporation representatives, and a few middle-income homebuyers. Most notably, there was limited youth representation, although neighbourhood mothers and youth workers did try to voice the concerns of youth, particularly relating to safety.

These meetings were quite sombre; I witnessed revitalization/housing/police officials dismiss resident concerns on a number of occasions, where frustrated residents were not allowed to speak and at one meeting, residents were even told that there would be 'no time for questions or comments.' Thus, attributinglimited resident engagement to resident disinterest is oversimplified and frankly inaccurate. In communities like Regent Park, where many residents feel disempowered by their circumstances and interactions with various actors and institutions,

limited resident engagement can be better understood as an internalized form of symbolic violence (Bourdieu 1979). Given disempowerment of social housing residents, efforts to elicit their feedback and include them in the planning process should be tailored accordingly, and not be fashioned according to white, middle-class standards of invitation. If powerful social actors like a housing authority, a private-builder partner, or the police want to engage with marginalized communities, they must acknowledge and try to dismantle power dynamics that often hinder meaningful interactions between these groups (Lind and Tyler 1988; Murphy and Cherney 2011; Tyler et al. 1997).

Third, neighbourhood redevelopment initiatives should include social housing residents *at all stages of the process*. While some effort was made to engage residents during the proposed stages of the Regent Park revitalization, my participants felt that their input did not matter once the revitalization began. Neighbourhood revitalization efforts are massive endeavors that require copious planning. Even with the best intentions in mind, and with resident involvement in the early planning stages, the restructuring of disadvantaged neighbourhoods combined with population engineering (to include middle-class homeowners) can have unpredictable and unintended consequences. Neighbourhoods are dynamic places, shaped by resident composition, interactional effects, and the broader physical environment. In the course of neighbourhood redevelopment, an unintended but damaging consequence of the redevelopment may surface or become foreseeable. Being in constant dialogue with social housing residents can attune redevelopment actors to existing/potential problems much sooner, which can allow for harm avoidance/minimization. Ongoing collaborations with residents can assist revitalization actors in implementing necessary changes in the most effective and least disruptive way. In order for these

efforts to be meaningful, and potentially successful at alleviating some unintended consequences of neighbourhood redevelopment, *all* residents (pro-social, criminal, etc.) need to be engaged in more meaningful ways and at all stages of the redevelopment.

Future Research Directions

The findings of this research warrant further criminological and urban ethnographic study of neighbourhood redevelopment initiatives. Only through employing these lenses can we better understand how neighbourhood revitalization affects criminal structures and processes, and how these periods of transition alter the safety and lived realities of criminal and non-criminal residents. In light of the limitations of this research, there are numerous avenues for future scholarly investigation that are critical to enhancing our limited knowledge of the criminological effects of neighbourhood redevelopment.

The Regent Park revitalization, like many other neighbourhood redevelopment initiatives across Canada, the United States and Europe, involves temporary and/or permanent displacement of residents to other social-housing projects. As argued in Chapter 4, in Toronto, like in other cities across the United States in particular, neighbourhood residency serves as a master status for many low-income residents (Bucerius 2014; Garot 2007). Thus, when Regent Park residents, and particularly (male) youth are relocated to other social housing complexes, they are branded with a Regent Park identity, and assume the gravity of Regent Park's history, stigma, associations, and 'beefs' with other neighbourhoods. This master status crosses lines of criminality and law abidingness; even residents who have no criminal associations within Regent Park and do not participate in its informal economy cannot escape these associations and are

viewed as impeaching on another neighbourhood's/gang's territory. This places them at risk of harassment, threats, police attention, and even serious violence inside and outside the neighbourhood. The risk of victimization is particularly exacerbated for a neighbourhood like Regent Park, which has had, and continues to have, long-standing and very serious 'beefs' with other social housing complexes across the city. Resident relocation—and particularly the relocation of criminal actors—from one disadvantaged neighbourhood into another alters the social and criminal fabric of the *departing* neighbourhood as well as the *receiving* one, the implications of which mandate further scholarly investigation.

Chapter 3 highlighted the effects of displacing 'major criminal players' from a neighbourhood in which they play a key role in enforcing informal social control. However, during the course of my research, I became attuned to the potential consequences of Regent Park residents being relocated (both temporarily and permanently) to other social housing complexes in Toronto. I heard many accounts of displaced residents (criminal and non-criminal) being victimized as a result of being displaced into neighbourhoods that have histories of 'beefs' with Regent Park. Future research should consider the extent and nature of victimization of displaced residents in their new areas. It would be also worthwhile to consider whether the relocation of otherwise law-abiding youth encourages or facilitates their involvement in criminality once relocated, because of absorption into existing systems of informal social control in their new areas, and/or because of the dissolution of informal social controls that kept them out of trouble in their old neighbourhoods.

In addition, since some displaced residents may be criminally-involved or may be 'major criminal players' (like Regent Park's displaced 'Old Heads') future research should also consider: a) the criminal participation (or lack thereof) of displaced residents in their new areas, examining any differences in type, amount, or location of crimes being committed; b) whether relocation of major criminal players into these neighbourhoods imports new criminality, or whether they (eventually) join established criminal networks in these areas; c) whether the relocation of major criminal players leads to desistence from crime; d) what happens to criminal structures in relocation areas upon the introduction of new major criminal players, and intuitively; e) whether resident displacement also displaces crime.

