THIS IS WHAT WE KNOW: WORKING FROM THE MARGINS IN CHILD WELFARE

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Abstract

This study investigates the work processes of racialized child welfare workers within hierarchical institutions and involves an understanding of several day-to-day child welfare activities such as case decisions, work training, court attendance, and work with families, as well as supervisors, co-workers and collaterals. While practicing, workers negotiate the power dimensions within the different and pre-determined work relations involving supervisors, colleagues, collaterals, families and children. The negotiating of power relations is complex and includes experiences of racial tension which are incorporated in the analysis. As the participants were both men and women with some workers being immigrants who had their own personal experiences of poverty, the analysis also recognizes the complexities of both gender and class. Part of the negotiation by the participants relates to addressing the tension that arises when their cultural values conflict with existing policies and laws, as well as institutional hierarchies.

Drawing on Michel Foucault's ideas of power, knowledge and the subject, this study analyzes the forms and uses of power through systems of differentiation, surveillance and hierarchical structures which provide a unique, relevant and applicable theoretical background to the understanding of race, gender, and class.

The study adopts a qualitative methodology, an approach that allows for an exploration and understanding of the work experiences of racialized workers. The stories of the twenty-one participants involved in this research are significant and profound, and warrant attention. The study concludes that issues of race, gender and class alter perceptions and practice with families and thus calls for the integration of alternative ways of knowing within the dominant child welfare knowledge to better serve families and address experiences of tension by racialized child welfare workers.

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SECTION I – INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1: Background

This research focuses on the work experiences of racialized workers in child welfare services in Ontario, Canada. The study's use of the term "racialized workers" refers to groups with racial identities that have social markers (physical characteristics) that result in conditions of their marginalization. In Canada, individuals who self-identify as having racialized background are both foreign and Canadian born, and primarily include - South Asians, South East Asians, Africans and Caribbean workers. According to Frankenberg (1993), race and racialization have become associated with communities that are marginalized. The concepts of race and racialization are not applied to dominant groups because they are equated with normality and have no need to be defined (Solomos, 1995).

Gender is also an important category in this study. As Schmid (2009) argues, child welfare work is fundamentally gendered. While gender divisions between men and women exist historically, Ramazanoglu (1993) insightfully reminds us that there are no universal categories that apply to all women. It is fitting to add that this is also true for men as life and work experiences are different for all genders based on class, race, geography, language and so on.

Further, this study incorporates some analysis of class issues. There are many ways of defining class. Primarily, class can be defined from the liberal democratic approach or the Marxist tradition. Liberal thinkers acknowledge the existence of class divisions in society. However, many liberal thinkers argue that there is no particular group that dominates the others. Each group works to protect its own interests (Pupo, 2000).   In the liberal democratic tradition, there is an assumption that the harder one works, the better off they will be. Second, unlike liberal democrats, Marxists maintain that those who own and control the economic means

(haves) dominate others who sell their labour (have-nots). The Marxist tradition claims the existence of class conflict and antagonism based on the ability to access wealth (Tepperman et al, 2008, Pupo, 2000). The class structure in contemporary Canada is typically differentiated in terms of upper, middle and lower class. Although there is considerable controversy about how these three class divisions in Canada should be defined, they are generally based on degrees of wealth and access to resources. In this study, I choose to define class from a practical stance and my focus is on segments of society that are deprived of an acceptable standard of living, meaning people living below the poverty line. Canada has no official poverty line (Hick, 2013). However, the low-income cut- off (LICO) is often used to define poverty. As an example, in 2011, the low-income cut-off for a family of three, living in a large Canadian urban centre of half a million people was $ 29,260 after tax (Statistics Canada, 2013).

The focus on race, gender and class is important to this study because of Canada's involvement in these issues at the national and international levels. Internationally, Canada has demonstrated its commitment to the protection of rights by signing the International Bill of Rights, which was initiated through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. By 1966, the International Bill of Rights had been expanded to include the Universal Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, as well as the Universal Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. In terms of race, Canada also signed the United Nations International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination in 1966. Similarly, in 1981, Canada ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. Although, the signing of these documents was symbolic (Ponting, 2000), it does suggest that issues of race and gender cannot be ignored. Canada also has passed several key human rights policies including the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Canadian Human Rights Act. Graham et

al. (2012) argue that the enactment of these pieces of legislation is a monumental constitutional breakthrough towards the creation of an inclusive society. Likewise, all Canadian provinces and territories have human rights legislation outlawing discrimination based on race, gender and other identities, e.g. the Ontario Human Rights Act.

The focus on class in this study is also relevant given Canada's unfulfilled commitment of 1989–unanimously passed by the House of Commons–to eliminate child poverty by the year 2000. Although the government's focus is on child poverty, its commitment is also to low-income families because children are part of impoverished households. Along with government policies and initiatives, the social work code of ethics affirms the profession's responsibility to advance social justice. Given that issues of race, gender and class remain important at the national, international and social work professional levels, it is critical that research studies like this one keep a sustained focus on these issues. The national and international policies can only go so far, and the need continues to understand why the inequalities that marginalized communities experience persist. The need for a sustained focus is what provides the impetus in this study to examine how racialized workers describe their child welfare work experiences.

In this research study, I argue that racialized child welfare workers' experiences involve complying with agency and Ministry policies, operating within institutional hierarchies and engaging in various power relations. Lemay (2011) has indicated that Ontario child welfare has to comply with over 9,500 requirements of the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. Despite vast Ministry requirements, this research does not attempt to examine specific policies as it is beyond the scope of this study. However, through reference to policies, this research broadly analyzes the Transformation Agenda (2007), which is one of the most recent reforms to child welfare instituted in Ontario, and governs current child welfare practices in Ontario.

Like other staff in child welfare, racialized workers not only comply with child welfare policies under the Transformation Agenda, they also engage in different power relations which are very clearly guided by a set of particular directives that form child welfare standards. In examining power relations, I claim in this research that existing child welfare policies help to construct the work relationships of workers in their day-to-day work. According to Skehill et al. (2011), work relationships are pre-determined by existing child welfare policies. The constructed work relationships examined in this dissertation are: worker/supervisor, worker/worker, worker/collateral (teachers, doctors, public health nurse and so on), and worker/family. I argue that racialized workers are in these constructed work relationships which form various power dimensions that generally seem unquestioned and reinforced by institutional hierarchies. By examining power relations, I attempt to understand how issues of race, class and gender impact the experiences of racialized workers.

I also examine how racialized workers' histories and experiences influence their practices with families from all racial and class backgrounds. Through the research themes, the study sheds light on how the perception of differences based on race, gender and class can extend to aspects of work. The reason for examining the social differences is to understand how families and children are being served within child welfare. The focus on families, particularly poor immigrant families remains vital for this research as the study demonstrates how racialized workers negotiate different power relationships within their services to these families.

In examining the policies, institutional hierarchies and work relationships, and how they impact the work experiences of racialized workers, the study raises the following four broad research questions:

1. **What roles do racialized child welfare workers play within child welfare institutions?**

2. **How do racialized workers experience work in the larger structure of child welfare policies?**

3. **How do racialized workers respond to power and/or use authority within the context of child welfare organizational hierarchies?**

4. **How do racialized child welfare workers interact and intervene with families from diverse communities?**

While questions one and four focus on work activities, the other two concentrate on the structures that govern work. The questions are independent but share a focus on the way racialized workers function within child welfare institutions to legitimize the "parenting norms" in Ontario. The questions all relate to the forms and uses of power within child welfare, allowing me to apply a theoretical perspective that focuses on the concept of power. Foucault's theoretical perspectives assume that power is present everywhere, including in social relationships and interactions, and policies, procedures and guidelines. In my research, I utilize Foucault's theoretical ideas of power, knowledge and the subject to analyze the work experiences of racialized child welfare workers. Foucault's work in relation to this research raises epistemological issues on two levels. First, a Foucauldian lens on power, knowledge and the subject raises compelling issues and questions that are central to this study: a) how are power, knowledge and the subject linked? and b) how do these concepts connect to the discourses of race, gender and class? As will be discussed throughout this study, power is significant in the debates about race which forms the central focus of this research analysis, along with gender and class.

Young (1995) claims that the paradox of Foucault's work is that while his analyses are particularly appropriate when it comes to race, he addresses it only in his later work that focused on bio-power. For Foucault, bio-power was related to the questions of superiority and purity and how the state used its power to efface a particular segment of the population in Europe during the

Holocaust. Given the writings of Young (1995) and others like Ramazanoglu (1993), one could certainly conclude that there is limited analysis of gender and race in Foucault's work. This, however, should not diminish the relevance of his study of power, knowledge and the subject as most of his work relates to the making of the subject as seen in his book, *The History of Madness* which one can convincingly argue is "the history of the other," the other being–the poor woman who is also racialized or has any other marginalized identities. Another one of his works, *The Order of Things* also highlights how western civilization has historically attempted to make sense of the "other."

The use of Foucault's work does not replace or even lessen the importance of other theories or ways of knowing about race, gender and class but adds to the wide range of our understanding of power relations that constructs the "other" or the subject. Other epistemologies related to race, gender and class have played substantial roles in the construction of knowledge. For example, our ways of knowing have been challenged by feminist theorization of gender relations. Code (1991) writes that feminism as a theory has raised questions about knowledge creation and the search for truth. Who is it that creates meanings about the world? What criteria are used to decide what constitutes valid truth? Similarly, emancipatory theories highlight the need to be aware of the oppression, exclusion and marginalization of the "other." For example, anti-racism perspectives represent a paradigm shift that seeks to look at new ways of race relations and the promotion of racial equality through the examination of the subjects' oppression and marginalization (Okolie, 2002). Relatedly, Marxist analysis of a classed society emerges out of Marx's historical examination of the bourgeoisie (haves) and proletariat (have-nots). These epistemologies lay essential foundations for exploring and understanding issues

relating to the "other," which inevitably leads to the conclusion that there is no one way to understand issues of race, gender and class.

Foucault's work is used here to help us become more inquisitive about the linkages between knowledge production (Ramazanoglu, 1993) and power, as well as the placement of the "other" in subject positions. Bhabha (1983) adds that the strength and utility of Foucault's epistemology is that it opposes the idea that there is only one way of knowing. Foucault's focus on knowledge challenges the ways of knowing, societal norms, and taken-for-granted concepts that form our understanding of the world.

Second, I borrow Foucault's (1982) idea of analyzing power because it requires a number of points to be considered critical to my research: 1) systems of differentiation permit one to create differences through law, traditions, status and privilege; 2) power relations are brought into being through systems of surveillance and rules that are not explicit; 3) forms of institutionalization maintain hierarchical structures that are well defined; 4) degrees of rationalization mean that the exercise of power is not only organized, but can be transformed, or to rephrase this, power is fluid and not static in order to control and manage the subject. As demonstrated in this research, Foucault's suggestion to analyze power in the form of systems of differentiation, surveillance and hierarchical structures provides a uniquely relevant and applicable theoretical background to the understanding of race, gender and class. The uniqueness of this study partly relates to its epistemological choice to use Foucault's work even with its limited attention to gender and race issues. Part of my task in this study is to extend Foucault's ideas of power, knowledge and the subject, and utilize these concepts in the analysis of the work experiences of racialized workers. Foucault's theoretical and historical insights

regarding institutions provide a solid analysis of the contemporary forms of power and knowledge within child welfare institutions.

Why this Study:

The study is significant in the contemporary child welfare field for the following reasons. First, the aim is to illuminate the various forms and uses of power within the child welfare context that would enable us to understand technologies of governance from the perspective of racialized workers. Institutions, including child welfare, have been studied not only because they shape and are shaped by our world, but also our hopes and dreams, as in the case of the parenting of our children. What has not received sustained attention in child welfare research, particularly in Canada is how racialized child welfare workers, who are potentially less powerful because of their historical social positioning in society, deal with delegated child welfare power and regulated work practices in providing services to families. In both the United Kingdom and the United States research on the power employed and experienced by racialized workers has been completed, albeit in a limited fashion. The American and British studies will be examined to determine whether their conclusions are relevant in the Canadian context. By exploring these areas of child welfare work, my goal is to provide the Canadian perspective on these important issues and to document, complement, elaborate and expand past studies by American and British researchers. Using the perspectives of racialized workers to explore their interactions with families and how child welfare work settings and practice activities are organized is important given the increasingly multicultural and diverse nature of Canadian communities where child protection services and intervention impact many families.

Second, we know that organizational policies and procedures have a significant effect on the work environment. This research involves a historical inquiry that can help to inform contemporary child welfare work policies to determine where change is possible and desirable.

Third, the use of Foucault's work provides a theoretical perspective to critically analyze and understand issues of race, class and gender within state institutions.

Lastly, in my past experience as a frontline child protection worker in Ontario and Yukon, child welfare work regularly involves issues of race, gender and class. My work experience allows me to critically reflect on these issues as interlocking social divisions, the implication being that these social identities have the effect of depriving individuals access to resources and opportunities, particularly women, racialized people and low income families. This critical reflection and the available literature on this topic point to the many child welfare agencies and workers who grapple with the complex social issues of race, gender and class. Critical reflection requires ongoing dialogue and research with workers who are frequently matched with families from various cultural/ethnic backgrounds. These conversations on race, gender and class are directly linked to the main focus of my research that will contribute to the field of social work field by expanding the existing literature and knowledge.

It is worth noting that my work experiences in a remote, Aboriginal community in Yukon led me to recognize the importance of working with the community and being engaged with families as strategies to keep children safe. Alcohol and drug abuse were not uncommon and often alternative placement arrangements for children in need of protection were required. A foster care system did not exist in that community. Despite the many challenges and lack of resources, I learned to work with the community through family circles where issues and

concerns about protecting children were discussed. This past work experience has shaped this

research and its focus on families receiving child welfare services.

Organization of Chapters

My thesis consists of ten chapters that are organized into three sections. Section I covers

the introduction up to the methodology. In Section II, I discuss the study findings while section

III comprises of the analysis and discussion, as well as the implications of the study.

Theoretical Chapter

The discussion begins with theoretical considerations that recognize Foucault's work and

his focus on the formation of the subject through an intersection of power and knowledge. The

study also recognizes other epistemologies (such as feminism, Afrocentrism and Marxism)

because there is no one way of knowing and all knowledge is created.

Literature Review Chapter

Following the theoretical considerations, a literature review is provided, using a

genealogical analysis to examine the historical role of the forerunners of child welfare and the

governing of low-income mothers and then turns to the history of child welfare in Ontario. This

is followed by an analysis of the evolution of the child welfare Transformation Agenda, which

was initiated in mid 2000 and implemented in 2007. Included also in the literature review is a

historical analysis of the role of racialized workers in social services mostly in the United

Kingdom and the United States. The review of the existing literature exposes a glaring gap in

the study of the role of racialized child welfare workers in Ontario, as there is very little in the

way of information on this.

The Methodology Chapter

In this study, I use a qualitative methodology that involves both ethnography and

genealogy. Using ethnography, I gain an understanding of how existing policies, and

hierarchical institutions and structures shape the work experiences and practices of racialized workers. Using genealogy involves analyzing the systems and conditions that maintain discourses or particular dominant ideas and their effects on the subjects. The affinity between ethnography and genealogy is discussed in this chapter as well. In this chapter, I discuss data collection and describe the snowball method that I used to invite social workers to participate in individual interviews and the focus group.

Data analysis is an important part of this chapter, which I discuss in relation to my use of NVivo research software to understand emerging themes and their relationship to each other.

SECTION II

Findings Chapter

My findings are presented in four separate chapters (5-8). These chapters reflect the four main themes (apparatuses of power, power relations, surveillance, and boundaries and identity) that emerged from the research. Chapter five introduces a discussion of the apparatuses of power in child welfare as described by the participants. This is an important piece in developing an understanding of how racialized workers experience child welfare work when following the mandate and implementing policies that protect children from abuse and neglect. The chapter focuses on the training workers have to undertake, the timelines they have to meet, and the documentation they have to complete to ensure compliance with management rules related to child safety, permanency and wellbeing. Still on the theme of apparatuses of power, I discuss the issues raised by the participants that pertain to court and the silent discourses within the institutional hierarchies themselves.

In chapter six, I discuss the different power relations that are framed within existing Ministry and agency mandates and guidelines as they affect the experiences of racialized

workers. Examining power relations is important in the analysis of work relationships of workers and supervisors, workers and their colleagues, workers and families, and workers and collaterals. Chapter six demonstrates that each of these dynamics is embedded in power imbalances based on race, gender and class.

In chapter seven I discuss the subtle use of power that workers engage in order to maintain a gaze on marginalized families and to reinforce the dominant ideas of parenting.

Chapter eight involves the examination of shared histories and identities between participants and families within the context of work. In this chapter, I discuss the social affinities and closeness between the families and workers based on shared experiences, beliefs and history, as well as the complexities that arise from this closeness to parents. In this chapter, I show that participants' sensitivity is heightened when children are removed from families whose history is marked by marginalization and oppression by slavery and state policies.

SECTION III

Analysis and Discussion Chapter

Chapter nine consists of analysis and discussion, which is organized around the negotiation of power that participants undertake when working within child welfare institutions and hierarchies.

Implications of the Study Chapter

The last chapter of the study focuses on the policy, practice, and theoretical implications. The strengths and limitations of this study are discussed in this chapter as well. The chapter also offers important future considerations that arise from this research.

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Chapter 2: Theoretical Perspectives

Introduction

As the relevant literature indicates, the concepts of race, gender and class arise concurrently within the same power/knowledge regimes, namely the normalizing disciplinary power/knowledge networks that arose in the early nineteenth century as a means of managing and controlling populations (McWhorter, 2004; Stoler, 1995). In my study, I reference the Enlightenment period as the developing power/knowledge networks of that era, which were also of interest to Foucault in his analysis of "truth" claims, as noted by Young (1990). I do not ignore that racial, gender and class divisions predated the Enlightenment period. For example, the word "race" can be traced back to the early sixteenth century (McWhorter, 2004). To be exact, Bernasconi and Lott (2000) claim that the term "race" was first used 1684.

The concepts of class and gender also have existed long before the Enlightenment era. The focus on the Enlightenment period simply helps me to understand that these social divisions as they appear in the contemporary era are products of the power/knowledge networks that have the ability to use science and other disciplines, as well as institutional forms, to classify populations as "others." Following the Enlightenment, one also observes the shift from establishing social classifications to confirming social hierarchies based on race, gender and class, which will be discussed later in this chapter. As a result, the prevailing discourses of race, gender and class have a shared history that has positioned classed, gendered, and raced groups at the margins of society. In keeping with Foucauldian analysis, this positioning is not seen as static but rather as fluid, with truth claims about them shifting with time and place. The epistemological question is how we have come to accept knowledge about particular poor and underprivileged individuals. Ontologically, we need to understand the ideas that inform our

beliefs about poverty. From a gender perspective, women have been socially classified in ways that place them in positions of subservience. Similarly, Appiah (1996) makes the point that our current ways of talking about race is the residue of earlier views, meaning that it is prudent to develop a deeper understanding of the history of race-thinking, as well as practices of racial divisions and categorization.

Many of the non-privileged knowledge systems related to class, gender and race share a common struggle pertaining to the question "who can know?" Class and race theories, as well as feminist theories, arise from the intellectual traditions that challenge oppression, that is, the dominant way of knowing (Schreiber, 2000). A disjuncture between Foucauldian analysis and other epistemologies exists with respect to subjectivity and power relations. Marxism, feminism, and racial theories (anti-racism) are all bodies of knowledge that have produced theoretical work that is important, but their foci on the emancipation of the subject and interrogation of power are in stark contrast to Foucault's work that focuses on the production of the subject in relation to power. While Foucault states that power is not limited to traditional forms of oppression, other epistemologies such as feminism and Marxism tend to limit the conceptualization of power to the traditional forms of domination (patriarchy, racial discrimination and class oppression/division) and repeatedly explore how the subject attempts to make a positive difference by challenging subjectivity through processes of questioning and interrogation of dominant knowledge. The interrogation of dominant knowledge is more prominent in racial and feminist theories than Foucault's work that focuses more on examining how knowledge is constructed.

To point out the disjuncture between Foucault's analysis of the subject and other epistemologies is not to say that one of these ways of knowing is right and the other is wrong, but simply to show that neither one of them is able to explain social phenomena in their entirety.

By exploring other epistemologies and ontologies related to Foucault's work, I gain from these

alternative theoretical views: they offer a different set of questions and distinctive insights about

social phenomena that cannot be ignored. While some differences exist between Foucault's

work and racial and feminist approaches, it is important to note that Foucault's analysis of

power, knowledge and the subject is critical and makes a philosophical contribution to

understanding the interconnectedness of these three key concepts.

Power, Knowledge and the Subject

The argument that I am making here, dependent on Foucault, is that the exercise of power

creates knowledge and in turn, knowledge itself produces the effects of power. Simply put,

knowledge can be socially constructed to support the dominant power (Fook, 2004). As will be

demonstrated, the effects of power include the creation of hierarchies, binaries, and subjects. In

order to understand Foucault's challenge of the taken-for-granted ways of knowing, it is

necessary to first identify how he defined power, knowledge and the subject. The Foucauldian

concepts of power, knowledge and the subject also provide a solid foundation for the following

discussion on the discourses of race, gender and class and how they share a genealogy in terms

of how subjects have been created by particular systems of knowledge (for example,

Enlightenment, colonialism, patriarchy, and slavery). Each of these systems of knowledge has

left legacies of racism, sexism and classism that will be further explored in this chapter.

The analysis of power as the central epistemological concept in Foucault's work is a good

starting point. In her research, Madibbo (2004:46) examines power by referencing a number of

authors including Kramarae et al. (1984) who assume that power has to be understood in a

multiplicity of ways. According to the authors, power refers to "all expressions of influence and

control" (p.15). In their view, power ranges from subtle manipulation to extreme physical or

psychic force. They also conceive of power as autonomous action based on one's own belief and abilities to exploit available resources to either exert or resist influence. Others like Ng (1995) have described power as operating in different societal settings to maintain different forms of inequities, and that people consolidate their power through acquisition of land, wealth and connection to the state. Still others like Moreau (1984) contend that power is a social fact established by individuals or groups who hold differential positions within particular social, political and economic structures.

In contrast to the conventional understanding that it is the state and influential groups that have and impose power, Foucault criticizes theoretical models that assume that power is held by individuals at the top and that it is primarily oppressive, although he is also opposed to repressive and coercive forms of power. Foucault conceptualized power as tripartite: the three forms of power are sovereignty, discipline and government (McNay, 1994).

This discussion will focus on two forms of power, "governing the self" and "disciplinary power", because child welfare workers are subject to a hierarchical organizational structure, and to discursive practices including state legislation, policies and regulations. Unlike sovereign power which is exercised through the juridical and executive arms of the state, power in its modern form is internal which means that we are watched at all times, but mainly by ourselves through the internalization of rules and laws (Foucault, 1991; Devine, 1999). Foucault argues that as individuals, we police ourselves through what he refers to as disciplinary power (Usher, 1997). Disciplinary power is one exercised over an individual or many persons to produce an effect on their conduct. Foucault argued that power is not held or exercised by individuals (Manis & Street, 2000). He conceived of power as spreading through networks of relationships (Foucault 1979, 1980; Ramazanoglu, 1993**)**. Foucault indicates that power shifts and that we all

act in terms of power relations according to our social locations within different periods of history. Foucault has been criticized for his view that power is not held by individuals, which his critics claim neutralizes power and allows no fundamental critique of the power that emerges from those in dominant positions (Grimshaw, 1993). It needs to be underscored that disciplinary power has not only affected individual habits, but has also influenced the production of certain forms of knowledge. This forms the basis of the argument for this discussion about the connection between power and knowledge production.

Some Foucauldian scholars have equated the way in which knowledge is created in the social sciences with the way power is exercised over individuals (Holmes & Gastaldo, 2002). The disciplines of medicine, psychiatry, criminology, psychology, and others, including social work, are therefore in position to create the divisions of healthy/ill, sane/mad, legal/delinquent, normal/deviant and are implicated in effecting the means of normalization, moralization and social control. Foucault convincingly argues that each of the disciplines has a political investment in enhancing its view of the world (Neuman, 2000). The term normalizing refers to the correction of behaviour which ensures that members of society conform to norms. This is one of the ways in which power is deployed. Moralizing refers to the construction of the behaviour of marginalized groups as immoral and inadequate (Lewis, 2000; O'Malley, 1996). He also shows that knowledge and power are inseparable and that the two work together to establish both subtle and explicit criteria for how to think about the world.

As Chambon (1999) points out Foucault's investigation of knowledge and power were transformative because they led to a questioning of the assumed realities about subjects. Not only is knowledge associated with regimes of power, but the truths that are produced have normalizing, moralizing and regulatory functions. According to Foucault, normalization and

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moralization are embedded in institutional practices based on Enlightenment epistemology that depends on dichotomies such as rational/irrational and logical/illogical. Colonialism, patriarchy and slavery as systems of knowledge have also created binaries in many societies. Binaries reflect differences that are often accepted as truth. Although the Enlightenment is recognized as an important period of western history, it has been critiqued by scholars, including Foucault, for privileging scientific knowledge because it is rational and objective which positions it as ideal for finding the "truth." Scientific knowledge has successfully labeled all other knowledge systems as specific, personal, incomplete, and partial, and which can be easily dismissed and pushed to the margins (Usher, 1997; Strega, 2005). The implicit idea that scientific knowledge is objective implies that scientists are impartial searchers of truth, who remain neutral in knowledge construction. Code (1991), however, argues that knowledge construction is not neutral; rather it is embedded in social, cultural and historical reality, which means that a distinction cannot be made between objective and subjective knowledge.

According to Schreiber (2000) and Ladson (2000), the production of knowledge is about creating perspectives about the social world. This means that we have to acknowledge that knowledge is partial and limited because there is no epistemological approach that can adequately articulate for all people, an understanding of the world. These authors go on to say that all epistemologies create blind spots that limit the understanding of the world in its totality. We must accept and respect the position that other views and perspectives are possible and can offer intelligible meanings and explanations of the world. Strega (2005) has suggested that subjective and objective knowledge reflect complementary ways of knowing the world because varied perspectives can expand and broaden our understanding of the social world, which is desirable for knowledge production. Added to Strega's observation is the need to challenge the

notion of objectivity in knowledge production. At the same time, being aware of the possibility

of distortion associated with subjective knowledge is also important because all knowledge is

created and not separate from our perceptions of the social world.

Enlightenment epistemology has also been critiqued for being hierarchical and dualistic.

From this perspective, we make sense of the world through hierarchies, and institutions

legitimately engage in naming, categorizing, classifying and characterizing in order to provide

surveillance, manage and control any aspects considered outside of the western norm. "Naming"

and "characterizing" are not Foucault's words, but these institutional practices are consistent

with his notion of discourse. For Foucault (1980), discourse is language put together that

arranges and naturalizes the social world in a specific way and thus informs social practices.

In relation to discourse, Foucault implies that "things do not exist outside of our naming

them" (Chambon, 1999) and that the "self" cannot be read apart from a discourse. The "self" as

it appears in many of Foucault's writings is created by discourses (Grimshaw, 1993). This view

that the self does not exist outside of discourse can be problematic ontologically because there is

sometimes the "real" experience that is unknown and unnamed. The dominant discourses

purposefully silence particular perspectives and histories. This silencing is an act of dismissing,

erasing and unrecognizing the existence of those experiences and histories.

Equally important, the question that many would ask is, can we exist outside of

language? Foucault's suggestion that we cannot exist outside of discourse speaks to two aspects

of language. First, it highlights that our form of being can only occur within social relationships

that become meaningful through language and communication. Second, his idea emphasizes that

discourses are about how power translates through language, which enables us to describe and

understand events and ourselves through words (Fairclough, 1992). We have learned to think a

certain way because language provides that understanding of the world. Language is more than

just the means through which people express themselves. Language shapes people's thoughts,

values and reality. Within science and other disciplines, language is seen as a neutral tool to

describe the subject as either normal or abnormal. Language therefore becomes an important

instrument in the exercise of power. Likewise, knowledge cannot become what it is unless

expressed through language. In a way, the subject is also a direct or indirect result of language

that influences knowledge formation and ways in which power is exercised over different bodies.

The role of language in forming knowledge and constructing binaries has led some scholars to

link Foucault's work to post structuralism (Strega, 2005), which assumes that oppression is

rooted in language (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000; Fook, 2004). Foucault's work has also been

linked to a postmodernism that focuses on how dominant discourses create legitimate knowledge

and power (Fook, 2004).

To further demonstrate the link between power, knowledge and discourse, Carabine

(2001) refers to these three concepts as an "interconnected triad" that is at the centre of

Foucault's work. We know that particular discourses in society are more dominant than others.

Dominant discourses are produced by powerful systems that create knowledge. These

knowledge claims or "truths" are necessary for the exercise of power as described by Mclaughlin

(2005). Foucault (1988) is less concerned with truth. He seems to be more concerned about how

"truth" is constructed. Foucault's idea that knowledge/truth is not discovered raises the question

of whose knowledge or way of knowing emerges as the one that "counts." Which knowledge is

privileged? Who is the knower? Who can speak with such knowledge? How are individuals

placed in subject positions through this knowledge? These are important questions to consider in

relation to power dimensions and knowledge production given that discourses determine who can speak with authority, which in turn influences our perception of the world.

These three concepts are linked in that discourse produces [regimes of] power/knowledge and determines what can be understood to be "truth" at any particular time. Understanding the interconnectedness of power, knowledge and discourse is critical, as described by Carabine (2001). However, equally important is to comprehend the formation of subjectivity because discourses exert strong pressures on the individual/self to conform to the dominant culture (Ramazanoglu, 1993). According to some scholars, discourses are not merely effects or end products of power. Rather power is embedded in discourses (Manis & Street, 2000). Although Manis and Street's perspectives add to our understanding of power and discourses, it also needs to be highlighted that discourses are consistently being challenged and contested. Foucault's argument is that within relations of power, individuals and groups can find space to resist domination, exercise freedom and pursue their interests. For Foucault, resistance is about continually interrogating the conditions of our lives, and problematizing the stories we are told and those we tell. Foucault refers to discourse as both an instrument and an effect of power. Showing how discourse, power and knowledge are interconnected is one of Foucault's distinct contributions to our understanding of the world and leads us to another major focus: the theoretical discussion of how his work informs the discourses of race, gender and class.

A diagrammatic method exercise demonstrated in Figure 1 below is intended to show how the theoretical concepts (power, knowledge and subject) are linked with each other and the connections to the discourses of race, gender and class.

Figure 1

Research Study Theoretical Map

Power and its relations to knowledge are inseparable.
Knowledge is enmeshed in power.
Power is not possible without knowledge
Control and power over knowledge production is important to ensure its survival.

Power

"governing the self" and "disciplinary power"

Knowledge

How do we know the everyday life?

The subject is part of the ongoing practices of being defined and re-defined

Subject

The subject is an effect of power and knowledge.

Examination of discourses – Enlightenment, capitalism, colonialism, patriarchy, and slavery

Discourse of race
As a salient factor in this study

Discourse of gender

Discourse of class

Outcomes
-   construction of the "other" from a narrow knowledge base
-   partial truths
-   scapegoat
-   deprivileged
-   normalize and moralize
-   regulate and control

Implications for Social Work Practice and intervention
-   curious and inquisitive about knowledge production
-   awareness of the forms and use of power
-   subjectivity due to effects of power and knowledge

This mapping exercise was developed based on the review of literature that showed the strong connections between power and knowledge and their influence on our way of understanding and perceiving important social phenomena related to race, gender and class.

