Race, Representation and the Commodification of poverty: A Pathways Case

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts

Humanities, Social Sciences and Social Justice Education

Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

University of Toronto

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2015

Abstract
This thesis brings under critical analysis the processes involved in rendering poverty a commodity by examining the discourses and images of the racialized poor circulated by agencies involved in the non-profit sector in their fundraising activities. I analyze the materials of Pathways to Education Canada, a non-profit organization operating in Regent Park, Toronto, as a case study for this analysis. With the launch of Pathways as a national non-profit organization, the reliance on depictions of racialized populations as deficient became a central feature in the rhetoric produced by the organization in order to gain funding for its operations. Recognizing the fiercely competitive fund-raising environment in which the organization must operate, Pathways employs several platforms such as the use of visual imagery, text, print and statistics in order to demonstrate its overall effectiveness and to attract potential donors.
Acknowledgements

To my father Patrick, forever an optimist, thank you for all your support and encouragement throughout this project, especially in the moments when I didn’t think I would see it through to its completion. To my mother Hara, thanks for always supporting me in my decisions and allowing me to choose my own path. Thank you to my sister Nive, for providing a listening ear to the many rants, a logical mind when I lost my way, and reminding me that there is life outside of academics.

Thank you to my supervisor, Dr. Sherene Razack for constantly pushing me to think and write critically throughout this project. Thank you to my second reader Dr. Roland Coloma for your valuable input throughout this project. I would also like to extend a special thanks to Rod Michalko and Kari Delhi for their encouragement, support and insightful conversations that assisted me throughout this process.

Thank you to my friends J’elle, Stefan, Dana, Kwesi, Gerard and Koryse for your constant support, words of encouragement, and most importantly, the laughs. To Shadi, Harjot, Sam, and Kim: your support throughout this process was invaluable – thank you. A special thanks to Nana for always communicating with the ancestors and for your positivity as well as critical insight, for this I am truly grateful.
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**Introduction: We are not for sale!**

In this thesis, I examine the process through which non-profit agencies rely on representations of racialized low-income populations as different in order to attract and maintain funding. Toward this end, I provide a case study of Pathways to Education Canada (Pathways), a national non-profit agency that perpetuates a stereotypical representation of racialized low-income populations primarily through mechanisms of print media, video presentations and evidence-based\(^1\). Throughout the research, I refer to this process by which representations of racialized low-income populations are continuously sold as different by agencies in the helping industry as the commodification of poverty.

In its attempt to fulfill its mission, Pathways, similar to most agencies in this sector, is heavily reliant on funding from private and public sources in order to sustain its operations. In its fundraising efforts, Pathways continues to rely on and uphold a particular representation of Regent Park\(^2\) as a community that is, marginalized, violent and thus in need of saving. This depiction of the Regent Park community is evident throughout the history and development of the space. During the post-War era, the initial residents consisted largely of low-income populations, predominantly of European descent. The 1970s marked a significant shift in both the racial composition and family structure that came to occupy the space. During this time, the community experienced an upsurge in the number of non-European immigrants and persons of Afro-Caribbean descent emerged as the dominant group. In addition to the changing racial composition, by the 1970s, there was a significant increase in the number of single-parent female-headed family units that came to occupy the space. The overall history of this community is not only a history of

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1 Evidence-based results refers to the statistical data and student success narratives that indicate to the public as well as donors and funders the overall success of the Pathways to Education model.
2 Regent Park is one of Toronto’s oldest social housing neighbourhoods that is located in the east-end of the city of Toronto in the province of Ontario.
shifting racial composition, family structure and poverty, but also a history of how these conditions have marked both the space and its inhabitants as different. This fixing of difference, particularly as it relates to Regent Park, has yielded a particular representation of the community as a “criminogenic” ‘slum’, in which residents are prone to commit crimes (Rose, 1958 cited in James, 2010, p. 70).

This negative image of Regent Park as outlined by James (2010) has become a permanent fixture in the popular culture of Toronto and more specifically in the rhetoric of Pathways. This representation of the community and its residents as poverty stricken, violent, and dysfunctional has become a critical selling point in order to maintain and attract potential donors so that Pathways may continue its operations. Marking specific populations as different is lucrative particularly in relation to the funding process. Non-profit/ NGOs initiatives rarely challenge dominant relations of power. Instead, they uphold these same relations of power by continuing to reinstall and maintain racialized populations and the spaces they inhabit as pathological. In the context of the helping industry, power to enact change is placed in the hands of the donor and not in the hands of the community itself. It is for these reasons I began reflecting on my work with Pathways.

Pathways has been the subject of several studies focused on literacy, impact on poverty reduction and program effectiveness. These studies reveal much of the discourse that Pathways uses to depict the Regent Park community as Other, but do not critically analyze the deeply embedded relationship between representation and funding. Reflecting on research conducted on the academic component of the Pathways program is critical to furthering my analysis, in that it raises questions regarding the effectiveness of the program’s model. Allister Cummings’ (2012) critically discusses the results of a four-year project that examined literacy achievement among ‘at-risk’ youth from culturally diverse backgrounds. The project, titled Adolescent Literacy in
Three Urban Regions (ALTUR), was conducted with youth from across three urban regions in Toronto, Amsterdam and Geneva. It is important to note that the results of Cummings’ analysis focus specifically on the Toronto chapter of the research. Initially, the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) was chosen as a suitable candidate for the ALTUR project. However, due to scheduling conflicts, the TDSB was unable to meet the requirements as outlined by the project. As a result, Pathways became a suitable alternative site of research due to its intensive media coverage.

ALTUR employs an ecological approach that analyzed individual, family, school and community factors in order to assess the impact of the Pathways program on the literacy development of Regent Park youth. Pathways identified twenty-seven (27) students as needing intensive literacy support. However, of the 27 students recommended to the program, only 18 responses were deemed to be admissible. While praising the efforts of the Pathways program, ALTUR, from their findings, questions the program’s effectiveness in addressing the academic needs of students who require extensive literacy support. The research draws attention to the informal structure of Pathways’ academic support component, coupled with the lack of literacy experience on the part of most of the Pathways volunteer tutors. Cummings (2012) notes that the ALTUR project, unlike Pathways, provides participants with systematic and focused individualized literacy support by means of experienced tutors over an extended period of time. This finding is of critical importance as it calls into question the evidence-based results reported by Pathways that constitute an essential part of its funding strategy. Cummings’ discussion of the program’s effectiveness is extremely useful in that it allows further analysis regarding the effectiveness of such community-based/non-profit initiatives in responding to social issues.
Megan Conway’s (2012) doctoral dissertation focuses on the Kitchener and Ottawa Pathways locations and critically examines the role of “place-based” measures as a response to poverty. Unlike policy initiatives, place-based poverty reduction measures can be described as community or people-driven initiatives that focus on poverty reduction (Conway, 2012). Recognizing that there has been an increase in the number of place-based responses, Conway identifies a gap in the literature pertaining to the evaluation of the effectiveness of place-based approaches in addressing issues of poverty. She also recognizes that evaluative frameworks employed to assess the success of place-based approaches hardly ever include clients/participants of respective agencies. It is in recognizing these gaps in the literature that Conway (2012) situates her analysis. A critical feature of her discussion is the manner in which success is defined and conceptualized throughout various levels of the organization. Although she recognizes the relationship between non-profits needing to portray themselves as successful and fundraising efforts, she does not delve deeper into analyzing this relationship. Her focus is on creating a more comprehensive evaluative analysis by broadening the definition of success and including participation of Pathways youth throughout the research process. Place-based initiatives are unique in their approach in addressing various social issues in low-income racialized communities. These programs serve as channels through which funding is directed toward low-income racialized communities. However, in order to obtain the necessary funds, the portrayal of success by these agencies is of vital importance. Due to this dependence on evidence of success in order to gain funding, research suggests that we critically assess the validity of statistical evidence, reports and narratives promoted by non-profits/NGOs.

Finally, Jensen Kettle-Verleyen’s (2013) analysis of Pathways focuses specifically on the validity of the results reported by the program. His research aims to contribute to the development of an independent tool of analysis that could determine the program’s effectiveness in the Ottawa
region. Similar to Conway’s discussion, Kettle-Verleyen also recognizes the link between program effectiveness and fundraising. In his analysis, he questions the statistical results claimed by Pathways and concludes that an independent tool of analysis would help to ensure that funding was distributed equitably among agencies in the non-profit sector. In his analysis of the statistical evidence specific to the Pathways Ottawa location, Kettle-Verleyen draws attention to some tensions that may skew the results reported by the program, specifically regarding program evaluators. Pathways utilizes absenteeism rates, credit accumulation and post-secondary enrolment in order to demonstrate the success of the model. However, he contends that there are discrepancies with respect to the data as it relates to the Ottawa location. For example, Pathways Ottawa works with four different school boards and thirty schools and student attendance may not be calculated the same way across these different entities. However, it should be noted that the use of statistical evidence is only one component of a larger and more complex process that is employed by the agency to attain funding.

The current funding structure fosters a system of dependency whereby non-profit and NGO organizations are reliant on public and private funds in order to sustain operations. Although both Conway and Kettle-Verleyen recognize that fundraising initiatives depend heavily on the reporting of successful program outcomes, neither mentions the power relations that operate throughout this process. In addition to providing quantitative evidence in order to attract and secure donors, agencies within this sector must also sell a particular representation of the communities and individuals with whom they work in order to ensure their continuity of their operations. This is not to trivialize conditions or experiences of poverty, nor am I of the view that we should not engage or support various forms of intervention measures. I am however, recognizing that there are relations of power that operate at varying levels in the funding structure. This exercise of power through traditional funding structures continues to undermine the efforts of those who are
committed to social change. In drawing attention to these power imbalances I attempt to disrupt these discourses by considering the question: how might we do this work differently?

**Methodology: Defining Critical Discourse Analysis**

In this research I employ a critical discourse analysis (CDA) approach in order to analyze and discuss the materials of Pathways. CDA as defined by Teun Van Dijk (2001) examines the way in which “social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context” (p. 352). Similarly, Norman Fairclough (1992) defines CDA as a, discourse analysis which aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony (p. 135).

Fairclough’s discussion demonstrates that CDA is a useful tool of analysis in that it makes visible the relationships between discourse, social structure and practice that work to naturalize dominant hegemonic beliefs in society. Van Dijk (1988) applied CDA as a methodological tool of analysis and examined the production of representations of racialized populations within the context of news media. Working in the framework of CDA, I draw specifically on relevant scholarship in the field of cultural studies. Here I rely primarily from the analytical work of the cultural theorist Stuart Hall and his discussion of representation in order to read the materials of Pathways to Education for race. Hall emphasizes the relationship between language, difference and meaning in what he refers to as systems of representation. Difference is essential to the production of meaning. In his analysis, Hall demonstrates the significance of difference in producing notions of Otherness. Furthering his discussion of representation and meaning, Hall (1997) analyzes the mobilization and dissemination of racial difference in the context of popular culture through his discussion of
representational practice, otherwise referred to as stereotyping. He centres his analysis predominantly on the use of visual imagery, and in so doing, he examines historical representations of Otherness that continue to remain present in contemporary society.

In his analysis, Hall examines the production and circulation of racialized stereotypes in popular culture primarily through the use of advertisements, film and images. In a similar way, I analyze stereotypical depictions of Regent Park and more specifically its youth in order to demonstrate the critical role of the media in producing the racial Other. In terms of my analysis, I focus on two large-scale news media publications: the Toronto Star and The Globe and Mail. The rationale for selecting these newspapers was their nationwide focus as well as large-scale readership. Throughout my analysis of these media articles, I pay attention to those articles which repeatedly characterized Regent Park as Black/racialized, welfare dependent, prone to crime, single-parent, and immigrant. It is my contention that this representation employed through print publications has served a dual role. In today’s highly competitive fundraising market, these images continue to construct and circulate low-income racialized populations as Other in popular culture. In addition organizations such as Pathways have also become an important medium through which stereotypes of racialized low-income populations are maintained.

**Stereotypes, pop culture and the helping agency**

The practice of stereotyping continues to establish and fix boundaries between groups as it constructs and includes the norm while excluding the different. In the case of the helping industry, agencies often employ particular representations of racialized populations with whom they work as different, helpless or in need. Although these images draw attention to particular social issues, for example poverty, the use of these particular representations removes agency from racialized
populations and continues to uphold binaries between the Self and the Other. Kennedy (2009) in his analysis of the impact of such images explains,

The reliance on these images thus has contradictory effects. On one hand, it facilitates principled action and consciousness raising. On the other, it can discard that which is most human about the victim: autonomy, dignity, and context. Victims have needs, not abilities.

Similar to Kennedy’s (2009) analysis, Jefferess (2002) also examines the use of visuals employed by international charities of racialized populations in poverty. In his discussion, he highlights that employing these images not only maintains binaries of difference, but also makes visible the connection between the use of stereotypical images and funding. Agencies in the helping sector often present images that convey a simplified and uncomplicated view of complex social issues such as poverty to donor audiences. As a result, the funding of these agencies is presented as a simple solution for the eradication of poverty. It should be noted that entering into these exchanges through funding practices offers donors a sense of comfort; such reinforcements negate systemic relations of power that continue to marginalize racialized populations. Throughout this process of commodification, Jefferess (2002) focuses on the extent to which the donors are satisfied by entering into these exchanges or sponsorship acts. This process constructs donors as the agent of change therefore removing agency on the part of racialized communities.

**Organization of Chapters**

The first step in understanding the commodification of poverty is to analyze the manner in which poverty, and by extension the poor, are conceptualized in North American academic scholarship. Chapter one presents an overview of how poverty and the poor are generally understood. I would like to point out that, from the outset, this chapter does not present an exhaustive literature review due to the extensive and multifaceted literature that exists on poverty. I acknowledge that some of the recent writings on the subject are not presented in this review. This
chapter aims to demonstrate that, from the early discussion of poverty presented in 17th century European society, low-income populations have been constructed as both different and deviant from middle class norms. However, in contemporary academic scholarship these differences become synonymous with race. In addition, to my analysis of academic scholarship on the subject of poverty, I discuss the role of the print media in supporting and disseminating knowledge of low-income populations to the wider North American society.

Academic scholarship and print publications on the subject of poverty construct low-income racialized populations as different. It is important to understand that the marking or fixing of difference is essential to the meaning-making process. In Chapter two, working in the broad framework of CDA, I analyze and discuss Hall’s theoretical writings on systems of representation in order to demonstrate the essential role that difference plays in the production of meaning. I also discuss how these systems, as presented by Hall, produce racialized populations as inferior in the context of popular culture. Specifically, I turn my attention to the helping industry in order to demonstrate how representations of the racialized Other as inferior and helpless become essential to the procurement of funding. In addition to Hall’s analysis, I rely on and discuss the analytical work of Heron (2007) regarding the “helping imperative” as well as other relevant scholarship in the field of development studies. These writings are pertinent to furthering my analysis as they demonstrate the productive nature of images in not only constructing binaries, but particular subjects.

The implications of Heron’s analysis regarding the production of subjects is fundamental to my discussion presented in Chapter three which traces the historical evolution of the Pathways to Education program, from its genesis as an experimental project that began in rural South Africa under the apartheid regime, to the Southern United States and finally to Regent Park, Toronto,
Canada. The apparent success of the model in Natal, South Africa, and Bolivar County, Mississippi, formed an integral part of a presentation at the 1995 International Community Health Center conference held in Montreal, Canada. After attending this presentation, founders Carolyn Acker and Norman Rowen set about developing Pathways to Education. The model presented at the International Community Health Center conference appeared to be the solution that they sought, in that it seemed to address the root cause of cyclical poverty. The chapter also points out that in Pathways’ experimental stage in South Africa, systemic racism was recognized as a critical contributing factor to the impoverishment and marginalization of Black populations under the Apartheid regime. This was also the case in the United States to some extent. However, throughout the development of the Regent Park model, any acknowledgment of systemic racism is notably absent. In addition to providing a historical background that led to the development of Pathways, the chapter critically examines the model employed by the organization. My research demonstrates that Pathways continues to reaffirm the causal explanations of poverty that portray racialized populations as deficient.