Further, it is necessary to highlight that the Regent Park revitalization is not occurring in a socio-spatial vacuum. At the same time that Regent Park is being revitalized and residents are being displaced to other social housing projects across the city, other social housing projects in Toronto are also undergoing revitalization and their residents are being displaced across the city as well (TCHC 2017b). Similar initiatives across multiple neighbourhoods are occurring across Canada. This begs the question about if and how mass resident relocation from some social housing projects into others (and possibly into the same housing projects) affects crime and violence across cities more broadly, particularly in cities where neighbourhood residency is an important master status. Gaining a broader appreciation for how concurrent neighbourhood redevelopment initiatives affect criminal dynamics at the municipal level would provide important insights for policy makers, urban planners, and law enforcement.

Related to this issue is how the rise of social media has altered individual, group, and neighbourhood relations. Chapter 5 outlined how the importation of the street code onto social media platforms and its subsequent re-embeddedness back onto the streets can have serious implications for residents of disadvantaged areas. However, we currently have a very limited understanding of the role that social media plays in exacerbating gang and/or neighbourhood 'beefs,' but also in terms of broader intra, and inter-gang and neighbourhood relations. Whilst scholars are increasingly turning towards uncovering the complex ways in which social media interactions affect life 'on the ground,' what is still missing is a deep consideration of whether, and how, social media factors into neighbourhood destabilization, transition, and redevelopment, and what the implications of this may be. How does social media visibility contribute to volatility in the streets when networks and structures are already compromised? Can social media help to enhance the safety of neighbourhood residents (both criminal and non-criminal) during such chaotic times, and if so, how? These questions are particularly salient at a time when more and more of our disadvantaged populations are accessing social media.

I hope that my dissertation research has contributed to scholarly understandings of some unintended and negative consequences of neighbourhood redevelopment. I also hope that by highlighting the perceptions and experiences of a subset of Regent Park's gang-involved men, changes to their fears and lived realities as a result of the dismantling of their neighbourhood will be considered just as important as the experiences of 'prosocial' Regent Parkers. Given the limitations of the thesis platform and my specific research questions and data, a thorough examination of the structural barriers faced by my participants such as social inequality, racial inequality, and systemic discrimination, is not adequately presented in this thesis. However, in

my efforts to address the micro questions that this thesis engages with, the salience of macro

forces in constraining the life opportunities of my participants was always at the forefront of my

data collection. While the criminality of my participants and other Regent Parkers is often

emphasized by the mainstream media and police (i.e., broadcasting police mug shots of Regent

Park homicide victims and mentioning their alleged criminal history/involvement), the barriers

and constrains that they face in their life decisions and their (real and perceived) realities of risk

and victimization are rarely acknowledged. Thus, apart from facing significant stigmatization

pertaining to their race, class, and lifestyle choices (however constrained), the salience of the

very real dangers that they are exposed to, and that have been further exacerbated by the

revitalization go unnoticed. This limits our understanding of their life decisions, whether a

provocative post on social media, or the decision to carry a weapon. Given the lack of

ethnographic research into criminalized groups in Canada's disadvantaged areas, criminologists

still do not have a strong appreciation for the intersection of struggles and risks facing these

groups and their neighbourhoods, further disadvantaging them.

Given the dilapidation of Regent Park's housing stock, challenging socioeconomic

conditions, and the prevalence of crime, violence, and gangs, the neighbourhood was in

desperate need of change. Given the serious consequences of concentrated poverty for low-

income residents (Galster and Friedrich 2015), it is little wonder why poverty de-concentration

was selected as the primary avenue through which to address the community's ills. The benefits

of poverty deconcentration via neighbourhood redevelopment are well documented (i.e., Chetty

et al. 2016; Katz et al. 2001; Kling et al. 2005; Leventhal and Brooks-Gunn 2003). Research has

also uncovered benefits of the Regent Park revitalization specifically, with social housing

residents expressing greater satisfaction with their built environment (home and neighbourhood), higher perceptions of personal safety and security of their homes, greater police protection, and reduced levels of distress, since being displaced into their new homes (Dunn et al. 2014). In addition, Regent Park's redevelopment via the social mix model has allowed TCHC to upgrade its housing stock without incurring additional debt, thereby benefitting social housing residents and the housing authority. However, an equally notable amount of research has uncovered that neighbourhood redevelopment can have a number of negative consequences for lower-income residents (i.e., Arthurson 2012; Clampet-Lundquist 2004; Fraser 2004; Fraser et al. 2007; Harvey 2012; Karjanen 2016; Oakley and Burchfield 2009), with findings from Regent Park highlighting the revitalization's negative implications for some residents (Thompson et al. 2013; Urbanik et al. 2016).