Discourse of Race

In this study, the discourse of race is dominant and the objective is to gain an understanding of the relevance of racial identities in the work experiences of child welfare workers when practicing with families. As noted in Figure 1, other identities including class and gender are examined, but race is the salient factor because of the study's focus on racialized workers and the understanding that racial background can influence child welfare interventions with families (Courtney et al., 1996). In discussing the work experiences of racialized workers, it is important that we begin by understanding the concept of race from a theoretical perspective, as racial identity can shape ideas about social work practice and work relationships. The concept of race is particularly pertinent in child welfare because of the increasing diversity in Ontario's magnet cities like Toronto, and the ongoing discussions of over-representation of racialized and Aboriginal children in care. The examination of the theoretical concept of race will provide a foundation for the understanding of racial issues within the context of child welfare, along with gender and class, which are also foci of this study. Foucault's theoretical lens is used to examine the role of racialized child welfare workers. His theoretical work cannot be disregarded because he focuses on themes of power that are germane to race and racial identity. Lewis (1997) argues that the issue of power becomes central because we are differently positioned within systems of social classification and in the organization of social relations. These social classifications help maintain power imbalances.

Foucault's work on race suggests that the concept was politically interesting from its inception or early theorization. It gained political power and salience in a discourse of what he calls "race war" (McWhorter, 2004). As noted earlier Foucault's ideas of race should not be perceived as a philosophical divergence from the anti-racism that is typically perceived as part of the scholarship on race. Rather, his views complement our understanding of racial divisions (Baines, 2007). While anti-racism perceives racial discrimination as the organizing principle of the social and political structures that create racial inequality and injustice (Morelli & Spencer, 2000), Foucault's concern is about particular discourses in which the term race has been articulated and reconceived (Stoler, 1995).

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, race discourse took on a new dimension and the term race became totally absorbed in practices that evolved from European and American Enlightenment perceptions. In taking on a new dimension, I mean that the race discourse shifted from simply referring to social groupings to a state of hierarchization, which was legitimatized by scientific methods to value and devalue particular groups (McWhorter, 2004). Interestingly, it was the Enlightenment that promoted the ideas of equality, tolerance and fair play, but it was also responsible for the creation of western notions of racial and cultural superiority that justified and legitimated colonial domination (Stanfield, 1993; Pfeffer, 1998). Individuals outside the western hemisphere were believed to lack knowledge, and were seen as subjects to be studied. The concept of race was taken up by early nineteenth-century anthropologists and biologists who turned it into a technical scientific category (McWhorter, 2004). The intent of the biological/scientific study of race or biologizing of race was to understand human development through objective scientific methods, which was one reality about race and racial differences that could be known and explained through science.

In a way, attempts to understand the concept of race through science also meant that no racial biases would cloud the reality (Lopez, 1995; Hunter, 2002). As we now understand, the development of science led to the ordering of living things based on the desire to know the developmental stages of human beings. As such, races could serve as clues to the "truth" of all human development. This form of knowledge purported that the industrial western world represented the highest level of human development and other parts of the world the lowest. What resulted was a hierarchy of races based on the "scientific knowledge" of that time. People became products of normalizing power that defined racial identities, highlighting Foucault's assertion that power produces the knowledge of who we are (McWhorter, 2004). This practice of ordering based on identities can also be understood through Foucault's notion of bio-power where people's lives are individually and collectively ordered and placed in different positions within a society. The ambivalence is that we embrace the very identities that are seemingly divisive in order to highlight the importance of our distinctiveness. Embracing a racial identity is a way of resisting being absorbed by the dominant discourse.

Questioning scientific knowledge related to the naturalness of race led to an understanding of race as a social construct. Omi and Winant (1994) write that in the post-World War II era, the concept of race was more comprehensively challenged than ever before in modern history. The contestation of the term race indicated the efforts to understand race in an alternative way (Foucault, 1988). Race as a contested term raises the following questions: what is acceptable knowledge? epistemologically, should race be viewed as a social construct versus a biological concept? what knowledge should inform our beliefs about race? ontologically what is the true nature of reality regarding race? Ontologically, the meaning of race as a concept is always evolving. To some, race has been perceived as the history of an untruth involving

political processes of classification (Gunaratam, 2003) because the meaning of race has been defined and redefined, as well as contested.

Other discourses such as colonialism have also legitimized a particular dominant knowledge through processes of civilizing and detribalizing the subjects (Ladson, 2000). The notion of civilizing is not only problematic, but demonstrates how power and knowledge were used to represent the other (colonized) as "almost human" or "sub-human" based on their ability to be "educated" (Smith, 1999). Smith also argues that colonialism was more than a representation of the "other" through western knowledge, but it was also a process of exploitation and a reinforcement of superiority and hierarchical typologies of humanity. For Smith, the Enlightenment and colonialism are directly linked. The development of science that is attached to the Enlightenment era paved the way for economic expansion and trade, as well as systematic colonization of the "uncivilized" world. Enlightenment and colonialism therefore can be perceived as regimes of truth that have contributed to social ordering because of their ability to name, categorize and classify groups based on racial identities.

The development of alternative ways of knowing and understanding race is highly significant. From a Foucauldian point of view, understanding race as a social construct enabled a new regime of truth to develop (Foucault, 1973). This new truth became another model or way of knowing by which the knower as a subject (a member of a racialized group) appropriated the language of "race" to form a racial identity and challenge dominant ways of knowing about race. Even though studies have shown that the term "race" is a social construct, and despite scientific explanations of race having been challenged, race is still important and the outcomes for those affected by it become "truths" for them. Omi and Winant (1994) suggest that "we are left at the

century's end with a range of unanticipated or at least theoretically unresolved, racial dilemmas" (p. 174).

Today, race remains an important concept in the western society. The dominant norm is western male traditions, and all others are measured against this norm. Based on Foucault's analysis of power/knowledge networks in the nineteenth century, being a member of a particular race other than white meant differing from the civilized norm in certain measurable ways. These measurable ways and forms of deviation amount to what we might now call "stereotypical racial characteristics" that construct the "other" from a narrow knowledge base (McWhorter, 2004). The problem is that stereotypes are only partial truths that do not reflect the complete stories of people's lives (Adichie, 2009). These partial truths and stereotypes play an important role in the naming, classifying and categorizing of one's racial identity.

In child welfare work, these issues of classifying are not absent from institutional practices and policies. As Chibnall at al (2003) indicate that racial bias is endemic to child welfare agencies. The authors also argue that the child protection system is not set up to support racialized families and children and that racialized groups are overrepresented in child welfare reporting, investigation, case substantiation, and child placements.

Discourse of Gender

To analyze and examine the truth and the marginalized knowledge related to the work experiences of racialized workers within the Ontario child welfare system requires a discussion of gender and class because of the intersections of the two social identities with race (Collins, 1998). Gender is critical to this study because this discourse is ubiquitous in many ways and cannot be ignored. Unequal historical gender relations continue to be demonstrated in several areas of Canadian society including housing, media, education, health, law, and politics. The

analysis of gender is rooted in feminist intellectual tradition that seeks justice and liberation by offering a rich understanding of women's life experiences within patriarchal societies. From a feminist perspective, Cain (1993) writes that "feelings are the most important political asset we have." According to feminism, the expression of lived experience creates alternative ways of understanding the social world. The common and shared element of feminism and race theories is the privileging of "contextual knowledge" over "universal knowledge" claimed by the Enlightenment. Within feminist traditions and racial theories, the starting point of understanding the world is the experience of a social group that has been excluded, marginalized or oppressed in various historical periods.

It is relevant to raise the question of how gender relates to Foucault's theoretical work. As Ramazanoglu (1993) argues, Foucault's ideas can be applied to understanding how women have had to conform to historically specific ideas of femininity. Using Foucault's theoretical lens, the point is to highlight some of the crucial effects of power and knowledge through the interplay of discourses. While it is true that there is limited analysis of gender in Foucault's work, it is possible to see in his work, a sympathy to women's desire to change power relations (Ramazanoglu, 1993; Grimshaw, 1993). Foucault alludes to gender issues in his examination of the hysterization of women's bodies in the nineteenth century medical and psychological discourses (Newton, 1998). It is difficult to argue that the discourse of gender and the material conditions for women, past and present, are unrelated to Foucault's work on power and subjectivity, as he offers a way of deconstructing history through genealogy that challenges assumptions about nature and the causes of subordination. Genealogy has many meanings, but I like to view it as an exploration of the processes, procedures and apparatuses whereby truth and knowledge are produced in the construction of subjectivities and the ways in which these

discourses are resisted (Tamboukou & Ball, 2003). Some feminist traditions have refined Foucault's work to describe how women have to conform to historically prescribed ideas of femininity (Ramazanoglu, 1993; Devine, 1999). Newton (1998) adds that Foucault's work is of direct relevance to feminist work in that it provides a basis to deconstruct "truths" that define normality that was established through science and patriarchy.

Women's subjectivity has historically been defined through the gendered nature of almost all societies (Corby, 1991) in which men and women are treated differently and that use nature (science) to make distinctions between males and females. In particular, eighteenth and nineteenth-century western culture intensified gender differences through Enlightenment science that associated reason and rationality with men while emotion was devalued and tended to be associated with women. The term "gender" has been problematized and cannot be accepted as a biological reality. Like race, gender is a social construction that societies use to award individuals opportunities and privileges (Allen, 1996). Brooks-Higginbothom (1992) aptly defines gender as an evolving concept that is applied to male and female bodies to give meaning and identity within socio-political, cultural, and historical contexts. Since these demographic categories have been constructed, we know that most societies (western and non-western) have been organized around masculinity as their starting point and that femininity is always subordinately positioned (Usher, 1997; Allen, 1996), thereby naturalizing the subject position of women based on phallocentric assumptions.

The recent case of Marissa Mayer, CEO of Yahoo is evidence of the ongoing patriarchal assumptions about child care and nurture. Mayer, who took only two weeks of leave after the birth of her first child, generated public debate on whether she should have taken a full maternity leave. The rhetorical question is whether the same public debate would have ensued if the CEO

was a male who had made the same decision following the birth of his child. Mayer's example is also a reminder that motherhood is not homogenous (Monture, 1995) and that many working class mothers return to work early out of necessity but their cases are not publicized because of class differences. However, the publicized case of Marissa Mayer reflects the subjectivity of women that continues to operate through the gendered nature of most social relationships.

The notion of the subject is critical in Foucault's analysis of knowledge and power in terms of how society influences our ways of thinking and acting towards women, racialized people and the people with low-income. The construction of women as the primary caregivers for children rests on the belief that they should adhere to "acceptable" standards of parenting (putting children first, spending time with children, keeping children safe and out of trouble). The subjectivity of women is seen in the expectation that women are expected to carry out certain roles in the home, marriage and the family. These roles require women to be what Hall (1992) has referred to as "moral regenerators of the nation."

These expectations have been naturalized and taken for granted, creating strong images that mothers are to raise children. Raising law abiding children is part of the moralization that mothers are expected to provide. The notion of motherhood is important because of Foucault's observations, which seem to be rooted in Marxism and which are part of his bio-power analysis (power over life/power to make subjects productive), that the historical development of capitalism and its various institutions (e.g., child welfare) depends on controlling family reproduction (O'Neill, 1986).

These gender divisions have significant consequences for women, particularly those from poor backgrounds. Mothers, rather than parents, tend to be the focus of child protection intervention, and women disproportionately bear the responsibility for their children's well-being

and safety (Swift, 1995; Reich, 2005). At the same time, the image of a racialized absent father in child welfare interventions is still apparent with the tendency being for men to be overlooked in child protection because they are perceived as irrelevant and/or a threat to children (Strega et al., 2008; Schmid, 2009) and women. One also cannot ignore that most child welfare investigations are initiated by first identifying the mother who is transformed into a "client" or a "case." It is rare that a file will be opened in a father's name. Using a mother's name when a family is involved with the child welfare system indicates a failing parent with deficits and also implies an absent father as he is not named in the file. The blame is shifted from inappropriate and often times unnamed violent men to named women (Brown, 2006).

The child welfare mother is perceived as deviant and unable to protect her child because of particular discourses (immorality, corrupt, public assistance recipients, the underclass, dependency, poor parenting) that come together to constitute the lone mother as a scapegoat who bears the brunt for all sorts of ills: teenage motherhood, delinquent children, juvenile crime, a crisis in masculinity and social and educational failure in fatherless boys (Carabine, 2001; Brown, 2006; Swift, 1995; Scourfield, 2001a; Scourfield, 2001b; Dominelli et al., 2005). This assumption that a child welfare mother is an inappropriate parent can be punitive to the already poor and lone mothers because these beliefs become institutionalized and result in practices and policies to manage and control this population. The control of the mother is not separate from how the poor should be managed and governed.

Discourse of Class

Class and classism are concepts that have their roots in Marxism. In his historical analysis of class, Marx asserted that society evolved from a tribal structure where there was latent domination of the wife by the husband within the family to master/slave relationships to

feudalism, a system that was marked by lord/serf relations (Heilbroner & Milberg, 2008). In our present capitalist market economy, there is a divide between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. In analyzing class, Marxism is critical in understanding the power imbalance between the owners of the means of production and labour, as these ideas are also used by Foucault who provides insight into the experience of poverty (O'Neill, 1986). Foucault's work and Marxism have affinity in that both recognize that the social world is based on categorization and binaries. Despite Foucault's critique of Marxist views of state power, both theorists demonstrate convergence in relation to how labour is rendered docile in the face of disciplinary power within the capitalist work relationship between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat (O'Neill, 1986). Arguably, the historical discourse of poverty is about categorization and is traceable to the Poor Law, which permits us to understand some of the existing knowledge and ways of thinking about poverty in the context of capitalism. In the English Poor Laws, initiated in 1536, including the amended Act of 1834, paupers were demonized and portrayed as degenerate (O'Connell, 2010). The codification of how to manage and control the poor, which was developed by the propertied, was a manifestation of privilege and power being exercised through rules and laws. This powerful portrayal has persisted through time, providing the same rhetoric and moral weight to arguments today that continue to dehumanize those that live below the poverty line.

Following a genealogical path also helps one to discover that the discourse about poverty often refers to the condition of women who are poor and maintain their families without an adequate wage, no help from a male breadwinner and who rely on the government for economic support (Fraser & Gordon, 1994). We also know that women are disproportionately represented among low-wage workers, but they still carry the greatest burden of balancing work and family life (Mahon, 2008). To a large extent, poverty is feminized and racialized. One in four workers

in Ontario earns below the poverty line. This number is higher for women overall (31%) and even higher for women of colour (38%) (The Colour of Poverty, 2007).

In many regards, discourses of the poor carry key words like young mothers, absent fathers and street children all of which have embedded meanings and represent both women and racialized groups who rely on economic support through government assistance. Labeling the problems of poor, solo-mother families as "poor" and "dependent on government assistance" pathologizes the groups represented and tends to make it appear that poverty is an individual problem based on a person's psychological problems or immorality.

Generally speaking, child abuse and neglect have been closely associated with families living in poverty (Paxson & Waldfogel, 2002). Strega and Carrière (2008) add that the main reasons families come to the attention of child welfare authorities are race and poverty, which further emphasizes the intersection of race and class. We also know that abuse and neglect of children outside poor families remains much more hidden from the official notice. Historically in Ontario, orphans who had lost their fathers in the War of 1812, young people with developmental needs, and children of unmarried mothers were the main recipients of protection (Chen, 2005). The Canadian Incidence Study of child abuse and neglect (Trocmé et al., 2008) shows that nearly 33% of maltreated children live in families dependent on social assistance/employment insurance/other benefits and another 10% live in families where the primary sources of income are seasonal, multiple jobs or part-time work.

Low socio-economic families are not only subject to child welfare interventions and relegated to low paying work, but they also live in what many would consider impoverished neighbourhoods. In Ontario, low-income families can easily be identified by their postal codes. This perception of poverty is emphasized in a United Way report entitled "Poverty by postal

code," in which the authors, MacDonnell et al. (2004), draw a connection between poverty and neighbourhoods. This report and research by Walks and Larry (2006) also conclude that high poverty neighbourhoods are made up predominately by newcomers and visible minorities. Child welfare agencies easily regard these communities as "dangerous" or "risky areas" and this triggers a different response than in "non-dangerous" neighbourhoods. Police are more often involved in interventions related to child abuse. For families residing in more affluent neighbourhoods, such intrusive child welfare responses are not exercised, leading one to suspect that poor families are seen through a different lens than non-poor families because of the assumption that they pose a threat to society.

Gatta and Deprez (2008) add that the powerful public image of the welfare recipient has a significant influence on policy. For example, in Ontario, the conservative government of Mike Harris promised to reduce the welfare rolls, a move that forced many poor families into the workfare program, but did not address poverty issues or help individuals realize economic self-sufficiency, as in many instances the workfare approach only forced individuals to take up jobs that were low paying. Dependency on state benefits has been problematized while dependency on a husband has been celebrated. One of the reasons why dependency on state benefits has been problematized is because of the powerful influence of the discourse of paid work which, when unpacked in the context of current policy, increasingly reveals the prevalence of the notion that "welfare recipients" ought to work (Fraser & Gordon, 1994). The push to have "welfare recipients" transition to work reflects the neo-liberal/conservative ideological view of "familial responsibility" and less government involvement into the financial support of individuals (Geen & Berrick, 2002; Dominelli et al., 2005). There is also a subtle desire on the part of the rich and those in the upper echelons of society to redistribute the wealth amongst themselves rather than

among the poor.   Historical and current public discussions suggest that people are poor because "they do not want to work." This view has been challenged because being poor is in many instances not a choice, but a product of a number of structural issues including unemployment, underemployment and family structures that oppress women (Tepperman, et al, 2008).

The public debate regarding poverty begs another important question: what informs our knowledge about the poor? As some have argued, power is significant in the construction of knowledge (Carabine, 2001). The development of knowledge about "poverty" can be understood in terms of the operations of power. Discussion of power relations is necessary because it conditions the way in which discourses of poverty are established and gain plausibility (Bourdieu, 1977 as cited in Fraser & Gordon, 1994). As a result, this knowledge becomes codified into policies that regulate the poor.

Summary

In this chapter, there is a particular focus on Foucault's theoretical work to analyse the different systems of knowledge that have created binaries like racialized/non-racialized, male/female and poor/rich. The use of Foucauldian analysis with a focus on the discourses of race, gender and class uncovers how knowledge about marginalized people is absent from the discourses that construct them. What is present in these discourses are ways of knowing that have become naturalized and legitimated because of the operations of power that permit the construction and reconstruction of differences such as male/female, racialized/non racialized and poor/rich. Constructed differences based on gender, race and class emphasize that each group has a way of knowing that has become problematic because it deviates from those of the dominant western capitalist system. Therefore, Foucault's work is relevant in the analysis of knowledge production and power because it helps us understand that in everyday life practices,

people are categorized and identify themselves on the basis of gender, race and class and that these dividing practices have become institutionalized. Once institutionalized, these practices become the mechanism that creates and recreates the differences in social and work relationships. Attached to these categories are meanings of what is normal and natural, which can lead to legitimizing ways of organizing social life.

Child welfare is not different from other institutions and it is implicated in the categorizing and naming of what is "good" and "not good" parenting. When drawing lines between "good" and "not good" parenting, issues of race, class, and gender present complex challenges that cannot be ignored in the larger context of the child welfare system.

The next chapter discusses the gaze on the "poor child" and the governing of parents considered to be "neglectful" and "abusive." The surveillance of neglectful mothers has historically been the work of middle-class white women. The next chapter also illustrates how racialized workers are now beginning to play a more active role in this process.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

Introduction:

It is my intent, through this research, to move the discussion beyond the theoretical perspectives on race, gender, and class. Instead, I pay particular attention to the historical roles played by middle-class women and racialized workers in child welfare. Although I draw on research from the United Kingdom and the United States, the focus of my research is on the contemporary child welfare system in Ontario, which is governed by the Transformation Agenda implemented in 2007. One cannot gain a full understanding of how workers practice under the contemporary Transformation Agenda without a historical analysis of child protection service providers and the institutions themselves. Foucault was always interested in the "history of the present," and what this means in respect to the modern day child welfare system in Ontario is that it has been formed and shaped by its past. Tracing history means to understand the development of knowledge and its relationship to power (Carabine, 2001). By taking this Foucauldian approach, one can observe the reproduction and transmission of social work practices in relation to the dominant ideas that continue to govern child welfare. This chapter therefore, focuses on the historical governing of the child welfare recipients and the evolution of child protection services in Ontario.

Swift (1997) cites Harris and Melichercik (1986) in describing the origins of child welfare in Canada as a gradually evolving response to social and economic conditions of the 19th century. Three critical factors emerge in this regard. First, in economic terms, the mass movement of Europeans to North America, growth in urban population because of industrialization, and many orphaned children resulted in conditions of poverty along with the neglect and abandonment of children. The child welfare response to these social conditions

facing families was initially by charitable organizations because of the lack of government

intervention (Swift, 1997; Murray, 2005).

The second factor, related to the first one, was that the ongoing social issues and the

advocacy of the Child Savers movement that propelled the government to legislate child welfare

as evidenced by the passing of the first Ontario child protection law in 1888 (An Act for the

Protection and Reformation of Neglected Children) and the creation of Act for the prevention of

Cruelty to and Better Protection of Children in 1893 (Ontario Association of Children's Aid

Society, 2012). The Act of 1888 confirmed the authority of the courts to legally intervene in

cases of neglected children while the legislation of 1893 reflected amendments that provided past

humane societies the power to remove children believed to be at risk of neglect (Chen, 2005).

For some scholars, the government intervention marked an important phase whereby the state

became the main regulator of child protection services and was acting as the parent of the nation

or *parens patria* (Chen, 2005; Dominelli et al., 2005). With the state responding to child

maltreatment, there has always been an element of control of those families or parents that were

deemed a 'threat' to society as they were failing to raise their children according to "societal

norms." Today, child protection services seem more responsive to socially and economically

vulnerable families, a pattern that was established in the early Child Savers Movement.

Thirdly, child protection policies and laws have evolved. In its infancy, the primary

concern of child protection was children in poverty and the associated neglect (Swift, 1997).

Variations of child neglect included: abandonment, children found in unfit homes, lack of

supervision, failure to provide the basic necessities of life, etcetera. The discourse of neglect was

primarily about the mother who was responsible to shape her children in such a way that they did

not become immoral or criminals (Chen, 2005). In the 1880s the use of excessive force in

disciplining the child was problematized and excessive physical discipline was redefined by the early Child Savers Movement as cruelty against children (Chen, 2005). According to Chen (2005), cruelty was understood as a "moral offence" on the part of the father attempting to civilize his children and not as a child experiencing "suffering" at the hands of their parents. Subsequently, the discovery of the battered child syndrome by the medical profession in the early 1960s added to society's understanding of child abuse in terms of the injuries inflicted on a child by a caregiver (Pleck, 1987).   Swift (1997:41) argues that in the 1980s, there was a debate on the definition of physical abuse under the Criminal Code of Canada and that most provincial jurisdictions now define physical discipline as "injury or risk of injury to the child." From Child Savers to state intervention, it is evident that the ideas of child abuse and neglect have been shaped, reshaped and legislated by those with influence/power and knowledge to save the abandoned and potential young criminal.

The Key Players in the Governing of the Neglectful and Abusive Parent

In the past, middle-class white women were the primary providers of child welfare services. Citing Fallon et al. (2003), Strega and Carrière (2008) indicate that 80% of child welfare workers are female and that 97% use English as the primary language. One can say that the child welfare profession has been traditionally female dominated. Chambers (1986) indicates that child protection/social service work was previously viewed as unworthy because it dealt with undeserving segments of the population. There were perceptions, still existing today, that social services work mirrored the negative societal expectations that women should assume caring responsibility of the undeserving.

In general, social work has historically been regarded as a non-racialized profession (Rossiter, 2005; Proctor & Rosen, 1981). In gender terms, it is important to note that the

involvement of women in the provision of child protection services placed them in contradictory positions. On the one hand, middle-class women of white background were situated in particular subject positions because their work in protecting vulnerable children was appropriated partly because of what Foucault terms "the naturalized thinking" within the male discourse that assumes that children are to be cared for and nurtured by mothers.

On the other hand, the feminist movement had made it possible for middle-class women to gain power beyond motherhood and actively engage in designing social programs and interventions to protect vulnerable children. Women were active architects of the welfare state in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Andersen, 1996; Weinberg, 2006). A more thorough analysis of the intent of the welfare state, however, suggests that the goal was in fact the maintenance of social order by provision of indirect interventions through women-led services. Foucault (1991) assumes that liberal states, unlike feudal systems, maintain a delicate balance between ensuring the liberty of citizens while simultaneously controlling their behaviour through institutional practices. Parton (1994) also writes that early social work and the state assumed that their child welfare interventions served the interests of the families that they were involved with. According to Parton, this intervention was highly paternalistic. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, philanthropic and social work activities were increasingly absorbed into the formal institutions of the state. This process continued through to the early 1970s. In the British system, local authority social service departments were introduced. In the Canadian context, similar developments in social work have been documented (Hick, 2009). According to some, this shift allowed government to enter into private homes and facilitate the liberal welfare gaze directed at poor people (Chambon et al., 1999; Margolin, 1997). Moralization and normalization were the primary foci of the new government-run child

welfare interventions which became increasingly framed in legislation, creating the possibility

for coercive intervention or "tutelage" as Donzelot (1977) describes it. Tutelage was to be used

for the exceptional circumstances where moralization and normalization had failed.

With the continued need to ensure moralization and normalization of "deviant" and

immigrant families, the efforts of state child welfare agencies expanded during periods of

increased immigration from Commonwealth countries of families who joined long-established

racialized communities in western nations (Williams, 1996; Lewis, 1997). Others hold the view

that expanded child protection services were attempts to extend services to the new populations

that had been unsuccessful in accessing services (Wakefield, 1998). Contrary to this view,

Stubbs (1984) emphasizes that in the 1970s, a shift from a discourse of "race/immigration

problematic" to a discourse of "race/crime problematic" occurred in Britain. Crucially, the shift

from an immigration problem to a crime problem meant immigrants became a threat to society.

In the process of migrating and settling in new countries, racialized families were pathologized

within official discourses and state practices. Immigrant families faced discrimination, exclusion

and social disadvantage that forced many of their children into foster care systems (Graham,

2007; Williams, 1996).

Similarly, there are indications that African Americans in the United States face a

situation of chronic unemployment and/or under employment and are confined to the lowest

rungs of the occupational ladder in a racially segmented/segregated labour market (Piven &

Cloward, 1993; Freeman, 2000; Tolnay, 2003). They are also confined to racially segregated

neighbourhoods that are in the least desirable areas and contain dilapidated housing, high rates of

poverty and rampant cases of family break-ups. The result is increasing anxiety among the upper

classes and emerging middle class about the "behaviour" of the urban poor, leading to

perceptions that these "dangerous classes" are criminals, vicious, indolent, and intemperate (Lee, 2008).

In recent years, Toronto, Ontario, has experienced a number of violent gun shootings involving young black men. On January 18, 2013, Tyson Bailey, 15 years old, was killed. Subsequently, Kesean Williams, 9 years old, was murdered in his Brampton home. It is such tragedies that trigger a public outcry for government intervention by such institutions as child welfare and police. To ensure morality and to calm those in power, police response was required to quell the reportedly increasing crime, as were other interventions (e.g., those of child welfare) to address the problems arising with inner city youth. We cannot assume that all interventions were negative and intended to control immigrant and poor families, as well as violent youth. As Jerome Wakefield (1998) has noted, some aspects of social control are necessary to maintain social order to ensure that crime does not lead to a breakdown in society and that children are not being abused and neglected by parents and caregivers. At the same time, structural issues that perpetuate marginalization need to be considered, particularly for reasons of advancing social justice.

Grossberg (2002) as referenced by Lee (2008) has succinctly written that "Americans have been torn between a 'fear for' children and a 'fear of' children." For Americans, the safety and future of children has been of public concern, as they are viewed as a resource and the future leaders of the country. There is no doubt that at the core of the interventions to protect children in poor families are child safety concerns which are used by child welfare institutions to justify a public "fear for" children. At the same time there has been a fear of underprivileged youth and what will happen to them if they are not given a "proper" upbringing. The fear is that children in

households with inadequate resources will remain poor and drain public resources, as well as become criminals and repeat the cycle of abuse by mistreating their own children.

These two perspectives regarding "fear for" and "fear of" children have led to contradictory policies. On the one hand, policies aim to help families by providing "pastoral care" (Foucauldian term). Regarding the notion of "fear for" children, the language of "pastoral care" which is associated with the shepherd and his flock, exemplifies gentleness on the part of the state. It also carries the expectation of obedience to the shepherd on the part of the flock. On the other hand, policies that grow out of the "fear of" children use disciplinary power to police and control family actions through the normative gaze of professionals and institutions. The disciplinary power provides regulation to remove children from parental care that does not fit the norms of society.

Several studies indicate that in the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States, child welfare intervention has had long conflictual relationships with racialized communities (Humphreys, et al, 1999; Roberts, 2002, Graham, 2007; Maiter, 2009; Barn, 2007). Conflictual relationships with North American Aboriginal communities are also well documented where children were removed from their families and placed in residential schools that served as child welfare institutions between 1879 and 1996. The 1920 amendment to the Indian Act made residential school attendance mandatory for all Aboriginal children between the ages of seven and fifteen (Kozlowski et al., 2012). The residential school system was intended to obliterate Indigenous societies and to assimilate the youth through the teaching of mainstream culture, while forbidding anything Indigenous to be discussed or learned (Maiter, 2009; Blackstock, 2007; Trocmé et al., 2004). A host of other studies have found that black children are more likely than white children to be reported, have their cases substantiated, and be removed from

their families (Derezotes et al., 2005; Hill, 2006; Lavergne et al., 2008; Roberts, 2002; Rivaux et al., 2008).

Canadian research confirms that racialized families are more likely to be investigated by child welfare agencies than any other families in Canada (Lavergne et al., 2008). Roberts (2002) argues that what a "proper" family looks like and stereotypes of black women, and probably black men, play a role in child welfare decision making. Other studies have not found differences in how cases involving black and white families are handled (Levine et al., 1996; Zuravin & DePanfilis, 1999; Wolock et al., 2001; Hill, 2006), but these findings are debatable, given American research (as cited by Trocmé et al., 2004) that indicates racialized children in the United States spend longer periods of time in out-of-home care and re-enter care at higher rates and are less likely to be adopted than white children. Further, available American studies demonstrate poverty as the determining factor for the overrepresentation of racialized children (Tilbury & Thoburn, 2009; Kim et al, 2011). However, American and Canadian studies also show that it is difficult to separate race from poverty when examining the overrepresentation of racialized children in care (Coulton et al, 1999; Trocmé et al, 2004).

Based on Canadian and American academic literature, the high presence of racialized children in care has brought issues of race to public attention. Child welfare experts, like Swift and Callahan (2009) and Blackstock et al. (2004) have recognized the overrepresentation of racialized and Aboriginal children in foster care as unacceptable and report that there appear to be no viable plans in place leading to a change in this trend. Others have commented that some of the most high profile child abuse inquires, particularly in United Kingdom have involved racialized children (Barn, 2007).

The discussion of racialized children in care is connected to workers from diverse backgrounds who have been recruited to intervene in families from increasingly diverse communities by social service agencies in Canada, Britain, and the United States (Stubbs, 1984; Rooney, 1984; Proctor & Davies, 1994; Bernard et al., 1993). Correspondingly, social work education has been transformed, resulting in more racialized groups entering the profession (Singh, 2011; Razack & Badwall, 2006). Christie (2006) cites Williams and Villemez (1993) who describes the trend of men, particularly from black and ethnic communities, transitioning into what they call "non-traditional" occupations (e.g. social work) because of the lack of employment in other fields as a result of discrimination. Among some racialized groups, social work has become an opportunity for education and employment.

Political pressure has been put on agencies receiving government funding to diversify their staff. For example, in Canada, Employment Equity Legislation at the federal level encourages development and implementation of equity hiring practices at the organizational level (Dorais, 1994). Similarly, in the United Kingdom, Employment Opportunities policies were intended to meet the needs of racialized individuals who were believed to have limited employment opportunities (Stubbs, 1984). The United States also has similar Affirmative Action policies with the intended purpose of creating employment equity. Employment equity programs are laden with assumptions about equalizing job opportunities and expansion of the labour force to allow marginalized groups entry into the labour market. While many racialized people have benefited from these policies, they are not without fault as there has been a lack of commitment by both government and involved agencies as described by Yee (2007). A relative weakness in Employment Equity legislation exists because of the lack of popular support for stronger equity-based policies and the employers' focus on the corporate bottom line, as well as poor

implementation and enforcement of the programs (Shalla & Clement, 2007). The lack of support

for employment equity legislation was highlighted in the 2009 United Nations report on human

rights for minorities in Canada. Despite some of the weaknesses of employment equity policies,

it must also be acknowledged that there has been modest improvement in the recruitment of

racialized employees in Canada (Bernard et al., 1993).

