UNEQUALLY PLACED: A CASE STUDY OF THE GEOGRAPHICAL

ORGANIZATION OF SOCIAL SERVICES FOR MARGINALIZED YOUTH

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TITLE: Unequally Placed: A Case Study of the Geographical Organization of Social Services for Marginalized Youth

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Dedicated to the young people who shared their stories

with me and for those whose stories have yet to be heard...

Abstract

Jackson, 16, has just lost his father to cancer and has nowhere to go so he drops out of high school to look for work. Chrissy, 18, and a recovering addict, sometimes wakes up still thinking about the drugs. She doesn't use the drugs, but she says that she still needs them. Steph, 20, is on a path towards 'normal expected success' when past trauma re-enters her every day. She takes all her prescribed pills on multiple occasions to end her life because her family doesn't believe the abuse she describes. She tells me she can't think about the future because she still has to be alive to deal with it. And Mark, 22, has been homeless for 5 years, not consecutively, but long enough to equate home with the streets more than with the times he's had a roof over his head. These are some of the everyday lives of young people included in this dissertation.

Using the case of one organization that operates across a rural and urban context in Ontario, Canada, I investigate the organization of social services for youth. Throughout I show that if young people experience forms of marginalization, and disadvantage like those described above in an *urban context,* they will likely know about and have access to local support centres, coordinated organizational processes, referral programs, and a network of social resources that are able to address their multiple and complex needs. The *rural context,* however, works in drastically different ways, even when the services are expected to be the same. In

other words, the geographical location operates as a social force that shapes both young people's experiences of, and organizational responses to, inequality. In the pages that follow I explore how intersecting social processes alleviate forms of disadvantage experienced by youth in urban settings, and paradoxically, reproduce and sustain forms of inequality experienced by rural youth. Importantly this research shows that the geographical location of people in disadvantaged positions matters to the ways that the experience unfolds. Getting out of marginalized positions for rural youth is more challenging because the rural setting is not set up to do this work; in other words, compared to urban settings, the rural context is *unequally placed*.

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For the youth, your candour about your experiences provided an opportunity for me to investigate how geography shapes access to and involvement with social services. As limiting as these words may be, I offer my respect to every one of you who allowed me to ask tough questions about your lives. I hope that my efforts to bring together your stories contribute to a critical conversation about the current structure of social services. To the staff and organization that allowed me to examine, and watch their work 'in-action', I offer my sincerest gratitude. These opportunities provided a window for me to see how the system of social services unfolds in practice for youth in marginalized social positions. Your dedicated work makes important change in the lives of young people.

This project would not have been possible without the continued efforts of my committee members. To my supervisor Melanie Heath, thank you for your tough questions and honest insights throughout this process. Your efforts have pushed me to develop into a sociologist that is able to move *between* empirical data ("the trees")

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<u>Introduction</u>

1.1: AMY

<u>*Spring 2009, Hewardsville[1] Ontario*</u>

This is my account of Amy. She is neither an abstraction nor anecdote but rather a young person who needed an immediate social service response the night that I was working at the Rural Branch in 2009.

It was like clockwork. Thirty minutes before closing we always started cleaning. Most youth usually left the Rural Branch when we took out the vacuum near the computers where they always flocked. On this particular night, however, Amy remained in the computer lab. Over the vacuum I reminded her that the Branch closed at 8pm. In a muffled voice she whispered, "I don't have anywhere to go."

My co-worker and I went into one of the staff offices to problem solve. We looked silently at each other in panic. Finally, my co-worker broke the silence asking me, "What do we do?" I grabbed the resource binder and flipped quickly to the "housing" tab. The page was nearly blank. There were no youth shelters in the town of Hewardsville that we could call. The Rural Branch did not offer any emergency or

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[1] All names and identifying material are pseudonyms to protect the identities of the people and communities involved in this research.

transitional housing programs, so we called the only local number listed: the Women's Shelter. All the beds were filled and, to top it all off, we were told that Amy did not qualify. She was not running away from an abusive boyfriend, nor did she have any children with whom she was also seeking shelter. Amy was not a priority. The Women's Shelter suggested "next steps" and we quietly hung up. While my co-worker flipped through the other pages of resource binder, I intently looked at the ceiling as if the solution would descend from the ceiling tiles. Nothing ever dropped.

About five minutes later we asked Amy to join us in the office. I asked her if there was anyone she could call and suggested that maybe she could stay at a friends for the night. Over my voice, my co-worker muttered, "Can you go home?" Amy shook her head and began to cry. I reached across the desk to give her some tissues. Amy would not make eye contact.

My co-worker and I left Amy in the office and moved to the front of the Branch. We locked the front door. The Branch was now officially closed. We started brainstorming other solutions. "What about the Sally? They've gotta have spots." My co-worker called the Salvation Army located 45 minutes away in the city of Grayson. Next to the Woman's Shelter, this was the closest housing program to where Amy stood. My co-worker hung up with this defeated, "oh shit", look on her face. "They asked if Amy had transportation to the Sally. Obviously she doesn't. What, do they expect her to walk?" I could sense my co-worker's disgust turning into gloom. "What are you thinking?" my co-worker asked. I must have looked like I wanted to say

something. "Um... I'm going to pack Amy some food from the kitchen." That was a lie.
Really I was thinking that I lived 2 blocks away from the Salvation Army in Grayson,
but as staff of the Rural Branch I knew that we were not allowed to put youth into
our cars. Organizational processes made accessing the only shelter solution for Amy
impossible.

My co-worker's voice continued to escalate as she told me what the Salvation
Army suggested we do. "They said that if we want to send her here that we should
call this church in town that will pick her up from Hewardsville and drive her to
Grayson." My co-worker shrugged her shoulders suggesting her uncertainty with
this suggestion. I had never heard of this church, they were not listed in the resource
binder, nor did I know if the Rural Branch had any pre-existing relationship with
them. We called our supervisor, left a message explaining the situation, and waited
for instructions as to what to do next.

Tick-tock. Tick-tock. All I could hear were the hands of the clock move. I
walked back to the office to check on Amy who was hanging up the phone as I
entered the room. When she hung up she told me she had arranged to stay the night
with a friend. Amy and I walked to the front of the Branch and I explained the plan to
my co-worker. My co-worker called our supervisor leaving another message stating
that everything was fine. We unlocked the front door, gave Amy the grocery bag
filled with food, and watched her walk towards the only intersection in town. As she
approached it, the light switched from red to green. This was our housing crisis plan.

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May 24, 2012, Grayson Ontario

When I started visiting the Urban Youth Centre for this project I ordered a lot of coffee. One week, in particular, stands out. For three days straight I ordered coffee from the same barista. Thursday, however, was different. On this day, the barista and I looked at each other as if we knew one another but couldn't seem to figure out where from. I ordered my coffee and walked back to the table. As I walked I could hear another cafe staff speaking to this barista. "Amy, can you grab these cookies?" I turned my head to look towards the register, raising my eyebrows as if I had solved a great mystery. It had been 3 years since I last saw her. "Right, her hair is different", I told myself. "That's why I couldn't remember." I gave her a half smile but we never exchanged a word. For the rest of the week I ordered coffee from Amy.

The more I looked, the more I saw Amy. Several times I saw her at the meal programs offered through the Urban Youth Centre. I saw her use a swipe card for tenants of the transitional housing units that were part of the programming offered through the Centre. And, during my subsequent visits I learned from staff that Amy had moved from Hewardsville to Grayson. Her (now-ex) boyfriend lived here. People thought she had been pregnant and that she moved to Grayson for help with supportive housing. But no one ever saw her with a baby. Staff explained that Amy was participating in one of the Urban Youth Centre's employment programs that provided her with part-time employment in a local cafe. Compared to that night

three years ago, Amy seemed to be in a very different place; while her story

continued to surround homelessness, through this different organizational site she

had acquired shelter, had a job and appeared heavily involved in other social service

programming.

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1.2: THE RESEARCH PUZZLE

The Urban Youth Centre and the Rural Branch function as a *single* non-profit

organization in Ontario, Canada registered under the Canadian Incorporation Act.