While the intentions of neighbourhood redevelopment might be commendable, and the consequent improvement to lower-income residents lives are promising, my dissertation demonstrates that some of the benefits of Regent Park's redevelopment do not extend (equally) to all residents, at least not presently. In particular, my findings reveal that younger male (16-40 yrs.) residents, especially those involved in or (interpreted to be) associated with, criminal activities, may have very different experiences of neighbourhood redevelopment than other residents, and may not reap its full benefits. Although the redevelopment may benefit most of Regent Park's social housing residents in the long run, it presents particular and immediate challenges and dangers for my key participants. As a criminologist, I was most interested in learning about this subset of residents, since young males are at greater risk of violence and criminality (Gartner 2011; Newburn and Stanko 2013; Witte and Tauchen 1993). Thus, while

this dissertation has critically discussed aspects of Regent Park's revitalization, it is by no means a critique of the redevelopment. As Canada's first neighbourhood redevelopment project, many lessons can be learned from the missteps of the initiative in Regent Park. Thus, while generalized findings demonstrating benefits of neighbourhood redevelopment in Regent Park and elsewhere are optimistic, more in-depth qualitative and ethnographic work is needed to understand the nuanced ways that neighbourhood redevelopment affects different groups of residents, but also to provide research-based recommendations for future redevelopment projects.

To conclude, while neighbourhood redevelopment projects may have positive benefits for some low-income residents with some of these relating to safety from crime and victimization, the possible real or perceived increases in dangers faced by those already most at risk of victimization cannot escape scholarly investigation. If neighbourhood redevelopment initiatives are indeed intended to make neighbourhoods safer and to protect residents from victimization, these aims should apply to ensuring the safety of *all* neighbourhood residents. These initiatives also need to take into consideration implications for safety during the 'in transition' periods of neighbourhood redevelopment, which, like in the case of Regent Park, can extend for over a decade, and should not just focus on neighbourhood safety upon project completion. While neighbourhood redevelopment may be North America's foremost policy initiative for deconcentrating poverty and the spatial clustering of crime and violence, a greater understanding of the implications of neighbourhood redevelopment is paramount if we intend to continue 'rebuilding' our inner cities in this fashion.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

Questions relating to my thesis project as per the 2013 original questionnaire from the research project on which I served as a research assistant:

Is crime in the neighbourhood different now than it was prior to the revitalization?

Remembering the time in Regent before the revitalization started, do you feel more or less safe now? Why?

Do you think the new private condo residents participate in crime in the community?

Has the presence of new private condo residents has affected crime in the neighbourhood? (*In what ways?)*

How much do you agree/disagree with media reports about the revitalization, saying it has disrupted gang territories in the community?

Do you see differences in the way policing in the community takes place now compared to before the revitalization?

Selected Questions added to interview schedule in 2014 as a result of findings from 2013:

Some residents have told us about "old heads" or older guys who "ran" the neighbourhood before the revitalization. Was there such a thing? (How *did these individuals affect the neighbourhood? Has this changed since the revitalization, and if so, how?)*

Are your feelings of safety different about the new areas of Regent as compared to the old areas of the neighbourhood? (*If so, why?)*

Do you think any crime happens in the new areas of Regent Park? (*Explain/Expand*)

Some residents have mentioned that the nature of 'beefs' within Regent Park has changed since the revitalization. Would you agree with this? (*If yes, has this affected violence and crime in the neighbourhood. If so, how?*)

Has policing changed since the revitalization? How do interactions with police look like in Regent Park? (*Probe into carding practices, police raids, over-policing, etc. How often does this occur? Why do you thin that is? How do you feel about this?*)

The news has written a lot about gangs in Regent Park, I'm really curious to see what you think about the 'gang' situation in Regent Park? *(Were there gangs in Regent Park before the revitalization? Do you think things have changed since the revitalization? Are there gangs in Regent Park now?)*

Were there any informal rules in Regent Park prior to the revitalization, i.e. general ways for those who are street involved to behave in order to avoid harming those who are not street involved and behaviours for those who are not street involved to avoid being victimized? (*If yes, describe what it was and how it was upheld*)

Selected Questions asked during 2015 and 2016:[47]

Tell me about the role that rap plays in Regent Park (*Ask about rap 'beefs,' different crews, dangers/benefits, relationship to gangs etc*.)

Has social media changed life in Regent Park? If so, how? (*Probe into neighbourhood/gang 'beefs', managing risks, relation to rap and music videos*)

Many Regent Parkers have told me "people are always watching." What do you think they mean by this? (*Probe into intra-neighbourhood surveillance, feelings about this, benefits and risks of this surveillance, agency in avoiding surveillance, how has social media and/or cellphones changed intra-neighbourhood surveillance, presence of new condo residents, etc*.)

Are you present on social media? Which platforms? How do you make decisions about what to post, about who to follow, and about which friend requests to accept?

How do you make decisions on where to hang out on particular days? (*Probe into why they change location, arrest warrants, probation conditions, 'beefs', police activity etc*.)

There have been a number of shootings in Regent Park recently. Do these affect the neighbourhood and if so, how? (*Probe into feelings, fears, broader impact on community, normalization, coping mechanisms, impact on policing, decisions where to hang out, etc.*).

In previous summers, the Somali and Caribbean men in the neighbourhood would all hang out together in the same spot. This summer, that doesn't seem to be the case. Why did this change? (*Ask about 'beefs', social media, rap, feelings about this, changes to risks, police attention, etc*.)

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[47] I placed more emphasis on ethnographic observation with my key participants than on formal interviews in 2015 and 2016. I adopted a less structured interview schedule, often forgoing formalized questions and letting my participants guide the interview process based on what they saw as important. Nevertheless, I asked about specific areas that are outlined here.

I noticed that there is far less police presence in Regent Park this summer than the previous two summers, do you agree? Why do you think that is the case? How do you feel about this? (*Probe into the relocation of police attention, feelings of safety/risk, thoughts on changes to carding laws, etc*.)