With the launch of Pathways as a national non-profit organization, this reliance on depictions of racialized populations as deficient became a central feature in the rhetoric produced by the organization in order to gain funding for its operations. The final chapter of the analysis traces the evolution of Pathways to Education Canada from a community-based organization to a modern day corporation. Recognizing the fiercely competitive fund-raising environment in which the organization must operate, Pathways employs several platforms such as the use of visual imagery, text, print and statistics in order to demonstrate its overall effectiveness and to attract potential donors. In my research, I refer to this process as the commodification of poverty. In addition, it is important to note that the selling of difference not only appeals to the sensibilities of the white middle class, but also engenders a desire to help that not only provides an uncomplicated
solution to a complex social issue but also provides a sense of satisfaction and fulfilment to those who participate in this exchange.
Chapter 1: Poverty- A Theoretical Framework

Poverty, in its simplest definition, means the inability to adequately provide for one’s basic needs: food, health care and safety (Johnson and Mason, 2012). However, in present day societies, low-income groups are classified and defined through the implementation of a statistical measure. In the American context the “poverty-line”\(^3\) is used to define and categorize populations in the society as low-income (Johnson and Mason, 2012, p. 108). Similarly, in Canada, the concept of the “poverty-line” is determined through a measure called the “Low-Income Cut Offs (LICO)\(^4\)” (Kazemipur & Halli, 2000, p. 18-19). While being used as the basis for policy prescriptions and interventions, these measures, however, do not provide underlying causal explanations as to why particular individuals and specific populations are predisposed to and ultimately trapped in the cycle of poverty.

A scan of the literature concerning the theoretical explanations of poverty shows different causal explanations of poverty throughout various historical periods. It should be noted that this debate is on-going and the theoretical explanations that have emerged focused on underlying causal factors, beginning with morality and ultimately moving to culture (Frazier 1939, Lewis 1961, 1966, Dean, 1991, Valencia 1997, Block, Balcazar & Keys, 2000). This chapter outlines the

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3 The “poverty-line” as discussed in Johnson and Mason (2012), is defined as a statistical tool employed at the State level to track, measure and categorize individuals within society. This tool of analysis was developed in 1965 by Mollie Orshansky at the Department of Agriculture. The initial statistical analysis was based on the cost of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Economy Food Plan. The analysis conducted by the USDA was based on household food consumptions surveys conducted in 1955. These surveys reveal that the average family at that time allocated approximately one-third of its expenditures on food. This calculation was then multiplied by the number of individuals living in a particular household in order to establish benchmark figure. To account for the cost of living over time these thresholds are adjusted annually through accounting for the overall consumer price (CPI).

4 The calculation of LICO is based data gathered from the annual Survey of Consumer Finances. The data gathered highlights that on average the Canadian family’s expenditure pre-tax on basic amenities (food, housing and clothing) are approximately 36%. In addition, Statistics Canada then adds 20% to the pre-taxed percentage on household expenditure on basic needs in order to establish the LICO line. Families that spend more than 56% of their gross income on their basic needs are considered low-income (see Kazemipur & Halli 2000, p. 18-19).
central arguments found in the discourses of poverty that attempt to rationalize the existence of poverty among particular groups as due to culture. The aim is to identify by way of the literature the process through which low-income populations are constructed as different. By the twentieth century, culture becomes synonymous with race. In addition to analyzing the discourses of poverty which mark racialized populations as different, in this chapter, I also discuss the significant role of the media in upholding and disseminating these particular representations. Media representations of low-income populations are critical in that they support and are supported by theoretical explanations of poverty. Images of poverty produced in the context of media continue to shape and order our thoughts and opinions regarding low-income populations in society.

**From morality to culture: defining racialized populations as dysfunctional**

Dean (1991) critically examines pauperism and the organization of the poor in British society during the 17th century. In his discussion, he points out, at that time, the poor were categorized and defined in relation to work: “those that cannot work; second, those that will work; and third, those that will not work” (p. 25). Individuals in the third category were “afflicted by the ‘taint’ of slothfulness’, seduced by the luxury of the alehouse, and liable to punishment as rogues and vagabonds (Dean, 1991, p. 26)”. In the then existing hierarchical social order, those individuals, who were positioned at the base of the pyramid, were seen to be justifiably positioned due to their innate immoral character and were thus marked as different. As Dean (1991) explains,

In *A Discourse Touching Provision for the Poor* (1683) Matthew Hale argues that the absence of the provision of employment and the bringing up of children in poor families in the ways of begging and stealing leads to ‘a successive multiplication of hurtful or at least unprofitable people… (p.29)

It follows logically, that it was necessary to manage the moral character of the poor in order to ensure the socioeconomic stability of the society. As the poverty debate continued to evolve, by
the twentieth century, theoretical debates that centered on the pathologies of the poor shifted from morality as a causal factor to the role of culture.

Alice O’Connor (2000), provides critical insight into the conditions which gave rise to theoretical explanations of poverty that centred on culture. O’Connor (2000), highlights that the sociological and anthropological frameworks of the 1930s and 1940s did not view the problem of poverty among racialized populations as a systemic issue but rather a cultural one. Despite scholarship such as Du Bois (1899), who emphasized the role that systemic structures and discriminatory practices played in producing the isolation and subsequent poverty of Black populations in Philadelphia, poverty continued to be explained as due to culture. Due to the impact of several structural changes such as, immigration restriction, and the increased migration of Black populations from the rural South to urban centres, Black people soon replaced European immigrants as the most visible racial Other in metropolitan centres (O’Connor, 2000). Despite decline of the biological/eugenics movement and the rise of Black academics in the field of anthropology and sociology during the 1930s, the scholarly debates regarding poverty nonetheless remained centred on explanations of culture. The theoretical explanations of the 1930s and 1940s centred on the assimilationist arguments propagated through the writings of Franklin Frazier (1939). In his discussion he traces the historical development of pathological behaviours of the Black family from slavery to the post World War I era.

Frazier (1939) emphasizes the role and function of the family in contributing to poverty among Black populations. For Frazier the family was a critical social institution through which culture was transmitted. In his discussion, Frazier (1939) highlights the effect of three historical periods: slavery, emancipation and reconstruction, and urbanization on the disorganization and reorganization of the Black family unit. He discusses the development and growth of pathological
behaviours which were supposedly characteristic of the Black family in North American society, notably, female-headed family structure, sexual promiscuity, criminal activity, and delinquency (Frazier, 1939). He is of the view that the extent to which the norms and values of white society were culturally assimilated by the Black population determined the production of either a stable or dysfunctional family unit. In the instances where acculturation occurs, these individuals and families could secure economic status as well as successfully transmit the cultural norms of white society to successive generations. The adaptation of these cultural norms by particular individuals and families is what Frazier (1939) referred to as the stabilizing element of the Black population. In his discussion, he centres his analysis on the ability of Black migrant’s adaptation to urban centres throughout the post-World War I era.

According to Frazier, these labouring migrants were largely illiterate, occupied low-income jobs as domestic workers and common labourers, and resided in low-income areas or slums on the periphery of the city. The conditions of inner city life fosters the development of culturally pathological behaviours as evidenced by high rates of desertions, juvenile delinquency and illegitimate births (Frazier, 1939, p. 381). The rural Black family living in metropolitan centres were producing children that were unable to adjust to the demands of modern life. Frazier’s assimilationist argument continued to be evident in the poverty discourse of the 1960s.

Daniel Moynihan and Nathan Glazer (1963) and Moynihan (1965) retooled the assimilationist argument of the previous decades. In Beyond The Melting Pot, Moynihan and Glazer (1963), collaboratively reviewed the cultural assimilation of several minority groups. They assessed the impact of the degree of assimilation of Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, Irish as well as African Americans in New York City in achieving social status and upward mobility. In their discussion, Glazer and Moynihan (1963) refuted the image of New York City as being a melting
pot and instead focused on the inherent tendencies of each group and their concomitant prospects for upward societal mobility. In their analysis, there is a continuing dysfunctional statistical portrait of the Black community. Drawing attention to the high rates of illegitimate births, female headed households and absent fathers as contributing factors to the low socioeconomic status of the community, they argue that “prejudice, low income, poor education explain only so much” (Glazer and Moynihan, 1970, p. 50-52). These views continue to be present in Moynihan’s (1965) analysis of the Black family, in which he argues that Blacks were trapped in a “tangle” of pathologies that stemmed from the existence of a deviant family structure. However, this view did not go unchallenged.

In response, Charles Valentine’s (1968) critique of Glazer and Moynihan’s analysis concludes that the authors continued to preference theoretical arguments based on judgements and preconceptions from a bygone era. In comparison to other minority groups, Valentine (1968) points out the harshness with which the Black individual and by extension the Black family was portrayed within Glazer and Moynihan’s analysis. As he explains,

The chapters on Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish contain no despairing comments about the “irresponsible,” “depraved,” “unworthy poor.” To some extent at least, this contrast seems related to indications in Glazer and Moynihan’s source notes that more descriptive cultural materials was available to them on the other groups than on Negroes (1968, p. 27).

In his work, Valentine (1968) did not oppose the view that low-income populations possessed a distinct culture, though he was of the opinion that Glazer and Moynihan based the application of this notion on a prejudgement that reflects a white middle class perspective.

**And the beat goes on: Racial underpinnings and the Culture of Poverty**

It is evident from the theoretical explanations of poverty throughout the 1930s to 1940s, that the lack of cultural integration of the norms and values of white middle class by the low-
income Black population was seen as a critical causal factor in explaining the poverty experienced by this group (Frazier, 1939, Glazer and Moynihan, 1963, Moynihan, 1965). By the 1960s, President Lyndon B. Johnson of the United States officially declared a “War on Poverty”. Following this declaration, there was an upsurge in the poverty literature that identified the role of culture as the critical factor in predisposing racialized populations to poverty. The theoretical arguments presented in this framework maintain the culture of low-income racialized populations as pathological and thus contributing to their lack of social mobility. Similar to earlier explanations of poverty, the arguments discussed in the culture of poverty debate continues to centre on pathological traits and behaviours such as, specific attitudes, values, sexuality and family structure.

The culture of poverty model, popularized by American anthropologist Oscar Lewis, identifies the behavioural and attitudinal differences exhibited by low-income populations that were not only counter-normative but were considered key determinants in contributing to their ongoing poverty. These differences are referred to as a “subculture” – a way of life handed down from generation to generation (Lewis, 1966, Valentine, 1968, Leacock, 1971). In his discussion Lewis (1966) identifies 50 character traits that hinders the social mobility of this population. Using the observations of Latino families, he explains,

Once (the culture of poverty has come-into existence it tends to perpetuate itself. By the time slum children are six or seven they have usually absorbed the basic attitudes and values of their subculture. Thereafter they are psychologically unready to take full advantage of changing conditions or improving opportunities that may develop in their lifetime. (Lewis, 1966, p. 14)

Although Lewis contends that low income, racialized populations may share and agree with white middle-class values, they are however, unable to alter their circumstances due to their adherence to a pathological culture. The behaviours and attitudes of these groups, according to Lewis, were initially conceived as coping mechanisms, a response to changing socioeconomic
conditions in society. However, these initial survival strategies later became a normative or standard way of life that replicates through successive generations thus trapping them in a cycle of poverty. Over time, these norms produce a legitimate subculture that is perceived to be detrimental to the success of low-income racialized populations (Lewis, 1961, 1966, Harrington, 1981).

In *The Unheavenly City*, Edward Banfield (1970), presents a different perspective regarding the culture of poverty school of thought as it applies to racialized populations residing in urban centers. While Banfield posits that certain populations are predisposed to an innate “ethos” or approach to life that hinders their social mobility, he acknowledges the impact of systemic racism and structural inequalities on racialized populations. However, he posits that these factors have little bearing on the socioeconomic positioning of an individual when “non-racial factors” such as place of origin, class, and education levels are controlled for (Banfield, 1970). In his comparative analysis between what he refers to as the “Census Negro” and the “Statistical Negro”, he concludes that when non-racial factors are controlled for there exist minimal differences between whites and Blacks. He concludes by highlighting that in “some respects the Statistical Negro is indistinguishable from the white and in all respects the differences between him and the white are smaller than those between the Census Negro and the white” (Banfield, 1970, p. 70). In his analysis of rates of unemployment differentials between whites and Blacks, Banfield (1973) argues,

One important factor behind unemployment differentials is place of residence: boys and girls who live in districts where there is a relative surplus of unskilled workers are at a manifest disadvantage whatever their color. Occupation and income of parents is another: boys and girls whose parents own businesses or “know people” have an advantage in finding jobs. Class culture is still another factor: lower class youth are less likely than others to look for jobs, and the lower their class culture the less acceptable they are to their employers (p. 71).
For Banfield, class was a more significant factor than race in producing poverty. He viewed employment discrimination as not only an issue for Black communities but for all racialized groups, including Jews, Italians, and Irish populations. However, in his discussion of Black populations he states that while “there is something about Jewish culture that makes the Jew tend to be upwardly mobile, there may be something about the Negro culture that makes the Negro tend not to be” (1973, p. 73). It is evident from Banfield’s and other scholars presented thus far that the spectre of race continues to be the critical underlying rationale for the poverty experienced by racialized populations.

**Race as a signifier of poverty: From the Culture of Poverty to the Underclass**

By the 1980s, the culture of poverty model, as propagated by the earlier theorists, was repackaged and presented under rubric – the underclass. This term underclass refers to a geographically specific segment of low-income populations residing in the inner cities (Wilson, 1987, Morris, 1989, O’Connor, 2000). The term was popular among academics and political conservatives due to its seemingly neutral meaning and narrow parameters. Unlike the culture of poverty label that classified all low-income racialized populations as pathological, the underclass refers to a subcategory of low-income populations. For policy makers and politicians this meant little restructuring or redistribution of income is required to address the needs of the low-income groups (Morris, 1989). In addition, this subtle change in language also meant that policy makers and politicians “could reintroduce their concerns about the values of the poor without overtly tying these concerns to a historically tainted theory” (Morris, 1989, p. 129). Lastly, the term underclass unlike the culture of poverty was better suited to traditional sociological frameworks that focus on class-based stratification (Morris, 1989).
The popularization of the underclass in the context of social sciences, centres on the structural conditions that adversely impacted a particular segment of low-income racialized populations. William Wilson (1987), in his discussion of the underclass, identifies several factors that contributed to the emergence of this group. In his analysis, he describes the adverse impact of structural and economic shifts throughout the 1970s on Black urban populations. A critical factor that he highlights in his research was the impact of “urban deindustrialization” that resulted in a decrease in manufacturing jobs available for Black low-skilled inner city residents (Wilson, 1987). In addition to the decrease and movement of manufacturing jobs from urban centres, Wilson (1987) notes that increased employment opportunities in finance and service industries contributed to elevated levels of joblessness among Black urban male populations.

Another consequence of this economic restructuring was the relocation of the Black middle and working class families from inner cities to suburban areas. The movement of this population out of the inner cities was due largely to the significant strides made by the Civil Rights Movement that resulted in a decline in housing segregation (Wilson, 1987). The removal of the ameliorating influence of the Black working class leads to an increase in social isolation and higher levels of concentrated poverty in these communities. This residual population that, came to occupy these urban centers and comprised increased numbers of single parent female headed families, unemployed, welfare dependent individuals, and persons displaying other pathological behaviors were known as the underclass (Wilson, 1987).

Throughout the discussion thus far the theoretical explanations of poverty as presented in the context of social science demonstrates poverty to be a central characteristic of racialized populations. In his discussion, Goldberg (1993) highlights that social constructions of race “has been a constitutive feature of modernity, ordering conceptions of self and other, of sociopolitical
membership and exclusion” (p. 148). This is evident through the production of knowledge where social constructs of race not only legitimizes the social positioning and superiority of the dominant white population but also subjugates Others. Power exercised through the production of social knowledge produces a “library” or an “archive” of information that works to define, identify and categorize Otherness (Said, 1979, Goldberg, 1993, Omi and Winant, 1993, Hall, 2007). However, as Goldberg (1993) points out that “knowledge, in particular knowledge of and about the social, is not produced in a vacuum”, rather it is put into practice through various social institutions (Goldberg, 1993, p. 148).

In his discussion of Wilson’s theoretical analysis of the underclass, Goldberg (1993) states that by the 1970s the term was no longer employed as an economic concept, but continues to signify culturally pathological characteristics such as: joblessness, welfare dependent, criminal, promiscuous and uneducated. These characteristics of the underclass identified in the poverty discourse and reinforced through media, low-income populations become visible through the outward sign of race (Goldberg, 1993). He contends that these pathological predetermined characteristics are evident throughout the various theoretical explanations of poverty and used to portray Black families as vastly different from the normative standards of the dominant, white population. Goldberg (1993) analyzes the manner in which power is exercised through practices of naming and evaluation. As he points out, the process of naming the underclass brings it into existence and thereby, at once, constructs its members as Other. In one form or another, the theoretical debates have focused on the perceived pathological behaviours associated with Black/racialized individuals and families and their supposed refusal to adapt to the changing sociopolitical and economic landscape. Scholarly arguments continues to blame racialized populations for their circumstances rather than analyzing the impact of systemic racism that (re)produces poverty.
Systemic racism and the labour market: a Canadian perspective

Few Canadian scholars have paid attention to the relationship between systemic racism and poverty. Among them, Grace Edward Galabuzi stands out. Galabuzi (2006) draws attention to the categorization of Canadian society along racial lines beginning with Aboriginal populations. Galabuzi (2006) states that the social constructions of race has a long history in Canadian society. Despite the fact that, in more recent times, such constructs have been disputed, particularly with the rise of multiculturalist policies. Galabuzi (2006) contends that these attempts to present a racially neutral society devoid of relations of power, continues to serve a sociopolitical purpose that maintains rather than challenges the continued exploitation of racialized populations.