Available American, British and Canadian research also indicates that most racialized

workers are in frontline line positions, working as interpreters and activists and engaging in

cultural connections with families involved with social services (Stubbs, 1984; Woldeguiorguis

2003; Morrel, 2007; Lewis, 1996; Barn, 2007; Hutchinson, 1989; Perry & Limb, 2004). Among

their frontline work duties, racialized workers find themselves playing the role of "cultural

expert" as well as exerting power and authority to manage families, and conforming to rules

established by child welfare regulatory policies and practices (Lewis, 2000). It is clear that

racialized workers have moved into middle-class occupations in the social services and have

primary responsibilities within minority communities (Bernard et al., 1993). This trend of

increasing racialized workers in social services is likely to continue because of the need for

agencies to remain involved in diverse communities. In some cases, the recruitment of racialized

employees has been due to the need to provide clients with services in their mother tongue. It

was believed that the entry of racialized workers in social services would help to expand services

within local minority communities (Dorais, 1994). The recruitment of racialized workers in

child protection has to do with the governability of minority communities and reflects Foucault's

idea of a "regime of normalization" (Lewis, 2000, p. 34).

Interesting parallels can be drawn between the racialized worker in social institutions as

cultural experts and middle-class women in terms of power and the achievement of middle class

status. It is clear that racialized workers have moved into middle-class occupations in the social services and often have primary responsibilities within minority communities (Bernard et al., 1993). Similarly, dominant middle-class white women continue to have the authority to regulate and monitor the work of racialized workers, but they are also subject to the ultimate power and authority of institutional executives, who are mostly men from the dominant culture. Available research indicates that the larger the institution, the less likely it is to be headed by a woman (Ashraf, 2010). An important shift is starting to occur in the management of Ontario's child welfare agencies. As of 2013, nearly 50% of the executive directors are women. It is also interesting to note how each group is situated within the hierarchical structure of child welfare institutions based on class, race, and gender. This hierarchy indicates the power inherent in most institutions, which demands supervision for purposes of shaping the work. The hierarchy is legitimated for bureaucratic efficiency to meet organizational needs. Hierarchies can also be justified because of the "knowledge" that individuals at the top bring to the organizations. Foucault has given a clear account of the connections between knowledge and power. It can be argued that hierarchical structures in organizations symbolize levels of power where those with "purported knowledge" are at the top.

Within child welfare institutional structures, the existing lines of hierarchy mean that those at the top are legally responsible for determining the organizational goals, thus giving them the power to instruct those relegated to frontline work to perform tasks deemed appropriate. Hierarchies have not only become structures that form and maintain power differentials between workers and management, but also function as ways to watch workers. Hierarchal observation becomes one of the tools of power and an apparatus to maintain norms for both the service providers and users. For workers who are service providers, part of the work means

internalization of the institutional norms, supported by rules that influence individuals to monitor themselves. The hierarchal observation is part of the current Transformation Agenda.

The Ontario Transformation Agenda Discourse

Recently Ontario has undergone an evolution in child welfare known as the Transformation Agenda, instituted in 2007, which seems to have continuities with the operation and functioning of earlier child protection. This evolution in child welfare has brought with it new legal and policy requirements to protect children from abuse and neglect. Today, child abuse and neglect continue to be assessed in terms of the risks posed by the caregivers. The Transformation Agenda was a result of the amendments made to the Child and Family Services Act under Bill 210 passed in the Ontario legislature on March 27, 2006 (Ministry of Children and Youth Services, 2006). The Transformation Agenda reforms were broad in that they made changes to the child welfare legislation, regulation, and policies. The changes were government measures to manage and control social work practices with families and children.

As will be elaborated in this chapter, the continuities of early child welfare practices are manifested primarily in the following two ways: 1) new legislation to control and manage families deemed to be a threat to society; and 2) historical paternalism embedded in the new risk assessment tools. In this chapter, I argue that racialized workers are not only perceived as "cultural experts" and interpreters but also have been drawn into family assessment work that reinforces dominant "parenting norms." More illustratively, the "parenting norms" are maintained through the powerful gaze of the workers who are now trained to assess risks posed by families under the new child welfare reforms. The new social and career positioning of racialized workers raises questions whether they are now distanced from their own communities. This question is explored throughout this research.

My research focuses on the Transformation Agenda by examining how racialized workers are implicated in the broad social context in the reforms that govern child welfare practice. One can argue that the prevailing regime of truth and knowledge of child welfare in Ontario operates within the overarching framework of the Transformation Agenda, as well as the Ontario Child and Family Services Act. There are particular practical activities that are articulated in the Transformation Agenda that require our attention and critical analysis.

The three key service elements of the Transformation Agenda are: permanency, alternatives to court, and differential response. A single information system, research, accountability, and funding are the other four principal elements of the Transformation Agenda (Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies, 2011). The focus of this study will remain on the first three Transformation Agenda priorities because they emphasize the client service principles of current child welfare.

Firstly, under the Transformation Agenda, permanency for children involves a number of areas such as kinship, customary care and adoption, as well as Looking After Children (LAC), Structured Analysis and Family Evaluation (SAFE), and Parent Resource for Information Development and Education (PRIDE) training. SAFE and PRIDE are used by child welfare agencies to assess and train caregivers including adoptive, foster, and kinship parents. LAC assessments are intended to provide an understanding of the wellbeing of children in care. All these are important areas of the current Ontario child welfare regime, but here the focus will be limited to kinship as it fits into the scope of this study that seeks to understand the interaction between racialized workers and families from diverse backgrounds. Additionally, kinship tends to be one of the common parenting practices used among racial and ethnic communities. Goodley (2011) argues that contemporary kinship care has evolved as a culture-based strategy

that helps to preserve families and maintain connectedness between children and their communities.

Based on the Transformation Agenda, kinship is a permanency option intended to reduce the number of children in care. In 2011, the Ontario Association for Children's Aid Societies reported a significant percentage of children placed in kinship homes. Upon review of the available statistics on children in foster care and kinship placements, it appears that fewer children are in family-based placements than foster care and other placements including group homes. From 2007 to 2011, the number of children in kinship care homes has been consistently around a thousand or slightly less (Ontario Association for Children's Aid Society, 2007, 2008, 2011). In comparison, the total placements within the same period have been between 16,000 and 18,000. Based on statistics from 2007 to 2011, the kinship care placements still form a small percentage of the total placements. Child welfare is just beginning to gain a new and deeper understanding of the importance of promoting family ties as the number of children in care is increasing and available foster homes are decreasing (Burke, 2009).

Similarly, current literature indicates a lack of understanding of customary care that undermines the placement options for Aboriginal children in Ontario (The Commission to Promote Sustainable Child Welfare in Ontario, 2011; Tripartite Technical Table on Child Welfare, 2011). In the Indigenous context, kinship care and customary care share some similarities (Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services, 2013). However, there is also a clear distinction between the two childcare placement strategies. In customary care, the First Nations Band Council plays a leading role in childcare decisions, while kinship care arrangements are primarily decided by child welfare agencies. Kinship care arrangements have prescribed timelines, but customary care arrangements have no time limitations because the

healing of Aboriginal children is perceived to be a lifelong process (Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services, 2013).

Secondly, the Transformation Agenda also promotes the idea of agencies and workers seeking "alternatives to court" when practicing with families. In its report "Measuring 2005 Transformation goals to 2010 child welfare practice," Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (2010b) indicated a downward trend in the number of child welfare cases requiring court interventions. For example, the report highlighted that court cases had decreased from 7,785 to 7,344 between 2006/07 and 2009/10, which is nearly a 6% reduction. Similarly, cases that required trials dropped from 661 to 387, or 45%, in the same period. In its analysis, the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies reported that it did not know why the downward trend existed. The Association recommended further research to elucidate the processes and practices related to the Transformation Agenda.

Interestingly, the language of collaborative and inclusive approaches that support families in the planning and decision making for their children is clearly stated within the proposed alternatives to court (Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services, 2006). With such language, the Transformation Agenda appears to be introducing new ways for child welfare services to engage with families outside of the parameters of the court system. Alternative dispute resolution methods such as mediation, family group conferencing and Aboriginal approaches were strongly encouraged under the policy directive. The language conveyed questionable messages or "truth" that the Transformation Agenda was about service delivery to families, which in most cases are poor single-parent families, as well as racialized and Aboriginal parents. The message was questionable because the Transformation Agenda's primary focus was on strengthening child welfare agencies rather than strengthening families

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(Dumbrill, 2006a). The focus on strengthening child welfare agencies undermined the inclusive family approaches of mediation, family group conferencing and Aboriginal approaches because institutions remain in powerful positions to determine whether to utilize these approaches. Dumbrill (2006a:6) points out that most of the Transformation Agenda measures have a cost-saving motive. Dumbrill uses open adoption (adoption with access to birth families), as an example that is likely to reduce legal costs associated with parental challenges to adoption. He goes on to say that increasing post-adoption support enables children to move more easily from state care to adoptive homes. Placing more children in kinship care should reduce in-care rates and costs. Dumbrill's work makes a strong case that the Transformation Agenda discourse is largely driven by cost saving principals. However, there were also other influences that led first to ORAM (Ontario Risk Assessment Model) and later to the Transformation Agenda, including a series of coroner's inquests in 1996 and the work of the Child Mortality Task Force in 1997 that identified problems with the capacity of the child welfare system to adequately protect children from harm (Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services, 2005a; Director of Services Committee, 2004). Substantial media attention to child abuse deaths in this era also led to public and political 'panic', resulting in a series of child welfare reforms.

Thirdly, among the other practice approaches reflected in the Transformation Agenda was the differential response model or differential treatment where lower risk families are provided a number of alternatives to resolve presenting issues, as in the example of referring the parents to community services for an early intervention. Families considered to be high risk are subject to more intrusive child welfare responses involving investigation than families that are not. Overall the differential response was considered less adversarial because of the collaborative, family-centred and team decision-making approach with which families and their

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natural support systems could be engaged more effectively (Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services, 2005a). Within the Transformation Agenda service elements, recurring key words appear: family and community engagement, extended family (kin), cultural, heritage, community, outcomes, and assessment completion. The repeated use of these words suggests that the child welfare reforms under the Transformation Agenda will shift social work practice. Arguably, this approach to practice is welcome in the field where conflict with families is not uncommon, but we need to question whether it disguises the paternalism of historical child welfare. Paternalism has been defined by some as a form of power that is used with the best of intentions to protect the interests of the child (Mihajlović, 2000) but one cannot ignore that parents can become marginalized during the intervention. Is the reform of child welfare as outlined in the Transformation free of paternalism and what does this mean for racialized workers who are the focus of my research? Paternalism still exists in child welfare as described by Turnell and Edward (1997), and it leads families to become subjects because workers have to operate in a system where the intervention focus is mainly on changing the behaviours of individuals (Maiter, 2009). When Maiter (2009) talks about changing the behaviours of the parents to ensure the safety of the child regardless of the structural inequalities, she vehemently gives credence to McWhorter's (2011) argument that laws are instruments of power. The Transformation Agenda with its new regulations is an excellent example of how child welfare reforms determine how families will be governed. Dumbrill (2006a) observes that under the Transformation Agenda, it is the policy makers, university researchers and agency staff who define the supports that families need and not parents identifying what they need.

One can also add that paternalism goes hand in hand with individualizing problems so that structural inequities of class, gender, race and other differences can be ignored (Pollack,

2010). While there is an increasing focus on the structural issues that contribute to people's

hardships in child welfare (Maiter, 2009), it is important to note that child protection today

shows important continuities with the past. Child welfare's long paternalistic history of

regulating poor and marginalized populations underlies many of the current assumptions in child

welfare that racialized workers are the "cultural experts" that need to engage with problem

families.

Research from the United Kingdom also indicates that while racialized workers are

valued as cultural experts who are able to judge behaviours of ethnic families, they are not

allowed to perform actual management, control, and supervision, a responsibility that lies in the

hands of those with power in child welfare institutions (Hutchinson, 1989; Lewis, 2000). So the

question remains, how can child welfare include families, particularly marginalized ones, in their

case planning and management when workers themselves feel like they are not part of the

process. The exclusion experiences reflect how racialized child protection workers have been

drawn into discourses that define the problems of families using their "cultural expertise" as a

source of knowledge. Bernard et al. (1993) write that the "unspoken expectation is that

racialized workers are representing their communities and that they are the experts who must

have all the answers related to this or that group." The irony is that this knowledge is valued

only to a certain extent in that it informs decisions, but the decisions themselves are not made by

the so called "cultural knowledge experts." In other words, the frontline workers (cultural

experts) are left to implement policies in which they lack a voice (Ayon & Ainesberg, 2010).

Expecting workers to be "cultural experts" also can be a "great disservice" to families because

cultural misunderstandings can occur as a result of the differences between racialized workers

and parents (Dutt, 2003).

The Transformation Agenda was not a complete shift from the old Ontario Risk

Assessment Model (ORAM). The differential response was intended to replace the old Ontario

Risk Assessment Model (Office of the Auditor General, 2008:10). The differential response

included child welfare standards and showed strong signs of continued use of assessments. The

assessments are to be completed in a timely manner, which is justified by the standardization of

social work practice. There is an inherent assumption that objectivity will be used when

completing the assessments because of the standardization of risk factors which are the measures

used for all families. Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (2012:49) indicated that

once a child welfare referral is made, there are over 200 standardized steps a worker must follow

to assess abuse and neglect of a child.

Child welfare's long paternalistic history of regulating poor populations underlies many

of the current Transformation Agenda assumptions in child welfare as demonstrated in the new

risk assessment models, which are used to predict that families pose risks to the safety of

children. Through the required child welfare assessments that are defined by legislation, policies

and standards, racialized workers have been implicated by the discourse of what Foucault

conceptualizes as normalization. In risk assessments, the issues of culture quickly disappear

because the tools to assess risk do not allow for such information. The 1995 Gove Inquiry on

child protection found that many workers in Ontario Children's Aid Societies could not rely

exclusively on the weighted ratings derived from risk assessment models. Workers also doubted

the predictive validity of the factors selected for assessment in a particular model, especially

when it came to assessing risk of parents from specific cultural minority groups.

The absence of cultural information in the assessments silences the experiences of

families from diverse backgrounds and takes away the possibility for parents to express

themselves in child welfare documentation regarding their lives. It also denies the alternative worldview of parenting experience as cultural information, and narratives remain unnoticed and unrecorded. These are persistent omissions that can marginalize families because the policies and assessments used by even the "cultural experts" fail to unveil the full picture, as they only contain bits and pieces of cultural information. Workers and families simply comply with the expectations of normative parenting that they have internalized. They have not problematized the mandated assessment tools and the related compliance standards and policies. Woldeguiorguis (2003) discusses the dilemma faced by racialized workers in implementing child welfare policies that overlook the structural barriers (e.g. poverty) experienced by people of colour and particularly women. She brings an awareness of how racialized practitioners are psychologically and spiritually harmed by having to implement child protection policies and practices that further marginalize women of colour.

Reid (2005) also examines the difficulties Canadian First Nations women face in managing the dual responsibilities of protecting children and supporting families. Her study of First Nations child protection workers complements the discussion of the struggle involved in abiding by child protection policies while not causing further generational social damage to historically disadvantaged communities. In her study, she was concerned about Aboriginal workers' delegated positions of authority and the possibility of them perpetuating colonialism towards their own people. Reid's study revealed feelings of powerlessness because of an inability to change the environment or influence policy, questioning their work, and lack of control were present among First Nations child protection workers when their intervention failed to empower families and ensure the safety of children.

Similar concerns have been identified in the United Kingdom in studies of racialized workers' involvement in reproducing dominance through existing policies and structures (Stubb, 1984; Liverpool, 1984; Graham, 2007). What these studies highlight is how racialized workers reproduce power relations and dominance because they have been socialized in the dominant discourses that have constructed and pathologized "the child welfare client." Rose (1996) discusses how, in the construction of subjectivity, dominant discourses demand particular behaviours and expect individuals to perform these behaviours, leading subjects to regulate their conduct in accordance with socially prescribed norms. In her study, individuals adopted dominant views of themselves and began controlling their own behaviour accordingly. Subjectivities thus represent how dominant society expects individuals to perform, as well as the degree to which such constructions become internalized (Rose, 1996).

In her scholarly work, Lewis (1996) talks about workers' occupational experiences being reconfigured, creating distances between workers themselves and marginalized communities as an unavoidable and painful experience. The compliance of racialized workers and their obligation to undertake surveillance of marginalized groups raises the question of whether their relatively privileged position makes them unrepresentative of diverse communities. Does reinforcing systems of power and domination by racialized workers mean that the workers are also susceptible to the same scrutiny as all others? The answers to these questions are varied, but we know that child welfare occupies a space that is highly regulated because of the state mandate to protect children from abuse and neglect. The power and authority exercised in this space comes in many forms, which means caution must be exercised because services to families and children are the preeminent priority. Racialized workers in child welfare under the current Transformation Agenda are in a bind because they hold state authority/power, but also occupy

positions of subjectivity. This means that while racialized workers may be sensitive to power relations when engaging with families, their work should be examined and they should not be absolved because they are subject to the same expectations, policies, and job roles as defined within child welfare institutions and the overall reforms under the Transformation Agenda as non-racialized workers.

Summary

Based on the review of literature, we know that, historically, child protection work was primarily carried out by middle-class women and that the recipients of the services were women. In the recent past, these roles and responsibilities have also been assumed by racialized workers, particularly in the magnet cities of Ontario. With increasing diversity and publicized violence associated with ethnic communities, there is latent public anxiety regarding the loss of social order. The assumption is that racialized workers are best suited to these responsibilities.

One of the recurring themes in the existing academic literature is that Transformation Agenda discourse is about engaging and collaborating with families and communities. With this emphasis on families, we also know that there is increased regulation of families through practices that require meeting Ministry standards. Some have indicated that the climate encourages an approach to social service delivery that simplifies and narrows the issues facing families and that this method provides only symptomatic relief to people's needs (Barnoff et al., 2006). As seen from a Foucaudian perspective, control and power exist at different levels within and outside institutions and have an impact on how services are delivered within child welfare. Child welfare services exemplify a highly regulated system that uses various tools and standards for surveillance of parents and protection of children for the greater good of society. The key question that is posed in this chapter is how racialized workers are implicated in the

Transformation Agenda discourse related to family engagement, community collaboration, extended family (kin), cultural, heritage, community, outcomes, and assessment completion. The next chapter discusses the methodological approaches that are used to further explore the work of racialized workers under the Transformation Agenda.

Chapter 4: Methodological Approach

Introduction

The methodological approach of this study falls within the category of qualitative

research and is guided by Foucault's theoretical perspectives. Specifically, the methodological

approaches of this study draw from Foucault's genealogical method, which is about how "truths"

are created through power and knowledge. Simply put, genealogy is the analysis of the

conditions that create discourses that become "truths" (Skehill, 2010). In this study, how

"truths" are created is shown through dominant child welfare practices and policies that are

employed in the subjugation of the other. What genealogy offers my study is a lens through

which I can study the work experiences of the marginalized groups within social

settings/institutions and through document review. Given my social location as a racialized

researcher, which will be further elaborated in this chapter, I am drawn to methodologies and

epistemologies that allow for ways of knowing, or "truths," that tend to be unacknowledged

within the mainstream discourses that establish and define what is accepted as knowledge.

Foucault's focus on the "other," or the subject, is one of the reasons why his work has

been criticized by mainstream social and political theorists for not having an identifiable

methodology or methodological precepts to be followed by researchers (Tamboukou & Ball,

2003; Prior, 1997; Carabine, 2001). According to Tamboukou and Ball (2003), Foucault's

genealogical methodology involves examining past institutional records (e.g., clinics, asylums,

and prisons) which is in and of itself a methodology that offers researchers opportunities to

explore the taken-for-granted and question the "truths" of our social world. In my study, I use

genealogy to examine the "truths" of child welfare work (policies, state legislation, institutional

hierarchy, procedures, and guidelines) as perceived by racialized workers in the present era of the Transformation Agenda.

McWhorter (2011) suggests that research should attempt to analyze and understand the workings of power beyond the theoretical level. This thinking is also expressed by some Foucauldian scholars who argue that each researcher can utilize methodological approaches that allow for an examination of taken-for-granted ways of knowing (Skehill, 2010; Tamboukou & Ball, 2003). Foucauldian theory can be combined with other research methodologies such as ethnography (Tamboukou & Ball, 2003). Ethnography is about learning from the research participants, as well as learning about them (Krefting, 1989). Like other qualitative research, ethnography is undertaken to generate knowledge. Tamboukou & Ball, (2003) add that ethnographic research is not a prescriptive method, but requires practical inventiveness or being creative which in this study means examining power embedded in the everyday work processes of racialized workers.

One would also argue that this inventiveness or creativity must explore methodologies that promote social justice (Strega, 2005). In research, the promotion of social justice is indicative of alternative ways of knowing which is core to Foucault's idea of questioning the taken-for-granted knowledge. Miller (1994) suggests that Foucauldian scholars seek to identify, amplify, and legitimate devalued discourses associated with marginalized groups and that silenced knowledge is a significant part of their research. He adds that combining Foucauldian theory and ethnography results in an effective method to study the silenced knowledge in social settings. For example, through ethnography and genealogical methods, Miller (1994) argues that marginalized voices are silenced through practices of monitoring and managing vulnerable individuals, and creating environments that do not allow them to speak. Similarly, using both

Foucauldian tools and ethnographic data, Hill (2009) examined how teachers in New Zealand contested the new work practices that required them to be more accountable by using classroom assessments as outlined in policy. As I discuss in later chapters, the work of racialized child welfare workers involves practices of subjugation through processes of work that silence their knowledge and that make the combined use genealogy and ethnography apropos for my study. The partnering of Foucauldian genealogical analysis with ethnography placed me in a researcher/analyst dual role where I learned the participants' "truths" through ethnographic interviewing while at the same time engaged in critical analysis as a genealogist to understand the workings of power. Social location, participant subjectivity, shared subject positions, subjectivity in research, truths, methods, data generation methods, participant invitation, data analysis, and ethical considerations are key methodological areas that are discussed in this chapter.

Social Location

In describing my social location, the aim is to show what has shaped my personal interests to undertake this research. It is not a deviation from Foucault's theoretical stance and its focus on genealogy but the discussion of my social location here is mainly to emphasize the ethnographic perspective of this research where the researcher is part of what they are studying. The inspiration to explore the broad research questions for this study was a result of my individual child welfare work experiences, which to some extent were rewarding for me in terms of my own personal and professional development.

In my personal life, I am familiar with poverty because of my own up-bringing. Poverty was also one of the many challenges that faced the families that I worked with in child welfare services. Despite the opportunities that child welfare provided me to professionally work with

families and communities, I always felt that something was missing. What it was remained unclear to me until I was told first by the executive director and then by one of the directors of services that I needed to find my voice. This led me to think about ways that individuals are defined by others through case noting and parental assessments. The idea of being defined by others within child welfare made me think about the different forms and uses of power. Power was being used to define not only my work but also my interventions with families. I then developed an interest in understanding the concept of power, which at that time seemed quite abstract to me. I began to explore the concept of power when I returned to graduate work when I was reintroduced to Foucault's theoretical work on power, knowledge, and the subject. As a result, I have adopted Foucault's theoretical framework to reflect the ways that my work was previously defined, as well as how I have also defined families and parents with whom I worked.

In reviewing Arthur Frank's (2004) work on qualitative study, I came across an interesting comment. His intent in doing research is to retain an academic goal by telling his audience something new in his writing. What he found, however, was that people knew everything that he wrote about, they had just not been able to articulate it. Frank cites Charles Lemert (1993) who also examines the power of putting people's everyday experiences into words, arguing that the gap between having an experience and not documenting that knowledge is a source of powerlessness. What the author is claiming is that when an experience remains unstated, it cannot be changed because it remains hidden. For Frank, social science research provides the knowledge and power to discuss people's experiences. Working in the field of child welfare, I often reflected on my own work with families and children. As a racialized worker, I always wondered what other workers with similar identities were thinking and doing in their interventions with families. I did not have time to reflect on these decisions or discuss with

colleagues about how I felt about the work because of the fast-paced nature of the work. However, the decisions about families and children that I made have remained with me to this time. This research is born of intellectual curiosity to connect my previous professional work in child welfare with that of others. The racialized child welfare workers' experiences articulated in this research fill the gap between what people already know and what has not been articulated in previous research.

In research, what is known and unknown are both equally important. In the context of this study, the "known" mostly reflects the dominant knowledge, which ironically, helps one with the question of what is "unknown." From a Foucauldian perspective, part of the "unknown" reflects the silenced forms of knowledge. Presenting the unknown as new information adds to and changes what is known. Similarly, what is known can be a background to uncovering what is unknown or, rephrased, the known can help to uncover the unknown. This means that the known and unknown are connected to each other in meaningful ways. As earlier stated, what is known and demonstrated in British, and American research is that racialized workers have been recruited in child protection services mainly to intervene in families from diverse communities (Stubbs, 1984; Proctor & Davies, 1994). Specifically, Stubbs (1984) argues that the British Social Services Departments' efforts to recruit racialized workers were to be perceived as creating or constructing "ethnically sensitive services" to ensure relevant programs to black communities. However, as discussed in chapter 3 of this dissertation, I would also add that the recruitment of racialized social workers in social services is also related to increasing immigration into Canada from developing countries, increasing numbers of racialized children in foster care, growing social work educational opportunities and the availability of employment equity programs (Lewis, 1997; Rooney, 1984; Singh, 2011; Dorais, 1994).

What remains unknown, particularly in the Canadian context, is the important aspect or question of how racialized workers interact with diverse communities and families, when working within the confines of child welfare laws, policies, regulations, and legislation. By diverse communities and families, the study is referring to various groups and households that are notably overrepresented in child welfare caseloads and include low-income single mothers, immigrants and Aboriginal parents. The intent of this research is to understand and decipher the work experiences of racialized child welfare workers in Ontario in two areas: the form and use of power when working with diverse families and how work is shaped and organized within institutional hierarchies. It is not my intention through this research, particularly in the discussions of powerlessness which, can incite and extend domination, to further marginalize racialized child protection workers. Although the idea of praxis is rooted in Marxism, researchers like Pamphilon (1999) have used it to show that research can function as social change through the voices of participants. This idea has significant implications for my study because as researchers, we need to be aware that research can be exploitative and that often it does not benefit the researched. The point raised by Beoku-Bett (1994) in this regard is important in terms of the subjectivities of the participants, as well as my own subject position as a researcher because of our marginalized identities based on race, gender, and class. The participants' subjectivities and the subject position of the researcher are discussed in greater detail below.

Participant Subjectivity

The central concept of analysis around which this study is organized is race. As stated in chapter one, in this study the term "racialization" refers to a process of categorization based on one's physical characteristics. The categorization process has real consequences such as

marginalization and discrimination for those categorized. In this study, participants were given

the opportunity to identify themselves racially although I use the more generic term "racialized

worker." The designation, "racialized worker," raises an interesting question of categorization in

research methodology because quite frequently the construction of race and cultural definition

are taken-for-granted attributes in social research. Western society is socialized to view self and

others in terms of particular differences based on gender, race, class, culture, and other markers.

These societal differences can bring a complexity to designing research methodologies.

Gunaratam (2003) argues that all social identities are heterogeneous because there are distinct

economic, social, interpersonal, and regional features that make each one of us different, even

within the same gender, class, and racial grouping. When speaking about social and cultural

categories, it is important to focus on what constitutes the categories of people who are

participating in the research.

In its primary focus on race, this study pays attention to the significance of racial/ethnic

categorization and identification, given that other researchers have shown that broad social

categories (for example, Africans and Chinese) in research can potentially erase the intra-group

differences (Gunaratam, 2003). Erasure of these internal group differences not only limits

knowledge production, but also has implications for policy-making. The use of broad

categories/concepts is underscored here because of the risk of essentializing groups by taking

little account of the existing differences within seemingly homogenous communities. The issue

of essentializing can be complex, with no one preferred solution, but this should not create an

impasse in the research process. Therefore, asking participants how they identify themselves is

the best way to acknowledge the differences within a seemingly similar social group of

participants. People can assign themselves to several categories, which together may express

some of the complexity of their lives (Pfeffer, 1998). In this study, participants used different

identities to refer to their racial backgrounds as in Table 1. In terms of gender, participants

defined themselves as either male or female. The term "participants" is used in this study to

mean people who are researched as described by Beresford and Evans (1999).

Table 1. Description of the Participants' Racial and Gender Subjectivities.

Individual Interview Participants	Racial Identity	Gender
Sue	Filipino Canadian/Asian	Female
Mary	Canadian West Indian	Female
Alisha	Black African Canadian	Female
John	Black African Canadian	Male
Tracy	Black African	Female
Jennifer	Black Canadian Jamaican	Female
Henry	Black African Canadian	Male
Brittany	Black Canadian Jamaican	Female
Donna	South Asian Punjab Indian	Female
Susan	Black African	Female
Eric	Black African	Male
Dora	Afro-Caribbean Canadian	Female
Patricia	Black	Female
Andrea	Jamaica	Female
Barbara	Black African	Female
Focus Group Participants	Racial Identity	Gender
Ashley	Jamaican Canadian	Female
Diane	Chinese	Female
Cathy	Jamaican Canadian	Female
Samantha	Jamaican Canadian	Female
Liz	East Indian	Female
Kim	Black Canadian	Female

In conducting this study, it was essential that I understood that the use of concepts and categories (gender, race, and class) can have implications that require recognition of the social/cultural differences as subjectivity. Although I use the term "racialized" to describe the participants in this study, it is important to understand the social and historical perspectives of their marginality. This meant uncovering the processes of how social categories of difference have been produced and given meaning through various discourses. As discussed by Gunaratam (2003), my research paid attention to individuals who or social groups that identify with particular categories to avoid taking for granted the meanings/effects of these identifications, as well as to not ignore the individuals' relationships to other categories of difference such as disability, age, class, and gender. McCall (2005) writes that intersectionality should be part of the methodological design and analysis. She goes on to say that research participants have multiple identities that reflect the complexity of social life. The complexity of social life involves systems of oppression that are interlocked. For example, class exploitation commonly occurs together with gender and racial domination (Fellows & Razack, 1998; Collins, 1989). It is this complexity of social life that produces varied knowledge and experiences that are to be examined throughout the study.

Shared Subject Positions

When conducting research, ethnographers regularly are faced with the dilemma of the insider or outsider position. The insider and outsider dilemma raises the longstanding and persistent epistemological debate on what should be done when research involves racial and gender differences and who should do the research (Ladson, 2000; Beoku-Betts, 1994; Bhopal 2001). The epistemological standpoint is important in influencing the researcher's methodology

(Creswell, 2007) because it requires us not only to think about the research questions but about how we gather data.

In this study, it is necessary to raise the issue of a racialized person conducting research and collecting data on other racialized individuals. Anderson et al. (1988) suggest that racialized participants who were interviewed by a white researcher were much more likely to state that they felt closer to a white researcher than to a racialized researcher. The authors go on to state that the closeness noted between the white researchers and racialized participants makes evident the danger of making assumptions that researcher/researched affinities are likely to develop only when individuals share common identities. Even when commonalities exist, diversity and complexities are present as well, which means that homogeneity cannot be taken-for-granted. An outsider position allows the researcher to retain a critical perspective and understand aspects of behaviour in a way that is not immediately obvious to the insider. Other evidence shows that researchers who are insiders have a distinct advantage (Scott, 1999). A researcher with insider status is viewed as bringing an enhanced sensitivity and engagement in the research process because of the shared experience and understanding of rules of conduct and nuances of behaviour associated with that shared reality (Merton, 1972). Insider status is also less likely to generate distrust and hostility from research participants or exclusion of the researcher from particular types of information (Zinn, 1979).