Together, both sites operate under a "one stop shop" service delivery model that

seeks to provide support to people between the ages of 16-30 who are known to be

'at-risk.' Resources provided to young people include employment counselling,

education (GED), job preparation and training, basic needs, and referrals to outside

systems of care (i.e., Ontario Works, mental health agencies, and supportive housing

programs).

"One-stop shops" emerge through "single window policy initiatives" (Berardi

2000) that attempt to provide uniform and standardized access to social services

(Askim et al. 2011). Conceptually this model might be seen as the epitome of

organizational collaboration – that is, the expectation is that all service providers

within the field *will know about* and *work with* each other to provide a unified

response to forms of marginalization and disadvantage. This means that accessing a

standardized social service should look the same regardless of *where* it is actually
delivered. Such a standardized organizational response also assumes that
experiences of disadvantage will be treated as identical regardless of the settings
where they occur. And finally, once people are inside such organizations this model
is thought to consistently and uniformly coordinate people's access to other services
that they need irrespective of the location where they initially access support.
Importantly, this social service model assumes a decontextualized relationship
between the organizations that provide these services and the multiple geographical
settings where this work occurs.

The case of Amy suggests that while the expectation of both organizational sites
is to be standardized, what happens in practice is different depending on the
community with which the young person seeks support. Although in theory "one-
stop shops" are an attempt to create the standardized delivery of social services, in
practice they may be more complex.

Amy provides a point of entry into my examination of the relationship between
the structure of institutions and organizational responses to inequality that are
expected to move people out of positions of disadvantage. Specifically, this research
explores how the field of social services – and the institutional logic of 'youth-at-risk'
– organizes resource opportunities for young people experiencing multiple and
simultaneous forms of marginalization. As a participant in the Urban Youth Centre's
affordable housing program, Amy accessed a concrete housing service that

addressed her insecure shelter situation and made visible some of her other needs (i.e., employment). Yet, the work of staff in the Rural Branch did not provide Amy with the same kind of support around homelessness, nor could they connect her to outside local resources (i.e., food programs). In other words, Amy's specific experience of homelessness was shaped by the context in which she experienced it. Her involvement with one organization did not produce the same response. How is the delivery of social services in Ontario structured within and across geographical settings?

This dissertation integrates sociological insights from institutionalism, neighbourhood effects research, and social capital theory. While much social capital research focuses on the consequence of social ties and the ways that inequality is reproduced, I draw on the work of Mario L. Small (2009), among others, who show that organizations are important for mediating the ways that people acquire social resources. While these insights are notable, unexamined is the ways that geography mediates service provision and thus the acquisition of social capital. To this end, I bridge this research with sociological institutionalism and organizational theory to investigate the processes that structure organizational activities that are important to people's access to social resources. Although social capital theory, neighbourhood effects research, and institutionalism are useful for understanding the organization of social services for young people, overlooked are the ways that geography shapes this institutional system.

Throughout this dissertation I demonstrate that the place where marginalized people interact with social service organizations is central to what actually happens. Fundamentally, I argue that the *social capital conferred to marginalized young people through the institution of social services is shaped by and shapes geography*. In short, geography is a social force that structures knowledge about inequality and the organizational activities that are expected to alleviate it. These findings suggest that geography conditions the ways that people and social service organizations understand, identify, and respond to social disadvantage. Understanding how geography affects social service organizations is important if we are to fully understand the forms and consequences of social capital that move people out of disadvantaged positions.

The analysis for this dissertation comes from interviews conducted with 13 staff[2], 1 manager, and 33[3] young people accessing service in either the Urban Youth Centre or its Rural Branch. In addition to these 47 interviews, data comes from over 260 organizational documents including agency reports, intake forms, program guidelines, and reports produced by funders. And finally, approximately 84 hours of participant observations of the daily activities and practices within and across the settings of the organization are captured within this dissertation. Overall my analysis details how experiences with, work processes, and activities in the Urban

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[2] There is one Rural Branch staff member that is local to the Town of Hewardsville. All other staff reside in the City of Grayson, or just outside of it.

[3] In total, 22 interviews were conducted with youth who were currently accessing the Urban Youth Centre. The remaining 11 interviews come from youth using the Rural Branch.

Youth Centre and its Rural Branch participate in and reconstitute a particular way of knowing and responding to 'youth at-risk' that is tied to and embedded in the geographical settings where these sites are located.

Focusing on the inter-organizational dimensions of work, this research demonstrates the importance of geography to the structure of social services. It shows that social capital opportunities and tangible resources conferred to marginalized young people are unevenly produced through organizations operating across geographical settings, even when these organizations are institutionally set up to be *structurally similar*. The major tenets of social capital theory, neighbourhood effects research, and institutionalism cannot explain this central finding. This dissertation argues that the work of social service organizations is structured under a variety of geographical conditions that (1) yield important differences in the social capital of youth and organizations, (2) constrain expectations of standardized organizational practice, and (3) produce and reproduce a sort of institutional blindness to rural youth's lives such that it becomes nearly impossible to organizationally address their needs. In sum, geography conditions the relationship between disadvantaged people and the social service organizations that they use.

1.3: FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING ORGANIZATIONS AND INEQUALITY

This study builds a case for research using institutionalism, neighbourhood effects research, and the concept of social capital to consider the ways that geography structures, and is structured by, institutional processes that disadvantaged people regularly partake in. Throughout this dissertation I use several key concepts to shape my analysis. Specifically, the concepts of institution, discourse, capital, marginalization, and geography are central to the overall argument I make. Before engaging with the larger scholarship around these concepts, I first outline my use of these terms and how they relate to each other.

Institutions, Organization, and Discourse

In sociological institutionalism, "institution" is often referred to as "taken-for-granted repetitive social behaviour that is underpinned by normative systems and cognitive understandings that give meaning to social exchange and thus enable self-reproducing social order" (Greenwood et al. 2008: 4). This notion emphasizes the mechanisms by which shared ways of knowing (cognition) and cultural[4] meanings construct organizational practices and larger social structures (DiMaggio and Powell 1991; Morrill 2008). Like others (Swidler 1986), this perspective suggests that institutions are cultural products constituted and reconstituted through action.

Extending institutionalist claims, I focus on ways that institutions *coordinate*

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[4] See Small, Harding and Lamont (2010) who discuss the multiple and overlapping conceptualizations of 'culture' that are commonly used in academic literature.

people's activities and practices across various local sites (Devault and McCoy 2006). Here coordination is about the ways that people's activities are connected, stand in for, and epitomize extended institutional arrangements. The focus on the coordination of people's activities is important because it draws attention to the intersecting local practices by which institutions are enacted, and challenged, and the ways that these activities bridge institutionalized systems of order (Smith 2005) – for example, how the work of social services is simultaneously tied to forms of government, education, and media (Giddens 1990). Organizations, in this characterization, are the concrete settings where institutions get played out through the coordinated activities of people.

Institutionalism posits that institutions produce shared norms, beliefs and behaviours that "both constrain the inclination and capacity of actors to optimize as well as privilege some groups whose interests are secured by prevailing rewards and sanctions" (DiMaggio and Powell 1991: 11). For example, in the opening account of Amy, I described organizational differences in the response to youth homelessness. Although Amy's experience bridged both settings of the organization, in the Rural Branch, Amy underwent a response that was different from when she accessed the Urban Youth Centre. Focusing on the (relatively) coordinated institutional processes that organize these service outcomes for youth shows how institutions, as structures of power, both constrain and privilege people's everyday lives.

In sociology, discourse is often referred to as "any practice by which individuals imbue reality with meaning" (Ruiz 2009: 2). Discourse is central to understanding how institutions are socially produced and maintained within organizations (Phillips, Lawrence, and Hardy 2004; Meyer and Rowan 1977; Zbaracki 1998). Discourse operates in many forms (e.g., written, spoken, and performed), and is always about the analysis of the power inherent in the production of meaning (Beland 2005; Ruiz 2009; Steensland 2006). In this dissertation I treat discourse as "sets of practices" that coordinate the work of people in formal organizations "in *particular* ways" (Campbell and Manicom 1995: 8, emphasis in original). Central to this view is an approach that focuses on the ways that people's activities in organizations are part of an extended social reality (Eastwood 2006). To this end, discourse is about the structure of what is known, and the processes by which particular ways of knowing are constituted, and reconstituted through the activity and practice of people (Schmidt 2008). Using discourse to understand the link between institutions, organizations, and people's everyday lives draws attention to the mechanisms linking social structure with action (DiMaggio and Powell 1991).