From its founding, Canada was intended to be a white-settler society and social constructions of race were therefore essential, from the outset, for the building and later the maintaining of a white nation (Razack, 2002, Galabuzi, 2006, Thobani, 2007). As a result, to ensure that Canada remains a mirror image of white European society, the codification of racial hierarchies was embedded in the legislative framework. These early laws that legitimize the racial hierarchy included the 1876 Indian Act, the Chinese Immigration Act of 1885, and the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1923, which prohibited Chinese immigration until 1947 (Galabuzi, 2006). The legislating of racialized groups as different and Other, on both physical and cultural levels, works to socially exclude these populations and thus deny them full citizenship, all the while entrenching the cultural, political, economic and social positioning of the dominant, white population (Galabuzi, 2008). As Galabuzi (2006) explains,

Essentializing race draws exclusionary boundaries, allowing the privileged to pursue specific interests at the expense of the broader society, and particularly of the groups that are depicted as outsiders. The social construction of race and ethnicity, like other socially constructed categories such as gender, serves to distinguish between groups for the purpose of creating or maintaining an advantage for the dominant group….The power of race consists in the adaptive capacity to
define population groups and by extension social agents as self and “other” at key historical moments (p. 30).

The social construction of race as presented by Galabuzi (2006) serves not only to mark differences between groups but also installs the white population as the privileged dominant group. In the Canadian context the advantages enjoyed by this group is reflected in the financial gap that continues to exist between the racialized populations and white Canadian society.

Discriminatory policies and practices in the labour market result in an overrepresentation of racialized populations in low-income and precarious occupations (Galabuzi, 2006, Galabuzi, 2008, Das Gupta, 2008, Li 2008). As a result lower wages coupled with precarious forms of employment are responsible for the stark differences that exist in the living standards between racialized and white populations. These factors produce what Galabuzi (2008) refers to as “economic apartheid”, where racialized populations are socially excluded from fully engaging in the labour market, thus hindering their upward mobility in society (p. xi). Galabuzi’s argument that institutionalized racism is a historical feature of Canadian society is supported and articulated in the work of Tania Das Gupta (2008). She points out that, prior to World War II, because of systemic racism, most racialized individuals in Canada were confined to precarious forms of employment with very few being entrepreneurs and professionals. As Das Gupta (2008) explains,

For Aboriginal peoples, people of colour, immigrant workers, the precarious labour market conditions in which they worked were an extension of their precarious conditions in society at large, where they were socially constructed as dependents, as non-citizens, and as non-workers deemed to be “others” in relations to employed white male citizens. Their otherness was marked by the colour of their skin, their “strange” customs and languages, their immigration status, and their lack of citizenship rights (p.144).

Accordingly, Das Gupta’s (2008) analysis reflects Galabuzi’s (2008) discussion in that she demonstrates how constructions of Otherness, implemented through legislation and State policies maintain Canada as a white nation. Prior to the 1960s, Canada satisfied its labour needs through
immigration from white, protestant European nations. However following this period, due to decreased interest from these traditional sources of labor, the Canadian government altered its immigration policy through the implementation of the 1967 Immigration Act. This change in legislation results in an increased influx of populations from the Global South in order to satisfy its labour shortfall. As demonstrated by both Galabuzi (2006, 2008) and Das Gupta (2008), a significant portion of non-white immigrants were forced into precarious forms of employment despite possessing high levels of educational attainment, professional experience and language ability. The continued funnelling of qualified non-white immigrants to the lower levels of the employment pyramid is attributed to the existence of discriminatory policies and practices in the labour market. Presently, these discriminatory policies and practices continue to manifest in a variety of forms, such as the devaluation of both educational and professional experiences attained outside of Canada, coupled with an increased demand for Canadian experience, continues to force racialized populations into accepting lower socioeconomic positions (Galazbuzi, 2006, 2008, Das Gupta, 2008).

Race, poverty and the role of the Media: poverty as a Black problem

In this chapter thus far I have explored the theoretical explanations of poverty that produce a particular representation of racialized low-income populations. Due to the focus of my research, in addition to drawing on the theoretical debates of poverty it is also important to highlight the role of the media. The rationale for this focus is that the media, in disseminating information to mass audiences, contributes to the social construction and reinstallation of racialized poverty stereotypes. Raymond Franklin (1999), highlights that it is through a “white lens”, that media depictions and generalizations of the Black low-income communities are produced and circulated.

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5 I use the term media in the context of this research to refer to mediums of communication that include but not limited to: television, print, images, film, video, Internet, and various forms of social media (Youtube, Facebook, Twitter).
In reviewing the manner in which the Black community was depicted in a *Time magazine* cover story, Franklin (1999) explains,

> The universe of the (black) underclass is often a junk heap of rotting housing, broken furniture, crummy food, alcohol, and drugs.” Add a graffiti and dimly lit streets littered with garbage and beer cans, and the image that whites have in their minds about black underclass neighborhoods (and, to one degree or another, perhaps all black neighborhoods) is completed (p.129).

Visual images produced through media publications continue to construct and uphold a particular representation of Black populations as pathological. The images presented are both supported by and in turn support the discourses of poverty. In his analysis, Franklin (1999) contends that Black men are often portrayed in two ways in the media: they are either depicted as “unreformable criminals or as irresponsible fathers” (p. 129). Similarly, Franklin points to the media’s negative depiction of young Black women in poverty. These portraits centre predominantly on illegitimate birthrates and teen pregnancies that convey the “belief that black sexual behaviour is completely indiscriminate and promiscuous” (p. 130). However, the depictions of the Black population living in poverty in the mass media, are statistically less than 1% of the larger population in the United States and represent an exaggerated social construction that has been stage-managed and presented as evidence of the failure of affirmative action programs and even liberal policies (Franklin, 1999, p.139)

Similarly, in analyzing the role of the media in its reporting of Black poverty, it is important to note the work of Martin Gilens (1996) and Rosalee Clawson and Rakuya Trice (2000). In their respective analyzes Gilens (1996) and Clawson & Trice (2000) examine media news articles in order to demonstrate the pervasiveness of these representations of poverty as a Black problem. Gilens (1996) in his theoretical analysis examines articles published on the subject of poverty and poverty-related topics throughout the period January 1st, 1988 to December 31st, 1992. Here, he analyzes three U.S. based newsmagazines, *Time, Newsweek, U.S. News*, and *World Report*. The
findings presented by Gilens (1996) highlight that “African American made up 62 percent of the poor people pictured in these stories, over twice their true population of 29 percent” (p. 520). In his discussion, Gilens (1996) demonstrates that these depictions of poverty in media work to distort and reinforce perceptions of poverty as a Black problem. He explains:

A reader of these newsmagazines is likely to develop the impression that America’s poor is predominantly black. This distorted portrait of the American poor cannot help but reinforce negative stereotypes of blacks as mired in poverty and contribute to the belief that poverty is primarily a “black problem” (p. 521)

These narratives of poverty presented in various magazine articles depict Black low-income populations unsympathetically and as the undeserving poor. Through the use of images and text, the Black American experience of poverty is viewed as intergenerational and is characterized by illegitimate births, crime, violence, welfare dependent, high unemployment and high school dropouts.

Clawson and Trice (2000) analyze media portrayals of poverty and support the conclusions reached by Gilens (1996), that poverty is constructed as a characteristic feature of Black populations in the United States. They extend the period covered by Gilens discussing the media portrayals of poverty for the period January 1st, 1993 to December 31st, 1998 in five U.S. based magazines, Time, Newsweek, Business Week, New York Times, and the U.S. News and World Report. Based on their research, Clawson and Trice (2000) conclude that although “Blacks make up less than one-third of the poor, the media would lead citizens to believe that two out of every three poor people are black” (p. 54). Their findings indicates that,

the magazines often portrayed an inaccurate picture of the demographic characteristics of poor people. These magazines overrepresented the black, urban, and nonworking poor. Blacks were especially prominent in stories on unpopular poverty topics, and black women were portrayed with the most children. Other stereotypical traits linked with poor people were not common in the magazine portrayals. Nevertheless, in those instances when the media depicted poor people
with stereotypical characteristics, they tended to be black or Hispanic (Clawson & Trice 2000, p. 63).

This overrepresentation of stereotypical images of racialized populations is also evident in Canadian news media. Despite the limited research regarding representation of racialized poverty in the Canadian context, the existing literature draws attention to the negative depictions of racialized/Aboriginal populations that uphold and reinforce notions of Otherness, but also construct these populations as a threat to society (Fleras, 1995, 2001, Henry and Tator, 2005).

As Minelle Mahtani (2001) states, media publications are neither fair, objective nor democratic in their depictions of racialized populations. This is evident in the continued portrayals of Black populations in Canada as criminals, villains or victims, while Aboriginal populations are presented as primitive, drunks, or savages (Fleras and Kunz, 2001). In a similar manner, Muslim populations are depicted as terrorists and by extension viewed as a threat to national security (Ojo, 2006). Representations produced through media reinforce binaries of us and them, thereby upholding a particular notion of Canadian identity, from which racialized populations continue to be excluded (Bullock and Jafri, 2001 Mahtani, 2001). However, in addition to the production of binaries, a key function of the media industry is the simplification of knowledge for audiences to consume, “by tapping into a collective portfolio of popular and unconscious images, both print and visual, each of which imposes a readily identifiable frame or narrative spin” (Fleras, 2001, p. 318). The constant repetition and exposure to these stereotypes of racialized populations naturalize these depictions to the point where they seem to become a reality (Wilson and Gutierrez, 1985).

In analyzing the theoretical explanations of poverty, it becomes evident that poverty is presented as a characteristic feature of racialized populations and results from their own inherent deficiencies. As discussed, these racialized representations of poverty are not only confined to the academic debates among social scientists but also pervades popular culture, in particular, the
media. The stereotypes presented by the media are often simplified one-sided versions of a complex social issue circulated for consumption. In establishing racialized populations as dysfunctional through the knowledge production process, the media disseminates and keeps in circulation these types of depictions that assist organizations such as Pathways in their bid to secure funding.
Chapter 2: Representation, Meaning and Difference

This chapter focuses on analyzing the systems of representation that produce racialized populations as Other. Indeed, this framework serves to provide contextual meaning to the discussion specific to Pathways contained in the following chapters. First, I turn to Hall’s discussion of representation, which critically discusses how meaning is produced, interpreted, and exchanged among members of a culture. Hall provides a contextual framework for the analysis of the representational practice known as stereotyping. Moreover, he specifically analyzes the use of visual images and language found in particular dominant messages about racialized populations in society at large. In the context of my research, Hall’s work provides the necessary analytical tools for investigating media representations of poverty. My aim is to demonstrate that, in its quest to raise funds, Pathways employs a particular representation of low-income populations that depicts the face of poverty as racialized, single parent, immigrant, and crime-prone. Pathways’ representation of poverty simultaneously conveys the message that the poverty experienced by racialized populations is a result of their own deficiency.

The second half of the chapter focuses on relevant scholarship in the area of development studies. Here I discuss the effects of images that not only shape and maintain perceptions of racialized populations as different, but also work to uphold relations of power. In this context, I draw on the writings of McClintock (1995), Heron (2007), McEwan (2009), Samimi (2010) and Mahrouse (2011) in order to establish a framework for analyzing the formation of dominant identities. The images of poverty as disseminated by Pathways emit powerful messages and are productive; they work to establish and reinforce particular racialized subject positions. Moreover,
these theorists provide critical insights into the production of the identity of the white subject that comes to know itself as not only superior but more importantly as good.

**Systems of representation and the production of meaning**

As a starting point for my analysis, a key understanding to be developed is the nexus that exists between language, representation and meaning. Hall (1997a) posits that representation is “an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture. It does involve the use of language, of signs and images which stand for or represent things” (p. 15). He identifies language as the medium through which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a particular culture (Hall, 1997a). However, in his discussion, he broadens the concept of language beyond the use of the vocal and printed word. Accordingly, Hall (1997a) views language as a comprehensive “representational system” that encompasses the use of various media, including: visual images, body language, and sounds to convey thoughts, feelings and ideas between members of a particular culture. Hall highlights the critical interconnectedness among language, representation and meaning. He explains,

> In part, we give things meaning by how we represent them− the words we use about them, the stories we tell about them, the images of them we produce, the emotions we associate with them, the ways we classify and conceptualize them, the values we place on them (Hall, 1997a, p. 3).

It is therefore evident from Hall’s discussion that meaning should not be regarded as a natural occurrence, but rather as socially constructed and not fixed. Before furthering the analysis, it is important to briefly outline the two “systems of representation” Hall’s refers to in his analysis in order to understand the processes involved in the production of meaning and ultimately representation.

Language is the second “system of representation” that is vital to communication, but more importantly, to the production of meaning (Hall, 1997a). However, in addition to language, Hall
identifies another “system” that is vital to the production of meaning and representation. In his analysis, Hall (1997a) states that it is through this system that objects, individuals and events are organized, clustered, arranged and classified in accordance with a set mental concepts (p. 17). The correlation between these objects and the mental representations formed in our thoughts allow us to refer to things both inside and outside the mind; without them we are unable to interpret our world meaningfully (Hall, 1997a). In addition to these two systems in his analysis, Hall continues his discussion by emphasizing the role of culture. Hall (1997a) acknowledges that while each individual may interpret their surroundings in a unique way, it is through a shared “conceptual map” that we communicate, share and interpret these realities in a similar way (p. 19). This is what it means to belong to a shared culture. By being able to interpret our realities in a similar manner enables us “to build up a shared of meanings and thus constructs a social world which we inhabit together” (Hall, 1997a, p. 18).

Furthering his analysis of representation and meaning, Hall draws on three theoretical approaches. While Hall outlines the key arguments presented in the reflective, intentional and constructionist framework regarding representation and the production of meaning, his analysis centers predominantly on the constructionist framework. His rationale for relying on theoretical arguments put forth in this approach is due to its significance in contributing to the field of cultural studies. He focuses his attention on the writings of Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure and French philosopher Michel Foucault respectively.

**Signs, signifiers and social constructions**

The constructionist framework acknowledges that objects in and of themselves as well as “individual users” of language cannot fix meaning in language (Hall, 1997a). In this framework, objects do not possess meaning, rather meaning is constructed through representational systems
such as language that are used to represent concepts. Accordingly, it is the “social actors who use
the conceptual systems of their culture and the linguistic and other representational systems to
construct meaning, to make the world meaningful and to communicate about that world
meaningfully to others” (Hall, 1997a, p. 25). While “signs” possess a material dimension, meaning
however is not dependent on the material object but its “symbolic function”. This process where
“signs” are used to convey or symbolize meaning is referred to by constructionists as “signify”.

For Saussure, the production of meaning is dependent on language. He views language as
a system of signs that includes images, sounds, and the written word, all employed to communicate
or convey ideas or concepts (Hall, 1997a, p. 31). Material objects can therefore communicate
meaning to members of a particular culture. In his discussion of signs, Saussure divides the concept
into two elements, which he refers to as the “signifier” and the “signified”. The “signifier”
correlates to the material object while the “signified” refers to a particular idea or concept within
our own mental framework (Hall, 1997a). However, Saussure points out that a natural correlation
between the “signifier” and the “signified” does not exist and that signs, in and of themselves, are
not endowed with a fixed meaning.

A key point Saussure’s notes in his discussion is that in order to produce meaning,
signifiers are organized into what he refers to as a “system of difference”. Hall (1997) contends
that,

(Saussure’s) attention to binary oppositions brought Saussure to the revolutionary
proposition that a language consists of signifiers, but in order to produce meaning,
the signifiers have to be organized into ‘a system of differences’. It is the
differences between signifiers which signify (p. 32).

As Saussure saw it, white as a concept makes no sense on its own unless society also had a concept
of black. Words only have meaning within a social system. Saussure’s analysis where meaning is
produced through organizing signifiers into a system of difference is particularly important to the discussion of the social construction of race and will be discussed later on in the chapter.