Although racial membership is of benefit when conducting research involving members of the same communities, it is equally pertinent to note that researchers also have multiple identities. For example, a researcher may be racialized, but he or she may belong to a particular class and have a specific cultural history and religious beliefs. For this study, all these

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epistemological factors have been considered important and explored because they influence and shape how researchers conduct research and interact with research participants.

Subjectivity in Research

Being aware of my own subjectivity in relation to this research was important because of the values and perspectives that I hold which could influence how I present research from the viewpoint of race and child welfare work. For this research, issues of my racial identity and child welfare background had to be addressed because my personal experiences could not be rendered irrelevant, invisible or reduced to the status of a passive observer. Like Edwards (1990), for this study, I acknowledged my child welfare work experiences and racial/gender similarities or differences with research participants throughout the interviewing process. By identifying these similarities and differences with participants, I was able to address my own assumptions as a researcher to minimize the possibility of over-interpreting the study results.

Schreiber (2000) adds that as researchers, we must ask what social-cultural predispositions are influencing the research process. By doing so, we are acknowledging how researchers' ideas can influence the interpretation of the research data from a group that shares the same racial identity. Gonzalez (2000) concludes that the lack of awareness of one's assumptions weakens research. Scholars have suggested that acknowledging racial/work similarities or differences between the researcher and participants can be in the form of reflecting on several questions: who am I? what assumptions about race and child welfare work do I have? what do I believe? These are all important questions that scholars have raised because one's personal/work experiences and racial identity not only affect how we will define research questions and organize data, but also affect the interactions between researcher and research participants (Ladson, 2000; Bhopal, 2001). By addressing my racial/work background

throughout the research process, I avoided situations where prior knowledge and experiences stifled my curiosity to examine what was unknown. Throughout the study, I also clarified information that participants assumed that I knew or understood because of my past work and racial similarities. Discussions that were elliptic were also made clearer by asking further questions that provided more details.

Truths

In examining the concept of "truth" in this study, I proceed with caution because the voices of the participants in this study do not reflect the stories, histories, and experiences of all racialized child welfare workers. I also take the position that in qualitative studies one's values are implicated in what we create as knowledge, which raises the question of truth as well. In Creswell's (2007) view, qualitative research is about the truths and knowledge that are co-constructed by both the researcher and the research participants. The researcher undertakes the writing, but it is a reflection of the truths as perceived by the participants. Within the context of this study, truths mean accounts and knowledge that reflect the multiple and diverse realities of research participants who are placed in subject position in relation to dominant ways of knowing. In discussing "truths" in research, many qualitative researchers use other concepts such as trustworthiness, credibility, dependability, plausibility and confirmability (Polkinghorne, 2007; Creswell, 2007) but I curiously choose the term "truths" because it involves the philosophical question of "what is truth?" I purposefully use the term "truths" because of the adopted epistemological standpoint for this study that emphasizes that there is no one way of knowing. Research must locate itself within an epistemology of "truths" rather than truth because one way of knowing (much of dominant knowledge) fails to account for many racialized epistemologies, women's ways of knowing, and other subjugated knowledges (Strega, 2005). Such "truths"

include an understanding of specific personal and work experiences based on everyday life events as described from racialized child welfare worker perspectives.

The study applied a number of methods to describe the "participants' truths." Fifteen research participants individually provided in-depth data based on rich descriptions of their work experiences in child welfare. Use of quotations throughout this study reflects the participants' stories and perspectives. Member checking, which requires the researcher to verify data with participants, was not applied in this study. The member checking method has been criticized for its potential to create confusion rather than confirmation/accuracy of information because participants can change their minds and have different views after the interviews, leading to many different data interpretations (Angen, 2000; Morse, 1994; Sandelowski, 1993). These authors also argue that member checking assumes that there is a "fixed truth" to be confirmed by participants. Importantly, my research approach was grounded in a Foucauldian framework, which assumes that there is no "objective truth." In the focus group, six participants were able to question, disagree, or confirm each others' opinions about topics and issues related to child welfare work. Citing Wilkinson (1998), Wibeck (2007) argues that focus groups are of particular value because they allow researchers to analyze how people engage in collective sense-making, and in this process "how views are constructed, expressed, defended and (sometimes) modified in the context of discussion and debate with others." One can add that the clarification of information in a focus group format is useful to establish the participants' beliefs and experiences. However, focus groups have the potential to silence the voices of those who are not assertive in group settings. To address the issue of silenced voices, I created opportunities for every focus group member to provide her perspectives. The unanswered or unaddressed questions in the individual interviews were discussed in the focus group setting.

I also compared and contrasted the focus group and individual ideas and beliefs as a way of understanding the interconnections between participants' work experiences. The use of different sources to present the participants' "truths" reflects what some researchers and ethnographers refer to as the "quality" in qualitative studies. Stenbacka (2001) argues that "quality" in a qualitative oriented study means to "generate an understanding" of a complex issue being researched. This idea of "quality" remains significant to my qualitative study because the intent is to understand the participants' perspectives on their work and practice within agencies in the context of current policies, hierarchies, and work relationships.

Methods:

Zinn (1979) makes an interesting point that data gathering methods and procedures have to be made explicit particularly in racial and ethnic qualitative studies completed by racialized researchers to avoid questioning the research work and scholarship. In qualitative research, including studies using Foucault's theoretical and epistemological approaches, various research methods can be adopted, including semi-structured interviews, ethnographic interviews, and focus groups. I used semi-structured interviews in individual and focus group settings. The semi-structured interviews involved the use of open ended questions which were mostly designed to probe and stimulate discussions with participants and help set the tone for the interview without using leading questions (Wibeck, 2007; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006).

I also analyzed the data, which involved organizing, coding, inspecting, transforming, comparing, and interpreting the gathered information. For example, data organizing involved transcribing of both individual and focus group interviews. Coding involved a line-by-line close examination of field notes to identify similarities and variations in the participants' stories. The process of coding and organizing data had to be completed with the awareness that I was

bringing my subjectivity into the process of transcription as researchers select details that are most important for their analysis, as several scholars have noted (Bucholtz, 2000; Emerson et al., 1995). These scholars maintain that the transcription process is not neutral, and responsibility and consciousness of one's subjectivity is required. It can also be argued that neutrality cannot be assumed in the data gathering process itself because one's subjectivity is implicated there as well. It is important to have the awareness that researchers are not only gathering data, but are also co-creating the data.

The comparison of data involved identifying the relationships between research themes while data interpretation required asking questions about the gathered information. Researchers like Stevens (1996) have suggested general questions that can be applied to the gathered data including: What common experiences are being expressed in the gathered information? Was a particular view dominant throughout the interviews? What topics produced consensus? Neuman (2000) adds that questions about the data can be raised from the theoretical framework to connect theory and data. The use of semi-structured interviews, a focus group, and data analysis will be further described in the next section on data generation methods and participant invitation.

Data Generation Methods

The discussion of data generation methods requires a further elaboration of how semi-structured interviews and a focus group were used in my research. However, it is necessary to mention that there was a third data source. This study also includes a review and analysis of the Transformation Agenda which was initiated by the Ontario Ministry of Child and Youth Services and which guides the Children's Aid Societies standards, policies, and procedures regarding child protection work. I selected specific documents that illustrated the Transformation Agenda

child welfare reforms. The specific policy documents reviewed included: 1) Two reports produced by the Ontario Association for Children's Aid Societies. One focused on Child Protection Standards while the other was a review of the Transformation Agenda. 2) Four reports and policy directives produced by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services that focused on the Transformation Agenda. 3) Two documents produced by the Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services: Child Protection Standards and Child Protection Tools Manual. All the reports were produced between 2007 and 2011, the period when child welfare reforms under the Transformation Agenda were implemented. In addition to the documents about the Transformation Agenda, I also reviewed four reports produced by the Ontario Association of Children's Aid on the facts and figures of children in care after the child welfare reforms. Societies

The review of these documents was part of the initial step to establish the context for my research and also to describe the milieu of power relations the workers have to negotiate. In qualitative research, the use of secondary data or information collected by someone else can be valuable to help illuminate new research questions (Colby, 1982). Reviewing the existing Ontario child welfare policies was useful to help understand the provision of mandated child welfare services to families and children from different backgrounds under the Transformation Agenda. Equally important, based on the secondary data, I was able to raise the question of how racialized workers are implicated in the reforms instituted by the Transformation Agenda. In the previous chapter (literature review), I demonstrated how racialized workers are implicated in the child welfare reforms through various processes that require completion of assessment tools when intervening with families. Further analysis of this issue will be provided in the following chapters of this study.

The second data source consisted of semi-structured interviews with individuals. The intent of this study was to use individual interviews as the preliminary step and basis for data generation. I conducted the individual interviews from October 2011 to February 2012. I interviewed fifteen participants who worked in three main urban centres. Three of the participants lived in the suburbs and were interviewed outside of an urban centre. The interviews lasted from one-and-a-half to two hours. Use of individual interviews helped to develop rapport and trust with individual participants who assisted in identifying others who would be willing to participate in the focus group.

On February 23, 2012, following many attempts, the focus group study was held outside of the three urban centres and formed the third data source. The combined use of individual interviews and a focus group is a common practice in qualitative research. In their work, Morgan (1997) and other researchers like Soklaridis (2009) have demonstrated that individual interviews and focus groups can be combined to generate research data. For this research, the focus group was intended to help explore the range of key issues, concerns, and questions that were generated by the individual interviews. Morgan (1997) and Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006) discuss the importance of focus groups in relation to research topics and subjects regarding marginalized populations. In this instance, the focus group was an ideal setting for individuals to reflect on and discuss their everyday work in relation to the main themes generated from the individual interviews. The purpose of the individual interviews and a focus group was to assist in gaining multiple perceptions and perspectives on child welfare work. None of the participants were representing their respective child welfare agencies and spoke about their work only as individuals. Both the individual interviews and the focus groups have been a significant part of the knowledge building process for this study.

Participant Invitation

After receiving approval from York University Faculty of Graduate Studies Research Ethics committee, I initially recruited participants by sending emails with an attached flyer (see Appendix A). Only five people responded and showed interest in my study. Admittedly, I was concerned that I would not be able to find participants for this study, and knew that I would have to be more proactive and find other ways to invite potential participants. Coincidently, in October, 2011, I attended a child welfare workshop and many of the attendees were child protection workers. At this workshop, I started to invite participants by word of mouth. Many of the workshop attendees were responsive to the invitation. Following the workshop, I contacted each of the potential participants to set up individual interviews (See Appendix B for a list of questions I used in the interviews.). One of the interview questions turned out to be problematic. The question required participants to discuss their experiences of serving and supporting families while a) implementing child welfare policies; b) within required timelines; c) adhering to legislative requirements. Many participants spoke candidly about timelines, but were uncertain how to talk about child welfare policies because of the large volume of Ministry and agency policies and guidelines. The participants who spoke about policies and legislation focused on the Transformation Agenda. As such, the individual interview question was not as comprehensive as it could have been. However, this problem related to the individual interview question on policy and legislation and was corrected by developing a focus group interview guide that elicited a specific discussion on the Transformation Agenda and the impact of the child welfare reforms on their work. (See Appendix C for the focus group interview guide.)

All participants in this study were from urban children's aid societies in central and southeastern Ontario. There were two reasons for choosing to invite research participants from

urban areas for this study: 1) Ontario cities are becoming increasingly diverse; 2) research

participants were accessible for either interviews or focus groups without me incurring large

costs and involved less travelling time, which made the study manageable.

Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006) use Morgan's (1997) idea that the invitation is about

getting participants and that sampling is about inviting the "right" participants for the study. My

invitation of key participants was deliberate and guided by my desire to understand the

perspectives of various sectors of child welfare service delivery. The participants included four

supervisors (two from the central zone and two from the southeastern Ontario) and eleven

frontline child welfare workers (four from the central zone and seven from Southeastern

Ontario).   All the participants were practicing in mainstream child protection services at the time

of the interviews and were over 30 years old with work experiences ranging from 3 to 11 years.

It is also of interest to note that 12 of the 15 participants were born outside of Canada.

Gender balance in terms of female and male representation was also considered when

inviting participants because Christie's (2006) study on men's relationship to the social work

profession in the north-west of England found that women and men perform child protection

differently. Gender differences raise the importance of including participants who would

provide different perspectives of work experiences based on gender. Twelve research

participants were women and three were men, which is consistent with the male/female ratio in

the child welfare profession.

Guidelines on how many participants to include in a study are limited. The literature

consistently references saturation as the measure of a good quality study sample. By saturation, I

mean the point at which no new information or themes are observed in the data. In their

qualitative research that involved 60 participants, Guest et al. (2006) found that saturation

occurred within the first 12 interviews and that the basic elements or themes were present as early as the first six interviews of the study.

Wilkerson (1996) suggests that the optimal number of individuals in a focus group is five. This allows each participant to play a prominent role in sharing their perspective on the discussion topic. The focus group for this study consisted of six participants. Of the six focus group participants, one was Canadian-born and five were immigrants. They were all women who were comfortable with each other in terms of the topic discussions for this study. The focus group participants had 4 to 10 years of work experience in child welfare. Individual interviews and the focus group were completed outside of the workers' regular work hours. An informed consent form was provided to all invited research participants (See Appendix D).

Data Analysis

Using NVivo software I was able to organize, sort, and code the individual interview and focus group data. I coded my data based on emerging themes that related to the theoretical framework of my research. Apparatuses of power, power relations, surveillance, as well boundaries and identity were four specific codes that I selected in this study. These themes provided insight into the power relations embedded in the interventions and services to families by racialized child protection workers and how power operates within the hierarchies of child welfare institutions.

After transcribing the interviews and focus group, I imported the transcripts into NVivo which allowed me to systematically place the relevant references to related codes. I used NVivo to make advanced queries to identify the relationship between the key ideas gathered from the study. By connecting ideas, I was able to observe patterns that were emerging from the interviews and focus group information. The queries also helped me to clarify different

participants' views on specific themes and subthemes. As noted by Creswell (2007), the use of analytic computer tools can help researchers with rigorous data analysis.

My analysis of the interview and focus group data was complemented by my Foucauldian discourse analysis. In citing Rojek et al. (1988), Ellerman (1998) describes discourse analysis as deconstructive criticism that interrogates knowledge and provides a voice to those with other ways of knowing. In my study, Foucauldian discourse analysis involved an examination of power and knowledge in everyday child welfare work and discursive practices (laws, policies, legislative acts, etc.). To some degree, this means that the choice of work practices is embedded in the dominant apparatuses of power and knowledge.

Ethical Considerations

Questions regarding confidentiality of research participants require serious consideration. As with any research study involving individuals, especially those from vulnerable groups, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity is paramount. I acquired written informed consent from everyone participating in the research. In gathering information, Gonzalez (2000) writes about the importance of being honest with the research participants. When honesty is exercised, it allows the researcher to gather and present data in a way that reflects the voices and stories of the research participants.

Confidentiality also can be an empowering experience that allows participants to speak about specific issues and concerns (Guenther, 2009). In my dissertation, participants have been assigned pseudonyms and they are given voice in excerpts that I quote. These are snapshots that do not present the entirety of the interviews but are reflective of some of the topics discussed. Consideration of confidentially also pertains to the agencies where the participants work, and

their locations. I simply refer to the agencies as mainstream organizations located in urban centres in the central and southeastern Ontario zones.

Summary

This chapter has presented the methodological approach involving the combined use of genealogy and ethnography for purposes of exploring the unrecognized work processes as described by racialized child welfare workers, as well as the historical and social conditions that have produced the regimes of truth in child welfare. The other key components of the methodology include the discussion of: social location, participant subjectivity, shared subject position, subjectivity in research, truths, methods, data generation methods, participant invitation, data analysis, and ethical considerations of the research. The different elements described in the methodology have been critical in my investigation of what is currently known in the literature regarding the work experiences of racialized child welfare workers in the context of contemporary policies, protocols, and agency and government standards. Using qualitative methods, involving the review of documents produced by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services and the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Society, and interview and focus group discussions, I was able to uncover tacit and undocumented patterns of work by racialized child protection workers which are discussed in detail in the next four chapters.

SECTION II – FINDINGS

Chapter 5: Apparatuses of power

Introduction:

For Foucault, the study of institutions must focus on the processes or activities that maintain a regime of power that defines, controls, and regulates the individuals (Bevir, 1999; Miller, 1994; Pavlich, 2011). Foucault's approach encourages us to study the state and its institutions by examining numerous techniques of discipline that construct the subject. Building on these Foucauldian theoretical ideas, the main theme of this chapter focuses on the apparatuses of power within child welfare. I am also particularly interested in the subthemes of training, policy compliance, and court and institutional hierarchy, which are key areas of child welfare work that greatly influence how workers practice with families. Based on the interviews, this chapter demonstrates that training, policies, and court and institutional hierarchies are apparatuses of power that focus on governing and maintaining the discourse of child safety. These institutional practices can be perceived as reinforcing the idea of the "conduct of conduct" (Dean, 1999), which determines how workers should behave, act, think and practice with families, and results in significant internal tension for workers. Specifically, the struggle for racialized workers is to remain "obedient" to the apparatuses of power that regulate and discipline, something they are familiar with themselves because of their own social positioning. The tension is also between their own lack of a voice within the institution and having to represent that institution as a worker. This tension will be further explored in the chapter.

I also argue that training, policy compliances, and court and institutions are part of a well organized state apparatus that is represented here in the form of a conceptual model that this

study adopts to analyze the interconnection of the state, institutions, and individual workers (see figure 2).

Figure 2. The Work Processes of Child Welfare.
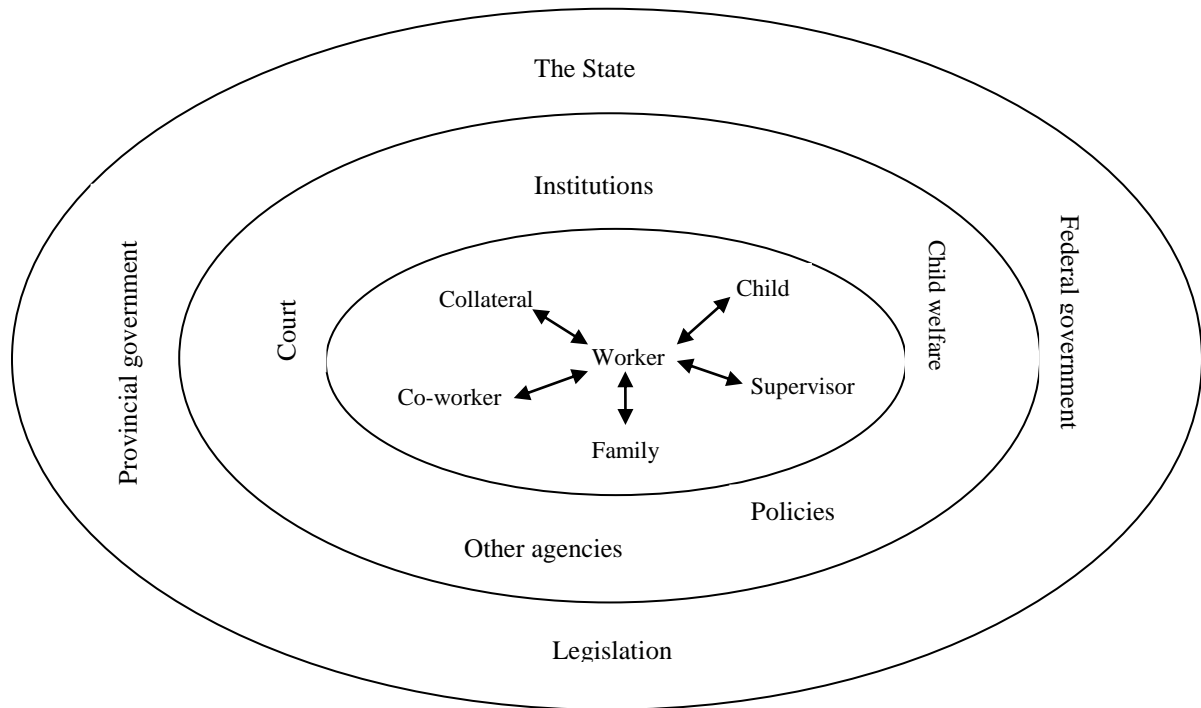
In Figure 2, the peripheral or outer layer represents the state (federal/provincial governments) that determines the discursive practices (laws, policies, regulations). Child welfare, police, education and other institutions represent the middle layer. Their responsibility is to govern, using state policies and laws. At the core of the conceptual model are the power relations, which in this case represent how families are governed through the work of the authorized worker. Yan (2008) claims that social work professionals are always at the centre of the child welfare interventions with families because they are employees of public service organizations. Workers are expected to hold families and individuals accountable for behaviours that deviate from parenting norms.

Farrell (2005) argues that Foucault used the term "apparatus" to refer to various institutional, physical, and administrative mechanisms and knowledge structures that enhance and maintain power. In this study therefore, "apparatuses of power" refers to how day-to-day activities that are occurring within an institutional setting are governed through discursive practices. A related question is: what rules are in place to organize the work activities? The governing of child welfare work includes: training, policy compliance, court and institutional hierarchies.

Training

The focus on the day-to-day activities helps me to examine the first broad question of this research: **what roles do racialized child welfare workers play within the child welfare institutions?** Many of the participants found employment within child welfare after completing their social work degrees at undergraduate and graduate levels. I mention formal education because many of the participants regarded it not only as an achievement, but also as informing their practices with families. Some of the participants identified that they were in child welfare because they wanted to play an instrumental role in helping children and changing their lives. To others, joining child welfare was a career and an employment opportunity. Convincingly, one can also argue that formal education has provided the participants access to state power that is embedded in child welfare work and practices. Participants, when starting their career, felt that it was simply a first step for them, but have remained in that field for employment opportunities and more importantly because they felt that they were making a difference in meeting the needs of families and children. Based on the interviews, it is clear that child protection work/career is a developmental process; participants enhanced their work competencies through various sources of learning and experiences. The new worker child

welfare training offered by the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS) seems

to have an impact of heightening the awareness of child welfare work and its mandate in Ontario.

As **Sue** said:

> yes some of the modules for the new worker training were very helpful, ah very, very
> helpful in terms how to engage families, how to use solution focused practice and how to
> engage difficult clients. But, what was not helpful was I started work in April and
> training did not start until 8 months into work. For the first chunk of time, I did not know
> what to do....The first months you do not know what you are doing. You are barely
> surviving.

Gleeson (1992) outlines how child welfare workers acquire essential practitioner

knowledge and skills in a number of ways that includes life experiences, supervision on the job,

self directed learning, agency-sponsored in-service training, formal education, and professional

continuing education. The focus here will be on agency-sponsored training because it forms part

of the apparatuses of power that shape workers' practices with families. As we examine training,

it is important to point out that the preparatory training for workers is part of dominant

knowledge production. This means that we need to ask ourselves what kind of knowledge is

being produced and for whom.

Interestingly, one of the ways to internalize the rules is through training. In 2006, the

Ontario Association for Children's Aid Societies announced that Transformation Agenda

orientations had been offered to 5,031 frontline child welfare staff. In its audit report of four

child welfare agencies, the office of the Auditor General of Ontario stated that all agency staff

had been provided training on the new child welfare standards and that software had been

implemented to monitor compliance with the new requirements in order to ensure that by 2008

the new standards would be in effect.

All workers must attend this new worker training, which is often offered at the initial

stages of employment. Most of the participants in this study received on-job training to learn

particular knowledge related to child welfare. For some, training was beneficial because of the perception that child welfare work is constantly changing and retraining helps to develop new ideas. Workers felt that training should be continuous as it fostered learning about areas that were pertinent to their work and practices. **Jennifer** indicated that training was helpful in understanding how to work with abusive men. She commented that engaging men by encouraging them to attend programs and holding them accountable contributed to keeping families safe. She went on to say that the field of child welfare had not traditionally been responsive to abusive men and males in general. Through her training, she learned that working with women and children was only half the work and that engaging men was equally significant if families were to be strengthened. While the focus on serving families will be fully explored in the later part of the study, it is important to note that her comments on the inadequate support of men involved with child welfare services is well supported by a body of academic literature (Scourfield, 2006)

Henry mentioned that he found training on child growth and development to be helpful because he had no intimate knowledge about infants. At the professional and personal levels, he learned a lot from the child development and growth training. From a gender perspective, **Henry's** comments are subtle, but fit the stereotype that women are the ones who know about child care. The participants' comments are not surprising, but are quite relevant in relation to the continuing need to re-educate ourselves on gender issues.

There was criticism of child welfare training particularly when it did not seem to relate to the workers' experiences. **John** said:

> My critique about all [child welfare] training is that it is all based on Eurocentric information. Most of the training sessions are devoid of cross-cultural perspectives and doesn't take in the diversity of families and children served by child welfare services.

The training is delivered in the way that serves that purposes of child welfare institutions. The training is about child protection. It is not about community wellbeing.

Other participants expressed similar sentiments. They felt that the new worker training lacked an inclusive approach in addressing the needs of increasingly diverse families and children. Although they acknowledged that some efforts were being made to expand training opportunities that fostered greater awareness of how to intervene in families from various socio-cultural backgrounds, participants complained that they were limited. The lack of focus on diversity is inconsistent with what is increasingly becoming a diverse population. As will be explored in chapter eight, the focus on newcomer and immigrant families was quite dominant for many of the participants because of their immigration histories and experiences, which inform their practices.

It is important to note that learning was not limited to formal agency training for the workers. Learning and acquisition of knowledge also was occurring in their interactions with supervisors and co-workers. Individuals also applied their lived and academic experiences when intervening with family. The discussion of work experiences will be further explored in chapter 8 of this study.

When discussing organizational training, one can argue that there are implicit forms of power that influence and shape the work performed by all workers. Training is one of the areas that does not manifest explicit forms of power, but it is coercive in that it is mandatory. There is a sort of shared understanding organizationally and among workers that they are expected to attend training to gain required worker competencies/knowledge. As a result, forms of power embedded in training are largely hidden from the workers.

Policy Compliances

In discussing child welfare careers and roles, participants provided extensive background information to further understand the second broad research question: **how do racialized workers experience work in the larger structure of child welfare policies?** Ontario child welfare is structured as a system that promotes compliance as a priority (Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies, 2010a). Participants consistently reported the need to guard against being driven by compliance and losing sight of the relationships with families and children. Although it remains to be seen, the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (2010a) claims that the child welfare field has supported a shift from a compliance driven system to one that provides quality services to children and families, supposedly through the implementation of the Transformation Agenda.

In the interviews, many participants consistently referred to meeting compliances and being accountable in their reporting, recording, and documentation. This raised the fascinating possibility that this was "compliance fetishism." The use of the term "fetish" is derived from Marx's ideas of how human relations are obscured by relations to commodities (things). In this vein, I ask whether "compliance fetishism" estranges child welfare workers from the families they work with. By using compliance fetishism to elucidate an aspect of child welfare work, I am implying that child welfare has developed strong attachments to fulfilling Ministry and agency requirements which can obscure workers' actual relationships with families. It seems that a worker's relationships with families can only be gratifying if Ministry and agency requirements are met. Arguably, compliance fetishism permeates child welfare work and I am concerned that the field can lose its ability to see the issues encountered by families because of

the focus on institutional requirements. This is an issue that has been documented by other

researchers (Barnoff et al., 2006).

Without minimizing the importance of documentation in child welfare, the firmly held

belief that compliances need to be met seems to govern most of the aspects of child welfare

work. For many of the research participants, this limited their capacity to fully engage with

families. The fetish to meet the compliances hides the relationships with families and the

realities of their lives, including oppression, because one only knows the "truths" that have been

completed in the required assessments. The idea of meeting Ministry and agency requirements is

succinctly captured by two comments. **Eric** stated that "if I am coming with that knowledge

level [child welfare expectations] and dumping it onto people [parents], I may not have good

results. I may have compliance, but not be able to create relationships [with families]." **Jennifer**

reported that:

> paperwork is difficult to manage and to be in compliance, when you are trying to be
> supportive to families and find creative, unique and alternate ways to protect children.
> Sometimes the solutions do not just happen. So you really have to work hard with
> families to find the solutions. So, the worker is putting so much energy into the
> relationship.

The conversation on compliance dominated the interviews because Ministry and agency

requirements in child welfare appear in many forms. However, the discourses of documentation

and timelines are among the key areas of compliance that participants described as problematic

in relation to their work to ensure child safety and permanency. The participants did not

question their mandate to protect children from abuse and neglect, but they questioned some of

the ways that the safety of children was maintained in relation to set timelines. Work activities,

such as completing case notes, were organized around set timelines.

According to **Jennifer**,

> it is so easy to fall out of compliance especially when the case notes have to be completed electronically within 24 hours. I think this is one of the most difficult tasks to manage in terms of timeliness.

Related comments also were made by **Sue** who said, "I did all my case notes within 24 hours, but at the same time, I wasn't the most 'social' social worker because I was doing my work."

As noted by participants, timelines are inscribed in most of the required documentations such as case management service plans, and risk and safety assessments (See **Appendices E and F** for the required documentation and standards.). These assessments all form part of the Ontario Child Protection Standards that are required when intervening with families and children. The focus of this dissertation is not so much on the child welfare tools and risk and safety assessments, but documentation became part of the focus for the participants, which means that it needs to be highlighted because it is tied to work with families and children.

Having child welfare standards assumes a consistent (universal) way of measuring outcomes for families that can be documented and reported within specific timelines. The impact of these assessment tools is significant in terms of their use, benefits, and challenges in child welfare. To some, completion of these documents has several benefits because all families and children are assessed in the same way, meaning that the tools give the appearance of consistency in the way they assess families. Additionally, prescribed timelines encourages that the information is authentic (accurate). **Alisha** stated that "the good part of completing the recording [case notes] within the specified timeliness is that it cannot be said that you made up the story." The completion of case notes within 24 hours raises the question of whether time is the measure by which the legitimacy of information is determined. The emphasis on timelines

implies that the authenticity of any documentation completed outside of the specified timeframes can be questioned whether by family courts, lawyers or management.

To others, the completing of these tools also means many others things such as the following comments from **Mary.**

> We are so busy focused on pursuing and trying to tick boxes and doing these paper exercises, but that getting down to the original child protection concerns gets forgotten at times. Because I am not able to dedicate the time so that I am able to help the family and start looking at what the needs are, meeting with the family. Me, coming out once a month, and having a good meeting and good visit and then showing up another 30 days later.

The danger in meeting the documentation timelines is that the subjects (families) can be turned into objects as workers define parents as cases. Documentation then becomes a tool of observation, not only for the families, but also of the workers and their supervisors. At the centre of this documentation is the requirement that workers report all contact with families and others connected to the parents. The documentation constitutes work in relation to case planning and management completed by the worker and their supervisor. The concern is that documentation only reflects selected information regarding the family, in other words, that information is only a portrayal of what is important in the eyes of the worker and the supervisor, as well as the requirements on the form. Documentation has become a mode of surveillance in child welfare. Timely completion of documentation becomes the ideal against which workers are measured because it demonstrates "competence," an attribute that is highly regarded in child welfare. The subjection of the worker and supervisor is recognizable in this desire to meet state obligations to complete documentation and have it reviewed and approved by a supervisor in a timely manner. The theoretical dilemma is that both the subject and the person exercising the power become shaped and controlled by the same system. As a result the system continually reproduces itself.

OACAS (2010a) in its consultation with frontline staff acknowledged that the time spent on administrative requirements far outweighed the time spent with families. It was estimated that frontline staff dedicated only 25% of their time to direct work with families, while another 25% of their time was spent on documentation. The remaining 50% was spent completing court work, travelling, participating in training, attending meetings, supervising, and carrying out various administrative tasks. Previous studies estimated that Ontario child welfare workers were spending more than 70% of their time on paper work and less than 30% on direct practice (Dumbrill, 2006b). Based on these two studies, it appears that workers are spending less time with families now than they did in 2005. In the 2006 study by Dumbrill, there was a call to have this ratio reversed with 30% spent on paperwork and 70% in direct practice. Although Dumbrill's study was completed in 2006 during the Ontario Risk Assessment Model (ORAM) era, it is still relevant for child welfare because the same concern that too much time was being spent on administrative tasks by child welfare workers was reported in a 2010 document entitled "Towards Sustainable Child Welfare in Ontario" prepared by the Commission to Promote Sustainable Child Welfare in Ontario.