I have increasingly heard about new private condo residents purchasing drugs from Regent Parkers. Do you think this is the case, and if so, why? (*Probe into transactions, location of transactions, mitigating risks, establishing trust, etc*.)

A series of police raids occurred in Regent Park recently. How do you feel about this? Did these raids impact you? Did these raids impact the neighbourhood? Did you experience a police raid yourself? (*Probe into experiences, fears, gendered differences, impacts on family, impacts on criminal structures*)

I keep hearing that people who are "hot" put everyone in the vicinity at risk, so sometimes they are told not to come around. Does this happen? Why? How do they increase risks for everyone else? (Probe into determining risks, ways of managing these individuals, honesty about 'beefs', being banned from the neighbourhood, etc.).

STUDY INFORMATION FORM FOR INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

<u>Study Information Sheet for Interviews</u>

Revitalizing the 'hood': The Changing Nature of Crime in Regent Park	
Investigator: Marta-Marika Urbanik, Sociology **Address**: HM Tory Building, University of AlbertaEdmonton, Alberta, T6G 2H4 **Email**: urbanik@ualberta.ca **Phone**: -----------------	**Supervisor**: Sandra Bucerius, Sociology **Address**: HM Tory Building, University of AlbertaEdmonton, Alberta, T6G 2H4 **Email**: bucerius@ualberta.ca **Phone**: -------------------

My name is Marta-Marika and I am doing graduate work on the effects of the Regent Park revitalization on neighbourhood crime. The purpose of the study is to gain a greater understanding of how the revitalization has affected crime, violence, gang structures and safety within the neighbourhood and how this has impacted residents. The results of this study will be used in support of my doctoral thesis. I hope that the information collected from this study will help us better understand how decisions about revitalization projects are made and how they impact residents and communities. In order for me to understand exactly how the revitalization has affected Regent Park, I would like to interview you to get your thoughts on how things have changed. You will be able to tell me as much or as little as you like about any topics we talk about and you will also have the chance to bring up topics that are important to you and that you would like me to know about. I am very interested in your experiences of, and thoughts about the revitalization and its effects on crime, violence, gang structures and safety, in particular.

Important facts about your participation in the study:

- Your participation in this interview is **completely voluntary**.
  - You do not have to be interviewed if you do not want to and you can stop the interview at any time without penalty. You can refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. You can stop the interview at any time to ask questions about the study, to take a washroom or drink break, or for any other reason.
  - As long as I haven't already published my findings, you can withdraw your information from my study by contacting me at any time.

- The information that you give me will be kept **completely confidential.**
  - Your name will <u>not</u> be put on any of the data that is collected. I will use a code name so that nobody from outside the study will ever be able to tell who you are.
  - Your name will never appear on any of the research reports that result from this project.
  - While *voice recordings are not anonymous*, they will be de-identified as much as possible and no one will ever listen to them except for me.

- The information that you provide will <u>not</u> be given to other people like the police or the courts. I will be the only person with access to the material.
- The information will be protected by encryption software and stored in a safe location for a minimum of 5 years.
- You may withdrawal your participation from the study without penalty for up to 90 days following the interview by contacting me, at which point I will destroy the audio recording and any related notes (this includes audio interviews, notes from conversations, fieldnotes and observations and anything else connected to you). If you wish to withdraw your participation at any point after the initial 90 days, you may do so without penalty as long as I have not yet published anything related to your contribution in my study.

- If you tell me about a future plan you have to cause serious harm to yourself or to someone else, I will have to contact the police. So don't tell me about any crimes that you may plan to do in the future. I don't want to know. Besides these instances, I will never talk to the police or anybody else about what you tell me unless the courts force me to. That is my promise.

- Aside from legal risks, by participating in my study you may also be exposed to psychological or emotional stress, particularly when discussing past personal and community experiences with crime, violence, and victimization. In addition, there is also the possibility that participating in this research may lead to a potential loss of social status in front of others.

- There are multiple benefits of your participation in the study. Personally, you may find the experience of being able to discuss their lives with an objective researcher as reflective and enjoyable. Additionally, your participation in the study may help future generations of social housing residents by shedding light on the victories and challenges that housing residents (law abiding or otherwise) face on a daily basis. I hope to use this knowledge to contribute to policy developments on neighbourhood revitalization and guide urban planners, government, community organizations, Non Government Organizations (NGOs), and the police in how to best approach neighbourhood restructuring.

- Once again, I would like to kindly remind you not to share any information with me about your knowledge of, or potential involvement in any criminal activities.

- If you would like to see the oral consent form that I have read to you, for any reason, you may do so right now, or at any time.

Do you understand that you have been asked to be in a research study?   Yes   No

Do you understand the benefits and risks involved in taking part in this research study?   Yes   No

Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study?   Yes   No

Do you understand that you are free to refuse to participate, or to withdraw from the study at any time, without consequence, and that your information will be withdrawn at your request?   Yes   No

Has the issue of confidentiality been explained to you? Do you understand who will have access to your information?   Yes   No

Do you agree to participate in the interview today?   Yes   No

May I tape-record the interview?   Yes   No

I, Marta-Marika Urbanik, have read the participant this form, offered him/her the opportunity to ask questions, and have answered any questions that he/she has asked.

Dated this _____day of _____ 20_____.