Marginalization

In this dissertation I draw on Vasas (2005) to define marginalization as an experience or state of being that is socially organized in ways that are consequential to people's well-being. Important to this conceptualization are the ways that

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thinking about marginalization evokes notions about particular places. For example, a common interpretation of "the ghetto" often denotes concentrated spaces of black urban poverty (Wilson 2011). In this way, the relationship between marginalization and place is not *just* about the distribution of inequality but also about the social processes that institutionalize these conditions for some people and not others (Hirsch 1998; Wacquant 1997).

Although the consequences of marginalization manifest in numerous ways (Small 2008), social exclusion is central to them all. For example, homelessness, precarious employment, drug and substance use, young parenting, and incomplete schooling often exclude young people from mainstream society and normative expectations of healthy development. Community agencies, government policies and other therapeutic social programs often step in to assist youth during these problematic times. I argue that focusing on both the experiences of marginalized *and* the social processes that alleviate and/or amplify them is imperative for understanding how people move out of such unfavourable positions.

Geography and Social Capital

The Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch seek to alleviate experiences of inequality by providing opportunities and resources to disadvantaged young people. The organization, thus, is a hub for and administrator of social capital (Small 2009). Drawing most centrally on Bourdieu, social capital is "the sum of the resources,

actual, or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 119). This conceptualization suggests that there is a mutual relationship between people's own knowledge and the connections that they have to others. In other words, "what you know" *is just as important as* "whom you know" (Gauntlett 2011). In this usage, I focus on social capital as the resources that materialize[5] through young people's engagement with the institution of social services.

Throughout this dissertation I show how the practices and experiences of people within the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch are organized to produce differences in the response to marginalized young people's lives. Geography, I argue, is central to these differences. Drawing on Gieryn's (2000) work, I define geography as a social force that organizes the contexts where social relations occur. In this study, the social relations under investigation are those between youth and social service organizations. My use of geography involves three dimensions: (1) institutionally constructed boundaries (i.e., the ways that city limits are tied to practices and activities that take place within particular locations [e.g., the ways that the state allocates funding for social programs in some places and not others]), (2) material forms (i.e., the compilation of resources across places including the distribution of social services), and (3) people's understandings and experiences of

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[5] My use of 'materialize' treats social capital as relational. This dissertation is focused on the relations between social service organizations and youth.

place (i.e., norms, perceptions and expectations). Table 1.1 provides an overview of

the geographical conditions that demarcate rural/small town settings from urban

settings.

Table 1.1: Conceptualizing Geography and the Conditions that Differentiate Rural and Urban Places

Dimensions of geography	'Place'	
	Rural Settings	*Urban Settings*
Institutionally constructed boundaries	- Non-local governing authority (*e.g., OPP vs. local police*)	- Community programming only available to residents (non-residents can still participate but pay higher fees) - Systems of interaction (*e.g., Provincially funded collaborative networks across social systems*)
Material Forms	- Small population density - Limited public transportation opportunities - Limited opportunities for local employment - Dwellings are sparse and more uniform in type	- Large population density - Multiple and complex public transit system (*e.g., buses, taxi services; several daily train departures and arrivals; and access to air travel*) - Manifold opportunities for employment across diverse settings - Dwellings are extensive and diverse in form
People's understandings	- Homogeneity in terms of people's thinking about who resides in the community (*i.e., race and ethnicity*) - Limited desire to migrate out of the community	- Heterogeneity in terms of people's thinking about who resides in the community - Understanding

Notably all three of these dimensions work separately **and** *in* a mutually dependent way. This is important because it extends thinking about geography beyond simple categorical or dualistic approaches to one that instead focuses on the relational aspects of 'place' that produce and reproduce relations of power. For example Bell (1992) argues that people located in rural settings construct 'countryside' identities that are consistent with their delineations of rural and urban places; in other words, rural settings are known in relation to urban settings.

In this dissertation I draw on Mohan and Mohan's (2002) argument that there is a relationship between geography and social capital. Specifically, they argue that the "substantial variation in the presence of, or participation in, organizations credited with producing social capital" (198) produces reciprocal effects such that social capital can explain geographical phenomena and geography can explain disparities in social capital. I extend this claim by attending to the ways that geography mediates the relationship between social service organizations and social capital. This focus on geography is fundamental to my overall argument.

1.4: SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO INEQUALITY AND ORGANIZATIONS

Sociologists have long been interested in the determinants and outcomes of inequality. Often these types of analyses have investigated the effects of disadvantaged urban contexts on individuals (Massey and Denton 1998; Small and Newman 2001; Wilson [1987] 1996). More recently, this research has shifted from

models of inequality (Jencks and Mayer 1990) to empirical investigations of the

mechanisms that exacerbate or reduce social disadvantage (Salcedo and Rasse 2012;

Small 2009). Notably, Mario L. Small's (2009) *Unanticipated Gains* investigates the

relationship between social capital and the local organizations that people

participate in. Focusing specifically on mothers' use of childcare centers in New York

City, Small finds that the practices and activities of these centers matter to structures

of inequality. Individual benefits, including social and organizational ties, and

increases to well being, are found to arise if mothers are connected to the *right*

childcare center. Small contributes to inequality research by attending to the

institutional mechanisms by which organizations – intentionally and unintentionally

– afford social capital opportunities.

   Small's findings make a significant contribution to understanding inequality.

However, his organizational embeddedness perspective overlooks the geographical

forces that shape how social service organizations afford social capital opportunities

to disadvantaged people. Generally Small argues that people are tied to

organizations and institutional systems in ways that – purposefully or not –

structure their lives in ways that are important for upward social mobility (i.e.,

movement out of marginalized social positions). For example, Small finds that

childcare centers operating under institutionalized contexts in New York City (i.e.,

organizations operating within contexts that have 1) institutionalized non-profit

infrastructures, 2) high organizational densities, and 3) effective inter-

organizational ties) provide more benefits and resources to mothers because of

state requirements to do so. Small develops this finding to argue that in cities with

weaker or absent institutional contexts, childcare centers are likely to provide

mothers with fewer resource opportunities. While this line of reasoning suggests

that context matters to the ways that people acquire social capital, Small does not

examine how geography is embedded in institutional contexts or how geography

conditions people's experiences with social services organizations.

The omission of geography is important because it leaves unanswered

questions about how local level experiences are linked to broader institutional

systems *across* communities. Consider, for example *Head Start*, a program that

"serves over a million children and their families each year in urban and rural areas

in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. territories,

including American Indian, Alaskan Native and Migrant/Seasonal communities" (U.S.

Department of Health & Human Services 2014). Often this program is delivered by

local non-profit organizations. But, does *Head Start* delivered by the Sault Tribe of

Chippewa Indians in Sault St. Marie, Michigan provide participants with the *same*

access to external referrals and collaborative ties that *Head Start* at Kumon of Upper

West Side in New York City does? Moreover do "single-window" social policy

initiatives or "one-stop" organizational forms translate into equal access and receipt

of social services across geographical contexts? While not explored, Small's research

suggests that where these service providers are geographically located may be

important to understanding the unintended consequences of social service organizations in the lives of disadvantaged people. In short, geographical contexts may be important to the relations that organize the delivery of social services. Geography may also matter to the ways that social benefits emerge for people participating in organizations providing the "same" service.

Little is known about how organizations address forms of marginalization across geographical contexts. And few research studies have investigated how and why these organizational responses are configured the way they are. This gap means a lack of attention to important dimensions of how disadvantaged people actually interact with social service organizations. For example, while Amy accessed service from the Urban Youth Centre she experienced homelessness and received housing support. This service opportunity moved her out of this form of precarious situation. Yet through her participation with the satellite location of this organization, the Rural Branch, accessing housing support for this *same need* did not occur. While eventually accessing the social service from this organization is not necessarily problematic, the structure, extent and form of Amy's ties to other people undoubtedly changes if she remains in the urban setting (Hofferth and Iceland 1998). This urban requisite to gain access to housing services is tied to the inability for the organization to deal with these experiences when they occur in the rural setting. The Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch provide a unique opportunity

for investigating how the institution of social services constructs different social

capital[6] opportunities for young people across geographical settings.