Interestingly, participants in this study discussed their experiences of timelines in relation to child permanency. Participants reported that young children aged zero to six must have a permanency plan within 12 months of receiving child welfare service. For children older than six years, permanency plans had to be in place within 24 months. Participants struggled with the prescribed timelines for permanency for children. At one level, participants indicated that they did not want children to be made crown wards, reflecting the concerns and anxiety around this form of permanency that nearly always means that children grow up and develop outside of their family relationships. Part of this reluctance to make children wards of the state is based on

values and perceptions about the family unit, which will be fully discussed in the later parts of this dissertation. However, before discussing the concept of the family, it is important to pay attention to some of the participants' perceptions about child permanency. **Jennifer** expressed frustration with the kinship assessment requirements, particularly when told that the grandparents could not meet eligibility. For many participants, child permanency was viewed through the kinship lens because of their own beliefs of what a family was. From the participants' points of view, permanency meant having options that allowed children to have access to their parents. According to **Andrea**, access could be in the form of allowing the mother (parents) to attend medical appointments for children, which would be beneficial for the child when re-integrated or reunited with the family. She went on to question whether permanency was limited to crown wardship and adoption that are typically used by child welfare agencies.

This form of questioning regarding child permanency options has also been raised by the Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services (2005b). In its report on "The 2005 review of the Child and Family Services Act (CFSA)," the Ministry indicated that adoption is not the only means of establishing a sense of permanency for children in care and that it is not always desirable from the perspective of the child or youth. Although **Andrea** and others did not specifically mention all the placement options, we know that there are other forms of permanency such as: admission prevention, kinship care, customary care, legal custody, family foster care, and youth leaving care. Exploring these other permanency options may be limited because of a focus on compliance of timelines (Christensen & Antle, 2003). For example, more time may be needed to explore extended families circles to prevent premature admission of children into care. Similarly more time may be needed by workers to engage and support families, which would enhance not only child safety, but also child wellbeing (health, education,

social relations, etc.). According to Christensen and Antle (2003), strict timelines result in workers missing early opportunities to plan child permanency with the families. These missed opportunities are due to practices that tend to control families, resulting in them resisting either openly or passively. Based on Christensen and Antle's research, it is appropriate to say planning for child permanency should begin during the preliminary contact with the family and, importantly, the initial time spent with the family is critical in determining the kind of engagement and outcomes to be achieved for the child. A viable permanency plan for the child requires a positive worker/family relationship.

At another level, timelines did not make sense when external community services were unavailable to parents. The need to use public community services is often not an issue for the middle and upper classes, but for low socio-economic families, the lack of resources decreases their ability to parent. The establishment of timelines assumes that families have resources and can afford to comply with middle-class expectations of meeting stated goals within specific periods. Children from middle- and upper class-families are rarely placed in foster care because their families have other resources and access to supports such as material goods, money, flexible work schedules, health insurance, marital counseling, children's extra circular activities, mental health treatment and substance abuse treatment. Such family supports and resources are not available to parents from low socioeconomic backgrounds, which can result in multiple or multigenerational involuntary involvements with child welfare services. In other words, there are structural barriers in place that impede parental completion of required programs within the strict timelines, and as a result, their children become permanent wards of the state.

The participants' responses seem to suggest that child welfare has effectively constructed timelines that have become the work norms that both families and child protection staff must

abide by. Some research indicates that timelines create motivation for both the worker and parents to respond quickly in assessing a family's needs and finding appropriate service (Chibnall et al., 2003). Unlike Chibnall et al., participants in this study did not perceive timelines as motivating them or the families they served. Rather, they used timelines to justify coercing families to meet specific compliances, for example, asking parents to meet with them within a specific period or interviewing children at school without parental consent. **Donna** stated that:

> people [families] are trying to make sure that their needs are met–child care, work. Some people have two or more jobs. We say, guess what, we got a referral and need to see you in such and such a time. If we do not see you in such and such time, then the family is uncooperative. We don't give them leeway.

Parents who are unable to meet with the workers within required timelines are deemed "uncooperative," a label that can shape and influence a worker's intervention with the family. The comment below by **Jennifer** succinctly captures how workers justify the timeline requirements:

> I have seven days to see the family. The file just opened and I have seven days to be in compliance. You start to be driven by the policies. So, you think, I have to do what I have to do because you have to survive at the frontlines. It is all about survival.

From a Foucauldian perspective, the timelines have become apparatuses of power, discipline, and regulation. This theoretical claim is not farfetched when one considers that failure by a parent to resolve child welfare issues for a child under the age of six can result in that child becoming a permanent ward of the state. The discourse of time and timelines becomes the focus of child welfare discussions about what parents have to complete to address the presenting concerns. Similarly, timelines become the institutional measure of what workers have completed in helping families move from a non-safe space to a safe place for their child(ren). Such measures are embedded in the documentation that has to be completed within specific timelines.

Sue stated that "it was not like you cannot do multiple tasks, but you are working with families with multiple problems." Again, the participants' comments suggests that it is not an issue of poor time management in meeting the compliances, but a case of working with families with generational issues and multiple problems, spending time traveling to visit with different families, and working with extended family members or separated/divorced parents which means visiting all individuals attached to the same file.

Court:

From the interviews, it was also interesting to note sporadic discussions of court in relation to timelines. Court processes involving child welfare follow strict timelines, a perception some participants seemed to share. However, in some cases, court processes also involve extended delays because of scheduling and other factors such as lengthy legal proceedings involving temporary care and custody hearing, settlement conferences, trials, and appeals. For this study, the silence on legal work leads me to suspect that the discussion of family court was an area that participants avoided because of their strong beliefs and values about keeping families together. The concept of the family unit as perceived by racialized workers emerges more fully as this dissertation develops. At this stage, however, it is important to note that references to court work were not as evident in the interviews as one would expect, given the structural connections between child welfare and various other institutions such as court, police, welfare services and schools. However, the interviews revealed several issues in connection to compliance with court requirements. Firstly, court involvement was viewed as a form of power, which made many participants uncomfortable. **Jennifer** stated that the court had, in one case, issued a no contact order for a mother who had physically disciplined her child, but had no previous child welfare record. In my interview with **Donna**, she stated, "court is scary

for many families." When you talk to newcomers about court they say, "oh my god what is going to happen?" Secondly, court involvement usually meant that the relationship between the worker and the family was adversarial. For most participants, the court process was the last option. Thirdly, court involvement also came up when permanency for a child through kinship care was being discussed, which again highlights the focus on the family by the participants. The participants' limited discussion of court involvement could also have been due to the backlog which tends to delay permanency for children. Although, participants did not articulate it, such court delays could not be viewed as beneficial for families and children as they add to the cumulative time a child is in care and perhaps lead to crown wardship for some children. Other participants were more concerned about the effectiveness of court time in relation to parents' work schedules. Here, the concern was about scheduling and rescheduling, which is not uncommon, and its impact on the parents who have to take time off work.

Institutional Hierarchy (Silent Discourse):

By referring to institutional hierarchy as a silent discourse, I am underscoring the day-to-day work-related activities that are unspoken and unarticulated but remain important pieces and/or experiences of work. According to participants, there was silence within the social settings and institutions regarding the topic of race. Race was erased through institutional silence yet it is an identity that participants could not escape from. As will be demonstrated, many participants wanted institutions to acknowledge that race and racial differences were part of a social identity that organizes society. However, there is an institutional culture of being respectful, diplomatic, and biting your tongue. According to the participants, these expected practices of worker respect and diplomacy reflected an inherent colourblind approach, which in itself is a disrespectful notion because it disregards the social divisions that make up society.

The colourblind approach hides the power imbalances based on racial differences. It also hides

the institutional practices that maintain racial discrimination. The colourblind approach is a

practice that moves away from confronting racial injustice and its impact on marginalized

communities (Proctor & Davis, 1994; Galabuzi, 2010). Proctor and Davis (1994) add that the

effect of silence at the organizational level also can mean that when an incident of racial injustice

occurs, it easily becomes an isolated incident between a perpetrator and a victim rather than an

organizational issue. The subtle silence about racial issues serves only institutions by not paying

attention to the concerns that impact racialized workers. In reference to race and racial identity,

Sue said,

> I talked to my supervisor about the issue [racial identity] because I was hoping to process
> this with her. I am a racialized, young woman. My supervisor stated that this is not the
> issue. You grew up in Canada. "It is not about you being racialized, it is about not being
> able to engage with the family." It was turned around on me. I said o.k. I did not want to
> say anything. I knew that I would leave the agency. They really get you. You know that I
> am only going to be here for a short time and need a reference that she is a great worker,
> takes directions quite well. I cannot jeopardize my reference. You need to suck it up. I
> bit my tongue. I was frustrated. They [the institution] talk about how they are inclusive.
> If you look at the job postings and description, they talk about inclusion. But when you
> go through these experiences your identity gets thrown out and the focus is on something
> else. Why the hell would you want to work there?

The use of the of terms respectful, diplomatic, and biting your tongue by participants was

frequent during interviews, raising the question of what is and what is not allowed in discussions

about race, gender and class issues. **Alisha** said:

> what I just learned is to be more diplomatic and not to voice my feelings, especially when
> there is tension in the room. I used not to give a damn whether there was tension, I
> would say what I want to say. As I have become older, I have learned to be more "wiser"
> and to let go certain things because expressing how you feel doesn't change anything
> anyway.

> The terms "respectful, diplomatic, and biting your tongue," not only reflected the

unwritten organizational rules, but also demonstrated how power operates in terms of "governing

the self." Self-surveillance was clearly taking place in terms of what could be said and not said. Interestingly, some participants who were vocal around racial issues had been approached by their racialized colleagues and told that they had appeared too forceful in their expression of marginalization. There was a sense that these strong views expressed by those with "big mouths," particularly issues of race, prevented workers from moving up in the power hierarchy within their organizations. Others expressed regret in terms of their silence. They saw themselves as having contributed to the status quo and reducing the possibilities of raising questions about the complex nature of their identities and issues of equality. As **Sue** said, "I regret not to push the envelope because in my silence I maintain the status quo. I did not push the envelope because I needed a good job after child welfare." **Sue's** comment reflects her feelings of disappointment because she failed to point out the limited attention racial issues were given.

However, there is also frustration for those who are "hotties," as **Alisha** referred to herself, meaning workers who are verbally aggressive or assertive in discussions of racial issues. For those who spoke up on racial issues, their experiences became more painful because they did not know where to go within their organization to address these issues. This is not to suggest that there were no avenues to address these issues in some agencies. What can be said is that there is a sense that workers cannot get too hot, meaning verbally expressive about race. At the same time others expressed regret of being cold, meaning non-responsive to marginalization.

Not "being hot" and not "being cold" points to an implicit expectation that workers will calmly complete their jobs within the existing institutional hierarchies and conforming to and internalize the organizational social values of respect and diplomacy. This leads to a muting of race and gender issues. This conformity raises questions about respect. For whom? For what?

The expected respect symbolizes the obedience and conformity to the hierarchies and dominant

practices within institutions. Conformity also means operating within the institutional

hierarchies with limited dialogue that can result in individuals becoming objects of the exercise

of power.

A remark by **Eric** was rather disconcerting but demonstrates the fear that exists in

relation to discussions of race in the context of child welfare work. He stated:

> the issue of racialization within child welfare spaces is not easily overt or visible. We
> even have a fear if we are serving a black family to stand up for them sometimes because
> we fear that we are going to be seen as radicals or at least for me sometimes, I say I have
> to be careful how I navigate this because I am going to be seen a radical, but sometimes
> the judgments that are thrown out there are so mind boggling and sometimes you cannot
> sit in a meeting and question fellow practitioners. I find myself conflicted and saying if it
> were another family and I have seen families that are worse than this.

Although race is silenced particularly when it is about workers and their needs, it does seem to

matter in other ways, especially when institutions assume that a racialized worker is the one best

suited to serve a family with the same identity, a practice commonly known as case matching. In

this regard, institutions or supervisors seemed perfectly willing to engage in discussions of race

and in practices such as case matching which are discussed in detail in chapter 6 of this study.

The participants' descriptions of their institutions paint a powerful picture of hierarchies

engaging in covert practices that silence discourses of race except when convenient. Such

practices are reflective of the continuity of the history of subjugating particular bodies and

maintaining the status quo.

Summary

Some of the issues raised about the apparatuses of power are not specific to racialized

workers. Others have noted similar concerns about meeting compliances by child protection

workers in general (Anderson & Gobeil, 2002). Many of the participants raised the issue of

timelines because they recognized that collaboration and engaging with families required time.

For most participants, engaging with families is about child permanency and safety, which are

fundamental aspects of child welfare work. In their study, Aronson and Sammon (2000) also

found that child welfare workers were often frustrated because of time constraints and the

standardization of work that impeded them from satisfactorily working with families over a

period of time.

However, for racialized workers in this study, these practices and standards were

significant because they represented systems that marginalized families and individuals with

whom they shared social positioning particularly a shared racial identity. It is evident that child

welfare work is compliance driven and hence I use the term "compliance fetish." The

completion of paperwork is undeniably important for a number of reasons, including legal issues,

maintaining records for coverage purposes, and meeting Ministry standards. However, the focus

on compliance and timeliness raises the question of whether Ministry and agency standards

necessarily ensure that children are better protected or that their wellbeing has measurably

improved. Participants also raised the point that paperwork does not mean that the worker is

doing a good job. Rather, it only means that the worker does paperwork well. There is a rich

body of research that eloquently illustrates the administrative burdens that child welfare workers

face (Ontario Association of Children' Aid Societies, 2010a; The Commission for Sustainable

Child Welfare, 2010; Anderson & Gobeil, 2002; Howe, 1992). As such, this discussion of

Ministry and agency compliances confirms what is already known, which is that all child welfare

workers, racialized and non-racialized, are vulnerable in many ways when it comes to meeting

these policy requirements. What is more specific to racialized workers in relation to apparatuses

of power is the ongoing hidden conversations within institutional hierarchies about racial

identities. In my view, race and racial issues are only discussed when it is convenient for the organizations.

In the next chapter of this dissertation I discuss other ways that racialized child welfare workers experience power relations with respect to race, gender, and class. Skehill et al. (2011) indicates that work relationships (supervisor/worker, worker/worker, worker/collateral, worker/child, worker/family) are predetermined in relation to what she calls the text, what in this study are Ministry and agency policies. In Skehill's view, the social worker (in my case, the racialized worker) is conditioned by law and institutional hierarchies to work with various parties in order to ensure child safety. It is necessary to examine power relations because there is a tendency to neglect the day-to-day work relationships within organizations when one is focused on formal policies as described by Culley (2001). I begin the next chapter by examining how participants described their work relationships by focusing on the broad theme of power relations and the related subthemes of case assignments, professional incongruence, and national status. The participants' statements about work relationships are akin to the third broad question that drives this research: **how do racialized workers respond to power and/or use of authority within the context of child welfare organizational hierarchies.**

Chapter 6: Power Relations

Introduction:

The previous chapter on apparatuses of power set the stage to discuss how power relations are perceived by the participants. Brown (2006) argues persuasively that interactions between the client and worker, including when to visit the family and specific questions to be addressed, are all predetermined by policy decisions and protocols developed elsewhere.

In this chapter, I argue that the power relations in child welfare are not limited to worker/family dynamics, but also involve other predetermined work relationships between worker/supervisor, worker/worker and worker/collateral. These relationships are examined in this chapter to clarify processes of power and how power is exercised and not who has power and who does not. By understanding the processes of power, we can become more aware of how power can subjugate individuals. More importantly, understanding the processes of power provides insights into how knowledge is produced in terms of who can provide services and how services should be provided to families and children. Throughout this chapter, I show how the knowledge of racialized workers, which is derived from their social standing and experiences, is demeaned and denied within various work relationships involving supervisors, colleagues, collaterals, families, and children. The delegitimization of knowledge is portrayed through three key subthemes, which are: case matching, professional incongruence and national status. 1) While case matching is used to assign racialized workers to families with similar racial identities, the planning and management of the case represent dominant knowledge. Case matching creates tension between supervisors and workers because subject knowledge is dismissed as "untruth."

2) With professional incongruence, racialized workers' knowledge is challenged by the covert questioning of their professionalism by colleagues and collaterals. This skepticism has

been noted in previous research done in the American context. Proctor and Davis (1994) show that the professional competence of racialized social workers in the United States was doubted by both racialized and non-racialized families in clinical settings. In Canada, Bernard et al. (1981) note that many clients experience discomfort in accepting help from racialized social workers.

3) The discussion of national status illuminates the challenges that racialized workers encounter when working with middle and upper class families because of the misconception that all racialized workers are foreign born and lack knowledge and resources that are essential when providing services with families. The issue of national status/citizenship raises the question of how racialized workers can provide meaningful services to middle- and upper-class families that question their knowledge and skills. Relatedly, this theme also allows for the discussion of how racialized workers respond to power within these work relationships.

As I discuss these sub-themes in this chapter, it is critical to recognize that racism, sexism and classism have inferiorized the knowledge of the "other" through existing power relations. Attention needs to be given to the issue of the power relations that maintain the "isms" because of the struggles of those whose knowledge in child welfare is demeaned and dismissed.

Work relationships are also representative of Foucault's idea of power and knowledge where the philosophical assumption is that institutions are apparatuses to preserve particular norms and ways of knowing. All institutions are organized in the form of work relationships in order to complete particular activities and carry out societal responsibilities, child welfare being one example. It is through these work relationships that institutional activities are completed. Within these relationships, individuals are not only performing institutional activities, but they are also engaged in power relations. Power gets expressed in a number of ways, as identified in

the worker's relationships with supervisors, colleagues, collaterals, families, and children. The

relationships also constitute the way child welfare activities are organized and completed.

Importantly, work relationships involve not only physical contact between equal and

symmetrical parties. The institutional hierarchies reaffirm the unequal positions of power of

parents and frontline workers, supervisors and frontline workers, and supervisors and

management.

Hugman (1983) has written that we should think of power not as a property of the actor,

but a feature of the social relationship between the actors. Within these work relationships,

reinforced by institutions, individuals begin to understand themselves differently from others.

Our way of seeing the "other" mirrors our history of social differences based on race, gender,

class and other marginalized identities, which was clearly noted in the interviews when workers

described their relationships with supervisors, colleagues, collaterals, and families. For example,

questioning workers' knowledge is prominent in most work relations, and it is associated with

systems of classification discussed in chapter 3 of the dissertation. The classifications are

constructed through power that often goes unquestioned. The social differences can have

implications for racialized workers in terms of being excluded from case planning and

management. This exclusion is reflective of a discourse in which "your work is needed, but you

become invisible in the work relationship and decision making processes."

Sue told me, "my authority [work] is not taken very serious because of my racialized

identity." She went on to talk about her experiences of racism and sexism in child welfare work,

which confirmed for me that I could not discuss the work of racialized workers with families and

children without acknowledging that race and racism are inseparable. Bernasconi and Lott

(2000) share this view. The concepts of race and racism are embedded in work relationships

based on unequal power within the social, political, and economic arena (Choi, 1997). In the interviews, I allowed participants to discuss power relations in terms of their identities, specifically race, gender, and class. Unlike previous research (Yan, 2008: Proctor & Davis, 1994) that focused on the work of racialized workers with families within social service agencies, here the study also allowed participants to discuss dynamics of different work relationships such as supervisor/worker, worker/worker, worker/collateral and worker/family. What emerged from the interviews and focus group was how issues of race, gender, and class manifest themselves in these different work dynamics and social contexts.

Case Assignments/Management

All the participants acknowledged that the success of their child welfare work depended heavily upon their work relationship with their supervisors. The positive supervisor/worker relationship is well researched and its nature documented in a number of studies. A good supervisor/supervisee work relation involves regular consultations and is about managing caseloads (Hess et al., 2009). Academic literature also exists that explore issues of race within the context of the supervisor/supervisee clinical work relationship (Pendry, 2012; Ayo, 2010; Cook, 1994). In his work, Pendry (2012) argues that it is always the responsibility of the supervisor, as a person in position of influence and power to create a work environment that allows for the discussion of race issues. Ayo's (2012) study also maintained that race should be addressed in the supervisor/supervisee relationship. Cook (1994) concludes that race does not have to be avoided as a "social stigma." In this chapter, I demonstrate that racial issues are silenced in the supervisor/worker relationship. I also discuss some of the participants' experiences of class and gender in their supervisor/worker relationship. In this research, a good work relationship was described as one where the supervisor gave the worker autonomy to

manage cases and respected their assessment of families. Positive supervisor/worker

relationships also depended on shared identities and professional experiences. Participants

acknowledged that gender, race, and class play a key role in the supervisor/worker dynamic.

Mary noted,

> I am aware of the oppressor and the oppressed, my social location and the impact of my role and even working with colleagues. I know that issues of race, gender, sexuality play a role into the day to day work experiences.

The interviews noted that supervisors tended to assign cases based on the workers' level

of work experience, as well as racial similarities. The issue regarding the case assignment was

neatly captured in the interview with **Alisha** who noted the following:

> I am not even an expert in my "little Yoruba culture." The Yoruba are about 20 million in terms of population size. I still say that I am not an expert in that area. They call me African because I am Black and the family assigned to me is Black and I happen to know a little bit of their history.   This makes me an expert.

There are three key issues noted in this research relevant to case matching. First, most

participants did not perceive themselves as "cultural experts." This has been clearly documented

in previous research (Morrel, 2007; Dutt, 2003). This is problematic because racial similarity

with families does not always translate into cultural similarity or familiarity. It is important to

note that the idea of culture refers to having beliefs, values, and practices that differentiate one

group from another. Culture is ever-evolving as social environment changes.

Culture and race can be confusing because the two are regularly used to categorize and

differentiate groups. Case assigning was being done through racial matching, and racialized

workers were perceived as having "cultural expertise." In **Mary's** view, assigning cases by

racially matching parents with workers seemed to be the only agency priority. She added that

there needs to be a focus on how to better serve families rather than simply case matching. The

practice of case matching echoes a previous discussion of how the state and its institutions are

expanding networks of power and surveillance using racialized workers to police families and communities that do not fit the norms.

Second, in the long term, case matching disadvantaged workers because they were perceived as only having competencies and knowledge to intervene with diverse communities. The result of intervening with only families from particular communities meant limited opportunities for workers to move easily into other positions that required broader work experiences and knowledge. The dismissed and disqualified knowledge traps racialized workers in institutional spaces where they are silenced and excluded. Some researchers have perceived this process as ghettoization of racialized social workers, implying that their role is only to connect mainstream institutions to racial communities (Hutchinson, 1989; Lewis, 2000; Li, 2001; Reitz, 2001). The perceived lack of broader mainstream work experiences by racialized workers also reveals how power is subtly maintained within institutions through processes that privilege particular knowledge and practices as dominant.

Third, case matching also resulted in experiences of powerlessness in a number of ways. In her research, Lewis (1997) states that case matching had the effect of constructing racialized workers in the same way as the families they serve. In my study, participants identified the "sadness" that they felt when engaging with families with similar racial identities. The "sadness" was triggered by the difficult experiences that families were undergoing or by families presenting the stereotypical images that are attached to racialized communities such as welfare dependence, use of physical discipline, and alcohol and drug abuse. According to the participants, it is these moments of sadness and shared vulnerability with parents that made them reflect on the plight of families and to build rapport with them. Gleeson (1992) also found that child welfare workers' experiences and histories played a role in their understanding of and

empathy with the parents. The complexities of workers building rapport with families with the same racial identities will be further explored in later discussions, but it is raised here to demonstrate that connections and rapport with families mean less when workers are excluded from case decisions and planning by supervisors. For example, **Jennifer** explains that

> so, even if as a worker, you are working with the family–you have this "lens of judgment." ...You may want to work more from a differential response [also perceived as a prescribed approach], see what sort of unique safety supports that you can provide the family but, then you go back and speak with the supervisor and they say no–maybe remove the child. You need to go back and tell them [family] this. You are always feeling like you have to go back to the family...yea [with a different message]....So, as a worker, I am working with the family yet the power is held in the supervisor position/role. It is not me.

The feeling of powerlessness and exclusion from the case planning and decision making is also documented in other research (Morrel, 2007; Hutchinson, 1989; Lewis, 2000). Some participants noted that exclusion from the case decision making was not only about a worker's inability to voice their opinions and work with the families but it was also about who was at the table making the decisions, meaning the class background of the supervisors and other child welfare managerial staff. Worker exclusion also was about coming to the case planning conference and a decision about the family had already been made by supervisors. Participants recognized that they were considered to be only a conduit to diverse families and communities that agencies would not easily access.

Some participants got their voices heard by supervisors by inviting other community professionals to participate in the case planning process/conferences to legitimatize their work with families and children. **Eric** commented that he invited community professionals to meet with the child welfare decision makers [supervisors/managers] when he has to discuss "immigrant norms." The invitation of other community professionals to the case planning conferences was an attempt by some workers to balance power dynamics within these meetings,

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an example of how participants were addressing their own powerlessness within complex racial relations with their supervisors, the majority of whom are white.

As noted by **Andrea**, inviting community professionals to case conferences also provided a legitimate way to terminate child welfare involvement with a family by connecting families to other service providers through an approved agency process. Again, what this points to is the perception that outside professionals with knowledge have to support and legitimate the work of the participants and to justify termination of child welfare services in some cases. **Andrea** concluded that "the reality is we [child welfare] do not work with every single child out there that has some sort of dysfunction in their family." As such, community supports [resources] can serve as protective factors for children.

Racialized supervisors also described their experiences of work and racialization. **Dora,** a racialized supervisor noted how she was perceived by a non-racialized worker as "taking up for the family" when she said racism was a factor in hindering the family's access to counseling services. She stated that the discussion of race and racism became uncomfortable for her non-racialized workers. However, she also noted that workers were becoming more aware of racial issues because of the increasingly more diverse families with whom they worked.

Concerning gender, one of the issues that stood out in the research was about safety for female workers. **Sue's** story was not easy to discuss, but difficult to ignore:

> I felt powerless because, when I started as an intake worker, I had an experience where the client called my house, looking for me. Calling my house was completely inappropriate. I felt that he crossed the line when he called my home phone number....I told this to my supervisor who was a man, 50 years old and had done this job for some time. He said "ah" and laughed it off. The supervisor said that people call me all the time. The supervisor completely minimized the experience. I felt this is a job that is potentially dangerous. I approached the union and they brought it up, which ended up doing a safety conference. They [the union] told me that it was your individual problem. This was a personal issue that you need to get over with.

The above excerpt demonstrated a masculinized union's lack of awareness of the potential safety concerns that female child protection workers face when they are in homes. The male supervisor's response in the words he used and how he used them also presumes a gender power imbalance and insensitivity to safety issues that many female workers encounter in child welfare work.

Within the supervisor/worker relationship, issues of gender and race manifested themselves in the following ways: 1) case matching; 2) exclusion from case decision making; 3) the continuing uneasiness in discussions of race and gender differences within work relationships; and 4) safety of female workers. What stands out is the omission of the racialized workers' experiences and knowledge which is evident in their exclusion from case planning, decisions, and management. This chapter emphasizes the inattention to the worker's knowledge within the working dynamics between the supervisor and worker and the social structures at large, which necessitates the continued documentation of how processes of power function within social settings to maintain regimes of truth and knowledge. At the same time, it is also questionable whether documentation of these processes is enough, given that the subject's knowledge can be ignored and dismissed as "untruths." However, the examination of the processes that continue to place workers in subject positions is a necessary and important first step.

Professional Incongruence

In some co-worker relationships, there were overtones of questioning the knowledge of racialized workers, which one can argue is another way of establishing who is knowledgeable and who is not. As **John** stated, "my colleagues also hold the same assumptions [as supervisors] about me that I lack the understanding of the changing Canadian cultural system." This

questioning of knowledge is subject to interpretation, but connects to the dominant/non-dominant

power dynamics within these worker/worker relationships. What is noted in this study is that the

discussions of race, gender, and class divisions were few and far between when participants

described their social dynamics with their colleagues. The limited discussion of the complexities

of the social divisions in terms of worker/worker relationships is unsurprising because

participants acknowledged that they need their child protection teams and colleagues for support.

Co-workers also can be tremendously encouraging in challenging situations, but this was

not the general rule as reported by **Alisha**. Participants also stated that they have heard of

horrible experiences from other colleagues regarding poor relationships with co-workers that can

lead to isolation. Studies have indicated that child protection work is undervalued and social

isolation from colleagues can add to these work complexities (Anderson & Gobeil, 2002).

Isolation can manifest itself in the form of physical and social exclusion (Acheampong, 2003).

For racialized workers, isolation from colleagues can be frustrating within work places (Yee,

2007; Essed, 1991). For example, **Alisha** stated that "marginalization is subtle. It is

camouflaged....I still have to do what I have to do. I can see the coldness in colleagues."

Existing academic literature indicates that collegial support can help to address the day-to-day

challenges of child welfare work. To survive in such a demanding work environment requires

what Korczynski (2003) calls "communities of coping" for workers. In discussing other work

relationships, participants recognized the value of having collaterals involved in their work.

Having good knowledge of community resources and professionals was significant when seeking

supports for families and children. Collateral relationships were important because most services

for families had to be sought through referral systems.

Participants in this study also maintained that the nature of the relationship between worker and collateral was dependent on good communication. Even within the worker/collateral relationship, some participants noted that they faced the challenge of having their professionalism and qualifications/credentials questioned. Some participants were mistaken for clients as in the example provided by a focus group participant. **Cathy** reported: "when I walked into court, the lawyer felt that I was the mother [client]. So, in her mind, a racialized person cannot be a worker, so they must be a client. I said to the lawyer that I am mom who?" She went on to say that she did not feel that she fit the profile of a social worker and that it took a few minutes for people to realize that she was a professional. These comments reflect the normalized and broad societal assumption of the roles that members of certain groups, determined by social location and identity, cannot fulfill certain roles. Although the trend is changing, one also has to acknowledge that the history of social work and other professions has been predominantly occupied by non-racialized individuals, which partly explains the perceptions held by the dominant group. The experiences of professional incongruence in terms of who can and cannot be a social worker is something that workers have to learn to manage within work relationships with families and other professionals/collaterals. Participants indicated that work relationships with collaterals such as medical doctors and lawyers were intimidating because of the perception that these professions were highly regarded by society. **Kim**, a focus group participant, stated that in a consultation with a lawyer, the meeting came to a conclusion without her voicing any opinions or ideas. This could have been because of status attached to lawyers but according to Kim, race was part of the issue.

Available research also indicates that the occupational status and competency of racialized workers are challenged within organizational settings and by families served by child

welfare services. Proctor and Davis (1994) noted that in the United States, racialized workers in clinical settings faced what they call "status incongruence," meaning that there is an expectation that certain racial groups are least likely to achieve academic training that would qualify them to perform what is considered a professional job. Historically, racialized workers engaged in work that "befitted" their class and race (Brand, 1999, p. 89). Research completed by Bernard et al. (1993) and Glenn (1992) shows a recurrent pattern of racialized women engaged in domestic work and professional caring tasks. This image highlights the broader patterns of race identities and relations where society assumes that racialized groups are suited for menial work. Yan (2008) concludes that racialized workers seem unprepared to deal with this dilemma of having to prove professional competence.