Signed: _____.

The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines by a Research Ethics Board at the University of Alberta. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Research Ethics Office at (780) 492-2615.

STUDY INFORMATION FORM FOR KEY PARTICIPANTS

Information Sheet for Key Participants

Revitalizing the 'hood': The Changing Nature of Crime in Regent Park	
Investigator: Marta-Marika Urbanik, Sociology **Address**: HM Tory Building, University of AlbertaEdmonton, Alberta, T6G 2H4 **Email**: urbanik@ualberta.ca **Phone**: --------------	**Supervisor**: Sandra Bucerius, Sociology **Address**: HM Tory Building, University of AlbertaEdmonton, Alberta, T6G 2H4 **Email**: bucerius@ualberta.ca **Phone**: ------------------

My name is Marta-Marika and I am doing graduate work on the effects of the Regent Park revitalization on neighbourhood crime. The purpose of the study is to gain a greater understanding of how the revitalization has affected crime, violence, gang structures and safety within the neighbourhood and how this has impacted residents. The results of this study will be used in support of my doctoral thesis. I hope that the information collected from this study will help us better understand how decisions about revitalization projects are made and how they impact residents and communities.

In order for me to understand exactly how the revitalization has affected Regent Park, I would like to be able to spend time with you, simply 'hanging out.' This can include things like casual conversations, spending time in the neighbourhood, running errands and even formal interviews. What we do when you let me 'hang out' and how much we 'hang out' will be completely up to you. You can also choose whether you want to participate in formal interviews or not, and you can change your mind at any time about this. Whether we are doing an interview, or just casually talking, you will be able to tell me as much or as little as you like about any topics we talk about and you will also have the chance to bring up topics that are important to you and that you would like me to know about. I am very interested in your experiences of, and thoughts about the revitalization and its effects on crime, violence, gang structures and safety, in particular. These conversations combined with the things I observe while we are 'hanging out' will help to me to get a complete picture of how things have changed in Regent Park because of the revitalization.

This would mean that I would be relying on you to serve as a 'guide' to the community and to put me in touch with people that you think may have information and experience with certain topics. I'd also rely on you for information: 1) through formal interviews and informal conversations, and; 2) through participant-observation, where I take participate in and observe some of your daily activities and routines (whatever you choose to show me) and take field-notes once I get home. This is a way for me to check the information I collect to make sure I'm getting things right.

Important facts about your participation in the study:

- Your participation in the study today, and at any time in the future, is **completely voluntary**. You don't have to participate if you don't want to and you can drop out of the study at any time without penalty.
  - You can stop our interviews or conversations at any time without penalty and can refuse to answer or discuss anything that you don't want to. You can also stop or pause an interview to use the restroom, go for a smoke or drink break, or for any other reason. I will work around your schedule and comfort level.
  - If you agree to be interviewed and then wish to withdrawal your interview, you may do so for up to 90 days following the interview, without penalty, by contacting me via email or telephone. At this point I will delete the interview and destroy any relevant notes (this includes audio recordings, notes from conversations, fieldnotes and observations and anything else connected to you). If you wish to withdraw your participation at any point after the initial 90 days, you may do so without penalty as long as I have not yet published anything related to your contribution in my study.
  - In terms of our day-to-day interactions, I will leave my participation in your life completely up to you. I ask that you invite and un-invite me to various events and daily activities as you see fit. If invited, I will try my best to attend. I will <u>never</u> pressure you to bring me along to anything that you do not want me to be present for.
  - As long as I haven't already published my findings, you can withdraw your information from my study by contacting me at any time.

- The information that you give me will be kept **completely confidential**.
  - Your name will <u>not</u> be put on any of the data that is collected. I will use a code name so that nobody from outside the study will ever be able to tell who you are.
  - Your name will never appear on any of the research reports that result from this project.
  - While *voice recordings are not anonymous*, they will be de-identified as much as possible and no one will ever listen to them except for me.
  - The information that you provide will <u>not</u> be given to other people like the police or the courts. I will be the only person with access to the material.
  - The information will be protected by encryption software and stored in a safe location for a minimum of 5 years.

- Depending on the topic and your comfort level, I will ask for your consent to tape-record some or all of our interviews and conversations. We can do this on a day-to-day basis or you can consent to tape-recording for all future meetings. Even if you don't want to be tape-recorded, I still invite you to be part of the study.

- If you tell me about a future plan you have to cause serious harm to yourself or to someone else, I will have to contact the police. So don't tell me about any crimes that you may plan to do in the future. I don't want to know. Besides these instances, I will never talk to the police or anybody else about what you tell me unless the courts force me to. That is my promise.

- Aside from legal risks, by participating in my study you may also be exposed to psychological or emotional stress, particularly when discussing past personal and community-level experiences with crime, violence, and victimization. In addition, there is

also the possibility that participating in this research may lead to a potential loss of social status in front of others.

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- If you would like to see the oral consent form that I read to you asking for your consent in the study, for any reason, and at any time, I will show it to you.