Another critical feature of Saussure’s analysis centres on the role of interpretation. The relationship between the signifier and the signified are not permanently fixed by cultural codes. Instead, the shift that occurs between the signifier and signified alters the conceptual map of a particular culture, and effectively changes the manner in which we classify and organize our world. Recognizing that meaning is constantly changing throughout various historical periods is critical to the discussion of representation in that it continues to demonstrate that language is not fixed to meaning. Due to the constant shift or “slippage” of meaning, Hall (1997a) brings to attention that in order for meaning to be understood by members of a culture, the process of interpretation must be “active”. Accordingly, Hall (1997a) recognizes that the role of the reader/interpreter is just as important as the producer in order for meaning to be successfully understood. This is to say that signs that cannot be successfully interpreted by members of a culture are useless.

**Discourse, power and the production of meaning**

In addition to discussing the academic writings of Saussure, Hall (1997a) also draws attention to Foucault in order further his discussion of representation and meaning. Hall recognizes that, in the meaning-making process, while Saussure centres his analysis on examining the role and function of language, Foucault analyzes discourse. The term “discourse” refers to a literary concept, but Foucault (1972) expands this interpretation beyond the confines of literature. Foucault is interested in the conditions and practices that tend to regulate our conduct and ability to discuss and interpret particular topics meaningfully. Foucault defines “discourse” as a,

...group of statements which provide a language for talking about – a way of representing the knowledge about – a particular topic at a particular historical moment. …Discourse is about the production of knowledge through language.
But… since all social practices entail meaning, and meanings shape and influence what we do… (Hall, 1992, p. 291 cited by Hall, 1997, p. 44).

What is important to take away from Foucault’s discussion of discourse is that nothing that is considered to be meaningful exists outside of discourse. Discourse produces and defines objects of knowledge; those objects order and regulate the manner in which we are able to discuss particular topics meaningfully. In addition, discourse also limits and restricts “other ways of talking, of conducting ourselves in relation to the topic or constructing knowledge about it” (Hall, 1997a, p. 44).

**Stereotyping, difference and power: productions of the racialized Other**

In his later analysis, Foucault (1977) focuses on the relationship between knowledge and power:

We should admit… that power produces knowledge (and not simply by encouraging it because it serves power or by applying it because it is useful); that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations. (Foucault 1977a:22, cited in McHoul and Grace 1977, p. 59).

This relationship is critical to the production of meaning and, ultimately, representation. From this discussion, we understand power to be productive rather than an oppressive force that circulates throughout varying levels of society. The relationship between power and knowledge demonstrates that knowledge does not simply operate in a void – it is put to work through particular social institutions, social practices, and institutional regimes throughout different historical periods (Foucault, 1977). The effects of this power/knowledge relationship are that “certain bodies, certain gestures, certain discourses, certain desires come to be constituted as individuals” (Foucault, 1980, p. 98). In his discussion, Hall (1997) states that, in order to understand the concept of punishment, for example, we must analyze the relationship between power and discourse/knowledge that has produced “a certain concept of crime and the criminal” (p. 49). What is evident through Hall’s
example is that the production and circulation of various forms of knowledge has real effects and that it produces particular types of subjects.

Hall furthers his discussion of representation by applying these concepts as outlined above to the work of images of Black men and women circulating in popular culture. Hall (1997b) makes visible the relationship between difference, representation and power. He notes that the meanings conveyed through these images work to produce binaries in which Black populations are continually constructed as Other. As a result, power in the context of representation operates through the marking or fixing of difference and this notion is extremely relevant to my analysis of Pathways in later chapters. However, prior to analyzing contemporary representations of racialized populations, it is necessary to briefly discuss the exercise of power through the production and circulation of stereotypes present throughout the colonial period.

In this context, Hall (1997b) examines particular epochs throughout history that gave rise to a number of popular representations that constructed Black populations as different. Power in Hall’s analysis is understood “not only in terms of economic exploitation and physical coercion, but also in broader cultural or symbolic terms, including the power to represent someone or something in a certain way – within a certain “regime of representation””(Hall, 1997b, p. 259). The exercise of power through representational practices of stereotyping produces “symbolic boundaries” that define and include in its parameters what is considered normal and excludes what is Other. Hall (1997b) explains,

Stereotyping, in other words, is part of the maintenance of social and symbolic order. It sets up a symbolic frontier between the ‘normal’ and the ‘deviant’, the ‘normal’ and the ‘pathological’, the ‘acceptable’ and the ‘unacceptable’, what ‘belongs’ and what does not or is the ‘Other’, between ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’, Us and Them. It facilitates the ‘blinding’ or bonding together all of Us who are ‘normal’ into one ‘imagined community’; and it sends into symbolic exile… (p. 258).
Stereotyping produces binaries between groups, setting clear boundaries and definitions of normal and deviant, while simultaneously fostering a sense of community among those belonging to the former. The use of visual images spanning the colonial period to the twenty-first century is a mechanism through which knowledge of the Other is disseminated and particular subject identities are produced.

**From Colonial advertising to the “CNN effect”: racialized populations as helpless**

McClintock’s (1995) analysis identifies the crucial role that visual imagery plays in the production of racialized populations and also its effectiveness in disseminated knowledge of the Other among members of a particular society. She focuses her attention specifically on advertising campaigns throughout the Victorian period. Soap advertisements employ images of Victorian domesticity and colonial exploitation in order to distinguish between particular brands in the commercial market. Prior to this period, advertising campaigns were scarcely employed as a tool to promote household products. However, due to increasing demand for goods and raw materials from the colonies and greater competition in European markets, advertising became ever more crucial.

Images of colonial exploits printed on commercial goods found in the homes of the Victorian middle-class fostered a sense of nationalism among the British population. Initially, knowledge of racialized populations was accessible only to those belonging to the elite class in Victorian society (McClintock 1995). With increasing reliance on advertising, visual images of colonial superiority disseminated knowledge of the racial Other among the mass populace of Victorian society. Advertisements became a mechanism through which European populations came to know the Other. McClintock (1995) refers to this process as “commodity racism.” She argues that these practices are a “distinct form of scientific racism in its capacity to expand beyond
the literate propertied elite through the marketing of commodity spectacle” (p. 130). The use of racialized images was not only confined to soap advertising campaigns, but became a popular marketing tool for promoting most commodities. As McClintock (1995) states,

The gallery of imperial heroes and their masculine exploits in ‘Darkest Africa’ were immortalized on matchboxes, needle cases, toothpaste pots, pencil boxes, cigarette packets, board games, paper weights, sheet music. ‘Images of colonial conquest were stamped on soap boxes…biscuit tins, whisky bottles, tea tins and chocolate bars…No pre-existing form of organized racism had ever before been able to reach so large and so differentiated a mass of the populace’ (McClintock, 1995, p. 209).

Visual depictions stamped on the various commodities occupying space in the Victorian home demonstrate the role of power operating both through and in the context of culture. In addition to the dissemination of particular forms of knowledge, images are part of a broader discursive formation aiding in the production of a particular type of subject. This is salient as we begin to analyze images of racialized populations in the context of the helping/aid industry and more specifically, Pathways. As noted previously, popular representations of Black populations found throughout the colonial period constructed racialized populations as inferior in comparison to dominant white populations. These binaries between racialized and white populations continue to be evident in the context of the helping industry, where depictions of racialized populations are portrayed as helpless and in need of saving.

McEwan (2009) critically analyzes the relations of power that work to produce images of the ‘Third World’ and by extension its inhabitants as helpless. McEwan writes,

Western colonial projects were based partly on an imagination of the world which legitimizied and supported the power of the West to dominate ‘others’. By representing societies as ‘backward’ and ‘irrational’ the West emerges as ‘mature’, rational and objective. The notion of ‘the Tropics’ was invented alongside other labels (e.g. the ‘Orient’) to view certain societies as ‘other’ and different from the European or ‘western’ self (McEwan, 2009, p. 124).
The West’s involvement in various colonial projects produced not only binaries of difference, but also notions of Self, as both “rational” and “mature” that in turn legitimizes its domination of presumably inferior Others. In addition to the production of notions of Self, McEwan (2009) demonstrates that these binaries are constructed partly on the basis of an imagined world produced by Northerners. This practice is evident throughout the contemporary period particularly as it relates to news media. McEwan turns her attention to what she refers to as the “CNN effect”, where the media presents sensationalized and graphical images of ‘Third World’ poverty to global audiences. These stark visual images serve a dual purpose. On the one hand, the media disseminates information about the Other to a mass audience that in turn shapes Northerners opinions of particular social issues experienced by the global South. On the other these binaries also legitimize particular responses or intervention practices that aim to address various social issues for example poverty that is perceived as a characteristic feature of the South.

The production of stereotypes of racialized populations in the context of media constructs not only binaries of difference but in relation to international aid agencies, the use and packaging of these images is vital to securing financial aid for these organizations (McEwan, 2009). In her analysis, she suggests that those in the North would not be interested in providing monetary aid or assistance without being convinced through viewing images of graphic poverty. These images act as evidence in that they portray racialized populations of the South as helpless. However, these stereotypical images of racialized populations continue to present an “unproblematized notion of ‘the poor’” (McEwan, 2009, p. 132). McEwan points to the fact that international aid agencies do little to acknowledge or address the relations of power that result in specific populations’ poverty in the global South. She contends that agencies in the helping sector maybe unaware that the presentations of these images and the application of poverty labels to specific populations reinforce and uphold notions of Otherness. In addition, McEwan (2009) highlights that these agencies rarely
consider how the individuals whom they label as poor view their own circumstances, since their voices are very rarely included. In addition these images continue to present a simplified version of poverty in which racialized populations must be saved.

**Helping acts and the production of the good white Northerner**

Heron (2007) critically discusses the impact of these representations of racialized populations as helpless as part of broader discursive practices that shape the moral consciousness and identity of the white bourgeois subject. Heron (2007) makes the point that development work serves as a mechanism to reinforce the notion that acts of helping are innocent and thus devoid of relations of power; indeed, the individuals who participate in these acts are reinforced as being inherently good. She reflects on her experiences as a white female Northern development worker, while also analyzing the experiences of other white female workers involved in long-term development projects. She does this in order to critically explore and understand the desire to engage in such intervention practices. Heron (2007) states that the practice of engaging in development work in countries of the global South is a continuation of the interventionist strategy employed in the era of colonialism and development work is integral to the production of the identity of the white bourgeois subject. The act of helping through the development enterprise is the modified manifestation of the colonial encounter, in what Heron (2007) refers to as “colonial continuities”, where whites possess what she refers to as a “planetary consciousness”. This particular world view, shared by Northerners infers relations or comparisons with the Other on a global scale, in which “the Other always comes off as somehow lacking or not quite up to an unmarked standard” (Heron, 2007, p. 7). Endowed with this “planetary consciousness” that depicts racialized populations as helpless, Northerners are compelled to intervene in order to ensure the “betterment” of the Other wherever they reside (Jefferess, 2002, Heron, 2007, Richie and Ponte, 2008 Mahrouse, 2011 Jefferess, 2012).
Heron argues that representations of the global South have had a long history of being depicted as exotic and thus different both in reference to its landscape and inhabitants. In the context of development work, depictions presented in media continue to uphold these binaries that reify notions of Otherness. As Heron (2007) so poignantly states, these oppositional binaries work two-fold in that, in addition to fixing difference, they also legitimize and endow Northerners with a sense of entitlement. This sense of entitlement maintains that they are obligated to intervene in the lives and spaces of racialized populations. Representations of Africa as a continent in crisis continue to permeate North American discourse (Jefferess, 2002, McEwan, 2009, Richie and Ponte, 2008, Anderson, 2008, Jefferess, 2012). These depictions work in two ways: they continue to shape the perceptions of white middle class Northerners while also compelling and legitimizing their need to intervene in the lives of racialized populations portrayed in the media. Heron (2007) states that, while white Northerner involvement in development work can be viewed as resistance to social injustice, intentions could be distorted. This distortion of purpose is particularly evident in cases where relations of power and racialized domination that underpin North/South binaries continue to go unnoticed.

It is thus necessary to explore how the production of images are critical to the formation of the white Northern subject. Heron (2007) analyzes the effects of the production and circulation of particular representations of racialized populations in shaping both the identity and the response of the white bourgeois subject. She argues that whites feel a sense of obligation and are legitimizing in their efforts to intervene in the lives of low-income racialized populations of the South. Northern participation in these practices continues to construct and guarantee innocence. The guaranteeing of innocence as discussed through Heron’s analysis of the production of the white female development worker is not only confined to international development initiatives. Indeed, the white subject that perceives themselves as inherently good could also be produced through other
intervention initiatives, such as socially conscious tourism, that are also situated in context of the helping industry.

The arguments outlined above are salient to my analysis of Pathways. McEwan’s discussion of the CNN effect highlights that visual representations of the global South not only disseminate information regarding social issues such as poverty, but as she emphasises, these representations continue to uphold binaries of difference. In addition she focuses on the importance of these particular representations of racialized populations in terms of the fundraising initiatives of the agencies involved in the helping sector. The images employed by these agencies present poverty as a simple issue that can be eradicated through funding measures that in turn save the Other from a dismal future. While Heron’s examines the effects of these images and discourses in the production of the good white subject through her discussion of intervention practices, it is important to note that not all white Northerners are able to satisfy their sense of moral obligation to help racialized populations through participating in long-term development initiatives. Alternative forms of intervention have emerged in consumer culture in order to satisfy the consciousness of the white subject (Anderson, 2008, Richtie and Ponte, 2008, Jefferess 2012). This is evident through initiatives such as the RED\footnote{The RED campaign is a social enterprise that began in 2006 by Bono and Bobby Shriver. This initiative focuses on creating a sustainable flow of monetary resources from the private sector in order to combat HIV/AIDS epidemic throughout various parts of Africa. Through partnering with private businesses the organization produces for sale “RED” products (tshirts, headphones, bags, etc) for consumer consumption. In addition, the organization also hosts RED events to further raise money for its initiatives. From purchasing a RED product the organization promises to donate 100% of the proceeds to the fighting HIV/AIDS (“About”, RED, n.d.).}, Me to We\footnote{Me to We is a Canadian based social enterprise that sells ethical and socially conscious products in order to fund its Free the Children program. The Free the Children campaign is centred on education and funding for these initiatives are used to on building infrastructure particularly schools in various low-income and rural communities predominantly in Africa (“Our Story”, Me to We, 2015)}, and Toms One for One\footnote{Toms One for One is a social enterprise founded in 2006 by Blake Mycoskie provides a pair of shoes to a child in the developing world for every pair of shoes from various Western countries. This social enterprise has expanded beyond the provision of shoes and also provides funding to safe births, provision of clean water and eye care. With each product corresponding to a particular need (“Toms® Company Overview”, Toms®, 2015)}.\footnote{Me to We}
Buyers beware: Marketing Third World poverty and securing goodness

In addition to long-term development and other intervention initiatives as mentioned above another enterprise, socially conscious forms of tourism, emerges as part of the broader consumer culture that attempts to counteract relations of power and bring global awareness to Northerners. Socially responsible tourism ventures offered through commercial tour operators and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) attempt to challenge conventional forms of tourism. Gada Mahrouse (2011) critically analyzes the upsurge and increased appeal of socially-conscious tourism ventures that attempts to counteract the invasive and a “crass form of exploitation” foundational to conventional tourist practices. In contrast, socially conscious forms of tourism are presented as a pragmatic and socially ethical interventionist strategy because it attempts to address the gross inequalities associated with conventional forms of tourism by educating participants on matters of social justice and ethics. Mahrouse (2011) centers her analysis on a specific type of agency operating in this sector that provides its participants with a glimpse into the realities of poverty faced by populations of the global South. In her analysis of Global Exchange Reality Tours Mahrouse writes,

these tours aim to show, rather than to conceal, the harsh realities of poverty and oppression that many of the local and indigenous communities in the global South face, as well as displaying their agency and resourcefulness. Framed as educational vacations, a Reality Tour consists of visiting various local communities to see and learn about the social conditions people live in (p. 374)

Mahrouse utilized the data collected from interviews with female tour participants and came to the conclusion that by engaging in these alternative forms of tourism, white Northerners continue to be driven by a sense of moral obligation to help or save the Other. This obligation in turn serves to reinforce the superiority of the white subject and their consequent claims to innocence.

The findings presented in Mahrouse’s analysis parallel Heron’s discussion in that both scholars explore mechanisms that produce and validate the superiority of the white Northern
bourgeois subject. They share the view that interventions, either through long-term development work or other socially-responsible initiatives, reinforce or produce the very same power relations that they seek to challenge. Heron points out that the makings of the Self as superior in relation to the Other through knowledge production processes endows the white subject with a “sense of entitlement and obligation to intervene globally” (Heron, 2007, p. 36). However, what is striking about Mahrouse’s (2011) discussion is that the same “subject-making dynamic is now operating on short-term tourist experience as well” (p. 387). The role of the non-profits and NGO organizations not only facilitate these initiatives but also offer opportunities to reinforce notions of the Self as good. Rather than disrupting these established discourses and relations of power that define racialized populations as Other it can be inferred that these agencies not only uphold particular representations of racialized low-income populations, but are also reliant on them in order to continually appeal to Northerners’ moral consciousness and for their financial support.