This dissertation considers how the activities and practices of people in the

Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch are connected to the governing

institutional context that shapes and is shaped by geography. Throughout I

demonstrate that geography is embedded in the social relations that constitute and

reconstitute institutional understandings of, and organizational responses to,

inequality. Understanding geography as central to these relations is important to

knowing about the ways that – through the institution of social services - shared

social meanings create responses to inequality. Overall, this research offers an

opportunity to think about geography as anchored in the processes that coordinate

disadvantaged people's lives and the social service organizations they use.

1.5: DISSERTATION OVERVIEW

Left unanswered from the account of Amy are explanations about how her

experience with the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch was institutionally

organized. For example, how was it that Amy received services around housing from

staff in the Urban Youth Centre but not through staff of its other location, the Rural

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[6] This dissertation is focused on the ways that social ties - garnered through ones participation in organizations - confer social capital. Despite this focus, I recognize that other forms of capital (i.e., economic and cultural) are also important to the lives of marginalized youth and are tied to the work of social services. For example, economic capital in the form of paid employment is imperative to the ways that people acquire basic needs. If and when social service organizations provide such employment opportunities the objective is not just access to economic capital, but also *skills* (i.e., cultural capital) essential to sustaining such employment (e.g., proper hygiene).

Branch? This study is a starting point for investigating the organization of social

services in rural and urban communities in Ontario, Canada. The central question

guiding this research is: How does the operation of social service organizations and

the ways that they provide resources to marginalized young people (as well as

young people's experiences with such organizations) differ across urban and rural

contexts? More specifically, this dissertation asks:

1. How does geography organize young people's access into social service

   organizations in rural and urban communities?

2. How is the delivery of social resources structured for young people who use

   social organizations that operate across rural and urban settings? And,

3. How does the institutionalized logic of 'youth-at-risk' structure the field of

   social services across rural and urban settings?

In the following pages I trace the pathways of 33 young people into the Urban Youth

Centre and its Rural Branch to the end of service. In doing so, I uncover the uneven

responses within the institution of social services to addressing inequality among at-

risk youth.

The first two analytic chapters of this study examine the multiple needs of

youth alongside the work of staff who provide service. Specifically, chapter four

investigates how youth learn about and enter into the Urban Youth Centre and its

Rural Branch. This chapter also examines how the organization learns about young

people's needs. Here I show that geographical contexts differentially organize people's habitus[7] *and* subsequent access to social service organizations. I refer to these differences as organizational entry processes. While chapter four demonstrates that geography organizes the social capital of youth before they begin a service relationship with the Urban Youth Centre or the Rural Branch, in chapter five I examine what happens once youth actually arrive. Here I map the work practices and social capital resources that manifest for youth involved in a standardized "Ministry" program delivered across both sites of the organization. This chapter shows that although the work of front-line staff is expected to involve identical documentary processes, the subsequent service opportunities made available to youth through these processes differ depending on the location with which they seek support. I refer to the differences in social resources that are made available to youth through this program as a geographically organized service (dis)entitlement. Importantly this chapter shows that while organizations are central to the ways that people gain social capital (Small 2009), geography mediates how this actually unfolds. In short, I argue that geography is a barrier to the delivery of standardized programs such that it organizes what tangible and concrete resources can be transferred from the organization to the people participating in its services.

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[7] Bourdieu (2000), as cited in Emirbayer and Johnson (2008) denotes habitus as "a set of dispositions, reflexes and forms of behavior people acquire through acting in society. It reflects the different positions people have in society, for example, whether they are brought up in a middle-class environment or in a working-class suburb. It is part of how society produces itself" (p. 19). In other words, the habitus can be thought of as a "mechanism linking individual action and the macro-structural settings within which future action is taken" (p. 4).

Chapter five establishes that despite similar forms of marginalization among youth, compared to the Rural Branch, the Urban Youth Centre is embedded in a context that is more diverse in resources that can actually respond. In chapter six I examine how the geographical service (dis)entitlement is tied to governing institutional relations that make visible the needs of urban youth while rendering invisible those of rural youth. Focusing on the ways that the discourse of 'youth-at-risk' shapes institutional knowledge about inequality and funding arrangements, I show how geography organizes institutional responses to inequality. Importantly, this chapter highlights the paradoxical yet powerful mechanisms by which institutions override people's knowledge and experiences of inequality. For example, research participants told me that homelessness, addictions, and alternative sexualities are characteristic of the lives of youth who use both the Urban Youth Centre and the Rural Branch. Nevertheless, chapter six shows that this knowledge is counterintuitive to the institution that, in practice, reserves these experiences and organizational responses for the lives of urban youth. These findings suggest that the field of social services is a set of organizational positions (Bourdieu 1993) shaped by geography that produce unequal opportunities for social capital among marginalized youth.

This dissertation makes a case for thinking about the role of geography in organizing experiences of inequality, and social service response to it. It is neither a study of the attitudes of organizational staff nor the emergence of 'youth-at-risk.'

Instead, it is a critique of the assumption that social services are delivered in seamless and standardized ways across geographical locations. Specifically this dissertation examines how geography is central to the individual experience and organizational response to marginalization.

Two

Review of Literature

2.1: ORGANIZATIONS AND INEQUALITY

Below, I discuss areas of sociological research that are important to situating this study's research puzzle. First, I start with social capital theory to consider the support young people gain when they participate in social service organizations. I then consider research on neighbourhoods to assess what is known about the effects of place on experiences of inequality. Finally, I look to institutionalism and its understanding of the cultural mechanisms that construct the interests and actions of organizations. This third focus draws attention to the institutional conditions that shape the work of organizations.

Generally, few studies have investigated how disadvantaged people's participation in organizations is shaped through institutional relations that are geographically mediated. In other words, institutional analyses do not address geography as a social force that enters into and shapes what actually happens within organizations. Likewise, neighbourhood effects research and social capital theory have often abandoned analyses of the ways that geography coordinates people's knowledge about inequality, and how this knowledge institutionally structures people's access into organizations intended to provide social support. These

oversights are important because they treat organizational responses to inequality as standardized across geographical contexts. This omission also assumes that people's participation in organizations is uniform and somehow removed from or unimportant to where they are physically located.

While these three sociological approaches are helpful, they ignore the ways that geography conditions the relationship between youth and social service organizations. Amy's involvement with the same technical organization suggests that different organizational practices across geographical contexts inevitably shape the resources delivered. This dissertation argues that the organizational provision of social resources, and young people's ability to acquire social capital, depends fundamentally on the geographical context in which this relationship unfolds.

2.2: SOCIAL CAPITAL

When people are in need, they often become connected to social service organizations. The support that emerges through social service relationships is expected to produce resources that improve the overall situation for the person/client (Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services 2014). In this case, social capital refers to the resources that arise through the interactions, purposeful or not, between people and organizations in which they participate (Bourdieu and Waquant 1992). While scholarly attention on social capital is generally focused on social relationships and the resources that derive from them,

sociologists disagree about the mechanisms involved (see Field (2003) or Small (2009) for an overview of some of these approaches). I draw on Bourdieu's conceptualization of social capital because of its focus on the ways that people's access to resources maintains positions of power (Field 2003). This focus is unique because of the emphasis on social capital as a social relation that is advantageous for some and not others.

Often the image of capital insinuates advantage. Yet, research shows that social capital is not uniformly available nor is it beneficial for all people (Cattel 2001; Lin 2000). For example DiMaggio and Garip (2011) argue that social network effects serve as a way to exacerbate inequality. Using the example of the advent of the Internet they argue that network effects are beneficial to those already advantaged; inequality is maintained between the wealthy and highly educated and their less affluent/educated counterparts. Importantly, these findings suggest that social capital is relational (Emirbayer 1997; Lin 2000). In other words, "the negative consequences of social capital can be seen as inseparable from the benefits" (Field 2003: 74). Inequality is inescapably embedded in social capital because not all social relationships carry the same value or produce the same resources. The organizations where people acquire such resources thus become an important site for investigating about how inequality is reproduced.