Do you understand that you have been asked to be in a research study?	Yes	No
Do you understand the benefits and risks involved in taking part in this research study?	Yes	No
Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study?	Yes	No
Do you understand that you are free to refuse to participate, or to withdraw from the study at any time, without consequence, and that your information will be withdrawn at your request?	Yes	No
Has the issue of confidentiality been explained to you? Do you understand who will have access to your information?	Yes	No
Do you agree to participate in the interview today?	Yes	No
May I tape-record the interview?	Yes	No
Do you agree to participate in the study as a key informant?	Yes	No
Do you agree to have our interviews tape-recorded?	Yes	No
Do you agree to have our informal conversations tape-recorded?	Yes	No
Do you want me to ask for your consent each time I turn the tape-recorder on?	Yes	No
Will you allow me to shadow you and participate in various aspects of your life as you see fit?	Yes	No

I, Marta-Marika Urbanik have read the participant this form, offered him/her the opportunity to ask questions, and have answered any questions that he/she has asked.

Dated this _____day of _____ 20____.

Signed: _____.

The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines by a Research Ethics Board at the University of Alberta. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Research Ethics Office at (780) 492-2615.

ORAL CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEWS

Introduction and Consent Form for Interviews

Revitalizing the 'hood': The Changing Nature of Crime in Regent Park	
Investigator: Marta-Marika Urbanik, Sociology **Address**: HM Tory Building, University of AlbertaEdmonton, Alberta, T6G 2H4 **Email**: urbanik@ualberta.ca **Phone**: ----------------	**Supervisor**: Sandra Bucerius, Sociology **Address**: HM Tory Building, University of AlbertaEdmonton, Alberta, T6G 2H4 **Email**: bucerius@ualberta.ca **Phone**: ------------------

Hello, my name is Marta-Marika. I'm a researcher from the University of Alberta and I'm doing a study on the revitalization of Regent Park and its effects on neighbourhood crime and violence. The findings of this study will be used in support of my doctoral thesis. The purpose of the study is to gain a greater understanding of how the revitalization has affected crime, violence, gang structures and safety within the neighbourhood and how this has impacted residents, and how local residents and other stakeholders (like community leaders, police, gang members, and Toronto Community Housing feel about it). The results of this study will be used in support of my doctoral thesis. I hope that the information collected from this study will help us better understand how decisions about revitalization projects are made and how they impact residents and communities. I believe that you may have some important knowledge about the topic and I'd love to interview you in order to hear about your experiences and perceptions. You will be able to tell me as much or as little as you would like about a particular topic, and you can also bring up topics that are important to you and that you would like me to know about.

First of all, I want to thank you for talking to me. If you agree to participate, we will conduct an open-ended interview where I ask you general questions and you tell me as much or as little about the topic as you like. The interview may last anywhere from 20 minutes to a couple of hours, depending on how much you have to say and how quickly we get through it. Please <u>do not</u> feel rushed or pressured to answer the questions. I have lots of time and I will sit and talk to you for as long as you'd like. For your participation in the interview, I will offer you $10, which you are welcome to collect or refuse at your own discretion.

Before you decide about participation in my study, I want to tell you some very important points.

1) Your participation in this interview today is **completely voluntary**. You don't have to participate if you don't want to and you can stop the interview at any time without penalty. If you don't want to participate in the interview or want to stop at any time, there is no penalty to the person that may have informed you about the study, so I don't want you to feel pressured to participate because of that. Also, you can refuse to answer certain questions that you don't want to answer. You can stop the interview at any time to ask me questions, to

take a washroom or drink break, or for any other reason. My goal is to have the interview feel more like a natural conversation rather than a formal discussion.

2) Even if you agree to be in the study today but change your mind later on, you can withdraw your information from my study up to 90 days following the interview, without penalty. You can call or email me within 90 days and I will delete your interview and any other information and not use it in my thesis research (this includes audio interviews, notes from conversations, fieldnotes and observations and anything else connected to you). My contact information will be provided on a separate sheet. If you wish to withdraw your participation at any point after the initial 90 days, you may do so without penalty as long as I have not yet published anything related to your contribution in my study.

3) The information that you give me will be kept **completely confidential** and will be handled in compliance to the standards set out by the University of Alberta.
   a. Your name will not be put on any of the material that I collect. Instead, I will give you a code name, or pseudonym, that only I will know. This way, nobody will ever be able to tell who you are except me.
   b. While *voice recordings are not anonymous*, they will be de-identified as much as possible and no one will ever listen to them except for me.
   c. If I decide to publish anything from our interview today, or use the information in a presentation, only your code name will appear. In other words, even if I know (or you tell me) your real name, I will never use it in anything that I publish or present.
   d. The information that you provide is completely confidential. I will not give this information to other people like the police or the courts. I will be the only person who has access to your information.
   e. Data will be kept in a secure location for a minimum of 5 years following the completion of the research project. When appropriate, the information will be destroyed in a way that ensures privacy and confidentiality.

4) In a minute, I'm going to ask you if I can tape-record the interview. If you agree, the information that is collected on tape will be written down after the interview is over and then the tape will be erased. The purpose of tape recording the interview is to make the process go a bit faster because I won't have to physically write down your answers. It will also help me record exactly what you say and how you say it, word for word. If we tape record this interview, to protect your privacy, I will ask you <u>not</u> to say your name while you are being recorded. Even if you don't want to be tape-recorded, I still invite you to be interviewed.

5) I must inform you that I have to contact the police if you tell me about a plan that you have to cause serious harm to yourself or to somebody else. So don't tell me about any crimes that you plan to do in the future. I don't want to know. Besides these instances, I will never talk to the police or anybody else about what you tell me unless the courts force me to. That is my promise.