**Staying alive: Representation, funding and the Non-Profit industrial complex**

Representations of racialized populations not only promotes awareness of specific social issues, such as poverty, but also in attracts potential donors and funders to these causes. Funding is essential to the survival and operations of agencies involved in the helping sector. Samimi (2010), draws attention to the fact that funding from the State is insufficient to maintain and grow the operations of agencies involved within the helping sector. As a result, non-profit agencies become heavily reliant on funds from foundations and corporate sources in order to bridge these monetary gaps. However, financial assistance often comes in the form of tied-aid packages, meaning that interested parties often attach stipulations to funding; in turn, these stipulations adversely impact and limit the work carried out by agencies. As such, in order to qualify for funding, aid agencies may alter their initial vision or mission, sometimes resulting in a shift in their commitment to social justice in favour of a social management approach so that they are able to
maintain relationships with funders (Jones de Almeida 2007, Kivel, 2007, Perez, 2007). In this shift, agencies move away from challenging systemic structures that continues to oppress and marginalize particular populations in society, as well as those advocating for systemic change, in favour of providing social services that work to maintain the status quo.

This structure in which non-profits and NGOs operate is often referred to as the non-profit industrial complex (NPIC) (Kivel, 2007, Perez, 2007, Rodriguez, 2007, Samimi, 2010). Dylan Rodriguez (2007) defines the NPIC as “a set of symbiotic relationships that link political and financial technologies of state and owning class control with surveillance over public political ideology, including and especially emergent progressive and leftist social movements” (as cited in Smith, 2009, p. 8). In her discussion of the nature of the non-profit industrial complex and its traditional funding models, Jennifer Samimi’s (2010) discussion of Paul Kivel’s analysis demonstrates,

When temporary shelter becomes a substitute for permanent housing, emergency food a substitute for a decent job... we have shifted our attention from the redistribution of wealth to the temporary provision of social services to keep people alive (p. 12)....

Unfortunately, this is the typical evaluation of nonprofits as band aid services that are unable to exact real change focused on justice for all (p. 21).

The current funding structure promotes a competitive, rather than collaborative, environment and forces non-profits and NGOs to compete for limited resources in order to maintain their operations. Due to this highly competitive environment, agencies within this sector continually demonstrate their effectiveness through the use of statistics, success stories, and reports and these indicators also serve to maintain monetary support for on-going operations. However, the continued reliance on the current funding structure adversely impacts agencies’ commitment to social change (Perez, 2007, Kivel, 2007, Samimi, 2010). This shift in their commitment from
social change to social management in the context of Pathways to Education is explored further later in the research.

In the following chapter I identify the genesis of the Pathways to Education model and review the process of implementation in the Canadian context. In addition, I demonstrate that the organization continues to uphold binaries of difference through employing stereotypes of low-income racialized populations in the Regent Park community; it does so in order to solicit potential funders and thereby render poverty a commodity.
Chapter 3:

Genesis of a model: Tracing the evolution of the Pathways to Education

Born out of a mass slum clearance project undertaken during the post-World War II era, Regent Park is one of Toronto’s oldest social housing developments. Unlike the diverse population that occupies present day Regent Park, the initial residents of this community, formerly known as “Cabbagetown”, consisted mainly of low-income persons of British and Irish descent. The eradication of this slum was an opportunity to address the lack of affordable housing in the city’s downtown core. However, this development project served a deeper purpose than the simple provision of affordable housing. This initial attempt to develop the community sought to address the dysfunctional characteristics associated with the neighbourhood and its low-income population (Rose 1958, Purdy, 2005, James, 2010).

Slum Clearance to Revitalization: saving Toronto’s urban poor

The short film *Farewell to Oak Street* (McLean, 1953) highlights this overarching objective of the development project – where the film presents the eviction of Cabbagetown residents as the solution to verminous walls, unclean and unhealthy rooms, fire hazards, juvenile delinquency, drunkenness, and broken marriages. The undertaking of this project was especially popular with local politicians and reformers because Regent Park would replace the original Cabbagetown – a neighbourhood of substandard multi-family dwellings that had long been labelled a “criminogenic slum that, by its very existence, demeaned its predominantly white working-class Anglophone residents” (James, 2010, p. 70).

However, this experiment in physical and social engineering that sought to address the deep-rooted problems of the resident population was described as a failure by Albert Rose (1968), who played a significant role in overseeing the development of the project and at the time occupied
the position of Dean of Social Work at the University of Toronto. Rose’s (1968) analysis concludes that the failure of the project was attributable to the deficiencies of the resident population and should not be ascribed to the abilities of the planners or the design itself. As Rose (1968) argues,

We have constructed huge villages of the poor, disabled and handicapped, vast collections of dependent and quasi-dependent families… who cannot provide or foster the indigenous leadership or, at least, the quantity and continuity of leadership required to build a strong neighbourhood. (p. 319-329 cited in James, 2010, p. 74)

It is should be noted that the very strategy of altering habitable physical space as a mechanism to address the deficient characteristics of the original residents, set up the conditions that would further marginalize and criminalize the population that population would come to inhabit the space throughout the 1970s-1990s.

The 1970s marked a shift in both racial composition and family structure as Regent Park experienced an upsurge in the number of non-European immigrants, with persons of Afro-Caribbean descent emerging as the dominant group. In addition to shifting racial composition, the structure of the family unit that came to occupy the area also changed. Initially, one of the criteria for housing at Regent Park was that residents be a nuclear family. The Housing Authority did not welcome single-parent and individual family dwellings, nor was it in favour of constructing single occupant units. Two person units were constructed; however, they were not without stipulation: for individuals to occupy these units they needed to be related either through marriage or blood (Rose, 1958, p. 75). However, by the 1970’s, these stipulations were dropped and the family structure of the resident population of Regent Park changed with the result that female-headed households now accounted for 37.3% of the population (Toronto Community Housing Corporation, 2006, p. 22).
Failures of Revitalization and the rise of community-based solutions

The shift in racial composition and family structure was accompanied by the deterioration of the income levels of people who occupied the space. James (2010) attributes the decline in income and the exacerbated socioeconomic conditions experienced by residents of Regent Park to the neoliberal policy prescriptions implemented throughout the late twentieth century - particularly during the 1990s under the Harris government. It was in this environment while working at the Regent Park Community Health Centre (RPCHC), operating in the framework of “community-oriented primary care” (COPC) model, that Norman Rowen and Carolyn Acker founded the Pathways. Geiger (1983) defines COPC as a unique approach to

“medical practice that undertakes the responsibility for the health of a defined population, by combining epidemiologic study and social intervention with the clinical care of individual patients, so that the primary care practice itself becomes a community medicine program” (p. 70).

Influenced by their training and work environment, the founders of Pathways employed procedures characteristic of the COPC model to devise poverty reduction strategies for the Regent Park community. Acker and Rowen came to the understanding that in the Regent Park community, conditions of high unemployment, low income, single parent families, and low levels of education were powerful determinants that undermined the overall health of the community and its residents. They recognized that increasing the health center’s capacity in the areas of health promotion and community development and the expansion of existing initiatives such as the Early Years programs, did not fundamentally address the deteriorating social conditions and increased level of violence experienced in the community (Acker and Rowen, 2013). Acker and Rowen (2013) were of the view that these initiatives, implemented by the RPCHC, serves as a “band-aid” rather than addressing deteriorating social conditions (p. 64). From their perspective, the continued existence of a high rate of youth dropouts, violence, dysfunctional family life, and the growing achievement
gap among racialized low income youth, were symptoms of deeply rooted systemic issues of poverty.

**From South Africa to Regent Park: the birth of a model**

In 1995, Acker and Rowen attended the first International Community Health Center Conference held at the Center for Health Care Reform in Montreal. It was at this forum that they encountered the work of Dr. Jack Geiger and his strategy to address cyclical poverty in the United States by providing educational and social support to racialized populations through a community health centre. The work and experience of medical practitioner Dr. Sydney Kark and his wife Emily Kark who was also a physician heavily influenced Geiger’s initiative – the two doctors worked in the rural village of Pheola in a racially segregated South Africa during the 1940s. The Karks had established a health center on an impoverished Zulu tribal reserve in the eastern province of Natal. Through their work in the community, they came to the realization that, though the provision of primary medical care was much needed, it was insufficient to address the persistent poverty experienced by this population (Geiger, 1984, Geiger, 1993, Susser, 1993, Geiger, 2002).

In addition to providing primary care to individuals in the community, the Karks sought to widen their attempts at dealing with poverty; they did so through community development initiatives that addressed issues relating to housing, education and sanitation. An integral element of their strategy focused on community organizing through the training and development of the community’s local residents and employed Zulu nurses to work in the community health center. These nurses also served as role models for the community in addition to providing health care education and environmental improvements (Geiger, 1994, Geiger, 2002).

It was in 1957 that Jack Geiger, a visiting medical student at the time, first encountered the Karks and inspired by their community-oriented primary care approach attempts to implement the
Karks’ model in the United States. In his justification of the model, Geiger (1994) recounts the successful story of Dr. Nkosazane Dlamini Zuma – she was a former patient of the clinic, a young Black South African girl, who later became a pediatrician and political leader of the African National Congress (ANC) in exile. Geiger narrates a conversation with Dr. Zuma where she explains the impact of the model on herself and the community, highlighting the emphasis that was placed on the educational aspirations and achievement among community members. In her discussion with Dr. Geiger, Zuma explains, “You had to live near the health center, so that you could see the role models, the African health workers and medical students, the people being trained” (Geiger 1994, p. 1152).

In 1965, during the height of the Civil Rights movement, Geiger assisted in founding a community health center in a racially segregated community in rural Bolivar County, Mississippi. This initiative, sponsored by the Tufts Medical School in Boston, mirrors the model developed earlier by the Karks in South Africa as its focus went beyond the provision of primary health care services. One of Geiger’s key strategies aimed at decreasing isolation, which he viewed as a critical factor in maintaining the cycle of poverty. The project developed strategies for the establishment of relationships between the health center and various educational schools, foundations and agencies.

Geiger establishes an office of education to assist youth in the community by providing them with access to university contacts, assistance with college applications and access to scholarship information (Geiger, 2002). In addition, the educational component of the health center also offered high school equivalency courses and college preparation courses by an accredited local Black Junior college. In a decade of its operation, the health center trained several Black health care professionals in fields of psychology, social work, nursing, and medicine as well as
PhD candidates in other health related disciplines. (Geiger, 2002, p. 1715). Geiger (2002) highlights in his discussion that some of these youth from the community were eventually employed by the health centre taking up positions as medical practitioners and social workers. In addition, he highlights that one individual from the community was hired as the Executive Director of the health centre.

The information and apparent success stories emanating from the application of the model in both Natal, South Africa and Bolivar County, Mississippi formed an integral part of Geiger’s presentation at the 1995 International Community Health Center conference. To Acker and Rowen, the model appeared to be the solution as it addressed what they perceived as the root cause of cyclical poverty. More specifically, the founders were drawn to the idea of “community succession” that is evident in Geiger’s presentation, but was rooted in the original model developed by the Karks through the hiring and training of Zulu nurses. The provision of various services and in particular educational supports further developed in Geiger’s model, ensured Black youth access to education but also professional and leadership opportunities in their community. This idea of community succession evident in the examples above, inspired both Acker and Rowen to implement a similar version that would provide educational opportunities and foster leadership roles among members of the Regent Park community. From its genesis in South Africa and its application in Mississippi, the next focal point of this model became Regent Park, Ontario, Canada.

**Visions and challenges: identifying barriers to “community succession”**

In the 1996 strategic planning retreat of the RPCHC, staff and board members created their vision of “community succession”; the next year, the Health Center embarked on the process of engaging the community in the actualization of this vision. This resulted in the establishment of Community Succession Task Force whose role was to engage the community in order to develop their own vision of success. A key question proposed by the Task Force was, “how can the
community help its children become the leaders and professionals of the Regent Park of the future?” The Task Force used engagement methods like surveys, focus groups, and formal and informal meetings with residents including graduated youth, dropouts, schools and other relevant local agencies. For the next three years, driven by Acker and Rowen, consultations with the community provided ideas as how to move forward in developing their own version of community succession. Funding from the Counselling Foundation of Canada\(^9\) and the Ontario Trillium Foundation\(^10\) helped to bolster the efforts of this research project. The results of this project was pivotal to the development of the Pathways model.

In their historical account of the findings of the Task Force, Acker and Rowen (2013) identified four main systemic barriers that impeded academic achievement. These barriers were viewed as contributing factors to the cyclical poverty experienced among the racialized low-income residents of Regent Park. These were: “poverty, poverty and risk, self-image and community image and the need for academic support and challenge of the curriculum” (p. 66-67). It was after identifying these obstacles to academic achievement and success among youth in Regent Park, that the founders developed both short-term and long-term solutions to these issues. At this juncture, I outline the barriers that hindered educational success and social mobility among youth in Regent Park. These impediments identified by Acker and Rowen (2013) and provides context for my analysis of deficit as presented later in the chapter.

**Poverty:** Identifying poverty as a barrier to academic achievement, the program’s founders deemed it necessary to provide some measure of immediate direct financial support to youth and their families in the community. Although Regent Park has the highest concentration of high

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\(^9\)The Counseling Foundation of Canada is a family foundation funded by Frank G. Lawson’s estate. The foundation is designed to support and create career counseling programs, while also providing technical support to career counselors.

\(^10\)The Ontario Trillium Foundation is an agency of the Ontario Government that provides support through the provision of grants to various community initiatives and agencies.
school youth in comparison to the overall average of the City of Toronto, no high school exists in the community. As a consequence, youth are forced to travel outside of their community daily in order to attend school, thereby incurring transportation costs. The lack of transportation subsidies offered to low-income families, coupled with the absence of a high school in the area, were presented by Acker and Rowen (2013) as contributing factors to the low-levels of success attained by Regent Park youth. As a result, Acker and Rowen (2013) set about designing a component of the program that would directly address the issue of school transportation cost; this would directly alleviate some of the financial burden to low-income families in Regent Park.

In addition, to the provision of immediate direct financial assistance, Acker and Rowen (2013) highlighted the need for long-term financial support. They concluded that the absence of such support constitutes a significant barrier to youth wanting to pursue post-secondary opportunities. They were of the view that the provision of a long-term measure of financial support would assist in counteracting “internalized pessimism” of youth towards post-secondary pursuits (p.66). Acker and Rowen attributed this internalized pessimism felt among youth to the stigma attached to the community by the wider society. Though they did not extensively elaborate on the impact of stigma on the community in their analysis, they do state that these regrettable misconceptions about the community had profound effects on the individual and collective achievement of racialized low-income youth.

**Poverty and Risk:** In their discussion, Acker and Rowen (2013) stated that childhood poverty not only adversely impacts educational achievement but was also a predetermining factor for an individual’s health, civic engagement, and involvement in criminal activity. Influenced by the analysis of Levin (2005) and Ferguson et al (2005), Acker & Rowen recognized the role of school-based factors as well as community-based factors as determinants in youth becoming at-
risk. They also recognized policies that focus solely on mitigating school-based factors were insufficient in addressing the needs of at-risk populations in the education system. It is in recognizing this gap between the school and the community that the Pathways model sought to situate itself. The program was thus constructed to address the community-based risk factors that the formal education system was unable to reach, thereby working in conjunction with the school to bring about a more effective approach to dealing with the issue of at-risk youth.

**Negative image and internalized pessimism**: The third barrier was related to the negative image and internalized pessimism attributed to the Regent Park youth. In their analysis, drawing on the work of Sennett and Cobb (1972), Acker and Rowen discussed the correlation between stigma and academic achievement of low-income youth, describing this nexus as a “hidden injury of class” (cited in Acker & Rowen, 2013 p. 67). Their analysis highlights that low-income marginalized youth were unable to envision themselves as successful and thus developed their own coping mechanisms in order to survive. In this vein, in seeking out places of inclusion youth became involved in criminal activities and gangs. However, Acker and Rowen (2013) stated that criminal activity was not a choice for the majority of youth in Regent Park. They highlight another coping mechanism employed by youth; becoming “invisible” (p. 67). In this sense, youth draw little attention to themselves or their circumstances and thus made no request for support from the adults in their lives. The reason adopting this approach, as described by Acker and Rowen (2013), was that youth were aware of the limitations of their parent/guardian’s material and emotional means of support.