2.3: INEQUALITY AND NEIGHBOURHOODS

Research generated in sociology is fraught with debate about the significance of neighbourhood context on structures and experiences of inequality (Bauder 2002; Fischer 2013; Sampson 2012; Small and McDermott 2006). While this scholarship has examined the outcomes of disadvantaged neighbourhoods and communities, it often does not distinguish the effect of 'place' (i.e., the local urban neighbourhood) from other social forces such as race and/or poverty (Massey and Denton 1998; Small 2007). Moreover, often this research is vague in its conceptualization of place. For example, often the "ghetto" is treated as an urban product to the exclusion of other geographical places (Wacquant 1997:342). Ghettos, in this sense, are often theoretically treated as inherently urban artefacts.

Despite this dissension, studies have proliferated in finding that conditions of neighbourhoods are important to experiences of inequality. Generally this scholarship finds that neighbourhood conditions influence life outcomes including economic and social mobility, criminality, sexual behaviour, and other child outcomes (for a review see Diezt 2002; Ellen and Turner 1997; Jencks and Mayer 1990). Similarly, studies find that disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods lack ties to institutional programs (Anderson 1999) and access to services including food stores (Morland et al. 2002), child care centers (Queralt and Witte 1998), banking institutions and pharmacies (Alwitt and Donley 1997). Stemming from these structural findings, research also shows that decreased service utilization rates are

also tied to disadvantaged contexts. For instance, Allard, Toman and Rosen (2003) find that urban contexts organize how female welfare recipients utilize social services; the closer spatially these women are to support services the more likely they are to use them.

For most researchers in this field, it is clear that neighbourhood effects are present. Less clear, however, are the mechanisms that produce these effects. Jencks and Mayer (1990) describe this shortcoming as the "black box" (115) that mutes questions about *how* neighbourhood effects manifest. Attempts to open this black box have argued that the relationship between neighbourhood conditions and life outcomes are tied to values, norms, and social and economic isolation (Wilson [1987] 1996). Traditionally this research has drawn on theories such as the disorganization of social contexts (Shaw and McKay 1969) and on structural accounts including economic status and ethnic heterogeneity to explain disadvantaged neighbourhoods (Sampson and Groves 1989). More recently scholars have investigated the relationship between time spent in disadvantaged neighbourhood contexts and the persistence of inequality including the perpetuation of racial segregation and concentrated poverty (Sharkey 2013). Together these explanations have generated some agreement on the effects of disadvantaged neighbourhood contexts.

Some research demonstrates that people's thinking and subsequent behaviours are shaped by the interrelationship between their own social positions

(i.e., class, and gender) and particular places (Rye 2006; Walsh 2012). For instance, Kissane (2010) finds that poor women not only use 'place' in terms of geographical closeness to determine their use of service organizations, but that they also use 'place' symbolically to understand who service organizations target and, accordingly, whether and how they use them. This research suggests that neighbourhood effects are tied to physical geographies, structural conditions of these spaces, and social constructions of place.

Still, others challenge the homogenous conceptualization of poor neighbourhoods as productive of negative outcomes (Small 2004). In terms of identifying mechanisms of neighbourhood effects, these studies draw attention to the differences *across* poor urban neighbourhoods allowing for theoretical clarification into the ways that neighbourhood poverty matters to people's lives. For example, Small (2004) finds that local participation and opportunities for increased social capital among residents in the housing project of Villa Victoria are tied to cultural perceptions and structural components of the neighbourhood. Attention to the cultural narratives and frames used by people illuminates the mechanisms and conditions by which neighbourhoods and communities influence life outcomes.

The message in poverty and neighbourhood research is generally consistent; neighbourhoods have both structural and cultural consequences for individuals. But what happens in these neighbourhoods and communities that safeguards, or does not safeguard, people from the negative outcomes of disadvantaged contexts?

Recent studies provide insight into how organizations influence experiences of inequality. Small's (2009) research, for example, suggests that childcare centers located in highly institutionalized environments present more opportunities for social capital among mothers than organizations with weak institutional practices. Similarly, other research finds that the location of organizations matter for how these resources become available. Specifically, organizations operating in higher poverty contexts are found to have more organizational ties than organizations in non-poor contexts (Small, Jacobs and Peeples Massengill, 2008). What this suggests is that poor people may have access to different sets of resources depending on where they are located.

Small's (2009) work is especially important as it opens up a space to start thinking about the social processes operating in and through organizations that respond to experiences of inequality. While Small's analysis of childcare centers demonstrates the unintended consequences for low-income mothers, his work takes for granted the geographical forces by which these centers become institutionally relevant in New York City. For example, the unintentional organizational processes that make social networking possible for low-income mothers in New York are tied to institutional discourses and processes that stem from and make visible the need for childcare centers in this geographical setting. While Small alludes to this point in saying that, "The conditions of the city in which the person is located matter" (173), his analysis does little to elaborate on how these 'conditions' actually emerge.

Allard (2009), in *Out of Reach: Place, Poverty, and the New American Welfare State*, offers some insight into this gap in his study on the effects of restructuring the "safety net" in the United States. Focusing on the role of non-profit service organizations in Chicago, Los Angeles, and Washington D.C., Allard finds that the welfare state is uneven in its reach to disadvantaged people and thus is geographically disparate. So while inequality is widespread, the concentration of social services does not match the physical location of disadvantaged people. Building on this finding, Allard shows how the geographical disparities of the safety net mirror the distribution of funding to organizations providing social assistance. This suggests that institutions beyond the local setting of the safety net organize who provides service, what services are delivered, where they are located, and who can access its supports.

While Allard argues that geography is central to the accessibility of social services, his analysis does not examine how the geographical characteristics of these institutional arrangements influence what disadvantaged people actually get when they access social service organizations (Galloway 2015; Sibley and Weiner 2011). For example, Allard (2009) takes for granted that the services that *are* available or delivered through the safety net including "outpatient mental health; outpatient substance abuse; assistance finding affordable housing or paying rent; adult education; job placement or training; emergency assistance; food assistance; and [...] assistance with financial planning" (57) are the same for poor people across

communities. Allard's account that the geographical mismatch is characterized by an unequal distribution of service providers assumes that the services and resources that people actually receive, despite this distribution, are equivalent. I argue that it is reasonable to suspect that if the safety net is a product of institutional relations that use geography to organize access to its support, then what people get out of it might also be a product of this geographical mismatch. Not investigating this question overlooks the ways that organizational practices and activities construct and reconstruct the geographical arrangement of the safety net. This begs the question of how, through institutional processes, geography enters into and shapes what happens at the interface between people in disadvantaged social positions and social service organizations they use.

2.4: INSTITUTIONALISM

Institutionalism provides insight into the ways that institutional contexts shape organizational responses to inequality. While "old" institutionalism focuses on the local environments, "new" institutionalism tends to focus on non-local environments (i.e., state level processes). Dominant across both approaches is the notion of institutionalization. This concept refers to socially constructed meanings, or "rationalized myths", that are incorporated into formal organizational structures (Meyer and Rowan 1977: 340). As institutional models of rationality, rationalized myths are considered "appropriate methods for pursuing organizational purposes" (Scott 2004: 462). Importantly, institutionalization is more than just a property of

organizational forms. For example, Zucker (1983) argues that institutionalization is also a process "by which certain social relationships and actions come to be taken for granted, that is part of the 'objective situation', while at the same time it is the structure of reality defining what has meaning and what actions are possible" (2) What this means is that organizational forms, rather than the organization itself, become institutionalized (Powell and DiMaggio 1991). Understood as a process, power relations are central in constructing what organizational action is established as appropriate.

Early conceptualizations of institutionalization portrayed the incorporation of rationalized myths as producing positive outcomes for organizational forms (Meyer and Rowan 1977). Some theorists argued that institutionalization creates opportunities for organizational legitimacy, survival, and stability. Yet more recently, others have argued that institutionalization can have paradoxical effects in that its processes can also produce opportunities to restructure the work of entire institutions (DiMaggio 1991). In this way, institutionalization can also be thought of as processes of change (Jepperson 1991).