Our perceptions of racialized workers' occupational status indicate our imagining of the world of professional work and who holds specific jobs in society. Society holds that certain individuals should hold certain job roles that have been socially defined and legitimated (Vago, 2003). To a large extent, the occupational status contradictions that racialized workers experience are indicative of Foucault's idea that power operates every way. The clients' covert questioning of racialized workers' occupational status exemplifies how power is challenged and resisted. The clients' resistance and challenging of racialized worker's competencies leads to an interesting point of how racialized individuals are constantly made aware and reminded of their various identities in numerous ways including subtle client behaviours, language, and signs

National Status

Massaquoi (2007) observes that national borders create dividing lines of who belongs and who does not. She adds that borders are constantly patrolled to keep away outsiders. Her analogy of the border brings to mind two Foucauldian points, that of dividing practices and that

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of surveillance. Both reflect the message that racialized workers receive from families, reminding them that they are playing roles unsuited to them, thus challenging their ability to engage this group of parents. The worker/family relationship is important not only in terms of the worker's continuing experiences of powerlessness, which have been well documented in previous studies, but in terms of how racialized workers had found ways to engage lower-middle- and upper-class families. For participants, working in affluent communities presented challenges. Parents had the resources and knowledge that put them in a position not only to challenge racialized workers, but also to question the involvement of child welfare services in their private lives. As **Cathy**, a focus group participant put it, child welfare services are for poor families. Middle- and upper-class families question the role of child welfare intervention, often describing it as difficult. **Sue** also mentioned that her way of engaging with upper- and middle-class families was to do home visits together with a non-racialized worker. In working with non-racialized workers, **Sue** found that upper- and middle-class families were more receptive to services as noted in her comment:

> When I visited the home with a dominant worker, their suggestions were taken seriously and implemented right away. The families would think that these suggestions were the "best ever." They would want to start the process right away. Because this happens quite often, I felt it was because of my racial identity that they would not engage with what I had to offer. I was very irritated, angry, stressed, and frustrated.

One can infer from this quotation that non-racialized workers were helpful in engaging middle- and upper-class families. While non-racialized and racialized workers working together to engage middle- and upper-class families is significant, the example should not trivialize the underlying message given by privileged families in terms of their perceptions of which workers have knowledge and which ones do not. The challenge of engaging middle- and upper-class families is also notable in a comment made by **Samantha**, a focus group participant: "when

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working with upper-class families. I think about the questions that the parents may ask; I think

about how I will speak; what language I will use." She added that "the language is different

when I go to another family [lower class] where I know what they are going to say because of

past child welfare involvement." This quotation confirms that it is atypical for upper-class

families to receive child welfare services but more importantly, for racialized workers to

question the parenting skills of privileged and powerful parents. This power dynamic is nicely

captured by **Cathy,** who stated:

> So the middle- and upper-class families are asking themselves why are you walking into
> my house to tell me what to do. So, as a racialized person, you exert the only power that
> you have in that [work] relationship. So, the middle- and upper-class families are asking
> do you know who I am when a worker shows up at their home. So, you have families
> who are saying that they cannot deal with you because you are black. It is another way of
> saying that this relationship is difficult. For the middle- and upper-class families,
> question of the worker is another way of saying that child welfare workers are not
> supposed to be talking to me. Your job is to talk to poor families, drug addicts, and
> people that are doing [inappropriate] things to their children. I am not doing anything to
> my child.

Furthermore, the worker's professionalism is questioned by families because of national

status, reflecting the assumption that racialized workers are foreign born. **John** stated that "they

[families] say that you are from another country and not even a Canadian. You don't come in

and tell me what to do. You don't come to my house and tell me how to parent our children."

These comments reflect the broad issues regarding citizenship and who possesses what

knowledge. **Tracy** also stated that her authority had been questioned not directly but through

comments like "you write well for an immigrant." For her such comments pointed to the

statement, "you shouldn't be writing at this good level of English being an immigrant." The

comment was intended to be a compliment, but this was a subtle assumption that the "other"

does not know. As **Eric** put it, that is an implicit way of saying, "I know and you don't." For

the "other" to know, demonstrate knowledge, and be taken seriously, they must work hard and

acquire [Canadian] academic knowledge that can then justify work relationships with some families. Interestingly, participants referenced that they made sure to have business cards with their credentials when working with some families. When these families see this, they can begin to weigh and understand the level of knowledge that the worker brings to the work relationship. For some families it was important that workers had knowledge because it meant that the worker would be able to support them to access resources. Clients believed that non-racialized workers had the knowledge to help them access resources. In many ways, the need to have the credentials raises the question of who can access education, which has a lot to do with class. Although many participants were aware of their middle-class status, they admitted to having shared commonalities with families mainly because of their other marginalized identities.

Similarly, having an accent was noted as an added problem in the worker interactions with families and collaterals, which is consistent with the study completed by Yan (2008). **Susan** described that having an accent can cause fear for the worker, fear about "what to say and how to say it." When participants discussed fear, they implied that their voices were silenced in the relationships with families and collaterals. The silencing of the workers' voices demonstrates the power that some parents (of middle- and upper-class families) and collaterals have within these work interactions and relationships. The power over workers by parents challenges one's understanding of power, which presumes the subjugation of families within the child welfare work relationship. The silencing of workers with an accent is also reflective of exclusionary practices that indicate that they do not belong. Families having power over workers illustrates Foucault's argument that power is everywhere, but this notion does not necessary mean the absence of dominant forces that turn individuals into subjects within particular orthodoxies. One child welfare agency tried to have the worker take Canadian accent vocal training. This is

interesting from the perspective that the institution itself engaged in implicitly influencing

expectations of how individuals should sound when they speak and work with families, which

reinforces the importance of being acculturated and belonging to the citizenry.

It was also identified that families can use racial differences to deflect attention from the

presenting child welfare issues. **Mary** provided the following example:

> when the worker is changed so the family is serviced by someone from the dominant
> culture, months later you hear that they do not like the new worker for another reason–
> whatever. So, the issue may not be necessarily race, but parents may use racial identity
> to deflect the child protection issues.

There was also a real fear of physical harm from clients because of racial

differences. **Alisha** reported that:

> race could have been an issue, but the woman also had mental health issues.
> Unfortunately, there was no one from her family to assist. Eventually the child was made
> a crown ward and put up for adoption. I am not sure whether the child was adopted or
> not. This is one case that wasn't a success for me. I could see from beginning that we
> never engaged. I kept a fair distance away during my contacts with the mother for fear of
> physical harm as she was not well.

The harm to racialized workers was not only verbal, but also physical, particularly where

issues of mental health are prevalent for parents. Focus group participants felt that male clients

were more likely to reflect their powerful social standing than females. The participants added

that this behavioural pattern was also common among young male children or youth. While we

know much about adults being racially inappropriate in the worker/client relationship, we know

little about youth engaging in these racially charged behaviours, and even less is known about

how workers or agencies respond to these challenges. There were other participants, who noted

that the questioning of their professionalism and authority had little to do with their identities,

but it was more about the institutions that they represented and the stigma attached to child

welfare agencies. This view that families were challenging workers because they were

representatives of child welfare agencies seems to simplify the complexities of racial identity and the resistance that families pose because of their perceptions of who can be a professional with the authority to provide resources and problem solve with them.

In terms of gender, **Donna** indicated that "people tell me that you are from India and very different because most Indians are very passive. I ask them who said that people from India are passive. Some would say that women are passive. I say they are not. They challenge you with both your gender and ethnicity." This excerpt reflects the assumption attached to socialized femininity and the assumptions that individuals of Indian are submissive, particularly the women.

To others, racial and gender identity placed them in a better position to engage with families that were at the lowest end of the social ladder. **Eric** found that he was able to relate to parents because he was perceived as having a poor family background, lacking knowledge, and not having accomplished much in his life. In part the worker's engagement with families created these perceptions, particularly when they shared history and experiences. This led families to perceive "commonalities of disadvantage" and view workers as lacking positions of privilege. In some respects, participants felt that their marginalized racial and gender identities were beneficial in the work relationships with families because of shared histories of marginalization.

Summary:

My discussion of work relationships was intended to demonstrate the power dynamics within child welfare work as experienced by racialized workers. As indicated earlier, the work relationships of supervisor/worker, worker/worker, worker/collateral and worker/family form part of the child welfare work. These work relationships are not unproblematic as racialized

workers are challenged by practices of case matching and dismissal of their knowledge by colleagues, collaterals, and middle- and upper-class families.

In serving families, participants also talked about their own experiences of power and powerlessness within these work relationships. Feelings of powerlessness can lead to self-doubt about your knowledge and ability to serve families. Self-doubt is also about the paradoxical position where professional knowledge is required for services to families, but at the same, this knowledge is questioned. This paradox indicates the notion that what counts as true knowledge cannot be separated from power. The notion of power establishes who is a knower and who is not, which is clearly demonstrated throughout this chapter where racialized workers' knowledge is demeaned and dismissed in various ways. This is another way of maintaining dominant knowledge by powerful families outside of the institutional confines. Part of the challenge for racialized workers is that they receive, both from within and outside of their institutions, implicit and repetitive messages that question their roles, skills, and competencies. The questioning justifies and reinforces the prevailing dominant knowledge and power structures. It also typifies Foucault's idea of the dividing practices between those that have knowledge and those that do not.

The work of racialized workers in child welfare agencies to intervene in increasingly diverse communities is a strength, but it is also a limitation when they are not able to fully participate in all levels of services. The citizenship of workers, as this chapter has demonstrated, is not only important for families, but also for workers themselves. This issue is significant because it raises the question of whether workers can fully participate in family interventions and institutional hierarchies.

The discussions of the experience of powerlessness and the different forms of power within work relationships led to conversations about how participants felt families receiving child welfare services should be served, which is discussed in chapter 7. In the discussion on serving families, participants also noted how race, class, and gender identities altered work practices when they interacted with parents. Furthermore, the participants' discussions of services to families cohere with the fourth broad research question of this study: **how do racialized child welfare workers interact with and intervene in families from diverse communities.** In asking this question, participants addressed the ways that they responded, engaged and exercised surveillance over families which is examined in the next chapter.

Chapter 7: Surveillance

Introduction

Interactions and interventions with child welfare families have the inherent element of social work surveillance. Foucault used the panopticon or prison as an illustration of the operations of power and how surveillance is organized in various modern institutions. When discussing interactions with and interventions in families receiving child welfare services, participants consistently reported the use of educating/role modeling for immigrant families that consisted of subtle but effective sharing of mainstream information that raised awareness of parenting norms in Canada. The education and role modeling practices are discussed under the subtheme of "caring and control." Some of the participants in the study also identified their struggles with lengthy periods of surveillance for families labeled as "difficult" or "risky."

Participants consistently reported practices such as giving parents more time and presenting choices to parents. These practices are examined under the sub-theme, "discipline" where I discuss how racialized workers use work activities to regulate immigrant parents. I discuss discipline with an emphasis on the idea of choice, meaning that parents are provided with options during child welfare interventions. In the eyes of the participants in this study, discipline was not associated with punishment and coercion but rather with the choices parents had available to them to achieve child welfare requirements. In this chapter, the subthemes of caring and control and discipline illustrate techniques used by racialized workers to achieve the ultimate organizational goal of protecting children deemed to be at "risk."

Although workers talked about using supportive methods in their interventions with families, some theoretical discrepancy remained in terms of their perceptions of power. I point this out, not to discredit their methods of engaging and working with families but to demonstrate

that there is still a power imbalance between workers and families. As I note later in this chapter, in many of the participants' stories, they discussed wanting to separate themselves from the notion of power because of their social positioning. Important to note is that the participants' interventions were not outside of these power imbalances as in the example of giving families choices and/or more time. These practices are noble, inclusive, and desirable, but I had misgivings partly because using these practices can be seen as a subtle means to get families to address child protection issues as required by agencies. From a Foucauldian perspective, these positive methods of engagement with families are in many ways a guise to ease the work relationship and tension while exercising surveillance over families. In Margolin's (1997) view, social workers are most effective in gathering information when refraining from pressuring and rushing families. Margolin adds that doing things with the families is so effective because it creates the illusion that surveillance is not really occurring. In my study, educating/role modeling, providing choices and more time are demonstrations of subtle practices of power that participants used to extend the dominant ideas of "parenting" to immigrant and newcomer families.

Caring and Control

Workers' enactment of power was not obvious to the participants themselves because to them the practices were ways of caring for immigrant families and not exercising of power. Participants commented that providing newcomer families with information on how to parent in Canada was a necessity but at the same time providing this information was not part of the policy requirements that focus on completing assessments according to timelines. However, what was notable in this research was the idea that workers were actively engaged in educating immigrant parents about Canadian ways of parenting. Several comments were made by different

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participants on the subject of making newcomers learn "parenting in Canada" and the "Canadian

parenting law." **Tracy** noted:

> I would usually say to the [parents] that I know where we come from and I understand where you come from. However, we are in a new country and these are the laws here. If you do not want trouble or need to live peacefully here–this is what you need to do. I would not come across authoritatively. I grew up in Africa. I was 24 years old when I came here. So, I was a well developed adult. Much of the [cultural practices] were ingrained in me.

It was clear in the study that racialized workers in their practices were reinforcing

dominant ways of parenting. Some participants felt that the protection of the child and the

family unit was and could be ensured if newcomer parents learned the Canadian ways of

parenting, which meant teaching them that children in Canada are protected under law. In the

context of child welfare, making immigrant parents "Canadians" involved the worker teaching

parenting rules. A number of interviews included discussions of judicious use of authority and

power, but the participants rarely spoke about how their practices of educating immigrant parents

about Canadian parenting rules reinforced dominance. This is well documented by Rose (1996).

The example of reinforcing dominance is highlighted in the participants' discussions that some

families involved with child welfare practised co-sleeping. In this context, the practices of co-

sleeping involved either siblings sharing the same bed or a mother sleeping with the baby. The

workers' understanding of co-sleeping as inappropriate child care was not in question because of

the work guidelines that identify the practice as a risk to the child. However, some workers were

conflicted because of their own experiences and knowledge that co-sleeping was common

practice in some families. As participants explained, the practice of co-sleeping encourages

sibling bonding. In other cases, co-sleeping was necessary because of a shortage of beds and

space as a result of poverty. **Henry** stated that "in these cases, it is difficult for child protection

workers to go in [the home and tell parents] that you cannot [practice] co-sleep. You cannot do this."

The example of co-sleeping is an interesting one because of the varied views about siblings sharing beds or parents sleeping with their babies. Although the issue of co-sleeping was conflictual, the workers justified and reinforced what was considered to be "safe sleeping child habits." The practice of parents sharing a bed with their babies is perceived as problem because of concerns of "sudden infant death syndrome or SIDS" (Office of the Chief Coroner, Province of Ontario, 2010). For some participants, their internal conflict about co-sleeping was heightened when families were struggling with poverty. In discussing poverty, **Susan,** who was a supervisor, stated that "racialized workers have seen the worst cases of deprivation. Racialized workers also know that people can survive, even though they are poor." Co-sleeping was one of the most eloquent examples of how the discourse of caring and control became complex. Workers were faced with a dilemma because they were in positions of authority and required to ensure child safety and unequivocally advise against co-sleeping, but also they had experienced poverty, immigration, and sharing beds with siblings while growing up. Participants were aware that immigrant parents were likely to retain those parts of their culture that they regarded as important (Este, 2007), but also embrace the "Canadian parenting values" that do not support co-sleeping.

The notion of children remaining safe within their homes raises the idea that racialized workers have positioned themselves as gate keepers. I borrow the idea of gate keeping from Holmes and Gastald (2002) who use Foucault to argue that nurses engage in gate keeping activities to monitor all aspects of the patients' health. In the process of gate keeping, nurses are controlling patients but are also controlled by the hospital regulations and rules that are grounded

in medical knowledge. The idea of gate keeping illustrates Foucault's portrayal of institutions as panoptical. Although this issue is discussed in chapter 8, I note it here because racialized workers are challenged by the high numbers of racialized children in care–a problem that, in their opinion, should receive public attention–and use their role as gate keepers to slow down the admission of children into care. The challenge is whether gate keeping by racialized workers becomes a risk for agencies that are shaped by dominant knowledge and ways of knowing. Are children being left at risk of harm? This and other questions are addressed later in the study.

What is important to emphasize here is that participants often became gate keepers when intervening with racialized youth who occasionally threatened to report concerns about their parents. Participants felt that such youth threats made immigrant parents vulnerable. Participants indicated that parents in such situations could not discipline their children for fear of child welfare involvement. This experience is not uncommon even for Canadian parents whose teenagers threaten to report their parents to child welfare. However, immigrant parents have the added fear that they will lose their control of and right to discipline their children and as a result, their children will acculturate to Canadian mainstream values and lose their cultural values and forget their history.

Important to note also is the reference by the participants of the focus group that "we are making parents Canadians." This reveals the deeply ingrained role that the state and child welfare institutions play in practices of moralization and normalization that become part of the primary forms of intervention with families that are deemed deficient, including immigrant families. The focus group clarified that helping families learn Canadian parenting rules is not only limited to immigrant families. Canadian-born parents may also need to know the complex court processes related to child protection.

Various academics, including Foucault who has studied power, knowledge, and the subject, have suggested that a liberal state government undertakes a multiplicity of state interventions promoting specific kinds of life (Dean, 1991). Foucault and others indicate that the modern liberal government, which emerged in the late eighteenth century, uses its methods of power not to punish, but to control through technologies of normalization (Osborne & Rose, 1997). Based on a Foucauldian analysis, one can conclude that racialized child welfare workers have become part of a state dynamic that is charged to implement child protection acts requiring families to learn the discourse of "parenting"; but in reality parenting is about the "mother." The mother is under surveillance, and child welfare needs to ensure that she is practicing "good parenting." The knowledge of how to be a good mother, raise good child, and have a healthy family is legitimated through various practices, policies, and laws that inform society on how we should behave and raise children. In her work on Canadian families, Dua (1999) claims that the state expects every woman to recognize the importance of motherhood and her responsibility for the future of the child who must be healthy and in a happy home. Embedded in this image of women and motherhood is a patriarchal tradition that participants struggled to enforce in their practices and encounters with mothers and immigrants.

Participants also discussed their role modeling for new immigrant parents who were integrating into Canadian society. Role modeling involved helping families not become the stereotypes of their race (incompetent parents, drug users, violent mothers and fathers). These aspects of role modeling were neatly captured by **Donna:** "at the end of the day, if you are to influence and teach families, you need to provide them with tools." She went on to say that "we have to believe in these tools." According to **Susan**, the tools and teaching were meant to engage parents as she talked to them about alternative forms of discipline, as many of the

immigrants involved with child welfare services use physical discipline. From the participants' perspective, families needed different tools to change their behaviours in ways that would promote healthy and positive parenting.

There were other examples of role modeling by racialized workers such as **Eric** who perceived himself as a role model who could have a positive influence on youth behaviour. For **Eric**, it was important that racialized youth did not perpetuate stereotypes of negative behaviours (disengagement from school, becoming parents at a young age, and wearing drop down pants). **Samantha**, a focus group participant, stated that she had helped with the hair care of racialized foster children. Jacobs (2006) argues that a child's hair and skin care seem trivial but these issues can adversely impact a youth's self esteem which has long lasting effects such as insecurity and lack of confidence. These examples illustrate some of the day to-day concerns of participants who felt that they were role models for racialized children in care. The participants' comments on role modeling demonstrate the subtle message that the worker is an "expert" from whom parents can learn to address the challenges that are present in their lives.

In the process of producing the discourse of caring and control, racialized workers found themselves not only regulating the parents but also having to advocate for immigrant parents in their institutions. Some participants stated that caring for families was also about having the confidence to articulate why one is working with the family in a way that does not reflect dominant knowledge. Participants noted that the worker's confidence was enhanced by their supervisor's affirmation that staff have the knowledge and skills to support families to overcome their challenges. Participants made several comments to the effect that one cannot simply talk about advocacy for families, one has to act by confidently suggesting solutions that would help families.

Kim, a focus group participant, made the following comment:

> at that time, I was a 23- or 24-year-old child protection worker and I did not know what I was doing. In a sense, I needed the direction and to be told what to do. However, I wasn't feeling good about doing what I was told to do. I did not have the skill sets to say that this is how I should do it. Being told by the supervisor that you are apprehending and going to the mother and...taking child.

The importance of presenting themselves confidently was emphasized by participants because of the need to affirm that they were knowledgeable and professional. Without knowledge, they were powerless, especially when workers had accents, were new to Canada and racialized. Participants also noted that knowledge was tied to work, education, and past experiences.

Some participants in this study indicated that the tension between caring and control also occurred when they had to maintain high levels of surveillance of families considered to be "risky." **Alisha** indicated that when Jamaican or African families were reported, the assumption was made that parents were angry and used physical discipline. Such perceptions easily impact interventions with immigrant parents because of agency fear of the "other" that can affect the work relationship. In separate interviews, **Eric** and **Alisha** added that racialized workers themselves were faced with the dilemma of reinforcing the agency labels of families that were thought to be "difficult" or "risky." **Alisha** also stated that agencies required workers to go "to that home every two weeks and meet...with the family." For some participants, such labeling of families led to intrusive monitoring and regulation of parents. As a result, language was important in terms of how families were constructed and disciplined in child welfare.

Discipline

Foucault uses the term "discipline" to refer to how power is used to govern individual behaviour. Farrell (2005) adds that discipline is also about regulating people's timetables and

activities through a complex system of surveillance. Discipline becomes one way in which power is exercised. The workings of power and discipline of families were evident in the subtle techniques that workers used like giving families more time during engagements. Using these techniques resulted in the agency's goal(s) being met, that of ensuring that families completed the required tasks including child safety, wellbeing and permanency. For example, **Mary** stated, "I am not the one who says to [families] that by the next time, this has to be cleaned up. I sit down with my families and piece the tasks together with a plan and ask them when they can honestly get the issues addressed and plans done." Commenting on the limitations of time in child welfare work, **Patricia** said:

> The plan was that mother had to show that her mental health is in a good place [under control] before the child was returned home. I found that the timeline was too rigid in order for her to effectively meet those deadlines. Realistically, for some people, it is sometime 4 to 6 years before they get a proper diagnosis, let alone the supports, whether it is counseling, medication and what not. I found in these types of situations, policies around timelines can be too rigid and oppressive.

For **Henry** giving parents time was about negotiating with them, rather than imposing appointment times. It was remarkable to note that negotiation of time for some participants involved consideration of the child's schedule of napping, being bathed, and feeding. According to one participant, consideration of the child's schedule in the negotiation of time with the family gave them the chance to meet with the parents and also observe the child. For participants, taking a family's availability into account rather than imposing a meeting time meant that they were acknowledging the busy lives of the parents and that they had other things to attend to besides meeting with the child protection worker. Available academic literature indicates that most first generation immigrants have difficulties managing work and childcare because of the lack of kin networks to provide supervision of children. The problem of managing work and childcare is intensified for unskilled immigrants because of low earnings and shift work (Wall &

José, 2004). As one participant stated, "families do not exist in isolation, they have basic needs

that have to be met. They have to continue to work." **Donna** also reinforced this:

> Families do not work within the timelines of child welfare. People are commuting long
> distances and they have to pick up their children. Families have so many things that we
> [workers] do not take into consideration with timelines. If we take children away, parents
> have to take time off from their jobs. Some of the parents are marginalized. They work
> because they do not want to be on welfare. They have pride issues. They do not want to
> be out of work.

In the discussions with participants, negotiation of time with parents was one practice that

they were in control of. However, I asked whether negotiation of time with families was feasible

in a work environment that was driven by time compliances and documentation. Participants

agreed that they had to abide by the compliances and that meeting with families and children was

one of the requirements that they were accountable for. For participants, meeting with families

and children was of equal importance and a Ministry and agency requirement that demanded

their attention and focus. Some participants referred to families and children as their first

priority and responsibility, which implied that other responsibilities were secondary. To many

participants, balancing documentation requirements and meeting with families and children was

an ongoing challenge. This tension has been thoroughly researched (Howe, 1992; Davis et al.,

1999; Barnoff et al., 2006; Baines, 2004). What one can conclude is that discipline increases the

workers' time to engage in surveillance of the family, resulting in a prolonged intervention that is

not necessarily welcomed by families, especially those with negative experiences of child

welfare interventions. The prolonged child welfare involvement with the family also may not

contribute to child safety.

Discipline of family activities and behaviours was also reflected in the participants'

practice of "giving families choices." As one participant put it, choices gave families the

possibilities to find solutions to their problems and reduced the paternalism that assumed that

workers were experts with knowledge of and answers to family problems. **Andrea** gave an

example of how she allowed parents to make access plans when requested by court. According

to her, giving choices meant that one believed that parents were doing their best for their

children. For **Susan**, giving families choices was about allowing parents to be involved in the

case planning.

Specifically, giving immigrant families choices was significant because participants

recognized that information regarding available services was not easily accessible for families

because they lacked language skills. Sharing information with immigrant parents with limited

language skills provided them with options for the limited resources available for newcomers.

Donna also acknowledged that:

> A lot of people are lost in that process because of lack of understanding of child
> protection laws. Others who know about the CAS work process, they are very scared of
> the institution. For families coming from other countries, the fear of child welfare is even
> worse.

Donna concluded that families have to be put at ease when you are working with them.

Giving them choices helps in that regard. However, some academic literature also shows that

giving choices to families is almost meaningless because these choices are rooted in a power

imbalance relationship (Ellerman, 1998), particularly in child welfare. Participants' views of

choice can be further challenged because giving families choices does not mean that parents are

acting on their own; to a large extent those choices emanate from the "expert," and it is a

calculated and coordinated action to ensure a particular result (Dean, 1999), which in most cases

is presumed child safety. In providing choices to parents, **Brittany** stated that it was important

to "develop that rapport and relationship and trust where you can talk to these families and have

them do what you want them to do and have a successful relationship where the children remain

in the home."

In a more open way, **Henry** also stated:

> if I exercise power, I do it implicitly. How implicitly?–You give families choices. You ask parents the reasonable time to accomplish required tasks to ensure safety of the child. I negotiate meeting time with parents based on their availability…This way, I get the chance to meet with the parents and also observe the child.

Use of implicit power was interpreted differently. To some, it was seen as client engagement. To others, it was a subtle use of power and discipline to gain compliance, which served several purposes. Participants indicated that such methods of engagement lessened conflict, and that they were uncomfortable with the use of power and authority. Those who were uncomfortable with the use of authority described power as having an element of domination of parents. Two participants in supervisory positions noted that when workers were not comfortable using power, the situation became oppressive for a child who needed protection. Participants identified that their work and power were based in law, which they were not reluctant to use should positive engagement with families fail and result in unsafe conditions for a child. Some participants added that they made use of such power and authority to get the parents to a place where they could work together to create a safe space for their children. Many participants revealed that the power and authority were only attached to their job titles and not their identities. The attachment of power to job titles was a rationalization that participants made because of their perceptions that they are in marginalized social positions. Participants were uncomfortable with the use of power but their involvement with the families reflected clear use of authority through practices of education, role modeling, and giving parents time and choices. In disassociating themselves from power, participants were subtly signaling that they did not like using their authority. In a way, the message could be that they perceived themselves as doing "good work" in comparison to others that engaged in the use and abuse of power.

Summary

Throughout this chapter, I have described demonstrations of subtle use of power as expressed by participants. Surveillance of families by racialized workers occurs in a number of practices including caring and control, as well as disciplinary methods of giving parents choices and time to complete agency tasks. The methods that workers used to positively engage families are important and should be promoted and amplified within child welfare, but it is also important to acknowledge that these engagement tools do not mean symmetrical or equal social/power relations between the worker and the parents. Education, role modeling, and providing families with choices and more time, simply indicate how forms of power and the functions of child welfare can be performed in less repressive way that shifts some of the power to the families. By shifting some of the power to parents, they can become more engaged in case planning which may increase compliance and help them work toward goals that would ensure their child's safety and permanency. Using these engagement skills to positively work with parents also explains the participants' perceptions of the concept of the family. The next chapter discusses boundaries and identity as the fourth major theme of the study. It is examined through the notion of the family concept, which was significant from the participants' perspective because of their own histories and experiences.

Chapter 8: Boundaries and Identity

Introduction

Foucault views identity as a form of subjugation (Farrell, 2005). Power maintains identities that keep individuals within boundaries based on race, gender, and class (Farrell, 2005). The "truth" of racial, gender, and class differences that society has created maintains these social boundaries. This theoretical idea lays the foundation for understanding why participants had close work relationships with some of the families that they served, based on shared histories and racial and gender experiences. In this chapter, the similarities of racial identity between workers and families are discussed using the participants' perspectives of slavery and experiences of immigration. Coupled with these participant perspectives, I discuss Canadian immigration policies that separate families. These family separations not only occur through immigration practices but also when child welfare institutions intervene in racialized families, which concerned some participants.

The theme of boundaries and identity allows me to understand the range of responses provided by participants about how and why they felt that the family unit was so important to the child's safety, permanency, and wellbeing. Many participants with years of child welfare work experience said that it was rare for them to apprehend a child or recommend crown wardship because of their belief in the protection of the child within the family. Several participants stated that they had managed to never remove children from their homes despite having worked in child welfare for many years. (As mentioned earlier, many participants had worked in child welfare for three to eleven years). The emphasis on non-removal of children from their homes led to in-depth discussions of the family unit from the perspective of racialized workers, which

also elicited conversations about putting children at risk in their attempts to keep immigrant and racialized families intact.

The closeness to families is also discussed from a gender perspective because the participants perceived themselves as parents and caregivers, as well as workers. Gleeson (1992) makes a compelling point that child welfare work is not easily separable from one's personal life experiences. He identifies that child welfare workers struggle with being objective, non-judgmental and with over-identification with families because the day-to-day work experiences foster closeness to the families and children.

Socio-historical, cultural, and contemporary perspectives are subthemes of the theme, boundaries and identity. From the socio-historical perspective, many participants believed the wellbeing of the child was best served within family boundaries while they perceived mainstream institutions as regularly disintegrating family networks, particularly within racialized communities. Participants also reported on social affinity with and closeness to families, based on shared cultural beliefs and histories. The contemporary child welfare perspectives examine how the dominant discourse of the Transformation Agenda was reinforcing the participants' current work and practices with families. Each of these subthemes is described in this chapter.

Socio-historical perspectives

Participants provided socio-historical insights into how they helped preserve the family in their work. Slavery was one of the social-historical factors discussed by participants as impacting their practices with families. The protection of racialized children within families was emphasized in different ways. Participants drew parallels between slavery and the use of physical punishment by some black families involved with child welfare services. **Dora** remarked that "if a black family came into the child welfare system, you would know that it is

because of physical punishment, and this could be because of the impact of slavery, meaning that this was the way to punish in slavery–the master used physical punishment. So, that form of discipline moves from generation to generation." **Dora's** comments indicate that the disciplining methods used by some black families increasingly led to child welfare involvement and investigations of child abuse. However, according to the participants, the problem of child discipline was rooted in the historical practices of slavery. Participants did not argue that slavery justified the physical abuse of children by black parents, but that workers should be aware of it throughout family interventions. The participants saw physical discipline in some racialized families as growing out of slavery is no surprise because Foucault himself believed that history was always alive. In this example, history was perceived as manifested in the current "inappropriate forms of child discipline," which some participants connected to the tragedies and practices of slavery.

The notion of history staying alive was also clear in **Eric's** belief: "during slavery the husband did not belong to the family. If they [husband] disobeyed the master they could be sold somewhere and never to be seen again." The participants' beliefs reference the regularity of excluding fathers in child welfare work and surveillance of the mother who in most cases is held responsible for the "family ills." For **Eric**, the pathology of the absent father in black families not only shows the connections to slavery but it is also a dysfunction that is borne by single black mothers who continue to be accused of "poor parenting" when child welfare is involved in their families.

For others, the sensitivities involved when removing children from the family home were heightened because of their knowledge and awareness of the impact of slavery. As **Brittany** commented, "during slavery children were ripped from their families. Slaves were not allowed

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to develop that attachment because they [children] were not yours [did not belong to you]."

Drawing on the complex historical events of slavery, some participants perceived child removal as reflecting those past experiences that disadvantaged many marginalized families and communities. In separate interviews, **Brittany** and **Eric** discussed the systematic functioning of slavery in relation to breaking up families and the need for workers to be aware of its lingering effects in present practices that often result in the removal of children from their homes.