**Academic support and challenge of the curriculum**: The founders identify five barriers in their research that the model sought to address. Three of these five factors are centre on the perceived inability or lack of knowledge possessed by parents to support high school youth. The
first category comprise non-English speaking parents who due to their own language barrier were unable to support their children. The second category includes parents who possessed the necessary language skills but lacked the education level to provide academic support. The third category was parents who possess the academic foundation in the relevant subject area, but due to evolving methods and changes to the curriculum, were also limited in providing support to their youth.

In addition to a lack of parental knowledge in relation to curriculum content, another obstacle to student academic achievement presented was low-income parents’ lack of understanding of the structure of Ontario education system. In their analysis, Acker and Rowen highlight the academic misplacement of youth from low-income groups. They attribute this misplacement to the lack of understanding of the education system on the part of both parents and students. Although it is not the subject of this research to critically analyze the processes that result in low-income racialized population’s disengagement from school, it is important to briefly discuss this barrier identified in Acker and Rowen’s (2013) discussion.

While the academic misplacement of racialized students is rationalized as lack of understanding of the Ontario education system on the part of racialized parents, Dei’s (1997) analysis identifies the practice of streaming as a major contributing factor. Due to stereotypical misrepresentations and racist practices implemented through educational policies and school administration, racialized populations were often placed in technical, vocational and behavioural courses thereby resulting in their disengagement from the academic process (Brathwaite and James, 1996, Dei, 1997). However, while streaming practices in Ontario officially ended in 1999, the perception of racialized populations as deficient continues to manifest in other subtle forms
educational policies, curriculum and practices. The culmination of these effects continues to disenfranchise racialized groups in the education system (Brathwaite and James, 1996, Dei, 1997.)

**The Pathways model**

The barriers identified in the above section contextualizes the problem of poverty and its effects on low-income racialized populations in Regent Park. At this juncture, it is necessary to provide an overview of the pillars of the Pathways program that were presented as solutions the problems outlined by Acker and Rowen. The four pillars of the program – financial, advocacy, mentoring and academic support sought to address the barriers that hindered the educational and economic success of racialized youth in Regent Park.

*Financial:* The financial component aims to provide some financial relief to low-income families. Due to the absence of a high school in the community, the Pathways to Education model provides youth with transit tickets to attend school outside of the Regent Park community. However this measure is not without stipulation, as Pathways allocates the transit tickets based on an individual’s school attendance that is tracked and monitored by staff of the program. The purpose of this stipulation is to ensure accountability on behalf of the student and their parents as transit tickets may be reduced due to student’s lack of attendance at school. The monitoring of the use of the transit tickets provides a mechanism for staff to build trust and foster communication between parents and Pathways staff. In terms of long-term financial support, Pathways offers a scholarship to all participants of the program. For every year a student remains with the Pathways program, participants receive one thousand dollars per annum – up to a maximum of four thousand dollars. Students are required to use this scholarship for post-secondary tuition and application costs.
**Academic support:** Pathways provides academic support for youth in the program at no cost to the student. This support is provided through individual tutoring, as well as group tutoring, in core academic subject areas throughout the academic term. Pathways also expects students to participate unless exempted\(^{11}\) and attendance is monitored and tracked by staff. In addition to the provision academic support, Pathways also recognizes the need for the social development of the youth in the Regent Park community. As a result Pathways included a mentoring component in its model.

**Mentoring:** The mentoring component of the program is divided into three distinct categories: group mentoring, career mentoring and specialty mentoring. The aim is to address students’ internalized pessimism by developing their social skills and overall confidence. Pathways specifically designed its Group Mentoring component to promote positive relations and develop students’ leadership skills in Grades 9 and 10. Students meet in groups of 12-15 with two or three mentors who, under the supervision of Pathways staff, facilitate sessions on a variety of interest topics and social issues. For students in Grades 11 and 12, mentoring activities focus on individual interests through a subcomponent referred to as “Specialty Mentoring”. In addition to Specialty Mentoring, youth in these Grades are provided with information regarding post-secondary educational opportunities and scholarship access through another sub-component known as “Career Mentoring”.

**Advocacy:** Upon enrolment, Pathways assigns students to a case worker who provides ongoing support to the individual and family throughout their involvement in the program. These staff members, known as Student Parent Support Workers (SPSW) are central to the advocacy

\(^{11}\) Student exemptions from tutoring are given to students on the basis they have met stipulated grade requirements as set by the program.
component of the program. They work collaboratively with the schools’ administration (Principals, Vice-Principals, Guidance counsellors and teachers) to ensure the overall success of the student. In addition, SPSWs provide informal counselling and refers students to other services that provide specialized support to assist their development.

**Establishing leaders and the spectre of community**

In reviewing the evolution, adaptation and implementation of the Pathways, several limitations become readily apparent. As presented in their historical account, Acker and Rowen (2013) after encountering Geiger and his model in 1996, became “inspired” and thus set about implementing their “own audacious vision of community succession” (p. 64, emphasis added). In their historical account, Acker and Rowen (2013) explain,

> By engaging the community and sharing the vision of “community succession” with them through focus groups, and by working in a collaborative process with community members and other community based agencies, we elicited the community’s input so we could develop a proposal to realize the vision (p. 65).

As documented above, it is apparent that interested parties outside the community developed the vision that was expected to lead residents of Regent Park out of cyclical poverty. The initial visioning process – the crux of the program – did not reflect an inclusive bottom-up or grassroots approach to community development. It appears as if the founders reduced the role of the community to that of a spectre. Acker and Rowen simply replicated the process through which the original model evolved, in that, outsiders implemented intervention practices in a community where racialized populations were viewed as being unable to help themselves. From the available literature, there seems to be little evidence that in Natal, South Africa and Bolivar County, Mississippi the initial visioning process included the community.

In examining the Pathways narrative, the word “community” is often repeated. It appears that the community provided much-needed information to Acker and Rowen in developing the
When the residents were asked as to how to avoid the project’s development being dominated by non-resident members, several strategies were suggested including: facilitation of discussions; putting a resident in the chair’s role; inviting youth to participate in focus groups; and coaching for resident participants so they would not be intimidated by the language and style of professionals (Acker and Rowen, 2013, p. 64). However to a certain extent, some suggestions were acted on, but there appears to be no evidence of implementing the recommendation to place a resident in a leadership role: Chairman of the Community Task Force initiative - the body that was set up to oversee the implementation process. In fact, from the historical account, it emerges that Acker and Rowen were the de facto leaders of the Pathways initiative that legitimized and solidified their position as leaders in the mission of reducing poverty among racialized populations in Canada.

**Good whites and a broken community**

Apart from the issue of imposed leadership, Acker positioned herself to speak for and on behalf of the community of Regent Park and the Pathways to Education program. In a video presentation on the history of the initiative, Acker’s role is portrayed as the centerpiece of the film’s narrative (“History”, Pathways to Education, n.d.) She is positioned as the focal point against the backdrop of chain-linked fences, empty playgrounds, and streetlights with surveillance cameras positioned on top, graffiti strewn walls, and high rise buildings. The images in the video portray Regent Park as a threatening and potentially violent space. Throughout the video, Acker continues her narrative of the development of the program with the community as a backdrop, coupled with images of herself and Pathways students in what appears to be her home residence. In the video, framed pictures of Acker and Pathways students sit on a grand piano between her own family photographs. In one photograph, Acker is positioned in the center of several Pathways graduates. In the video, there are subtle changes in the language employed by Acker, as the
narration changes from the use of the pronoun “we” to “I” as she describes the unfolding of the program. She punctuates the video with statements such as: “…I wouldn’t give up! There were so many obstacles but I kept pushing forward because I believed those kids deserve a chance” (“History”, Pathways to Education Canada, n.d.). From the images portrayed in the video, it could be inferred that Acker comes from a position of material privilege and expresses a desire to help the impoverished Other. She charges herself with the task of breaking the cycle of poverty as the space of Regent Park and by extension its residents are viewed as being unable to address their own dysfunctions and are in need of help.

The role played by Acker and Rowen mirrored the roles of the Karks in South Africa and Geiger in Mississippi in that the focus was on white bodies reaching out to provide help to racialized, marginalized low-income communities. The roll-out of the respective programs saw Kark and Geiger, followed by Acker and Rowen, abrogate unto themselves the leadership and key decision-making roles. They relegated the community to a supportive role in providing information and feedback. In the case of Regent Park, Acker casts herself as the heroine of the narrative, where, due to her own privileged position, she is able to move between and into spaces of the Other that are characterized as being violent.

However, an important distinction between the three experiments was that in the case of the Mississippi experience, the program recognizes systemic racism as a central determinant of poverty and attempts to provide some mitigation efforts. On the other hand, while persistent cyclical poverty experienced by Black South Africans was directly related to systemic racism of the Apartheid state at the time, the Karks realized that they were powerless to affect any long term systemic change. However, in contrast, the Regent Park experience demonstrates that the role of systemic racism in perpetuating cyclical poverty is not recognized.
From culture of poverty to deficit: legitimizing the image of a community

Having traced the evolution of the Pathways model through the research work and findings of Acker and Rowen, it is evident that the population in Regent Park is constructed as deficient. The key underpinning that connects the findings of Acker and Rowen and the deficit model is that both the individual and the community are portrayed as dysfunctional in nature, thereby blaming these populations for their continued poverty. Richard Valencia (1997) in his discussion highlights that the “transmitters” of deficit are predetermined by one or a combination of factors, such as racial group, genetics, familial relations, income status and culture. He highlights that these determinants could negatively impact one’s cognitive and social abilities and may act as barriers to academic success.

The deficit model views the parent or family structure as the carrier of deficit and the primary source for reproducing pathological behaviours thereby trapping successive generations of individuals in poverty. The emphasis is placed on the family and community thereby negating the education system as critical factor responsible for the lack of overall success of low-income racialized populations (Valencia, 1997, Dei, 1997, James, 1996, Gorski, 2008). However, as pointed out in Chapter One, what initially began as a coping mechanism to ensure the immediate survival of the individual was, transferred through the family unit over subsequent generations and thus became solidified as a distinct culture. In analyzing their work, it becomes readily apparent that Acker and Rowen depict the low-income racialized youth of Regent Park as existing in this self-perpetuating culture. The youth are seen to lack the cultural capital to break the cycle of poverty on their own. They thus are seen to need white intervention.

Acker and Rowen (2013) draw on deficit literature in support of their argument that community-based factors are a central determinant of the educational success of low-income marginalized youth in Regent Park. In their analysis, they highlight the work of Canadian
educational scholars Raptis and Flemming (2003) and Levin (2004), respectively. Raptis and Flemming (2003), in their review of the literature regarding academic achievement, state that community factors have a greater impact on student success than school based factors. With community-based factors accounting for a 50-60% higher rate of achievement as compared to school-based factors which only account for 5-6% of educational success among youth (cited in Acker and Rowen, 2013, p. 67).

Prior to the establishment of Pathways to Education, Acker and Rowen estimated the drop-out rate in Regent Park to be 56% - twice the average of the City of Toronto. Of this, 70% were children of immigrant and single-parent families (Acker and Rowen, 2013, p. 65). They also reported that there was a higher concentration of single-parent families residing in the community at that time: twice the average for the City of Toronto. In juxtaposing these indicators, it appears the founders present a basis for inferring that there was a cause and effect relationship between the drop-out rate and immigrant, single parent families. By drawing attention to factors such as social isolation, absence of role models, low-income and high proportions of single female headed households, Acker and Rowen continue to reflect the arguments presented in the deficit theory that blame the academic underachievement of low-income racialized youth on the individual and community.

Pearl (1997) traces the re-emergence and proliferation of notions of deficit thinking that no longer seemed to be centered on genetics but rather on cultural differences. Pearl (1997) explains,

If the differences in school achievement were not genetic then they had to be either the result of some other deficit, or, caused by persistent unequal treatment, that is, individual and institutional bias. Preponderance of social policy and social science thinking chose the former, which opened the door for the rise to prominence of cultural deficit arguments (p. 133).
It is evident from Pearl’s discussion that discourses and social policy solutions regarding academic underachievement of specific populations centred on constructing the individual and community as deficient. Moreover, the deficit model presents deviations from the normative nuclear family structure, such as single parent female headed households as providing inadequate socialization for youth. The absence of a male figure or role model throughout a child’s formative years, impacts their ability to properly distinguish between right and wrong. In addition, children and youth socialized in this deviant family structure are unable to delay the need for immediate pleasure or gratification (Valencia, 1997, Pearl, 1997). In the context of the school, children and youth socialized in these environments demonstrate disruptive forms of behaviours, such as truancy, criminal activities and other antisocial types of behaviours. However, Pearl explains that the cultural deficit arguments were not founded on “well-articulated theory” (cited in Valencia, 1997, p. 137). He points to the inadequacy of the theory in providing explanations of the exceptions: those successful and talented individuals in various fields of music, business, academia, and sports who were once labelled as culturally deprived or disadvantaged.

Scholars Valencia and Solorzano (1997) and Gorski (2008), have also presented a counter narrative demonstrating that these depictions of racialized low-income parents are a fallacy. Gorski (2008) demonstrates that it is a fallacy that low-income parents are not disinterested in their children’s education. The fact that many parents work multiple jobs, work evenings and may not have access to unpaid time off, leaves them unable to be as involved in their children’s education to the extent as demonstrated by wealthier parents. Gorski (2008) notes that the school does not take into consideration these factors and may not value, in the same way, the involvement of low-income parents as opposed to wealthier families. Rather than attempting to accommodate or provide alternative means of support for low-income parents, the school continues to foster an environment that keeps these groups as outsiders. Both Solorzano and Yasso (2001) and Ogbu
(2003) highlight in their respective analysis that this perceived disinterest on the part of racialized parents regarding their children’s education does not take into account the history of marginalization – a history that has worked to further exclude these populations.

The prevalence of deficit depictions of racialized low-income families constructs a particular representation of racialized populations as in-need. They require some form of intervention in order to alter their current circumstances, and thus change their future. Though we know these conditions to be a product of systemic inequality, the common targeting of racialized communities serves to produce a class of helping professionals and scholars as caretakers of the Other’s dysfunction. In this Chapter, I traced the historical evolution of the Pathways to Education model. In my discussion, I also identified the key players and their role in the development of the model that would be promoted as a national approach to Canadian poverty reduction. Several key findings have emerged from this analysis both in terms of the process of development of the model and the model itself. From the very beginning of the initiative, it appears that the community was excluded and is only acknowledged as dysfunctional in the historical accounts presented by the Pathways founders. Based on the available information, a group of outsiders created the vision of social change – they relegated the input of the community to finding ways and means as to how to actualize this vision. Another critical observation was the issue of ownership. Although members of the community put forward suggestions as to how it could play a leadership role, it appears from the evidence, or lack of evidence, that Acker and Rowen remained firmly in control and took ownership of the entire process. The extent of the community’s role in the decision making process is therefore questionable.

In terms of the Pathways model itself, the evidence points to the fact that the pillars upon which the model was founded and subsequently developed, including its ameliorative measures,
are all firmly rooted in discourses of deficit. The founders of the model identified academic opportunity and performance as the most critical factor in breaking the cycle of poverty in Regent Park. However, the organization attributed the lack of educational achievement by the racialized youth of Regent Park to the traits and characteristics that are rooted in their community, thereby continuing to construct the community as the site of dysfunction. As a result, in the process of developing the model, Acker and Rowen did not examine the structure and functioning of the education system as a hindrance to the overall success of low-income racialized youth.

The critical role of systemic racism reflected in educational policies, administration and curriculum and its impact on the underachievement of the Regent Park community were not acknowledged by Acker and Rowen. In the South African experiment, the Karks recognized endemic racism as a critical factor in the impoverishment of the community, but they also recognized their inability to deal with this broader systemic issue. In the Mississippi experience, Geiger both recognized that systemic racism was a key problem and attempted, to a limited degree, to design mitigating measures. However, in the development of the Regent Park model, based on the available writings, any discussion of systemic racism and its impact on the community is notably absent.

In chapter three, I identified the genesis of the model and reviewed the process of implementation in the Canadian context. In so doing, I highlighted the shortcomings of the model. The following Chapter demonstrates the corporatization of Pathways. Furthermore, it highlights the practice of selling a particular representation of racialized low-income groups to acquire funding and ensure the organization’s financial stability and sustainability.
Chapter 4: Funding and the Commodification of poverty

Building on the analysis presented in the previous chapter, I will now trace the evolution of the Pathways program from its beginnings as a community-based response to its development as a national organization known as Pathways to Education Canada – an institution that reflects the structure of a modern day corporation. I demonstrate the use of selling a particular representation of racialized low-income groups as crucial to ensuring the financial sustainability of Pathways. In this research, I refer to this process as the commodification of poverty. The analysis conducted relies on the available public materials produced by Pathways, as well as various other media and print articles that trace the development and perceived success of the organization.