Organizations are understood to reconstruct and surreptitiously challenge the institutional environments within which they are situated by decoupling their practice from the formal structure (Meyer and Rowan 1977). This is said to happen because rationalized myths are often inconsistent with the internal activities of organizations. In other words, the links between organizational structures and

institutional environments are not always seamless. Instead, organizations are loosely coupled systems operating on, and through, various and intersecting institutional and organizational objectives. To deal with these manifold demands, decoupling allows the organization to maintain distance between rationalized myths and the actual work that is performed while ensuring that external evaluation meets the expectations of the formal structure (Meyer and Rowan 1977). Like processes of institutionalization, power relations – or the ways that institutional expectations are unevenly practiced among organizations – are central to decoupling strategies (see Westphal and Zajac 2001: 207).

Building on this notion of institutionalization, research has investigated the homogenization of organizational forms (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). Referred to as isomorphism, organizational homophily is shaped by the state and professions in three ways. First, organizations are subjected to implicit and/or explicit coercive pressures from other influential organizations and cultural frameworks. Second, normative pressures – stemming from commitments towards reproducing professional beliefs – influence organizations. And third, in times of insecurity, mimetic pressures are thought to move organizational activities in line with others who are similar in structure, form, objectives and goals. Like Meyer and Rowan (1977), DiMaggio and Powell (1983) argue that organizations become isomorphic because of the legitimacy they warrant from other organizations for stability, success, and survival. Even if these institutional pressures do not always translate

into practice (Westphal and Zajac 2001), isomorphic mechanisms continually emphasize the negotiated and shared social meanings of the institution.

Prior to processes of institutional isomorphism, organizations create boundaries around and between their work and that of others. This issue has led theorists to study how organizational fields emerge. Organizational fields are described as the "organizations that, in the aggregate, constitute a recognized area of institutional life [including] key suppliers, resource and product customers, regulatory agencies, and other organizations produce similar services or products" (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983: 148). This implies that those involved in organizational fields interact with each other because of a shared – institutionally defined – objective (Scott 1995). Powell and Colyvas (2008) summarize the factors important to the development of organizational fields like this:

1. An increase in the amount of interaction among organizations within a field
2. The emergence of well-defined patterns of hierarchy and coalition
3. An upsurge in the information load with which the members of a field must contend
4. The development of mutual awareness among participants that they are involved in a common enterprise

Together these factors suggest that there is a broad set of relations in which organizations are embedded (Scott and Meyer 1994). Research substantiates this

claim. For example, DiMaggio's (1993) analysis of the field of U.S art museums demonstrates how the *Carnegie Corporation* acted as a source of material and ideological support for other organizations and professions pursuing and redirecting the goals of the field. Accordingly, what happens at the local level of the organization is influenced by what happens elsewhere.

Tied to the notion of organizational fields is the concept of institutional environments (Meyer and Rowan 1977; Scott 1991). Both are produced through the establishment of cultural or rationalized systems that "serve to communicate information about the organization to both internal and external audiences" (Tolbert and Zucker 1996: 177). Institutional environments, however, are external to organizational fields because they structure boundaries around that which organizational actors can select, and are compelled, to act (DiMaggio and Powell 1991; Scott 1991). I argue that 'youth-at risk' is both a shared social understanding and a physical framework through which the field of social services function. Knowing how the institutional environment is constructed provides insight into how organizational activities get structured at the field and organization level, and most important to this dissertation, how social services are made available to disadvantaged young people.

Institutions and Discourse

Research shows that discourse about social disadvantage structures systems

of social welfare in ways that define who is eligible as clients or recipients of

professional practice (Hansfield 2000; Hays 2003; 215; Heath 2012; Mohr and

Duquenee 1997). How this happens is tied to people's use of institutional language

in their local activities (Smith 2005). For example, organizational actors use

institutional discourse in their talk, reading and use of organizational texts to

"coordinate, organize, and dominate what goes on" in these settings (Rankin and

Campbell 2009:4). In other words, discursive practices function as "pivots" between

institutions and the activities of people within organizational settings (Barley and

Tolbert 1997: 99).

Many scholars have investigated how discourse is enacted within

organizational fields (Suddaby and Greenwood 2005). From an institutionalist

approach, this focus often deals with the ways that organizing logics – or the "set of

material practices and symbolic constructions […] which is available to

organizations to elaborate" (Friedland and Alford 1991: 248) – are brought into

formal structures (Owen-Smith and Powell 2008). Institutional logics, that is beliefs

and practices that organize behaviour, exemplify how power relations are

challenged and sustained (Thornton and Ocasio, 2008). Importantly, institutional

logics are not just visible at the macro level. For example, McPherson and Sudder

(2013) show how within the "drug court", differently positioned actors (i.e.,

probation officers, public defender, clinicians, and state attorneys) draw on multiple

logics to define the case/client being heard before the court. These findings suggest

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that institutional environments generate multiple and conflicting logics that, enacted

at the organizational level, produce variation in action (for others, see Thornton and

Ocasio 1999). Thus, discourse, or cognitive meanings, is central to the construction

of institutions.

2.5: Geography as the Missing Link

Institutionalized processes highlight the link between the institutional environment

and the activities of organizations (Barley and Tolbert 1997). This is an important

addition to Small's (2009) unanticipated gains because it draws attention to the

institutional relations that shape what happens to and for people embedded in

organizations. However, how geography is entrenched in the institutional

organization of social capital is missing from this scholarship. This dissertation takes

up this missing link and in doing so puts the analytic focus of social capital back

towards the material and symbolic contexts with which it unfolds (Emirbayer and

Johnson 2008). Specifically I focus on the ways that multiple dimensions of

geography (i.e., institutional arrangements, material forms, and people's

understandings) influence the organization of social services.

   Social science debates about the conceptualization of rurality and urbanity are

longstanding (see Halfacree 1993 and Lobao 1996 for an overview). Briefly, these

debates raise concerns over the definition and measurement of rural-urban

continuums (Redfield 1941; Wratten 1995), the theoretical relevance of attending to

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rurality (Newby 1980), and most recently, the subjective and social processes that construct the rural (Halfacree 1993; Jacob and Luloff 2010; Mormont 1990; Rye 2006). Others have also argued that people's social ties are important in the construction of physical spaces (Hipp, Faris and Boessen 2012). Keeping in mind these methodological and theoretical caveats, I treat rural and urban as delineations of spatial contexts that are *(a)* social, *(b)* physical, and *(c)* experiential (Chaskin 1997: 539) as well as characterized by (*d*) [physical] sites, (*e*) perceptions, (*f*) networks, and (*g*) cultures (Burton et al. 1997 as cited in Small and Newman 2001: 31). While I draw on this scholarship to understand the processes inherent to the boundaries of physical communities and spaces, importantly my conceptualization of geography also emerges directly from the data for this dissertation (see chapter three).

2.6: CONCLUSION

Sociological studies continue to investigate the effect of neighbourhoods on experiences of inequality. However, this research has often not been explicit in its treatment of geography on these outcomes. Likewise, despite its continued focus on the relationship between organizations and institutional environments, institutionalism has not explored the influence of geography on institutional processes.

For neighbourhood effects research, addressing geography is important to examining how the physical and social location of organizations shape inequality. Consider, for example, the childcare centers in Small's (2009) study. Perhaps the advantage that mothers received through their organizational participation can be partially explained by the multiple dimensions of geography (see table 1.1) that shape the institutional processes of the childcare centre. If so, geography serves as a mediating mechanism that organizes social capital and experiences of inequality.

Similarly, addressing geography for institutionalism contributes to understanding how institutional environments are organized. The current inattention to geography is surprising given that some institutionalist studies suggest that these environments are tied to conceptualizations of physical and social place. For example, although DiMaggio's (1993) study of the rise in the field of museums describes developmental processes as tied to institutional practices happening beyond the local environment, it never provides an analysis of the local geographic contexts important to its emergence. Although DiMaggio states that the growth of the field of museums was not uniform but instead specific to cities with "more than 250,000 inhabitants" (273), this point is never advanced. Here we catch a glimpse of how geography might be important to the construction of organizational fields. How does geography, as a factor that is implicated in and produced through institutional relations, shape the field of organizational activity

and people's involvement with social service organizations? This dissertation begins

to provide an answer.