Canada also has a history of separating different immigrant families by applying different policies in different periods (Dua, 1999). For example, Asian men were separated from their wives and children when they were brought to Canada to provide cheap labour. Dua also provides the example of Caribbean women coming to Canada as domestic help and mothering Canadian children at the expense of their own families that are left behind in their home countries. Similarly, she discusses the separation of Aboriginal children from their communities during the period of residential schools. Recently, in Hamilton, Ontario, a single mother, Luciene Charles, was issued a deportation order to return to St. Vincent separating her from her four children (Fragomeni, 2012). Once her story made news headlines, she was granted a six-month stay. Dua concludes that Canadian policies governing families in Aboriginal, Asian-Canadian, and Caribbean communities are remarkably similar in terms of how they separate family members. These socio-historical events lie at the heart of why participants wanted to protect children within families and avoid repeating the history of separating families through systematic state policies.

Some of the participants had been separated from their own families because of immigration delays and the restrictions of family sponsorship for biological children and spouses. **Donna** stated: "I understand that to have supports means having to [make new] friends

because as immigrants you are leaving your social network back in the old homeland." These experiences of family separation point to reasons why participants felt that children should be raised by parents and that families consisted of extended kin relations. **Donna** added that within many immigrant families children are considered as a "family asset." This perception of children as "family property" differs from the western view where children are seen as individuals with rights and freedom. The idea of children as individuals with rights and freedom is a contemporary western idea. Historically they were the property of the father (Chen, 2005). As children are "assets" for immigrant families, sons and daughters become the most significant and close relationships that parents have in their new world where they have limited social networks.

Donna also indicated that children were an asset in the family's immigration and integration, contributing in meaningful ways, for example, interpreting for their parents who had limited English skills. Chand (2005) and others like Maiter and Stalker (2011) question the appropriateness of using children as interpreters in child protection cases. They identify several problems with using children as interpreters: a child's lack of linguistic knowledge to accurately interpret; possible longer term repercussions of a child being privy to adult issues and concerns at a young age; and a disruption to the normal family hierarchy (Maiter & Stalker, 2011). However, in this chapter the question is not so much about children acting as interpreters in cases of child protection. Rather the focus for **Donna** was on English- or French-speaking children who help their parents make social connections to their ethnic groups and the wider community. Children's ability to speak the official Canadian languages contributes significantly to the integration of their families in their new home country. More specifically, when children attend programs that workers have suggested, parents are drawn in as well and take up the

responsibility of being part of the activities. Children's role in the immigration and integration process is often overlooked because of the focus on the adults, but by focusing on the children, we can see how they contribute to the building of the Canadian state by being the conduits for their families to participate in programs and school activities.

Cultural perspectives

Earlier in this study, culture was described as shared values and beliefs that bring people together. Here I re-introduce the notion of culture from a Foucauldian perspective in which culture is a hierarchization of values and a mechanism of inclusion/exclusion (Farrell, 2005). A number of participants reported that their child welfare agencies were concerned about their closeness to families or thought that they were identifying too closely with parents based on shared histories and culture. Some participants indicated that there was an irresistible social affinity with racialized families, particularly marginalized immigrant families. **Mary** stated that:

> There is the unconscious code. You do not realize this, but when you go into homes you feel for them and want to be more helpful. But then also too there are times when you may feel uncomfortable with your role because you see someone that you identify with going through a difficult situation.

Other participants established close work relationships with families; newcomer families took a lot more time because parents were considered "high risk" and lacked knowledge of parenting rules in Canada. The participants also noted that they developed close work relationships with parents because families often faced multiple problems and because they wanted to work with the entire family–mother, father, children, and extended family. Participants believed that building relationships with families was paramount and necessary to keep children safe. They also noted that relationship building did not mean compromising child welfare laws to ensure the safety of children. For **Eric** the correct balance between social affinity with families and ensuring that child welfare laws were obeyed is when workers were

able to recognize that "the wellbeing and safety of the child" was not being compromised despite the cultural similarities.

According to participants, their social affinity with these families was more than part of their daily work routines. Close relationships with families were also about understanding their marginalization and powerlessness. What was implied in the way participants described their social affinities with families was an understanding of the vulnerability that families experienced, but without excusing inappropriate parenting behaviours. However, the closeness to families raises several issues: 1) How does the worker know when not to over identify with the family? 2) What does being close to the family mean? 3) Would being close to the family be of concern if it was a non-racialized worker and white family?

The question of how the worker knows when not to over identify with the family is important in child welfare and other social work settings. **Susan** noted that closeness to the family could result in the worker minimizing the risks to the child, making the relationship building ineffective. Others added that over-identification with families can be problematic because the worker might not insist that parents make the required changes, even though they recognize the problems facing families. Failing to challenge parents could result in child welfare being involved in the family for a longer time. Viewed from this angle, it is necessary to recognize that children also have rights under Canadian law that need to be protected and that all child welfare workers play a role in maintaining safe home environments for children. Child welfare interventions require a balance between fairness to parents and ensuring the protection of children. The Transformation Agenda suggests that the worker practice this balance. In citing Trotter (2002), Dumbrill (2006b) argues that children are better protected when workers balance investigatory and helping practices. **Susan** also pertinently stated that once the worker could no

longer maintain a balance, it is only reasonable that the worker seek collegial support. The problem is whether workers can recognize when to seek support once they have developed a closeness to a family.

The second question can be addressed from a theoretical perspective. Does "being too close to the family" imply a gaze on race? The absence of race as a factor cannot be assumed because of its very presence in our everyday social interactions. A worker's closeness to a family can shift the gaze from child protection to race because of the shared racial identity of the worker and family. When the worker's closeness to the family is based on non-majority racial similarities, white supervisors may feel the need to use their power to control case management and planning. Part of the problem related to the issues of over identifying with families is that racialized workers are expected to use dominant ways of assessing families, which is problematic when one's upbringing and values are tied to conditions that are similar to the families that they are serving. The shared histories and experiences of the worker and family can cause concerns in mainstream institutions where racialized workers come to be mistrusted and hence the intensification in the use of power by the child welfare agencies.

Similarly, the racialized worker closeness with families that share racial similarities also reveals the hidden social work assumption that it is the privileged worker who is always positioned to intervene with non-privileged parents. This social work assumption does not quite fit the picture of the racialized worker relationship with families of colour because both the social worker and parents have non-privileged historical social positioning. On the contrary, in the white worker/white family dyad, the work relationship appears to be the norm because the focus is on class differences rather than race. It is arguable that these social affinities could also be a concern when a white worker provides services to a poor white family. However, the roots

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of social work indicate the idea of the privileged class helping those from low social economic class through the work of the early Charity Organization Society and the Settlement House Movement (Hick, 2009). Therefore, the white worker/white non-privileged family dyad is not seen as too close. For non-racialized workers, using tools that are Eurocentric puts them in a position to make assessments of the "other" (the poor single parent and the marginalized). As a result, questions of over-identification with the family do not even become an issue because professionalism, objectivity, and appropriate work boundaries are assumed and expected as a norm.

The struggle for racialized workers regarding closeness to families with similar racial backgrounds also reflects some of the concerns that are discussed in the available research on the supervisor/supervisee work relationship. For example, Pendry (2012) noted that there is lack of meaningful discussions of race in the supervisor/supervisee relationship in family therapy settings. According to Pendry (2012), these supervisor/supervisee work relationships should involve discussions of race, the fear and anxiety related to this subject, as well as engaging workers in conversations of their work with families [racialized parents].

Patricia stated that:

> I was told that I am exercising too much social work skills and not enough child welfare. The family was torn by this decision because they were told that I would work with them upon my return from sick leave. Actually, a couple of my families cases were not given back to me because I was too close to them which I am still struggling with understanding what too close means… I was left out of the whole process and my supervisor was insulted by that because she asked whether I felt that the file couldn't be handled without me. The supervisor questioned why I felt that they had to contact me before transferring the file to another worker. I explained that they did not have to contact me, but I felt that this was the procedure. This is one of the examples that really stand out for me.

For Patricia, the experience of transferring the file from her to another worker for concerns of being too close to the family added to her sense of exclusion because she was not consulted in

the process. **Samantha**, a focus group participant stated that "for myself, I always have to wonder whether I am doing that [aligning with racialized families] – whether I am being more protective of them because they are black or different race. I struggle with that a lot.

The institutional expectations of not being too close to the families can create ambiguities for workers. On the one hand engagement with families is encouraged, especially in this era of the Transformation Agenda and on the other hand, the professional clinical judgment of the worker is questioned when a relationship with the family is suspected. The need to engage families but "not get too close to parents" poignantly symbolizes the dilemma of working with families and having limitations on the work relationships. In her doctoral work, Lee (2008) found that caseworkers were either replaced or fired for being "too close to the families." In one case, a caseworker was dismissed from the case for advocating against a court finding that the mother was neglectful. However, Lee noted that the mothers found those caseworkers to be valuable sources of support and that the mothers were pleased with the workers' services.

When I asked the participants about their success stories, many of them discussed parent/child(ren) reunification, which concretized the importance of the family unit and how they perceived it. Based on the participants' perspectives, family reunification involved the reintegration of foster children with their parents or extended families. Reunification in some cases meant supporting fathers so that they could be part of their families, or having a distant relative from abroad come to Canada to help a struggling mother. Many participants also described success in their work as being able to help children achieve better outcomes such as high school graduations.

Other participants stated that the work with families mattered for them because they saw themselves as caregivers. When the focus group was asked about the issues of closeness to

families, **Samantha** openly stated: "I think it is the cultural background. It is our nature. We feel like we are the caregivers. You just feel that you need to care about the people. You need to embrace everybody."

This notion of the caregiver is interesting because of the assumption that women do social service work. Brown (2006) argues that these societal assumptions shape and reinforce the social processes that determine what women's paid work should or should not be. Again, the dilemma for the participants was that they were not only workers but also mothers who were caught in the contradiction of being "caring" service providers and at the same time meeting the expectations of being professional and maintaining professional boundaries.

Contemporary Child Welfare Perspectives:

There are contemporary reasons why workers focus on the preservation of the family. There was a general sense from the participants that there are parts of the Transformation Agenda that support their values and focus on families. For example, **Eric** said that "we [racialized people] have been the receivers of poor [social] policies. Families have been broken up and given no respect." In her work, Swift (2011) refers to the "interventionist" regime that introduced the ORAM, leading to substantial increases in reports, investigations, and apprehensions of children, especially from racialized and Aboriginal backgrounds (p. 53). The increased apprehension of children was due to workers' fears of making mistakes and wanting to feel secure by rating families as high risk. Higher rating of risk meant increased likelihood of child removal (Callahan & Swift, 2012).

For my participants, the legislative/policy shift reflected in the Transformation Agenda was noteworthy because the idea of the family seemed to be implicitly reflected as central to the child's life. I do not know whether the Transformation Agenda contributed to the way

participants perceived the family unit. So we need to continue asking how Transformation

initiatives impact the practices of workers who are serving diverse communities in Ontario.

Within both the focus group discussions and individual interviews, I asked whether "the Ontario

Transformation Agenda has transformed child welfare work and how has the Transformation

Agenda experience been different for racialized workers in terms of service provision to

families? In comparing the Transformation Agenda with the old ORAM system, **Kim,** a focus

group participant said:

> I couldn't be a family worker under the old ORAM system. I tried being a worker
> initially under the old child welfare system and I had to get away from it because I
> couldn't stand it. We were apprehending children even when parents refused to speak to
> us. I took that child until the parents spoke with us. We were using real power. So, this is
> the first opportunity to work as an intake and family worker. During ORAM, I got out
> and did children services for 3 to 4 years. When I changed child welfare agencies, I was
> terrified of being an intake/family worker again because I had not worked under the
> differential response. Transformation fits with the way we should be working with
> [families] and how we should be seeking kinship options.

To some participants, the Transformation Agenda was seen as a systemic reform that

allowed workers to use some of the policy principles, ideas, and concepts, including kinship

placements. Others indicated that families and extended family relationships were always the

centre of their practices. For example, **Alisha** commented:

> for me coming from...I believe that family is very central to any child's life. Therefore,
> even prior to these new policies [standards], I always believed that we needed to work
> with the family."

Therefore, the participants argued that in some ways the Transformation Agenda was

consistent with the reality of their cultural practices with families. However, in the eyes of some

participants, the Transformation Agenda has not met some of their expectations, including the

reduction of the high child in-care placements for racialized children. The disproportionate

number of placements for Aboriginal and racialized children also are cited in a Canadian study

by Lavergne et al, (2008) that found children from these racial backgrounds are more often

investigated than other children. In its 2011 interim report on Transformation Agenda, OACAS

noted an increase in the number of Aboriginal children/youth in-care between 2007 and 2010.

The report also mentioned an upward increase in the number of Aboriginal children and youth

placed in customary care. Likewise, Pon et al (2011) cited the Child Welfare Anti-Oppression

Roundtable report (2009), which indicated that in an urban Ontario city, black youth represented

65% of the children in care, despite the fact that the black population in that urban centre was

only 8%.

Some participants felt that kinship placements, which are traditionally preferred

placements for racialized families, are still only minimally utilized. As described in chapter 3 of

the dissertation, this view is confirmed by OACAS statistics from 2007 to 2011, indicating data

on kinship placements in comparison to total children placements. As in the pre-Transformation

Agenda era, participants said that the compliances and strict timelines are still strongly

emphasized in the current child welfare practices. This concern was also expressed by the

Commission to Promote Sustainable Child Welfare in Ontario (2012). According to participants,

such practices limit interactions and collaborative approaches with families, which are the ideals

expressed by the new child welfare reforms under the Transformation Agenda.

Sue, one of the participants, made the following comment:

> "That morning, I went to my supervisor and told them about my morning and the support
> for the family. The supervisor asked you did what? What do you mean you drove to
> Toronto and took them to Toronto? Yes, I told the supervisor that I rearranged my
> schedule and took the family to Toronto. The supervisor stated that that was a waste of
> time and that you have other things to do in child welfare. You shouldn't be doing that.
> You do not have the time and resources to support the families. I felt confused because I
> am a child protection worker and a social worker. I was conflicted because I was to
> support the family and not focusing on only child safety. I thought she would be proud of
> what I did, but I was apprehended [confused]. Because when you think of the
> transformation that you need to support the family, but I was swung that other way of
> child safety and told to focus on risk. I asked myself what I am doing."

This excerpt demonstrates continuing tendencies to focus on child risk as the priority. In its recent report, the Ontario Association for Children's Aid Societies (2011) noted that it was difficult to know whether families served by child welfare are showing better outcomes (child safety, child well-being and child permanency) under Transformation Agenda services. The report also noted that it was impossible to determine whether worker practices and their focus on the family were a result of the Transformation Agenda. The same report claimed some positive changes in child welfare practices as a result of the Transformation Agenda. For example, there were significant decreases in the number of children re-admitted into care. Similar results were reported in terms of decreased admissions to care, as well as reduced case transfers from intake to ongoing services, which means shorter child welfare involvements with families.

Summary

What struck me in my research was that participants took their own histories and experiences into consideration when engaging with families. Based on the participants' stories, these experiences were: exposure to immigration processes, knowledge of oppression and marginalization, awareness of the current Transformation policy. This awareness and their experiences seem to have shaped the participants' work, leading them to give primacy to the concept of family. Discussions of slavery in relation to the concept of the family indicated that participants were aware that child welfare work today can perpetuate history's legacy of disadvantage and marginalization based on divisions of class, race, and gender. The issue of the participants' histories, experiences and perceptions of family leads to the analysis and discussion chapter of this research.

SECTIION III - ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Chapter 9: Negotiation of power

Introduction

I begin my analysis of the study findings by arguing that there are three specific ways that racialized workers use to negotiate power in their work with families and children receiving child welfare services. I argue that racialized workers negotiate power because they are faced with challenges ranging from compliance fetishism, silent discourses of race, delegitimatization of their knowledge, and re-enactment of power to witnessing history in their present child welfare work. Through these work experiences, racialized workers negotiate power using the three techniques of conformity, collaboration, and conflict. Each of these methods is discussed in this chapter. However, it is important to note that all three methods not only show the existence of power but also reveal the forms of resistance that racialized workers use in their child welfare work. Specifically, even when workers conform their work to the dominant child welfare policies, they also question whether these guidelines and policies accommodate the needs of the diverse families. The analysis of the collaboration techniques used by racialized child welfare workers reveals closer work relationships with colleagues to assist immigrant families, and yet resistance is clearly demonstrated in instances of case matching by supervisors when assigning client files.

The discussion of conflict also shows racial tensions, challenges and questioning. Foucault argues that power co-exists with resistance (Farrell, 2005; Medina, 2011) or, simply put, wherever power prevails, there is always a possibility of resistance, which I explore in this chapter. Resistance in this case highlights important issues of racism, sexism, and classism as experienced by racialized workers.

Conformity

As stated above, the negotiation involves three different processes which are: conformity, collaboration and conflict. Conforming refers to the negotiation that constitutes a balancing act of meeting the state objectives of protecting children and respecting the workers' own histories and alternative ways of knowing in regards to the place of the child in the family. In this process, the practices help keep the child safe in the family or extended family. In many ways, conformity seems like a necessity and strategy to survive within the work environment. Regarding conformity, when one analyzes the apparatuses of power, it seems that Ontario child welfare Ministry compliances have shaped how children should be protected and parented. Child welfare laws, regulations, and standards shape our knowledge to some extent. The successful integration of racialized workers into the child welfare system is clear in terms of the discussions around their work to protect the vulnerable children in Ontario. Participants used language such as "there are lines that cannot be crossed and "cannot bend rules with serious cases of child abuse [sexual and physical harm]." Participants who were supervisors understood the risk of not following the policies based on their awareness of potential child deaths. These expressions meant that safety of the child was a priority and conformity to the child welfare policies and guidelines was observed to a large extent. Participants also knew that trying to minimize risks to a child resulted in punishment and that no rewards were given to practices of building family relationships when child safety was compromised or ignored.

Although conformity to child welfare policies and guidelines is occurring, it is clear that workers develop their own ways of practice in their interventions with families, a strategy described by Nimmagadda and Cowger (1999) and others like Brown and Brown (1997). It is apparent through my research that racialized workers' histories, knowledge, and experiences did

not seem to have become alien and/or strange from their child welfare practices with families.

The way in which the workers' histories and experiences influenced their interventions in

families is noteworthy because the current standardization of child welfare practices was

intended to ensure that all child protection workers operated the same way. However, many

times participants talked about how their backgrounds and experiences informed their practice.

For instance, **Mary** reported that "at the end of the day, where you come from plays a role in the

assessment…you do not even realize that personal experiences play a part in the practice

decisions and assessments." **Donna** added:

> Having a background in social work, has allowed me to practice social work.... but I think
> life experiences contribute a lot to the way I practice with families. This means that you
> have to understand what your value system is. Do you value human beings? Do you
> value families? Do you value all these things? Having these values helps me to put
> families at ease when I am working with them.

John stated:

> personally, I come from a closely knit family. I grew up in a big family. We had a big
> compound. One house was my family. Another house was for my grandparents. So, we
> went in and out of both homes. We ate in both my parents' and grandparents' homes.
> We had cousins and nephews raised in my house. We had also non-relatives–I call them
> aunts and uncles–who were raised by my parents. It is a cliché to say that "it takes a
> village to raise a child." This is a background that informs my practice today.

The above excerpts indicate that participants' knowledge and practices with families

were entrenched in their histories. This challenges research by Scheurich (1997) whose

discussion of domination references double consciousness, a concept that grows out of W. E. B.

Du Bois's idea of the "divided self." According to Du Bois (an African American scholar of the

early 1900s), racialized people experience a divide between how they perceive themselves and

how they are perceived by the dominant group (Billings, 2000). Scheurich (1997) describes

double consciousness as a coping response to domination. Scherich argues that people of colour

grow up learning to look at themselves neither through their own eyes nor through the eyes of

their own race, but through the eyes of the dominant culture, which include policies and practices. The result of this historical dominance is that the styles of thinking, acting, speaking, and behaving of the dominant group become the socially correct or privileged ways of thinking, acting, and behaving. However, in my study, participants discussed how their histories and knowledge (a background of slavery and immigration) concerning particular practices of parenting did not neatly align with the policies and practices of their agencies.

The question that remains is whether legislation, regulations, and standards are enough to change and/or influence workers' histories, experiences, and practices. This question has been raised in previous research on the challenges of using policy to influence people's behaviours and beliefs (Lewis, 2007). Lewis concludes that there is a growing public interest in understanding what makes people's behaviours and experiences change in relation to policy approaches. Although I argue that the Transformation Agenda has not been fully adopted in child welfare, there are aspects of this policy that struck a chord with the participants. This suggests to me that policy values have to resonate with people that are implementing it in the delivery of services in order to achieve meaningful response and conformity.

Collaboration

Collaboration was also important to the participants, and involved working with several parties. This negotiation process includes workers sharing their knowledge with others, including supervisors, co-workers, and collaterals, so that the best supports are provided to families and children. This process is reciprocal because non-racialized workers are also sharing their knowledge. As Hugman (1983) argues, the idea-sharing process can be sustained within social relationships—and I would add social work relationships—both laterally and hierarchically. Participants acknowledge that this collaboration and idea-sharing is built between workers who

hold different levels of power, but such relationships can still be effective in providing services to families and children. Focus group participants clarified that work experience changed when non-racialized workers, and not supervisors, asked them to help with racialized clients. For example, **Diane**, a focus group participant stated:

> So far all the cases, I have been helping other team members because the families are either Chinese or Asian....In my case, it [is] often the workers not even managers approaching me saying yea do you speak this language because I have a client that is from this country. So, in my experience, it is a worker to worker dialogue where I am being asked to help with the families coming from Asia. For me, this is a nice thing because the workers are trying to do something for their clients.

As in the above excerpt, collaborating with non-racialized co-workers changed the experience for participants because it did not involve case assignment and case matching by supervisors. It became a collegial work relationship to help families. Focus group participants felt that collaborating on these cases was helping families so that their non-racialized colleagues would not misunderstand parents.

In his research on ethnic health workers, Fuller (1995) found that workers used the exchange of values, ideas, and strategies to provide cultural solutions within their professions. Swift (1997) adds that attention needs to be paid to issues of diversity in child welfare because of complex factors including different child rearing practices. The different ways of parenting raises questions of how racialized workers practice within institutions that maintain particular knowledge regarding parenting. The question remains whether the knowledge of racialized groups will be integrated in state policies and practices of child welfare or whether the alternative ways of knowing will be rendered marginal by increased regulation, accountability, and training that does not account for the increasing diversity of staff.

Conflict

Conflict also occurs as part of the negotiation process. The worker's knowledge is contested within the dominant way of knowing that informs child protection work in Ontario. The worker's knowledge is challenged within these work relationships and power dynamics. Contestation creates tension within different work relationships including, those of supervisor/worker, worker/worker, worker/family and worker/collateral. The participants noted part of the negotiation was about individual attitude and actions. **Alisha** stated:

> it is not for me to deny that there is no differentiation or marginalization, even among your own "black people"....I have been an activist–women activist at that. So, it is very different for me because I cannot change, but I try to soften it [my language].

Discussion of the challenges of negotiating power relationships revealed deep issues and tensions of race and gender that are ongoing and cannot be obscured by the focus on the protection of the family unit. When discussing areas where change should occur, some participants mentioned that anti-racism training was needed, indicating that this matter continues to be a challenge for child welfare. As **Susan** stated:

> I was experiencing racism, but you did not have the name for it. The label wasn't there for you to call it but you were feeling something that you couldn't even deal with it. My experiences have come to shape my thinking.

Patterns of racial tension in the workers' practices are entrenched in the social and work relationships as reflected in this study. Racial and gender issues are clearly documented in various research (Woldeguiorguis, 2003; Stubbs, 1984; Dumbrill & Maiter, 2003; Reid, 2005; Proctor & Davis, 1994; Levine et al., 1996). However, the need to discuss these concerns indicates that they are not yet resolved and further attention is needed. The ongoing concerns that race and gender elicit raise the question of whether a utopian optimism that racial injustice will ever be completely eliminated (Sullivan & Tuana, 2007). One can also question whether it

is possible to have a society without sexism and class division despite the continued efforts of feminists and social justice advocates. The discussion of these issues in my research reflects the ongoing individual and collective struggles against racism, sexism, and classism. These "isms" made participants question their abilities and practices with families. **Henry** stated that "there is self-doubt whether you can really do child protection work." Participants questioned themselves when their knowledge and competency was unrecognized or challenged by the dominant way of knowing.

The participants also questioned their relationships with others (supervisors, co-workers, parents, children, and collaterals). Their stories reflected experiences of powerlessness when they were excluded, discriminated against, and marginalized. For example, **John** noted that he felt powerless because of the assumption that immigrant workers did not understand child welfare work in Canada. Participants, in their admissions of powerlessness, were not suggesting that they had no control over their work nor did they pity themselves. Admitting powerlessness was not a sign of weakness because they found ways to question the nature and structure of work and found ways to practice through a negotiated process within the various work relationships.

As a researcher, the negotiation of power by racialized child welfare workers through techniques of conformity, collaboration and conflict brings me to the **so what question or what does this study mean**. At the personal level, there are the underlying racial and gender tensions within the various power relations which participants openly discussed, but there was a lack of clear answers on issues of race, gender, and class, which demonstrates the complexities of these matters. The hesitancy to discuss race, gender, and class also makes these social issues invisible and maintains the status quo. Further, injustice and inequality are firmly kept in place.

The development of human rights legislation regarding race and gender has been a landmark in the struggle to create an inclusive Canadian society. However, the human rights legislation that could help to achieve inclusion and instill the proclaimed values of justice and equality has only gone so far. Silence regarding racism, sexism, and classism has been one of the most powerful of modern apparatuses operating within institutions to effectively neutralize and erode the legal protections afforded to marginalized groups by human rights legislation.

However, from this study, it is clear that issues of race, class, and gender alter the work experiences of racialized workers and influence their practices with families. This means that these social divisions cannot be ignored. Knowing that issues of race, class, and gender alter work experiences should be the starting place for future debate and discussion about how social work students, both racialized and non-racialized should prepare for child welfare practice or other fields. In this study, it is very clear that participants have to begin interventions with some understanding and awareness of how racial, gender, and class similarities and dissimilarities can impact the work relationships with families. Overall, however, race remains an extremely challenging topic because of the deep social complexities that are fundamental to our social existence. While being interviewed by Andrew Davidson (2012) on CBC, Clarence Jones discussed how inaccurately and uncomfortably race is being dealt with in the United States. Jones' comments apply equally to Canada. In my interviews, participants indicated that race is regularly dismissed because the topic is uncomfortable for many people. Race and racial differences have not been normalized because they provoke complex discussions and emotions, but one cannot remain inattentive to or trivialize the issue. As Lewis (1997) argues, race is one of the key features in the organization of social relationships.

Summary

This chapter focuses, for its main topic, on how racialized child welfare workers negotiated power. Part of the negotiation meant focusing on the three distinctive areas of conformity, collaboration, and conflict. Each of these key areas of negotiation involved processes that cast some light on how the participants managed day-to-day work, involving interventions with families and children, under the Transformation Agenda policy framework. Discussion of conformity, collaboration, and conflict also revealed how participants responded to and resisted power in their ongoing struggles with issues of race, gender, and class. What gains will be made in addressing the complexities of race, gender, and class in child welfare is the question that remains.

Chapter 10: Implications of the Study

Policy Implications

This study adds to our understanding of the resistance by racialized workers to some child welfare policies. This resistance was fuelled by their history of immigration and awareness of slavery. The workers' history is significant because it informed their practices and interventions with families. Prior to my research, I had not given thought to how their history would influence workers' practices. The connections that workers made between their practices and slavery revealed to me a deep struggle that workers undergo as they intervene with families. Nimmagadda and Cowger (1999) insist that social work practice cannot be acultural and ahistorical, meaning that social workers routinely rely on their tacit cultural knowledge when intervening with families. Yan and Wong (2005) come to the same conclusion: social workers bring their own values and beliefs into the relationship with their clients.

The concept of family dominated my research. As such, the parental care for children was important for the participants under the state's laws. However, for participants, it was not the duty of the state to parent the children through permanency plans like crown wardship and adoption. Participants' stories reflected the ongoing struggle to make their practices conform to existing policies.

The participants' struggles with the existing child welfare policies can inform child welfare practice. Along with the required Ministry and agency requirements, alternative forms of parenting informed participants' practices of how they intervene with families. The participants were operating within the child welfare mandate, but they were also functioning in ways that were outside of the prescribed parameters of child protection, especially when the policies contradicted or could be used to support their beliefs and values in relation to families. By

functioning outside of the policies, I mean that workers questioned the guidelines and found other ways to practice with families that minimized apprehensions or the removal of children from their homes. They were conforming to the laws to maintain safety of children while at the same time they created opportunities for families to safely raise their children.

In this study, participants' stories revealed that they had only brought a few children in foster care over the course of their work. Part of the reason for fewer than average child admissions to care were due to their engagements with families which often took longer than prescribed child welfare standards, but the process led to early permanency for children, meaning that children stayed with their parents or relatives. On the one hand, fewer child admissions could also mean less provincial costs. On the other hand, child removal from families receiving income assistance has several implications (Blackstock & Trocmé, 2005). The removal of children increases the family's poverty because of a reduction in the amount of income assistance received. The reduction in family income increases the risk of the family having to move to even less suitable housing, leading to food insecurity and family stress. According to Brown (2006) when children are removed from homes, the need to protect mothers from unduly stressful circumstances is unacknowledged. There is also very little provision for emotional or psychological support for mothers to compensate for the experiences of child loss. One also can argue that child removal takes away the parents' ability to engage in any activities related to parenting. As described by Swift (1995), the failure to parent becomes officially defined as "bad mothering" through the dominant discourse and practices of social work.

In the focus group discussions, participants discussed balancing their histories and experiences with the prevailing child protection policies. The focus group discussions revealed that workers never knowingly put children at risk because of their focus on family, but valuing

family meant that they looked at every way possible to avoid removal of children from the families. The workers also did not disavow the policies; rather they looked for policies that were more inclusive and would support families from diverse communities.

Participants also suggested changes to policies that would reflect more realistic timeliness that did not conflict with family engagements, an idea that is not new to child welfare as it has been previously raised and documented by the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (2010a). That report concluded that the focus on compliances and timeliness overshadowed the work with families. Throughout my study, participants repeatedly brought up the issue of timelines and how it impacted the work of child welfare. Callahan et al. (2004) argue that timelines embedded in child welfare legislation are intended to prevent prolonged stays for children in foster care. Without minimizing the significance of meeting compliances, we need to find answers to how child welfare will continue to address issues of permanency when families are faced with challenges, such as mental health and language barriers, where stabilizing the family will take longer than the prescribed timeliness for permanency allows. Timeliness can act as guideline, but should not determine how workers intervene in families. The strict timelines often do not support communities that are impoverished and are no longer homogenous. As child welfare work with families becomes more complex and ambiguous, agencies should find ways to respond to parents' and children's needs. Some participants have noted that relationship building with families requires more time because it means attending medical, immigration, and social assistance appointments with families. In other cases, it would also mean taking families to food banks.

Current academic literature suggests that a worker or child protection system has limited time to develop relationships with parents, which ultimately results in failure to protect children

(Trotter, 2004). For some participants, investment of time with families was one of the reasons why they had fewer cases of child admission to care on their caseloads. Participants felt that attending appointments with families, which one participant referred to as doing "little things," helped in their interventions. Providing concrete help to parents has also been shown to be beneficial in research conducted by the Child Welfare Information Gateway in 2011. The workers were able to avoid engaging in extreme child welfare measures because of established and trusting relationships. For participants, "established and trusting relationships" led to some families calling them back to ask for assistance to address new challenges, even after their child protection files were long closed. Some participants indicated that building relationships with families clarified for parents that the worker was not only involved with them to point out things that were wrong in their lives.

Participants also reported situations where families called them prior to family situations getting worse and out of control. **Jennifer** stated that a parent's decision to contact the child welfare agency was an indication that "[the system] was not going to rip kids out of [their] home, which is everyone's fear." She went on to say that parents' trust can extend beyond the family because parents are connected to larger communities particularly in instances where racialized groups are closely knit. With larger communities trusting child welfare agencies, child safety could also be enhanced because of non-intimidating relationships between the two entities.