Communities to national entities the evolution of Pathways to Education Canada

In order to contextualize this study, I briefly reflect on the work of Perez’s (2007) discussion of the “Non-Profit Industrial Complex”. Perez analyzes the ways in which agencies involved in the helping sector change in both nature and organizational form when they participate in the “organizing market” to acquire funds (p. 92). A key feature of participating in this market is that organizations adopt a fiercely competitive approach to fundraising and grant attainment, rather than a collaborative approach. Operating in this type of environment, agencies often are forced to adopt a business oriented model in order to increase their chances of acquiring the quantum of funding that they seek. Perez (2007) highlights that in this environment, foundations are transformed into consumers to whom organizations must sell themselves and their work in exchange for funding. The products organizations present and sell throughout this process are often the accomplishments, accolades, statistics and models of the respective agencies (Perez, 2007).
Perez’s analysis is extremely relevant to my discussion of Pathways to Education. The replication of the Pathways model in other low-income communities across the province began in 2007 and, as discussed by Acker and Rowen (2013), driven by donors and other communities in Toronto with similar experiences to that of Regent Park (p. 76). This expansion required more funding and, as a consequence, necessitated greater participation in the “organizing market”. The need to be successful in this market drove changes in the structure of the organization as well as the nature of the program. These changes resulted in the transitioning from a community focused to a national organization: Pathways to Education Canada.

In the initial stages, the Pathways to Education program operated under the Regent Park Community Health Center (RPCHC). The structure of the RPCHC consists of a Board of Directors who provided oversight to a number of committees that related to the functioning of the RPCHC. This framework added a Pathways committee as an adjunct to the functional Committees that service the needs RPCHC clients. The Pathways committee consisted of board members and community representatives, and was responsible for the effective trusteeship of the Pathways Program. The role of the committee was to establish accountability measures, set policies and develop systems for monitoring and evaluating the project. In addition, the RPCHC established a Development Committee, consisting largely of people from outside Regent Park, including business leaders. This committee was responsible for fundraising, project related marketing and public relations.

The establishment of Pathways to Education Canada as a national organization meant significant changes in terms of organizational structure. In contrast to the committee organization, Pathways to Education Canada was set up along the lines of a modern day business corporation. The organization’s website provides information regarding the structure of the Board of Directors
as well as background information on Board Members. The structure consists of a seventeen member Board of Directors; reflecting knowledge and experience in banking, finance, law, accounting and auditing, human relations and marketing (“Our Leadership”, Pathways to Education Canada, n.d.). This Board is responsible for setting strategic direction, monitoring performance, and overseeing policy development. The Chief Executive Officer, who is an ex-officio member of the Board of Directors, heads a seven member Executive Team. This Team supports the Board of Directors in policy and strategy development and provides the day to day leadership and execution of Board-approved plans. In the execution of its duties, the Executive Team relies on a number of operational Departments – Corporate Development, Operations, Marketing and Communication, Government Relations and Talent Management and Internal Communications (“Our Leadership”, Pathways to Education Canada, n.d.). A key unit of the structure is the “Campaign Cabinet”. This body consists of twenty-nine persons, including the Chairman of the Board and other Board members, the CEO and prominent business leaders. The main function of this Cabinet is to undertake fundraising initiatives to ensure the implementation of the strategic plans of the organization (“Campaign Cabinet”, Pathways to Education Canada, n.d.). It is noteworthy to mention that with the launch of the program at the national level, Acker resigned from her post as Executive Director of RPCHC to take up the CEO position of the national organization. Co-founder Norman Rowen transitioned to the position of Program Director of Pathways to Education at Regent Park (“History” Pathways to Education Canada, n.d).

**Media images, dysfunction and the commodification of poverty**

Funding has been, both in the formative years of the Program and in the related expansionary phase into Pathways to Education Canada, a central issue for Pathways. According to Acker and Rowen’s (2013), it became evident that continuous long-term funding was essential if the Program was to get off the ground and eventually achieve success. In 1999, the RPCHC
received “seed” funding from the Counselling Foundation and the Ontario Trillium Foundation to implement the initial pilot program in Regent Park. In addition, this initial funding assisted the RPCHC to not only further the development of the fledgling program but also generate a “multi-year” funding plan to continue its operations (Acker and Rowen, 2013, p. 65). In moving to a national organization and undertaking the replication of the program, the leadership recognized that an increased amount of funding was required and that these “seed” financing types of arrangement would be inadequate. As a result, Pathways implemented a more business-oriented approach to raising funds targeting not only individuals, corporations, private sector organizations and foundations but also provincial and federal sources (Acker and Rowen, 2013, p. 76).

Recognizing the fiercely competitive environment in which Pathways had to secure funding, staff at the national level relied heavily on the representations of low-income racialized populations as deficient in order to attract funding. In addition, individual success stories and statistics were also used to highlight the perceived effectiveness of Pathways in addressing educational and social barriers faced by racialized youth. The selling of particular representations of low income communities as racially and culturally different and dysfunctional in order to raise funds is what I describe as the commodification of poverty. The continued portrayal of racialized youth and communities as deficient: low-educational attainment, dysfunctional family structure, immigrant status and violent has become a standing feature of the narrative of Pathways. The selling of difference appeals to the sensibilities of the white middle class subject and engenders a desire to help. I show how helping reproduces and maintains the superiority of the white subject, while also securing the subject’s innocence from complicity in structural inequality.

In their quest to secure funding, the founders of the Pathways relied heavily on the use of text and print media, as well as visual imagery. In articles published by prominent Canadian media such as the Toronto Star, and The Globe and Mail, Regent Park already known as crime prone and
poverty stricken, was further depicted as a space of degeneracy through the reiterations of its failing youth, single parent homes and racialized/immigrant populations. In addition to reviewing the materials produced by Pathways, it is also necessary to analyze some excerpts from these newspaper publications in order to provide context for my analysis. These excerpts are part of a broader discursive formation that upholds and keeps in circulation a particular representation of the Regent Park community as Other. It is through the continued circulation of these discourses that Pathways positioned itself as an effective solution to a myriad of social issues that plagued the community.

In my discussion of the media articles I pay specific attention to print publications for the period of 2004-2007. By 2004, after three years in operation, both the program and the efforts of Acker and Rowen began to receive media coverage for their role in developing the initiative. The articles published throughout 2004 centred on providing readers with a detailed description of the adverse social conditions such as crime, violence and poverty experienced in the community and also featured the work of the Pathways program as a success. These media publications consistently highlighted a graphic representation of Regent Park as dysfunctional and in need of saving. Goar (2004) draws attention to the dysfunctional conditions the youth in Regent Park face daily that act as barriers to their success. She explains,

Regent Park is a harsh test tube for any education program. The median family income is $16,000. Nearly half of the households are headed by single parents. Two thirds of the kids speak English as a second language. (Goar, Toronto Star, 2004).

Similarly, Valpy’s (2004) article focuses on the story of Adna, a participant of the Pathways program at the time, and the various community and education barriers that she must face and overcome in order to be successful. He writes,

Adna is 16 years old, with hopes and expectations for the future as sparkling as her smile and as ambitious as those of any Canadian her age. She wants to be a doctor,
a pediatrician. That is what she talks about with her friends, her teachers and her single-parent father. What makes Adna's dream special is that, until two years ago, an Everest-sized barrier stood between the Somali-born Grade 11 student and her medical-school aspirations. Teenagers in her neighbourhood just didn't grow up to become doctors; it was enough merely to graduate from high school. Adna's assessment is blunt. Without Pathways, she says, she wouldn't have made it this far. She has a dream (Valpy, Globe and Mail, 2004).

Both excerpts presented by Goar (2004) and Valpy (2004) respectively, highlight the community, family structure, poverty and immigrant background as barriers to success for the youth of Regent Park. In Adna’s narrative, she praises the Pathways program for removing the “Everest-sized” barriers that hindered her from attaining her goals. Story’s like hers construct the Pathways program as an effective solution in saving youth from the dysfunction of their community.

From dysfunction to graduation: correlations between success and funding

Print publications that featured the organization in 2005 continued to construct and circulate an image of Regent Park as a dysfunctional environment hindering the progress of youth. Articles published during this time profiled the graduation of the first cohort of Pathways students since the development of the program in 2001. Despite the apparent success of the program shown in these print publications, the words used throughout these articles continue to present a dismal image of Regent Park. Cheney (2005) writes,

Ms. Brago’s arrival on campus is a triumph over the forces of despair and economics. She was raised by a single mother in Regent Park, a place best known for drug-related murders and a high-school dropout rate of nearly 60 per cent. Now, thanks to a program called Pathways to Education, Ms. Brago is among a new generation of Regent Park residents who are starting to rewrite the community’s history (Cheney, Globe and Mail, 2005).

Ruth’s narrative and others like it, featured in print publications, provide evidence that the program is effective. This evidence may in turn serve to strengthen the program’s legitimacy and appeal to potential donors for continued funding. The article describes Ruth’s success as a triumph over poverty, dysfunctional family and community (Cheney, 2005). Indeed, it describes success as made possibly by social and academic support provided by Pathways. In addition to highlighting
the individual success of participants of the program during this period, four of the twenty-one articles accessed through the ProQuest database calls for increased funding for community-based initiatives similar to the Pathways program.

In her article, Louise Brown (Toronto Star, 2006) discussed the educational progress of students of the Pathways program. She noted that the Ontario government established a high profile committee to increase enrolment of first-generation students into post-secondary institutions. At the time, the committee included the current program director of Pathways to Education, Norman Rowen. This is significant in that it not only confirms Rowen as an expert on the subject of poverty reduction, but also validates the program as an effective and viable solution to poverty. The article highlights that the Ontario government would commit $55 million to the project over the following three years (Brown, Toronto Star, 2006). Funding would be allotted to various community-based programs, similar to Pathways, in order to address the issue of cyclical poverty. In addition, the committee would liaise with the provincial government to provide recommendations to increase first-generation enrolment and retention at the post-secondary level.

The print publications during 2006-2007 heralded the program as a success in its ability to counteract the deficiencies of a historically marginalized and dysfunctional community. These media publications highlighted increased funding from both public and private sources. As indicated by Brown (2006) and Aulakh (2007), the program received $500,000 from the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities and a $19 million dollar grant over four years to support the replication of the program across Ontario. In addition to featuring individual success narratives of program participants, print publications during this time, also began to feature statistical data to convey the program’s success and thus attract more funding (Brown, Toronto Star, 2006). Acker and Rowen (2013) mention the importance and appeal of evidence-based results in securing
funding, and explain that “marketing efforts were finally paying off and the Program and its results were beginning to be recognized and disseminated, primarily through newspaper articles” (p.76).

Selling “success” at the national level

This practice of documenting and circulating narratives of success through forms of text through media publications became part of the “evidence-based” results employed by Pathways, particularly through their organizational website. At the time of this research, Pathways featured twelve “success stories” on its website of some of its participants across various sites in operation. The site presents ten such narratives in the form of video presentations, and two are text based (“Success Stories”, Pathways to Education Canada, n.d.). The format of these narratives is presented as before and after snapshots similar to print narratives discussed in previously outlined media publications. In the before shots, students provide a glimpse into the dysfunction of their community that negatively impacted their academic progress and potential for success. Participants highlighted issues such as a lack of confidence or support, absence of (parental) role models, the impact of community stigma, and financial status. However, as the video and text narratives progressed, students highlighted the ways in which the Pathways program positively impacted their lives. This after snapshot, where students portrayed their story in a more positive light focused on the role of Pathways in addressing various obstacles faced by students and how the organization assisted them on their way to success.

The narratives of these youth, as portrayed by Pathways, attempt to demonstrate to the wider public that the program’s intervention in the lives of low-income racialized youth could, in fact, yield positive results. These success stories center specifically on graduating from high school and transitioning towards post-secondary education. This definition of success constructed in the context of the organization is seemingly reflective of the white middle class ideologies of its founders and donor base. These narratives highlighted by Pathways construct success in a narrow
manner, the organization only profiles students that move towards educational pursuits. In these narratives, youth are presented individually productive and successful in spite of living in dysfunctional community. The textual narrative of Humayan Khan on the organization’s website provides the public with his Pathways story. It highlights the dysfunction and adverse social conditions he and his peers faced while growing up in Regent Park. He explains,

Prior to Pathways, kids were doing exactly what everyone expected them to do. Join a street gang, sell drugs on the street corner, maybe have kids before turning twenty themselves, and so on. But this is where Pathways to Education stepped in (Khan, Pathways to Education Canada, n.d.)

These before and after presentations of the individual keep and maintain binaries of difference in circulation. Success stories constitute an integral part of the material evidence used to demonstrate the effectiveness of Pathways. The material presented on the organization’s website attempts to demonstrate the potential economic and societal benefits to be gained from transformed youth.

Statistics, endorsements and Success: continuing to package the Pathways brand

In addition to employing print media, video presentations, and success stories, presenting statistical data is also a key component of Pathways’ funding strategy. In 2011, the Boston Consulting Group (BCG)\(^\text{12}\), one of the corporate funders of Pathways, conducted, on a pro bono basis, an economic evaluation of the program. This undertaking was essentially a follow-up study of work done in 2007\(^\text{13}\). The 2007 analysis was based on data gathered solely from the Regent Park location. With the expansion of the program in various communities during 2007 to 2011, the 2011 report also incorporated and analyzed data generated from replicated or “secondary” sites (“The

\(^{12}\) Established in 1963 with over 80 offices in 45 countries the Boston Consulting Group is an internationally recognized global management consulting firm and business strategy advisor. Its clientele includes agencies from both private and public sectors as well as non-profit agencies. The aim of the BCG is to improve and strengthen performance indicators of various agencies in order to ensure optimal performance.

\(^{13}\) It should be note that information regarding the initial 2007 analysis is not provided on the Pathways website. However, what is accessible to the public is the Executive Summary of the 2011 BCG findings that provides a comparative analysis of the initial results documented in the 2007 report.
Results”, Pathways to Education, n.d.). In this report, the commodification of poverty reaches new heights.

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the social return on investment (SROI) of Pathways. BCG calculated that $24 would be returned to society for every charitable dollar donated to the organization (“The Results”, Pathways to Education Canada, n.d.). This broad rate of return reflected the impact of the program on government tax revenue and government spending. Benefits to the State determined by the BCG analysis projected increased tax revenue due to higher employability. Moreover, higher income levels would be a result of the progression of marginalized youth to post-secondary and more opportunities resulting in productive citizenry. BCG (2011) reports an increase in amount collected from sales tax is to be expected due to a projected increase in consumer spending that will result from higher levels of income. On the other hand, the state is likely to reduce expenditure in areas such as social assistance and costs related to the judicial system due to predictably lower incarceration rates (“Social Impact Stories”, BCG, 2015).

In addition to identifying the social impact of the Pathways program, BCG (2015) also reports on health cost-saving benefits to be gained by the government. High school graduation rate improvements are expected to positively impact health outcomes. Indeed, the analysis projected reductions in health-related issues such as hypertension, heart disease, and smoking, as well as an overall decrease in risky behaviors. BCG reported a 75% decrease in teen pregnancies in Regent Park since the establishment of the Pathways program in the community. What is particularly striking about BCG’s statistical analysis is that it continues to uphold and legitimize a stereotypical belief concerning the sexual practices of low-income racialized women. It does so by classifying teenage pregnancies as a result of engaging in a form of “risky behaviour”. Kelly (1996) counteracts this narrative in her discussion. Upholding these perceptions of sexual behaviours of
low-income racialized teenagers distracts from the issue of structural inequality that continues to contribute to cyclical poverty and centres on blaming the individual for their circumstances (Kelly, 1996, Franklin, 1999). These statistics demonstrate that, in order to render poverty a commodity to be sold, corporations must continually mark low-income racialized populations as deficient. The cost-benefit analysis points to the fact that if left unmanaged this population could be a potential threat to productivity. The statistics employed by the organization demonstrate just how far the processes involved in the commodification of poverty has come.

The BCG report is lengthy in providing information regarding positive outcomes, but quite brief when providing supporting evidence to back these assertions. The report claims that, due to the Pathways Program, there was: a decrease in violent and property crimes; “decreased “ghetto-ization” of Toronto”; “decreased time spent on streets by youth; increased sense of responsibility among youth for their educations and career decisions and increased aspiration of youth to take part in their community” (“Social Impact Stories”, BCG, 2015). However, neither the BCG nor Pathways have made statistical data and relevant information publicly available to support these outcomes, whether in print or on their respective websites (BCG, 2015).