The Institution of Social Services

Historically studies of youth examined adolescence as a period with

tendencies of storm and stress (Zelizer 1985). Often these studies used a

"delinquency or maladjustment" lens (Bessant 2001: 34) to study the "problem" of

adolescent behaviour (Giordano et al. 1999). Although there are competing

arguments surrounding the notion of a universal developmental stage of storm and

stress, most scholars continue to acknowledge youth as involving a period of

instability (Arnett 2007; Cote and Allahar 1994). The Canadian government uses

multiple age ranges to classify youth (see table 2.1).

Table 2.1: Classifying Youth in Canada

Federal Government[8]		
Organization	*Project*	*Youth Definition*
Statistics Canada	National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY)	16 ‑ 23 years
Statistics Canada	Labour Force Survey (LFS)	15 ‑ 24 years
Statistics Canada/ Human Resources and Skills Development Canada	Youth in Transition Survey (YITS)	15 ‑ 28 years
Human Resources Skills Development Canada	Youth Employment Strategy	15 ‑ 24 years
Policy Research Initiative (PRI)	Investing in Youth: Evidence from Policy, Practice and Research	15 ‑ 34 years

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[8] As cited in Doucette's (2010:1)

Canadian Heritage	Young Canada Works	16 ‑ 30 years
Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)	International Youth Internship Program	19 ‑ 30 years
Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada	International Experience Canada, formerly International Youth Programs	18 ‑ 35 years
Service Canada	Federal Public Sector Youth Internship Program	15 ‑ 30 years
Environment Canada	International Environmental Youth Corps (IEYC)	30 years and under

For some young people, life is especially difficult. The Government of Ontario notes that the following groups are in need of "more targeted supports and opportunities to ensure that they are able to succeed" (Stepping Up 2014: 12): racialized youth; new immigrant youth; Aboriginal youth, youth with disabilities and special needs; youth leaving care (i.e., foster homes; crown wards); LGBTTQ youth; Francophone youth; youth living in rural or remote communities; youth living in poverty; and youth in conflict with the law. Here the Ontario Government notes that young people often occupy more than one of these groups and that there are systemic mechanisms that often shape the vulnerable position that these youth find themselves in (e.g., racism). Some youth are also more likely to experience forms of marginalization over others. For example, LGBTTQ youth are more likely to experience difficulties with mental health, homelessness, and substance abuse (Government of Ontario 2014: 13).

Unlike many other nations (e.g., Australia, France, U.S.A), Canada *does not* have an explicit national policy focused on youth. Instead many provincial and municipal governments have constructed policies that address the lives of youth. In

Ontario there are 18 ministries that are responsible for some aspect of young

people's lives (e.g., the Ministry of Children and Youth Services [law; mental health;

child welfare], The Ministry of Education [i.e., curriculum, special education]; the

Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities [i.e., employment]) (Government of

Ontario 2014). In other provinces a single governing body overseas the delivery of

services and programs to youth (e.g., Nova Scotia).

The Organization.

The Urban Youth Centre operates in the city of Grayson, Ontario, while the

Rural Branch (founded many years later) is located in the town of Hewardsville,

Ontario. The Government of Canada considers Grayson and Hewardsville as part of

the same county. Nevertheless, Grayson is defined by Statistics Canada (2011b), as a

Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) since it has a population greater that 100,000

people, with at least 50,000 people living in its urban core. Conversely, Hewardsville

is classified as a township or Census Subdivision Type (CDS) (Statistics Canada

2011c) but can also be classified as part of an "urban fringe and rural fringe"

distinguishing the periphery and central areas of the Grayson CMA (Statistics

Canada, 2011d). This means that while the population of Hewardsville is primarily

classified as 'rural', it is also treated as part of the urban core (Grayson) – even

though it does not share an adjacent border. Here we see geography demarcated in

terms of *institutional boundaries* (i.e., city limits) and *material forms* (i.e., population

density).

The Urban Youth Centre sees more than 12,000 visitors per year and delivers programs and services to youth out of a building that is located in the centre of the city. There are other service providers in this building including social welfare, and employment services for persons with disabilities. Access to the Urban Youth Centre is close to many of the public transportation stops that serve the city and are less than two kilometers away from four of the more than twelve local high schools in the city. There is metered parking available close to the Urban Youth Centre.

In contrast to the Urban Youth Centre, the Rural Branch sees upwards of 5,000 visitors per year and delivers programs out of a single building located in the center of town (Organization Annual Report 2011-12). The building is owned by the organization and rents space out to local service providers including Ontario Works and the public school board. Located beside the Rural Branch are other local businesses, none of which are social services. Parallel parking is free on the street immediately out front of the Branch and on side streets. There is no public transportation available in town. The Rural Branch is about four kilometers, or roughly a 50-minute walk, from the only high school in town.

I use the case of the Urban Youth Centre and the Rural Branch to ask more nuanced questions about how (and for whom) organizational responses to inequality and social resource opportunities for disadvantaged youth are geographically coordinated. The case of the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch provide an important organizational context for investigating this question. For

example, both locations are mandated by the same mission statements and goals, and are financially regulated through some of the same funders (i.e., Ontario Trillium Foundation, United Way, Service Canada, Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities, Community Futures Development Corporation). Equally, both settings offer several shared programs that are regulated by the provincial government. Both sites even share staff. On the surface, these features may help to ensure the standardization of service. However, beyond these similarities the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch operate in different geographical contexts. This distinction serves as an entry point for thinking about if, when, and how the institution of social services produces geographically diverse or similar experiences for young people who access its resources.

In the next chapter I describe the epistemological approach, sample, and data used in this dissertation. In particular I illustrate how using a relational analytic framework to understanding the organization of social capital for disadvantaged youth is exemplified by the case of the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch. The geographical separation of these sites provides a comparative case study that is effective for responding to the stated research questions. It is contended that this comparative approach supports an analysis that is attentive to the provision of social service across time and space. Overall, this methodological strategy provides deep insight into the relations that organize the institution of social services.

Three

<u>Epistemological Approach and Data</u>

3.1: RELATIONAL ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Research that draws on social capital theory, neighbourhood effects research, or institutionalism regularly focus on individual, institutional, and/or cultural spheres of activity. For example, Small's (2009) analysis of childcare centers focuses on the ways that social capital manifests between individuals and organizations. Similarly, institutionalists argue that the behaviour found in organizational structures is tied to the activity of organizational fields and institutional environments (Fligstein 1991; DiMaggio 1991). These sociological approaches are useful for understanding the links that connect and embed individual social practices to organizational settings and institutional processes constructed elsewhere.

In order to investigate the ways that geography shapes how social service organizations provide resources to marginalized young people, I use a *relational analytic framework.* Central to this approach is an understanding that "individual persons are inseparable from the transactional contexts within which they are embedded" (Emirbayer 1997: 287). This approach is a useful for understanding the dialectical relationships and continuities between individual action and macro level structures (Giddens 1986; Hall and Lamont 2013; Smith1990). Importantly this

approach allows me to investigate the relations that link marginalized social

positions with organizational practices and institutional processes.

3.2: ANALYTICAL TOOLS

Interviews

This dissertation seeks to use empirical evidence to illuminate the social relations

that connect and condition the relationships between people and social service

organizations. To do this I rely on several methodological tools. First I use

interviews to uncover the organizational processes that shape young people's

experiences of social services. Interviews with youth focused on accounts about

their needs and the resources they were acquiring through their participation with

either the Urban Youth Centre or its Rural Branch. In these interviews I asked

questions about how youth found out about the organization; why they came; what

happened when they got there; and what services they used. These accounts allowed

me to comparatively assess the organization of social services across geographical

settings.

The staff team in this organization consists of employment counsellors,

workshop facilitators, youth outreach workers, job developers, and industry experts.

In addition to my interviews with youth, I also spoke with numerous staff about the

processes that coordinate the interactions between youth and the organization. I

first spoke with employment counsellors about what happened when they first met

a youth, about any paper work they did, about who saw this paperwork, and about

what this all meant for youth who were produced as "clients." I collected blank

forms and asked questions about what employment counsellors were looking for in

order to make subsequent service decisions. I then spoke with program managers,

supervisors and other staff who delivered programs or services within each setting.

I asked these staff questions about what this service looked like; who it was

intended for; how service ended; how program outcomes were documented and

evaluated; and how funding was acquired.