6) Aside from legal risks, by participating in my study you may also be exposed to psychological or emotional stress, particularly when discussing past personal and community-level experiences with crime, violence, and victimization. In addition, there is

also the possibility that participating in this research may lead to a potential loss of social status in front of others.

7) There are multiple benefits of your participation in the study. Personally, you may find the experience of being able to discuss their lives with an objective researcher as reflective and enjoyable. Additionally, your participation in the study may help future generations of social housing residents by shedding light on the victories and challenges that housing residents (law abiding or otherwise) face on a daily basis. I hope to use this knowledge to contribute to policy developments on neighbourhood revitalization and guide urban planners, government, community organizations, Non Government Organizations (NGOs), and the police in how to best approach neighbourhood restructuring.

8) Once again, I would like to kindly remind you not to share any information with me about your knowledge of, or potential involvement in any criminal activities.

9) If you would like to see the consent form that I am reading to you right now, and would like to read it yourself, you can ask me to do that right now, or at any time.

Do you have any questions about what I've said?

Now, I'd like to keep a record that we talked about the research process and that you agree to participate in it. I will circle 'yes' or 'no' for the following questions and then sign my own name on this document. I won't write down your name or ask you to sign anything.

Do you understand that you have been asked to be in a research study?	Yes	No
Have you read and received a copy of the attached Information Sheet?	Yes	No
Do you understand the benefits and risks involved in taking part in this research study?	Yes	No
Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study?	Yes	No
Do you understand that you are free to refuse to participate, or to withdraw from the study at any time, without consequence, and that your information will be withdrawn at your request?	Yes	No
Has the issue of confidentiality been explained to you? Do you understand who will have access to your information?	Yes	No
Do you agree to participate in the interview today?	Yes	No
May I tape-record the interview?	Yes	No

I, Marta-Marika Urbanik, have read the participant this form, offered him/her the opportunity to ask questions, and have answered any questions that he/she has asked.

Dated this _____day of _____ 20____ .

Signed: _____.

Thanks for agreeing to participate in my study. Now, I'll give you an information sheet about the things we just talked about. As you can see, it describes how your participation in the study is completely voluntary and that I will keep all of the information I collect completely confidential. At the top of the page, you will see my contact information.   If you have any questions about this study, please contact me at any time.

The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines by a Research Ethics Board at the University of Alberta. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Research Ethics Office at (780) 492-2615.

Let's begin today's interview.

APPENDIX E

ORAL CONSENT FORM FOR KEY PARTICIPANTS

Introduction and Consent Form for Key Informants

Revitalizing the 'hood': The Changing Nature of Crime in Regent Park	
Investigator: Marta-Marika Urbanik, Sociology **Address**: HM Tory Building, University of AlbertaEdmonton, Alberta, T6G 2H4 **Email**: urbanik@ualberta.ca **Phone**: -----------	**Supervisor**: Sandra Bucerius, Sociology **Address**: HM Tory Building, University of AlbertaEdmonton, Alberta, T6G 2H4 **Email**: bucerius@ualberta.ca **Phone**: ---------------

Hello, my name is Marta-Marika. I'm a researcher from the University of Alberta and I'm doing a study on the revitalization of Regent Park and its effects on neighbourhood crime and violence. The findings of this study will be used in support of my doctoral thesis. The purpose of the study is to gain a greater understanding of how the revitalization has affected crime, violence, gang structures and safety within the neighbourhood and how this has impacted residents, and how local residents and other stakeholders (like community leaders, police, gang members, and Toronto Community Housing feel about it). The results of this study will be used in support of my doctoral thesis. I hope that the information collected from this study will help us better understand how decisions about revitalization projects are made and how they impact residents and communities. I believe that you have some valuable knowledge about the topic and the neighborhood and I'd greatly benefit from having you as part of my core group for this project.

More specifically, I'd like to ask if you'd be willing to serve as a key informant for my study. In order for me to understand exactly how the revitalization has affected Regent Park, I would like to be able to spend time with you, simply 'hanging out.' This can include things like casual conversations, spending time in the neighbourhood, running errands and even formal interviews. What we do when you let me 'hang out' and how much we 'hang out' will be completely up to you. You can also choose whether you want to participate in formal interviews or not, and you can change your mind at any time about this. Whether we are doing an interview, or just casually talking, you will be able to tell me as much or as little as you like about any topics we talk about and you will also have the chance to bring up topics that are important to you and that you would like me to know about. I am very interested in your experiences of, and thoughts about the revitalization and its effects on crime, violence, gang structures and safety, in particular. These conversations combined with the things I observe while we are 'hanging out' will help to me to get a complete picture of how things have changed in Regent Park because of the revitalization

This would mean that I would be relying on you to serve as a 'guide' to the community and to put me in touch with people that you think may have information and experience with certain topics. I'd also rely on you for information: 1) through formal interviews and informal conversations, and; 2) through participant-observation, where I take participate in and observe some of your daily activities and routines (whatever you choose to show me) and take field-notes

once I get home. This is a way for me to check the information I collect to make sure I'm getting things right.

Before you decide about participation in my study, I want to tell you some very important points.