In addition to determining the SORI\(^\text{14}\), the 2007 analysis used net present value per student criteria as an indicator of investment return to be gained from investing in a Pathways participant. In 2007, it was determined by BCG that the net present value (NPV)\(^\text{15}\) was $50,000 per Pathways student with a cumulative benefit of $600,000. In the 2011 follow-up report, BCG calculated the NPV at $45,000 per student enrolled in the program. BCG’s analysis attached a particular financial and economic value to the participants of the program; the lives of human beings were equated to and analyzed as if what was being examined was an inanimate investment project. Pathways uses

\(^{14}\) Social rate of return (SORI) is a quantitative methods-based approach that determines the financial value of factors such as environmental and social determinants that cannot be accounted for within mainstream financial analyses.

\(^{15}\) Net present value (NPV) is a formula employed to determine both the profitability of particular projects.
this statistical data to buttress the print media, video presentations, and success stories, providing the so-called hard data demonstrating the effectiveness of this particular intervention strategy.

As a result, the statistical data provided by BCG is a vital ingredient in the production and dissemination of a particular acceptable truth, namely that Pathways to Education is effective in breaking the cycle of poverty. Individuals associated with various international institutions such as the United Nations or the McKinsey & Company Monitor Group have voiced their support for Pathways to Education based on their perceived results. The organization uses these endorsements to effectively silence any potential criticism or questions regarding the integrity of the organization or its performance. With the exception of the United Nations, the other experts who endorse the Pathways organization are all management consultancy firms that specialize in areas of business competitiveness and planning.

The use of print media, video presentations, success stories, statistical data and endorsement by global experts are all combined in a package that Pathways uses to provide credibility to the performance claims in its fundraising activities. The 2010 Spring newsletter produced by Pathways not only presents profiles of historical and on-going supporters of the program, but also documents their statements that underscore the role of the statistical data in influencing their decisions to continue to provide funding to the program. In their historical account, the founders highlight that these “evidence-based” results are what appealed most to donors, government institutions and foundations (Acker and Rowen, 2013, p. 76).

The rise of Graduation Nation

In 2011, Pathways unveiled its five-year strategic plan with the objective to make Canada a “Graduation Nation”. This initiative, with its focus on increasing graduation rates among racialized youth in low-income communities, became a national priority and reflected the general conclusion of the BCG report. The conclusion was that failure to increase these rates among
racialized youth would have detrimental effects on the wider society. In its use of the term “Graduation Nation”, Pathways sought to promote its efforts as a national project. The replication process sought to establish and sustain high performing Pathways programs in twenty low-income predominantly racialized communities over a five year period. Following the announcement of its strategic plan, both the Provincial and Federal Governments demonstrated their support for the initiative by allocating monetary resources to establish the Pathways program across Canada. In 2011, the Provincial government allocated $28 million over a three-year period while the Federal government also pledged $20 million over the following five years. In 2013, the Provincial government announced its pledge to permanently support Pathways by investing $9.5 million per annum. In 2013 and 2014 the Federal Government recommitted its support to the organization in its Economic Action Plan 16 (“Budget in Brief”, Government of Canada, 2014).

Through print media and video, success stories and statistical data Pathways employs a particular representation of low-income racialized youth accompanied by a matching rhetoric in its appeal for funds; this selling strategy intensified with the launch of Graduation Nation. The constant repetition of the images of low-income racialized communities as hopeless and dysfunctional has become a critical selling point in facilitating the exchange between donors and Pathways. This exchange cannot be viewed as a simple process of marketing. Against the backdrop of a corporate business model, the selling of difference by Pathways in effect reduces poverty to a saleable commodity. They conduct the exchange in an open market environment in that there is a buyer and seller relationship; Pathways presents static and fixed representations of the Regent Park

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16 In 2009 during the height of the global recession, the government of Canada implemented an Economic Action Plan in order to ensure the stability of the Canadian economy. The strategy employed focused on three specific areas related to economic growth: Balancing the budget, Stimulating employment and growth and Support families and communities. Funding Pathways to Education Canada demonstrates the Canadian government’s commitment to low-income families and communities in order to ensure economic growth. This is part of Canadian government’s plan to invest $70 million dollars over a three-year period to support 5000 new internships for recent post-secondary graduates.
community as violent, and poverty stricken (commodity), to the white upper and middle class subject (consumer). This exchange reduces the low-income racialized community to the status of a commodity, while donors are able to feel satisfied through their participation in the funding process.

**Advertising, sponsorship and the production of the Good White Donors**

It is interesting to note that the exchange relationship conducted by Pathways is emblematic of other organizations who pursue funds through constant images of racialized communities living in substandard conditions. There has been much scholarship analyzing how these images facilitate exchanges between sponsors and the helping organizations (Jones de Almeida 2007, Perez 2007, Heron 2007, Jefferess 2002, Mahrouse, 2011 and Jefferess 2012). Jefferess (2002) critically analyzes the marketing of ‘Third World’ poverty primarily through the use of imagery and video presentations by World Vision. In these representations of poverty, World Vision employs images of racialized women and children in its fundraising campaigns. A consequence of this approach is the maintenance of binaries of difference between countries as these portrayals continue to reinforce particular truths; such truths produce representations of the Global South as being backward, inferior and childlike as opposed to Northern/Western countries that are constructed as progressive, superior and paternal (Jefferess, 2002, McEwan, 2009, Jefferess, 2012).

In the case of World Vision, individual child sponsorship is a primary medium used to solicit funding from potential donors. As a result, World Vision uses spaces of the racialized Other in advertising campaigns as a setting to draw potential donors to the cause (Jefferess, 2002, p. 10). Against a backdrop of images of mud huts, unsanitary conditions, and dilapidated buildings, World Vision highlights their efforts in these communities in an effort to appeal for continued funding. These emotive images, as relied upon by World Vision, cajole donations from guilt-ridden Northerners who are the focus of the appeal. Pronouns such as “you” and “your” are employed
throughout the advertising campaigns that center on the role of the donor as the facilitator of change. Jefferess (2002) contends that successful fundraising initiatives are dependent on the extent to which these exchanges will satisfy the emotional consciousness of the sponsor/customer (p. 15). Donors gain this sense of satisfaction through material exchanges between the sponsor and the sponsored; the organization therefore sells them “peace of mind” through their participation in these initiatives (p. 18).

In the case of World Vision, sponsors may select a participant or sponsored child on the basis of their sex and country of origin. Once chosen, sponsors receive material objects such as pictures, letters and progress updates from the sponsored child in exchange for monthly contributions to the organization. These material exchanges allow sponsors to feel personally invested in the lives of sponsored children. Sponsors are, in turn, satisfied by their participation in these sponsorship acts that promise to change their lives (Jefferess, 2002). However, what is important to note from Jefferess’ (2002) analysis is that through engaging in these exchanges the child, and by extension the alleviation of poverty, become commodified through the act of sponsorship (p. 16). The successful nature of these fundraising campaigns employed by World Vision is dependent on the level of satisfaction to be gained by the sponsor/consumer through these exchanges (p. 15).

**Drawing parallels: the donor as the agent of change**

Pathways does not offer individual sponsorship opportunities as outlined in Jefferess’ (2002) discussion of World Vision’s fundraising campaigns. They do however, offer opportunities to meet, interact and listen to stories of program participants. Pathways hosts and participates in a variety of initiatives such as the “Pathways Graduation Gala”, “The Longboat Roadrunners Toronto Island Run” and “Charity Golf Tournaments” in order to raise awareness and funds for the organization. At these events, Pathways often invites participants or alumni to share their
personal stories and more specifically the role of Pathways in supporting them in addressing their barriers to educational achievement. At these events, donors may bear witness to the transformative effects of their investments. Unlike the narratives captured in newsletters and video presentations in promotional materials, these opportunities enable the donor to personally encounter the Other which may evoke a sense of satisfaction from their encounter. These encounters, as discussed in discourses of development work, not only reinforce notions of the Self, but also work to satisfy and thus appease donors, ensuring their continued funding for the various sites in operation (Jefferess 2002, Jones de Almeida, 2007, Anderson, 2008, Richie and Ponte, 2008, Jefferess, 2012). While Pathways does not engage in large-scale sponsorship practices for example like World Vision, they do however hold annual fundraising events.

The Pathways Gala is a primary fundraising event where sponsors can donate at varying levels ($5000 to $50,000). It is also another opportunity for donors to interact with participants and alumni of the program. The theme of Pathways Canada’s annual Grad Ball 2014 is “Unlock Potential” (“Attend an Event”, Pathways to Education Canada, n.d.). The language employed on the promotional materials for the event uses pronouns such as “you” and “we”. The use of this type of language appeals directly to donor identities who hold the key in order to “unlock” this untapped potential of low-income racialized youth. The invitation, accessible via the organization’s website, encourages donors to come and connect with other like-minded supporters who share values regarding equal opportunity and access to education for all youth (“Sponsorship Opportunities 2014”, Pathways to Education Canada, n.d.).

Throughout the promotional material for the Gala, Pathways provides potential donors with information regarding sponsorship opportunities, including: brand exposure, a full page “post-event thank you advertisement” in the Globe and Mail, recognition on social media used
throughout the evening, and recognition on all event paraphernalia (e-vites and programs invitations). The organization sells packages to corporate funders and, depending on the package purchased, funders have the opportunity to host alumni and current participants of the program at their table during the event. The “Gold Sponsorship”, priced at $15000, invites donors to sponsor alumni and student transportation costs for the event. Pathways subsequently provides students with name tags bearing the logo of the respective company, so that individuals attending the event will know that their organization is responsible for “their big smiles” (Pathways to Education Canada, n.d.). These types of fundraising events provide opportunities to the corporate sector to align themselves with a particular cause; in this case it is provision of educational support initiatives for racialized low-income populations.

**Accolades and Awards: Critiquing the Pathways model**

The work and efforts of Pathways to Education Canada over the years cannot be diminished, as the program stepped up to fill a glaring need. However, upon review, several shortcomings are apparent. Acker and Rowen were of the view the application of the program in various low-income racialized communities would serve to break the cycle of poverty, first in the Regent Park community, and later throughout Canada. My argument is that these initiatives are necessary but not sufficient conditions for breaking the cycle of poverty.

Pathways simplifies the complex social issue of poverty and promotes the notion that money used for the purpose of educational and health initiatives could, in isolation, be an effective response in creating and sustaining social change that results in the breaking of the cycle of poverty in Canada. However, this very presentation of an uncomplicated narrative is the same one that is positioned as a compelling justification for continued donor financing. It is questionable whether
donors, if faced with a more complex reality, would be equally willing to fund the programs offered by Pathways.

A critical underlying socio-cultural factor in the continuation of the cycle of poverty in Canada is that of race. Pathways chose not to acknowledge the existence of systemic racism that manifests in, policies, programs, and practices in the educational, judicial, and employment systems throughout Canadian society. The failure to identify systemic racism as a causal factor of poverty, from the very inception of the Pathways model, has served to simplify the task of providing a solution to the issue of the deprivation of the Black/racialized community in Canada. In turning a blind eye to the existence of systemic racism in the education system, labour market, housing, and judiciary, it became far easier for the organization to lay the cause of poverty at the feet of the individual, and by extension, the community. Furthermore, Pathways constructs the donor as the agent of change, rather than focusing on the empowerment of the community. Change is, therefore, only able to be effectively realized through the intervention of persons in positions of privilege to whom the rhetoric appeals.

Events such as the Pathways Gala serve to foster an environment whereby the generosity of the wealthy is applauded and celebrated for their financial contributions. Individuals with privilege and capital are elevated to the status of heroes to whom both the community and, more specifically, its youth, are indebted. Sponsors view their participation in the transformative process through the initiatives of the organization as unquestionably good, thereby guaranteeing their innocence. In constructing the donor as the agent of change, Pathways upholds dominant relations of power, whereby racialized groups continue to be depicted as inferior and lacking agency in altering their circumstances. White subjects involved in this process are continually constructed as good and in providing financial support appear to fulfill their moral obligation to the Other.
Pathways presents funding as a simple solution to social issues, and has fostered a system of dependency that focuses on the efforts of donors. This reliance on donor funding maintains a system of dependency that limits the initial aim of the organization. With the focus on appeasing donors, the organization runs the risk of developing programs that satisfy the wishes of the donor, rather than meeting the needs of the community. The reliance on funding from predominantly corporate and private sources has placed Pathways, similar to other agencies in the helping sector, in a precarious position whereby in order to survive, they must continually portray the communities and individuals with whom they work as helpless victims – commodified, impoverished subjects.
Conclusion

It cannot be disputed that, over the years, Pathways to Education Canada has contributed to poverty alleviation in Canada. It was with foresight and tenacity that the founders embarked on a mission to develop interventions that they understood would serve to break the cycle of poverty among low-income racialized inner city populations. Since its initial development in 2001, Pathways has positioned itself as an effective solution to Canadian poverty reduction. Both the organization and its founders were recipients of a number of accolades over the years. The organization attained a four-star rating on Charity Intelligence Canada\(^\text{17}\) for its financial reporting as well as its apparent success. As evident throughout the research, has been featured and endorsed by a number of experts from a variety of fields. Most recently, in 2013, Pathways was the recipient of the World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE) Award\(^\text{18}\) for transformative impact on education and societies. In addition, founder Carolyn Acker has also benefited from the program’s popular success as she was bestowed with Canada’s highest honour, the Order of Canada\(^\text{19}\). Subsequently, she has become the face of Canadian poverty reduction. However, from the position of this thesis, the apparent success of Pathways in fulfilling its goal of breaking the cycle of poverty must be critically reviewed.

\(^{17}\) Charity Intelligence Canada (Ci) which began in 2006 assesses and identifies exceptional charities for potential donors in order to create a balanced portfolio that reflects their “giving interests and the change they hope to achieve. As a result, donors have the tools they need to give better and get higher returns on their donations—donations based on evidence (“Our Story”, Ci, 2014”).

\(^{18}\) World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE) established by the Qatar Foundation in 2009, under the patronage of its Chairperson, Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser. The Organization brings to the forefront global innovations in the field of education in the hopes to create policy shifts and social change.

\(^{19}\) The Order of Canada established in 1967 by Queen Elizabeth the award recognizes an individual’s service to community (Governor General of Canada, Feb, 2015)
Analysis of the data between the years 1996 and 2011 demonstrates that poverty has become an entrenched feature among racialized groups in Toronto. Based on the 1996 Canadian Population Census, Michael Ornstein (2000) reports,

For families from East and Southeast Asia and the Pacific, the incidence of poverty is twice as high for European-origin families, 29.6 versus 14.4 percent. For Latin American ethno-racial groups, the incidence of family poverty is 41.4 percent, for Africans, Blacks and Caribbeans it is 44.6 percent and for Arabs and West Asians it is 45.2 percent – all roughly three times (emphasis added) the European average. The figures for Aboriginal persons in Toronto, 32.1 percent, and South Asians, 34.6 percent are also very high (p. i).

The incidence of poverty among racialized families continues to be three times that of non-racialized families. Block & Galabuzi (2011) also point out that in Canada “6.4% of non-racialized families lived in poverty in 2005, but three times that number, 19.8% of racialized families lived in poverty in that same year. These higher poverty rates cut across all racialized groups” (p. 15).

Another contentious issue is the claim of success for the mode of intervention. Based on the established discourse that identifies the lack of educational achievement and immigration status as underlying explanations for racialized poverty, the interventionist strategy is comprised educational support initiatives. However, the evidence points to the fact that, despite attaining higher levels of education and being born in Canada, racialized persons are still at a disadvantage in terms of income earning (Galabuzi, 2006, 2008, Das Gupta, 2008, Li, 2008, Block and Galabuzi, 2011). Block and Galabuzi (2011) compared incomes for 25-to-44 year-old workers who completed university education by immigration generational status. The comparison highlighted a wide disparity in earnings between first generation racialized and non-racialized workers as the former made 68.7 cents for every dollar that the latter earned. The earnings gap persisted for second-generation workers, with racialized men in this generation earning just 75.6 cents for every dollar non-racialized men earned (p.12).
Pathways, whose mandate is centred on poverty alleviation, now operates in the same mold as a large corporation employing similar selling strategies. The public face of poverty is that of a racialized, helpless, poverty-stricken, individual. This image is now ever-present, courtesy of various forms of media such as cable television, internet, newspapers and more recently social media platforms. My thesis is located within the growing literature focusing on the dark side of the fundraising initiatives of organizations in this industry. Similar to other organizations in this industry, in order to finance its programs, Pathways to Education Canada relies on financial support from donors. In its efforts, the organization sells visual images using particular representations of racialized populations to potential donors in exchange for monetary support. As pointed out in this thesis, this exchange not only serves the purpose of fundraising but also become the medium for disseminating information about the Other. These images often reflect stereotypical images of racialized populations that distorts, exaggerates and essentializes difference as a fixed characteristic feature of these groups.
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