However, one should say that building trust with families is difficult in a system that has child safety as its first priority. One can view this intervention (attending appointments with parents) as creating dependency where families are co-parenting with child welfare agencies. The family "dependency" is not supported by a system that typically regards the parenting of

children as the responsibility of individual families, specifically "the mother" (Fraser & Gordon, 1994; Swift, 1995).

The challenge is how policies, including guidelines for timeliness, can support the diversity of family experiences. There were compelling reasons why participants felt that building relationships with families required time, a process that did not seem to be accurately accounted for in terms of meeting the compliances of time. As described by **Eric,** one may meet the compliance, but not be able to create relationships that would yield good results for children. The seemingly well-intentioned compliances for child safety, permanency, and wellbeing simply become tools to achieve particular outcomes and results that have to be reported and recorded for institutional purposes, rather than focusing on the processes and tasks to achieve the desired outcomes for families and children.

Achieving safety, wellbeing and permanency outcomes for children are paramount, as spelled out in child welfare legislation and policy. However, the practices that workers use to engage with parents to achieve the hoped for outcomes are also important, as cited in a large body of literature that references positive engagement with families receiving child welfare services (Dumbrill, 2006c; Palmer et al, 2006; Chand & Thoburn, 2005). According to these authors, the positive practices of engaging child welfare families may range from the worker being respectful, caring, empathetic, helpful, non-judgmental and projecting warmth and genuineness. In particular, Dumbrill's (2006c) discussion of parental engagement involves the ideas of child welfare workers' using "power over" and "power with" parents. The ideas of "power over" and "power with" are important in the context of child welfare because they remind workers of the need to be aware of how parents respond and react to power. Trotter, (2002) claims that positive worker practices are related to better client outcomes, meaning that

parents were able to make progress, leading to child welfare termination. In the current Ontario child welfare system, the process of building relationships with families seems not to be reflected in the required paperwork that focuses on reporting of what one has completed (outcomes) with the family rather than how one has worked with the families (process). The outcomes become the focus and the measure to protect children rather than the process involved to resolve child safety issues.

In the re-examination of the child welfare standards, OACAS (2010) cited several studies that concluded that an outcomes approach maintains the integrity of programs and services because it creates efficiency that must be embedded in an organization's management and decision-making structure. While OACAS acknowledges the importance of an outcome based approach, there is also recognition of complexities such as poverty and diverse families in child welfare, and a focus on outcomes cannot be the only way to practice child protection work. In my view, the focus on outcomes and meeting standards only is a way to meet the neo-liberal goals of reducing waste and increased accountability in the provision of social programs.

It is also evident from my study that workers are part of the child welfare system that intervenes in families, using varying practices and ways of knowing. It is not only achieving outcomes for families, but also a focus on how workers intervene with families by identifying the struggles and challenges at the institutional and broader levels. It is important to address the issue of striking a balance between compliances, particularly timelines and the ways racialized workers practice with families. Striking this balance is particularly crucial especially when it results in better outcomes for children. How can child welfare achieve the balance between meeting compliances and serving families? Is this a question that even deserves to be posed? The implications are great if child welfare does not pause and ask these questions. Silence

cannot be an answer. Similarly, hasty policy decisions that are commonly made based on child welfare crises have not led to better outcomes for children and families.

The discussion of striking a balance between meeting compliances and serving families under the Transformation Agenda also gives rise to another question, why do mainstream agencies continue in this struggle. Despite the reforms, Ontario child welfare is still operating within a child protection model and not a family service approach. Although, there is an expressed desire to focus on the family within the current Transformation Agenda, practitioners tend to err on the side of caution, which means focusing on child risk and not on family preservation. Mildred and Plummer (2008) make a notable illustration by using the work of Gilbert (1997, 2011) who compared nine countries in North America and Europe and found that English-speaking countries use what he calls a "child protection" approach, while many European countries have more of a "family service" approach. Responses in countries that emphasize child protection tend to be more legalistic, less optimistic, and more likely to delay intervention, while family service approaches focus more on prevention and offer services to families earlier and more generously. Other scholars like Cameron and Freymond (2006) have made a similar observation that early interventions to support parents is what makes the family service approach distinctly different from child protection services with its focus on making parents subjects of investigations.

Under the Transformation Agenda, the focus on risk is still very much present in child welfare work as evidenced by the need to complete risk assessments. Strega and Carrière (2008) note that the shift to a system concerned almost exclusively with the protection of children rather than with the welfare of the family was accelerated by high profile child death inquiries. The result was a reduction in the support and resources for families experiencing difficulties. This

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study is not calling for the overhaul of the child welfare system–that is not a realistic and foreseeable goal–but a rethinking that recognizes the real dilemma facing a system that has to operate with seemingly contradictory approaches. This places significant limitations on preventative measures that would assist the families in providing required child safety, permanency, and wellbeing. Rethinking means taking some reasonable and realistic steps that could assist families and also increase safety, permanency and wellbeing of children. This is not to suggest that child welfare has not provided assistance to children in the various areas of their lives. The suggestions made by participants were not evidence that child welfare has been inattentive to these challenges. Rather it was a call to pay consistent attention to areas that could make the system more responsive to the needs of families and children from all backgrounds.

The participants felt that more focus on prevention would help families avoid some of the crises. Some mentioned the recent mainstream initiative such as the Admission Prevention Fund through which families can be supported financially to avoid child admission. Respite, access to child care, and one-time financial assistance are examples of admission prevention funding that are helping to avert the removal of children from their homes. Although not a new idea, others participants suggested smaller caseloads which would allow them to get more work done with families. Where possible, these prevention practices must continue so as to avoid circumstances where families reach breaking points, resulting in the removal of children, particularly in poor immigrant and Aboriginal communities. These are communities where poverty is rampant and regularly results in what is seen to be "poor parenting."

The admission to care prevention also means working with schools, public health nurses, and other community services. Collaboration with the community means that child protection work cannot be the only focus; collaboration will be a team effort to support families. Other

participants suggested integrating the services of therapists and counselors into child welfare. Participants felt that the integrated model would benefit families that are on long waiting lists for community programs referred to them by child welfare. Others suggested that workers have to look for the potential in families and serve parents from a "position of potential" rather than a "position of emptiness." What does the position of potential entail for the family? It would involve a departure from the current system with a strict focus on child risk approaches to practices that demonstrate engagement with all families. Part of the problem is that the Transformation Agenda, with its rhetorical and espoused ideas of community collaboration and family engagement, has not been firmly ensconced in current child welfare practices.

My research indicated that practices vary even under the same legislation, policies, and standards. These variations in the workers' practices indicate that child welfare policies are not consistently and universally applied when intervening with families and children. However, within contemporary child welfare policies, there is an underlying universality and standardization that diminishes the important differences that exist between families. With the exception of Aboriginal people, the compliances fail in all ways to take into account significant differences in cultural values and beliefs. The incongruence between policies and practices has been also documented in a study by Parada et al. (2007). The authors found that child welfare workers based their decisions on child welfare protocols, but they also drew upon their own social work skill and practice wisdom. Parada and his colleagues do not explain what they mean by practice wisdom, but one can assume that they are referring to the worker's own experiences that help guide the decisions of workers.

It is also important to acknowledge that different worker practices are not only the result of different racial backgrounds, but also the different levels of work experience, class and

gender. Workers with long work histories practice differently from those who have less

knowledge and fewer skills. It takes many years for workers to develop child welfare work

competence.

Social Work Practice Implications

Transforming one's ways of knowing will also require meaningful changes to practices that have up to now remained as "moral or normal codes" against which particular family parenting practices are judged by middle-class ideals. This leads to deleterious consequences and outcomes for many diverse parents and children in the child welfare system. Dua (1999) observes that Canadian charities headed by middle-class women have historically spearheaded attempts to make poor and immigrant European families conform to the ideal of a nuclear family. Currently, the picture of a two parent family has not changed significantly. If child welfare is the voice of how children should be protected and parented in a multicultural society, parents are being cheated by a system that does not reflect the diversity of parenting knowledge. For example, in the west "family" is limited to the immediate relationships of the nuclear family while in the practices of racialized workers in this study, "family" include community and extended family. Similarly, as noted in the Saskatchewan Child Welfare Review report completed by Pringle et al. (2010), the Indigenous view of family places the child within kinship systems, clan, band, and tribal membership. Children are cared for within a cultural community with grandparents, aunts, uncles and older cousins all having responsibilities in child rearing. In most non-western cultures, a discussion of children is inextricably linked to extended families and communities.

In these cultural environments, notions of interdependence and communalism are basic to their worldview and are highly valued. Racialized workers bring this view to their work. It involves seeking out who is in the family beyond the nuclear family. Including extended family is one way of looking at child permanency if it does not compromise the safety of the child. In their work on child welfare families, Christensen and Antle (2003) have noted that engaging

larger extended family networks requires the worker to make additional phone calls, home visits, or mediation sessions. The worker has to engage the kin family and understand that a relative placement may not be sufficient for the child. Worker assessment must consider that kin families may be estranged from the abusive or neglectful parents for a numbers of reasons including: family conflict because extended members feel they have tried and failed; and parents isolating themselves because of poverty, drug use, negative family relationships, etc. One can also add shame, which can result in parents isolating themselves from relatives.

Not engaging extended family social networks leads me to argue that current child welfare practice cannot escape the western idea of the "individual." The primacy of the "individual" is reflected clearly when children are placed in the foster care system for safety and also expected to be resilient and independent as individuals outside of their communities and families. As illustrated by Chipungu and Goodley (2004), many racialized communities place significant emphasis on communalism, collective values, and responsibility to extended family. These traditions of extended family and the larger community conflict with the "American" cultural values that have traditionally emphasized and normalized independence, self-reliance, and autonomy. The authors go on to say that this difference of cultural values can create developmental confusion where a child is unable to develop a positive social identity. Canadian research by Gough (2006) and Cuddeback (2004) also emphasize the importance of children maintaining family relationships while other permanency options are being considered for them. The authors indicate that family relationships promote greater cultural and spiritual affiliations for children.

In addition, Kerman and Glasheen (2009) argue that independence is no substitute for family connections that can help to deepen much needed emotional security for children.

Although the focus of my research is not on children in care, it is noteworthy to ask whether racialized foster children are being impacted by the idea that they are individuals that can grow and develop independently outside of their family circles. As discussed in earlier chapters, participants struggled with the concept of the family and keeping its boundaries intact. The question about racialized children in care can be a sensitive public issue because of the continued concerns that foster children tend to be overly represented among the youth population who become homeless, who drop out of school or are pushed out, as well as those with no family and community connections. These negative outcomes are also quite common for children aging out of foster care (Osterling & Hines, 2006; Mendes & Moslehuddin, 2006).

The discussion of racialized children in care poses questions that are beyond the scope of this research. However, I raise the question here because I believe it is important to engage in a dialogue with child welfare about placing family and community supports at the centre of their care. Hopps et al. (2002) argue that African American families play a pivotal role in the nurturing, socialization, social functioning, competence, and successes of adolescents. The authors indicate that the family is a place where youth learn to cope and gain survival skills necessary for dealing with the environment external to the family, a raced, gendered and classed environment that the authors describe as hostile and noxious. This view is complemented by Chipungu and Goodley (2004) who argue that developing coping skills for youth involves spiritually focused family rituals such as naming ceremonies and rites of passage that emphasize the children's racial identity and place within a family and community system that connects them to a larger historical and contemporary reality. According to the authors, such connectedness provides a stable force that can foster resilience for a child during difficult times. Chipungu and Goodley's argument that racialized families can foster resilience is disputed, as many racialized

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parents are challenged by poverty and forced to live in poor neighbourhoods. Such poor conditions of living deter the resilience that racialized families can develop in the child. As a result, some children from these poor neighbourhoods are subject to child welfare apprehensions and the potential of growing up in foster care is high. This was a concern raised by many participants.

Although the discussion regarding the role of the court was limited in this study, it is reasonable to suggest that the legal system should be holding child welfare workers accountable in terms of the promotion of the concept of family in its broad sense. In this study, the broader family means "extended familial relationships" and not simply nuclear households that are regularly the focus of child welfare practice. The focus cannot continue to be in the "best interest of the child" outside of their families and histories. Even when removed from their homes, children can have meaningful access to their families which can result in a sense of belonging and hence further the best interests of the child. Wensley (2006) has highlighted that the children's cultural and family background cannot be treated as an abstract concept, meaning that any good outcomes for children in care should include their cultural and community connections. The less abstract the cultural/family background is for workers, the greater the opportunity to change the practices and knowledge to ensure better outcomes for children. Wensley (2006) adds that a child's connection to his/her community is not in conflict with their best interest. The question that needs broader attention is how do we ensure and enhance child safety within different communities. This is a question that is yet to be explored and needs further research

Theoretical Implications

From an intellectual stance, this study contributes to how complex theoretical frameworks, such as Foucauldian perspectives, can be adopted to analyze and further understand the complicated issues of race, gender, and class. In her work on theoretical and methodological approaches to studying diverse Canadian families, Albanese (2014) argues that theory and research are intertwined. She suggests that our understanding of theory never remains the same because new research provides new perspectives. This study provides a new understanding and knowledge from subjugated voices; the subjugated voices in this study provide new truths. Foucault's insight that taken-for-granted ways of knowing have to be questioned and that resistance emerges from new discourses that produce new truths are important to this study. The new truth emerging out of this study is how racialized workers are practicing child welfare using their own histories and experiences to intervene with families. The workers' histories and experiences regularly contradict the conventional ways of practicing, which theoretically means that power is constantly being challenged and resisted. However, power also continuously reproduces itself through knowledge formation that influences and perpetuates mainstream child welfare policies and practices.

In this study, one of the most prominent ways in which power is exerted within work relationships is the questioning of the workers' knowledge. Here, the questioning of knowledge indicates how certain ways of knowing are disqualified, resulting in the de-legitimization of the workers' roles and their work not being taken seriously. The questioning of workers' knowledge, national background, accent, and educational qualifications are some of the challenges faced by racialized workers when providing child welfare interventions and functioning within institutional hierarchies. This questioning raises the issue of who can know

and which knowledge is considered relevant, as well as who can be an expert. Knowledge and

power are inseparable. As such, control and power over knowledge becomes an integral

component to ensure its own survival (Kovach, 2005). According to Hook (2001) dominant

knowledge maintains itself through these processes of qualifying and disqualifying ways of

knowing. This process of qualifying and disqualifying knowledge occurs within work

relationships and interactions. Brown and Brown (1997) examine the working experiences of

black workers in the United States and raise the question of how these challenges differ from

their non-racialized counterparts, an issue this study has not addressed but which can be an

important future research area.

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

One of the potential limitations of this study was that the participants would identify with me because of our racial backgrounds and shared child welfare work experience. Of concern were the participants' assumptions that I was aware of and understood their work and social location. When this affinity resulted in a lack of in-depth conversations about their child welfare work experiences, I tried to make sure that a range of participant responses were explored and clarified throughout the study.

Bhopal (2001) explores issues of gender and racial identity in research. On the topic of shared identities or what she calls sameness/differences, the author argues, "if we want to know how women [research participants] feel about their lives, then we have to allow them to talk about their feelings, as well as their activities." She goes on to say "if we see rich potential in the language people use to describe their daily activities, then we have to take advantage of the opportunity to let them tell us what that language means (p. 282)." On the issues of sameness, one can add that the shared identities and work experiences made it easier for me as an insider, to access participants. In the same vein, it needs to be emphasized that the realities of participants' work experiences differed, even though they shared a similar racial identity with me.

Some scholars have suggested that one's own intuitive understanding and knowledge of research participants with shared racial identities could lead the researcher to unwittingly over-interpret or overlook data that an outside observer would probably view as significant (Beoku-Bett, 1994). When the researcher and the researched operate from shared realities, there is a tendency to take too much for granted. Researchers can overlook certain aspects of participant's realities because of the presumed familiarity with those realities. Familiarity with the phenomena under study therefore risks blindness to certain details that may be significant

(Bhopal, 1995). In this study, I re-read all the transcripts and treated the data as new and unfamiliar.

In the same manner, Frank (2005) states that the researcher can never conclusively determine who the research participants are in their totality and what they can or will become in the future. Ceballo (1999) adds that the observer's (or researcher's) conclusions can never capture the exact daily life experiences of the researched. Research therefore is not and should not be static or presented as the ultimate representation of the researched. Rather, research results of a community are only a partial representation of a group at a particular time, which means that further study would provide additional findings. In my case, findings related to the work experiences of racialized workers in child welfare. However, the stories of the 21 participants who were involved in this research are sufficiently profound that they warrant attention by scholars of child welfare.

Future Research

Most of the conversations with the participants did not include discussions of their work experiences with children in Ontario's foster care system. Some participants talked about services to children. However, a deeper understanding of how services are provided to racialized children in care would help to generate awareness of opportunities for racialized workers to play an active role in the children's wellbeing in areas such as education and identity. These areas can become future research inquiries to help enhance ways in which racialized children in care can succeed in areas where they continue to show enormous struggles including school dropout, early pregnancies, criminal activity, etc. There is convincing evidence that we need to pay attention to the needs of all children in care (Allain, 2007). The question is whether racialized workers have a role to play in meeting these needs. The limited information that participants in this study provided and common sense dictate that there is a role for racialized workers to play in working with children in care, but further research would clarify these areas. More interestingly, a focus on how social work will continue to provide services to immigrant children in care is a significant area of research because racialized children tend to remain in foster care longer than non-racialized children (Magruder & Shaw, 2008; Lavergne et al., 2008). Equally important, how will social work understand and provide services to immigrant children with histories of trauma, loss, and isolation. Okitikpi and Aymer (2003) argue that if social work is to be effective with this population, then issues of knowledge and skills have to be addressed. Future research is also needed to broaden the scope and include experienced non-racialized workers with records of minimal child apprehensions to understand their interventions and practices with families. These are key areas that will form important research as Ontario becomes more diverse.

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Appendix A

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS NEEDED

I am currently attending a Doctoral program at York University. My research is titled
" **This is what we know: Working from the margins in child welfare.***"* and I am looking to
interview 12 to 15 participants who self-identify as racialized (South Asian, South East Asian,
Caribbean, African) and have worked in child welfare in Ontario.

The main purpose of the research is to explore the work processes of racialized child welfare
workers.

If you are...

> ➢ a child protection worker with two years of work experience

> ➢ worked in areas of Toronto, Peel and Hamilton

> ➢ willing to be interviewed for an hour or so to discuss your work
> experience

> **…I would like to speak with you!**

I can be reached on my cell at (905) 512 4153 or by email at dkikulwe@yorku.ca.

If you agree to participant in this research, you will receive an informed consent to
advise you of your rights and confidentiality. Please be advised that the research has been
reviewed and approved for compliance to research ethics protocols by the **Human
Participants Review Subcommittee (HPRC)** of the School of Social Work at York
University. Be assured that the information you provide will remain **confidential** and your
identity anonymous.

Thank you for your time and consideration and if you know someone else who has
and fits the criteria above, please feel free to pass this information to him/her.

Thanks,

Daniel Kikulwe

Appendix B

Interview Guide Questions:

Background

1. What is your gender?

2. What age group do you belong to?
   a. 20 – 29
   b. 30 - 39
   c. 40 – 49
   d. 50 – 59
   e. 60 – 69

3. What is your birth place?

4. If you could describe yourself, how would you identify yourself in terms of your race, ethnicity or other identities?

5. What made you to pursue a career in child welfare?

Working in Child Welfare Institution:

6. What have your experiences been like serving and supporting families within the current?

   a. child welfare policies
   b. required timelines
   c. legislation requirements

7. What policies and/or training enable you to support your practice when working with families?

8. Tell me when you felt powerless in the organization and in your practice with families?

9. If you had power what kind of things would you like to change in the organization and in your practice to support families receiving child welfare services?

Experience of working with families:

10. What are your main job expectations?

11. How do you feel about these job expectations?

12. How do you meet the job expectations on a day to day basis?

13. What knowledge and skills do you bring to your work when intervening with families receiving child welfare services?

14. As a child welfare worker with marginalized identity or identities, what has your experience been like using delegated power/authority when intervening with families?

15. What are the discrepancies that you have experienced being racialized and having delegated authority/power?

16. What do you do in circumstances when you feel a sense of conflict between your racialized identity and the delegated power?

17. What have been some of your successes when working with families and children?

Appendix C

Focus group questions:

Questions about practice with families:

1. What do you think are some of the culturally relevant ways, practices and experiences that racialized child protection workers use to help families that are receiving child welfare service? (e.g. language interpretation)

2. We live in blended cultures where our views regarding families roles in protecting and disciplining children shift and change (e.g. spanking, co-sleeping and older children caring for younger siblings). As a racialized child welfare worker, how do you balance child wellbeing/safety and the need for preservation of the family unit/parenting practices?

3. What do you think about the idea that you cannot help families and children unless you have power and knowledge as a worker (e.g. self confidence, not being silent, speaking out about case decisions, being comfortable with authority/power)?

4. The point of institutions to have racialized workers is to ensure that they connect and work with families from various racial backgrounds. Some racialized workers have been told that they are "too close to the families" or "protective and aligning with families" resulting in cases being reassigned to other workers – what does this contradicting experience of engaging families, but not aligning with parents mean to you as a racialized person; what does it mean in relation to colleagues who has received the reassigned case file?

5. Clients from middle and upper class non-racialized families question the institutional power and role of CAS, as well as racialized worker knowledge (qualifications). What has been your experience with middle and upper class racialized families?

Questions about practice with children:
6. Tell me about your work experiences with children in terms of race, class and gender? (e.g. children, particularly boys experiencing marginalization within the educational system, racialized workers being role models)

Questions about practicing within structures of power:
7. Has the Ontario Transformation Agenda transformed child welfare work and how?

8. How has the Transformation Agenda experience been different for you as racialized workers in terms of service provision to families?

9. How do see more of the racialized workers becoming involved in child welfare?

Questions about practicing and working with collaterals/community:
10. Tell me about your work experiences with children in terms of race, class and gender?

Questions about "silenced worker practices/discourses"
11. Tell me about how faith and spirituality plays a role when practicing with families and children.

Additional comments/suggestions:
12. Is there anything additional that you would like to share regarding the work experiences of racialized child welfare workers?

<center>**Appendix D**</center>

Informed Consent Letter

Date: March 16, 2011

Study Name: **This is what we know: Working from the margins in child welfare.**
Researcher:

My name is Daniel Kikulwe. I am a doctoral student at York University, School of
Social Work. My faculty supervisor is Dr. Karen Swift. I am doing this research as part of
the requirement for my PhD degree. I would like to interview racialized child protection
workers about their work within the context of child protection policies, procedure,
legislation, and mandate. If you are interested in participating, please contact me at (905) 512
4153 or by email at dkikulwe@yorku.ca.

Purpose of the Research:

You are invited to participate in a doctoral dissertation project entitled: **This is what we
know: Working from the margins in child welfare.** The purpose of the study is to
investigate: 1). how racialized workers experience work in the larger structure of child
welfare policies? 2). what roles do racialized child welfare workers play within the child
welfare institutions? 3). how racialized workers respond to power and/or use authority within
the context of child welfare organizational hierarchies? 4). how racialized child welfare
workers interact and intervene with diverse communities and families receiving child welfare
services?

What You Will Be Asked to Do in the Research:

If you agree to participate in this study, you will take part in a confidential interview with the
researcher. Interviews should take around one hour and take place at a location of your
choice and convenience. This interview will consist of answering open-ended questions
**PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT SOME OF THE QUESTIONS MAY BESENSITIVE IN
NATURE AND YOU CAN DECLINE TO ANSWER THEM.** Interview questions will
include asking information about how you identify yourself in terms of your race, ethnicity or
other identities? What knowledge and skills you bring to your work when intervening with
families receiving child welfare services? What your experience has been like using
delegated power/authority when intervening with families?

This interview will be audio taped with a digital voice recorder for the purpose of taking
notes. Please note: You have the right not to answer any question during this interview.
If you do not want a statement that you are making to be recorded, you have the right to
request that the tape recorder be turned off. At anytime, you may withdraw from this
study. Please be advised that all or some of the quotes from potential participant's interviews
will be used within research publications.

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Risks and Discomforts:

There is always a possibility that you may experience some feelings of discomfort during the interview. You do not need to answer any questions which make you uncomfortable. Please, be advised that you can stop participating in the interview. You also welcome to contact me after the interview, if you change your mind and you want any part of the interview removed from the record or to withdraw from the study.

Benefits of the Research and Benefits to You:

The direct benefits that may reasonably be expected to result from participating in this study include the opportunity to share one's thoughts, views and concerns related to the research topic. The indirect benefit is gaining a sense of helping social work field and others in terms of expanding the existing literature and knowledge.

Voluntary Participation:

Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop participating at any time. Your decision not to volunteer will not influence the nature of your relationship with York University either now, or in the future. Participants will be given a $5.00 Tim Horton's gift certificate to thank them for their participation.

Withdrawal from the Study:

You can stop participating in the study at any time, for any reason, if you so decide. If you decide to stop participating, you will still be eligible to receive the promised gift certificate for agreeing to be in the project. Your decision to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions, will not affect your relationship with the researchers York University, or any other group associated with this project. In the event you withdraw from the study, all associated data collected will be immediately destroyed wherever possible.

Confidentiality:

All information you supply during the research will be held in confidence and unless you specifically indicate your consent, your name will not appear in any report or publication of the research. The collected data in form of handwritten notes and audio tape will be safely stored in a locked cabinet. All the recordings in form of digital files will be kept in the researcher's personal laptop computer protected by log-in name and password. The interview transcripts will be destroyed after publication. Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law.

Questions About the Research?

If you have questions about the research in general or about your role in the study, please feel free to contact Dr. Karen Swift either by telephone at, (416) 736 5226 extension 66328 or by e-mail kswift@yorku.ca.   This research has been reviewed and approved by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee; York University's Ethics Review Board and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines. If you have any questions about this process or about your rights as a participant in the study, please contact the Sr. Manager & Policy Advisor for the Office of Research Ethics, 5th Floor, York Research Tower, York University (telephone 416-736-5914 or e-mail ore@yorku.ca).

Legal Rights and Signatures:

I_____, consent to participate in the study entitled "**This is what we know: Working from the margins in child welfare"** conducted by Daniel Kikulwe. I have understood the nature of this project and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. My signature below indicates my consent.

Signature_____   **Date_____**
Participant

Signature_____   **Date_____**
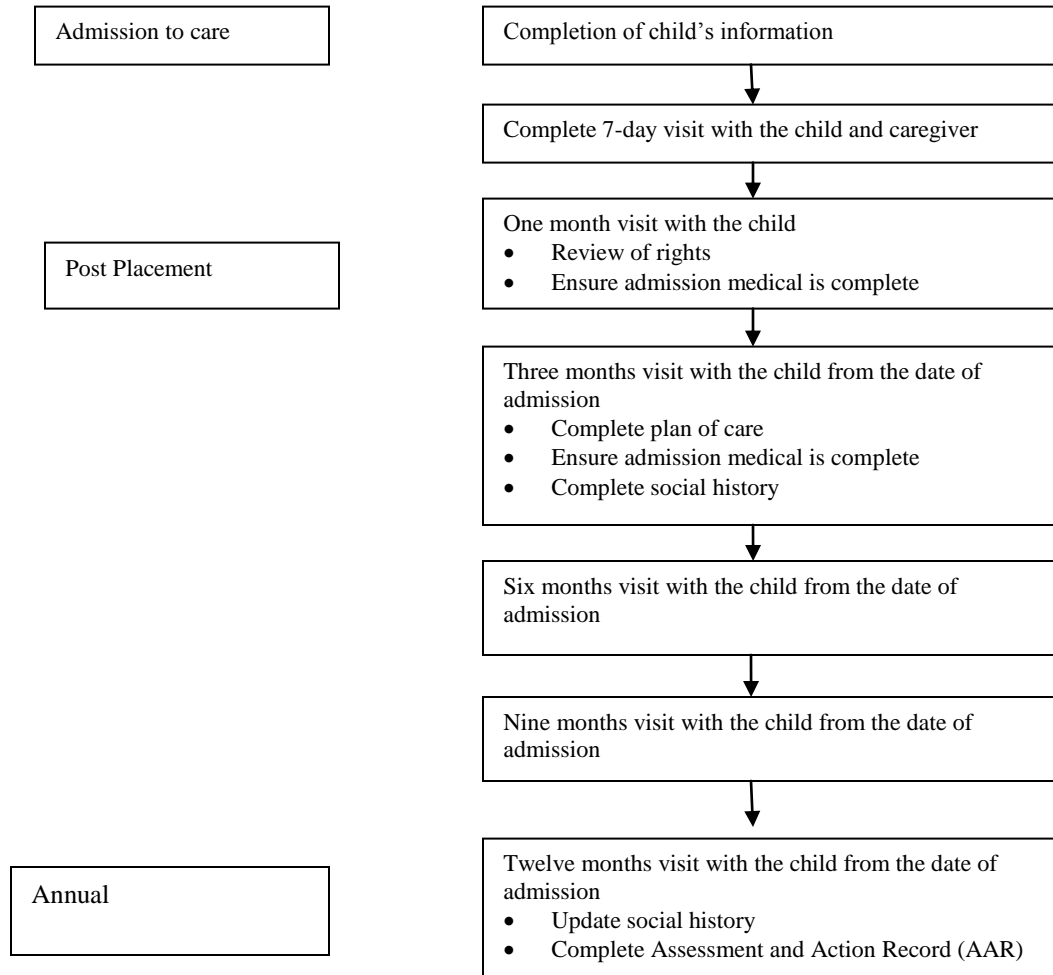Daniel Kikulwe (principle investigator)

Table 2. Timelines and documentation completed by child welfare workers.

Timeliness	Documentation
24 hours	**Safety Assessment to be completed**
	child(ren) interviewed or observed
	primary caregiver interviewed
	home environment assessment completed
	gathering information from family or collaterals
30 days	**Family Risk Assessment to be completed**
	Evaluation of risk continues throughout the investigative process to determine level of risk (low, moderate or high)
	Risk assessment is completed for every child protection investigation.
	If investigation is complete and file is closing, a case summary is required within 3 weeks.
Within 10 days of Cases Transfer	**Case Transfer**
	Ongoing worker to notify all other service providers of the case
	Completion of a summary update of all significant case events
	Completion of a service plan and to be concluded no later than three months from the initial investigation.
Within one month of the completion of initial investigation or date of case transfer and at six months intervals.	**Family and Child Strength and Needs Assessment to be completed**
	Identification of the presence of parent/caregiver strengths and resources
	Gathering of information from family relative, available records, direct observation, collaterals and so on.
At each six month case review	**Reassessment tool to be completed**
	Evaluation of the family's progress towards safety goals
	To be completed when case is closing or transferring to another worker
	Reunification Assessment
	Assess risk level and safety within the family for the child to be returned home
	Assess the quality and frequency of access between the child and parents during foster placement
Relevant supplementary screening tools are to be completed based on the challenges facing the child and family. Information is discussed with the family during service planning process.	**Supplementary Screening Tools**
	Child Wellbeing tool
	Adult Drug Abuse Screening tool
	Adult Alcohol Use
	Family Support Scale
	Adult Emotional Wellbeing Mental Health Inventory

Adopted from Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Service, Child Protection Standards in Ontario (2007a, 2007b).

Flow Chart Diagram3: Child in Care Required Standards and Documentation.

Admission to care		Completion of child's information

↓

Complete 7-day visit with the child and caregiver

↓

Post Placement		One month visit with the child • Review of rights • Ensure admission medical is complete

↓

Three months visit with the child from the date of admission
• Complete plan of care
• Ensure admission medical is complete
• Complete social history

↓

Six months visit with the child from the date of admission

↓

Nine months visit with the child from the date of admission

↓

Annual		Twelve months visit with the child from the date of admission • Update social history • Complete Assessment and Action Record (AAR)

Adopted from Ontario Association of Children Aid Societies (2010a: 142).