10) Your participation in the study today, and at any time in the future, is **completely voluntary**. You don't have to participate if you don't want to and you can drop out of the study at any time without penalty.
    a. You can stop our interviews or conversations at any time without penalty and can refuse to answer or discuss anything that you don't want to. You can also stop or pause an interview to use the restroom, go for a smoke or drink break, or for any other reason. I will work around your schedule and comfort level.
    b. In terms of our day-to-day interactions, I will leave my participation in your life completely up to you. I ask that you invite and un-invite me to various events and daily activities as you see fit. If invited, I will try my best to attend. I will <u>never</u> pressure you to bring me along to anything that you do not want me to be present for.

11) Even if you agree to be in the study today but change your mind later on, you can withdraw your information from my study, within 90 days of the interview or interaction. Within these 90 days, you can call or email me at any time and I will delete the information you provided and not use it in my thesis research (this includes audio interviews, notes from conversations, fieldnotes and observations and anything else connected to you). My contact information will be provided on a separate sheet. If you wish to withdraw your participation at any point after the initial 90 days, you may do so without penalty as long as I have not yet published anything related to your contribution in my study.

12) The information that you give me will be kept **completely confidential** and will be handled in compliance to the standards set out by the University of Alberta.
    a. Your name will not be put on any of the material that I collect. Instead, I will give you a code name, or pseudonym, that only I will know. This way, nobody will ever be able to tell who you are except me.
    b. Please note, while *voice recordings are not anonymous*, they will be de-identified as much as possible and no one will ever listen to them except for me.
    c. If I decide to publish anything or use the information in a presentation, only your code name will appear in these publications. In other words, even if I know (or you to tell me) your real name, I will never use it in anything that I publish or present.
    d. The information that you provide is completely confidential. I will not give this information to other people like the police or the courts. I will be the only person who has access to your information.
    e. Data will be kept in a secure location for a minimum of 5 years following the completion of the research project. When appropriate, the information will be destroyed in a way that ensures privacy and confidentiality.

13) Depending on the topic and your comfort level, I will ask for your consent to tape-record some or all of our interviews and conversations. We can do this on a day-to-day basis or you

can consent to tape-recording for all future meetings (you can always ask me to turn it off at any time). If you agree, the information that is collected on tape will be written down as soon as I get home. Once the information is written down, the tape will be erased. The purpose of tape recording is to make the process go a bit faster because I won't have to physically write down everything that you say and can avoid forgetting or misunderstanding important information. It will also help me record exactly what you say and how you say it, word for word. If you consent to tape recordings, I ask that you not say your name while you are being recorded. This is for your own privacy. Even if you don't want to be tape-recorded, I still invite you to be part of the study.

14) I must inform you that I have to contact the police if you tell me about a plan that you have to cause serious harm to yourself or to somebody else. So don't tell me about any crimes that you plan to do in the future. I don't want to know. Besides these instances, I will never talk to the police or anybody else about what you tell me unless the courts force me to. That is my promise.

15) Aside from legal risks, by participating in my study you may also be exposed to psychological or emotional stress, particularly when discussing past personal and community-level experiences with crime, violence, and victimization. In addition, there is also the possibility that participating in this research may lead to a potential loss of social status in front of others.

16) There are multiple benefits of your participation in the study. Personally, you may find the experience of being able to discuss their lives with an objective researcher as reflective and enjoyable. Additionally, your participation in the study may help future generations of social housing residents by shedding light on the victories and challenges that housing residents (law abiding or otherwise) face on a daily basis. I hope to use this knowledge to contribute to policy developments on neighbourhood revitalization and guide urban planners, government, community organizations, Non Government Organizations (NGOs), and the police in how to best approach neighbourhood restructuring.

17) If you would like to see the consent form that I am reading you right now, and would like it read it yourself, you can ask me to do that right now, or at any time.

Do you have any questions about what I've said?

Now, I'd like to keep a record that we talked about the research process and that you agree to participate in it. I will circle 'yes' or 'no' for the following questions and then sign my own name on this document. I won't write down your name or ask you to sign anything.

Do you understand that you have been asked to be in a research study?	Yes	No
Have you read and received a copy of the attached Information Sheet?	Yes	No
Do you understand the benefits and risks involved in taking part in this research study?	Yes	No
Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study?	Yes	No

Do you understand that you are free to refuse to participate, or to withdraw from the study at any time, without consequence, and that your information will be withdrawn at your request?	Yes	No
Has the issue of confidentiality been explained to you? Do you understand who will have access to your information?	Yes	No
Do you agree to participate in the interview today?	Yes	No
May I tape-record the interview?	Yes	No
Do you agree to participate in the study as a key informant?	Yes	No
Do you agree to have our interviews tape-recorded?	Yes	No
Do you agree to have our informal conversations tape-recorded?	Yes	No
Do you want me to ask for your consent each time I turn the tape-recorder on?	Yes	No
Will you allow me to shadow you and participate in various aspects of your life as you see fit?	Yes	No

I, Marta-Marika Urbanik, have read the participant this form, offered him/her the opportunity to ask questions, and have answered any questions that he/she has asked.

Dated this _____day of _____ 20____.

Signed: _____.

Thanks for agreeing to participate in my study. Now, I'll give you an information sheet about the things we just talked about. As you can see, it describes how your participation in the study is completely voluntary and that I will keep all of the information I collect completely confidential. At the top of the page, you can see my contact information. If you have any questions about this study, please contact me at any time.

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