After I obtained clearance to conduct this research from the McMaster

Research Ethics Board (MREB) (see appendix A), I undertook several strategies to

recruit youth and staff for interviews (see appendix B). First I met with staff in both

the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch to explain the research that was being

conducted. I then asked for my posters to be displayed in all common spaces of the

organization. On these posters I provided a local number and my email address. This

was done in an attempt to access young people who did not have long-distance plans

on their phones and, because without the clearance of staff, local calls could only be

made by youth at the organization.

Participants were asked where they were most comfortable for the interview

to take place. Most of the interviews took place in local coffee shops or in private

offices within the organization (see MREB (Appendix A) for scripts used to caution

people about the impact of where they chose to participate in interviews). Once in

this agreed upon location, each participant was asked to read and sign the letter of

information and letter of consent (see Appendix C). Staff interviews involved people

currently working for either, or both work settings (see Appendix D). These

interviews took place between February 2012 and July 2013. In total 14 staff

interviews were conducted and ranged from 45 to 90 minutes. Youth interviews

took place between April 2012 and July 2012 and involved young people who were

currently frequenting and/or accessing service from either the Urban Youth Centre

or its Rural Branch. In total 33 youth interviews were conducted and lasted between

30 and 45 minutes. Each youth participant was given a $20 gift card to either

McDonalds or Tim Horton's for their time. All interviews were transcribed shortly

after and were kept electronically and in hard copy in a locked and secure location

(see Appendix E for interview guide).

Youth and staff interviews provided an entry point for surveying the

experience of social services by youth and staff in urban and rural communities.

Here I noticed that there were differences across the Urban Youth Centre and its

Rural Branch in terms of the response to youth needs. From here I identified

organizational and institutional processes that were described as part of these

different social service outcomes (e.g., "after each meeting I fill out the form" (staff);

"I have to talk with my worker before I start the program" (youth)). Once these

processes were identified, I assessed how they were organized. To do this, I drew on

discourse and textual analysis.

Discourse and Textual Analysis

Discourse and textual analysis was used in this dissertation as a way to examine how interview accounts provided by youth and staff are organized to happen the way that they do. This approach was useful for investigating how everyday experiences are institutionally organized. For instance, Edin and Kefalas (2005) reveal that poor single mothers give meaning to marriage, children and fathers in ways that contradict dominant cultural discourses that are used to organize welfare state systems. Like others (Hays 2003; Van Hook and Bean 2009), this suggests that discourse is central to the relationships between people who occupy socially disadvantaged positions and the systems they seek help from.

Discourse is part of everyday life, yet importantly it also operates as an institutional framework through which the work of organizations are structured (Devault and McCoy 2006; Sharma 2001). Smith (1983) makes this point in her assertion of the differences between the statements 'she killed herself' and 'she committed suicide.' While the former represents the "language of everyday discourse", the latter is tied to "relations of ruling within which the act becomes 'suicide' (Smith 1990: 143). Thus, while seemingly denoting the same thing, 'she committed suicide' represents a different set of relations that draws attention to the institutional sites where discourse plays out (i.e., psychiatric office, criminal system, social services).

Textual analysis is a way to locate the links between discourse and people's

experiences within institutions[9] (Bell and Campbell 2003; Kinsman 1995; Ng 1988).

For example, research demonstrates that the production of child abuse cases by

social workers through daily logs, running records, files and court reports shape

what action follows and how this work, overall, is evaluated and controlled (de

Montigny 1995). 'Child abuse' is produced through the textual processes of social

workers; that is, texts organize and are organized by institutional processes that

construct child abuse as a social fact. Notably, this textual practice coordinates the

work of social workers, and its clients who "learn to think through their lives

employing the terms of an institutional reality" (de Montigny 1995: 39).

I examine discourse in two ways. First I attend to my interviews as a way to

identify discursive practices that shape the relationship between youth and social

service organizations. In addition to this analytic lens, I collected texts discussed by

staff that were: 1) used in bringing youth into and out of service; 2) documents

produced by the organization itself or its funders; and 3) media accounts that dealt

with the work of the organization. Textual data collection occurred between

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[9] It should be noted that not all institutionalized action or discursive practice leads to the production and reproduction of texts (Phillips and Malhotra 2008: 713; Willis 1977 [1981]). That is, texts are not always present in the local settings where discourse plays out. For example, sociologists find that in schools the 'fag' discourse emerges in practice and interactions in ways that reinforce the institution of heterosexuality and patriarchy (Khayatt 1994; Pascoe 2007; Smith, G.W 1998). Although texts are not always present, I argue that they serve as a material form through which discourse is found and, especially in social service organizations, are central to the ways that shared meanings enable, condition, and restrict action (Sewell 1992).

February 2012 and May 2014. In total roughly 266 documents (over 3000 pages)

were collected (see table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Overview of Documents Collected for Textual Analysis

Text Type	Number of texts
Organization of Work {Including but not limited to: funding allocations; service agreements between the organization and larger institutions; program guidelines, provincial ministry and federal program information; organizational networks and terms of relationship}	149 (electronic) 1 (hardcopy - book) 1 (CRA data file)
Organizational Texts {Including but not limited to: Annual Reports (2009-2013; newsletters, intake forms; blog posts; marketing materials; external service brochures and public presentations}	31 (electronic) 34 (hardcopy)
Media Accounts {Media accounts produced by local newspaper in the City of Grayson and the Town of Hewardsville}	50 (Urban Youth Centre, n= 44; Rural Branch, n= 6)
Total	**266 documents**

Mapping

So far I have described two strategies that I employed to collect data about

how the institution of social services is organized for young people in this rural and

urban community. I use mapping as a third technique to bridge interview accounts

and textual analyses. This strategy was important for demonstrating sequences of

work; that is, how texts enter into organizational practices that directly tie into

people's experiences of social service (Turner 2006). For example, Wilson and Pence

(2006) draw on conversations with members of an Indigenous group connected to a

domestic advocacy program and numerous legal texts (i.e., administrative directives,

rules, guidelines) to chart how domestic assault cases are taken up through the

criminal system. I use mapping to document how texts organize the processes that

move young people through the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch. I also use

this strategy as a way to identify how organizational processes traverse other

institutional processes (for example, how the work of the Urban Youth Centre and

its Rural Branch is connected to the work of the Ontario Government and/or the

United Way).

Participant Observation

        Finally, I employ participant observation as a way to observe the institutional

processes that organize the provision of social services. Specifically I used

observations as a way to substantiate the data that emerged from my interviews and

textual analysis. Through these observations I also was able to develop additional

interview questions as I witnessed organizational processes occur. I was also able to

see the intersection of organizational practices with other institutional processes

including funding relations and networks among other service providers which

motivated me to investigate the formal (textual) relations that made this work

possible. Importantly then, my use of observational data was used to "locate the

institutional *in* the local" as it actually unfolded (Diamond 2006:61, emphasis in original).

Participant observational data was collected between February 2012 and February 2013 and was focused on the activities that took place inside the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch. In total I spent about 42.25 hours in the Urban Youth Centre and 41.5 hours in the Rural Branch. Specifically I focused on what services were provided to youth, how the provision of service happened, and who accessed the service/programs. I also observed how internal and external referrals occurred and how youth came to know about the organization and its services from people inside each setting. I also attended several events specific to each setting and one larger event put on by the entire organization. All of these events were open to the general public. After each observational occurrence I made detailed field notes (n=30) and analytic memos (n=36).

Confidentiality

Throughout this dissertation I have used several strategies to preserve the confidentiality of the organization and the people involved in this research. I have altered the name of the sites of organization, and its location. The names I have assigned the organization emerge from my analysis but remain anonymous in their description. I use "Urban" and "Rural" to describe this organization and its Branch because staff apply these geographical distinctions – for example, staff use "smaller

town", "smaller scale" and "city" – to talk about their work with young people.

Likewise, some of the services delivered through this organization use these

geographical distinctions to describe which youth these programs support – for

example, program documents specify "rural youth" as its target recipient. I have

listed the province and country where the Urban Youth Centre and its Branch is

located to highlight the relationship between government funding and services

available to youth (i.e., See table 1.1; geography as institutionally constructed). I

have also included this geographic detail to emphasize the ties that the Urban Youth

Centre and its Rural Branch have to other service providers in each respective

community. For example, the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch deliver a

provincially funded program that is offered by over 400 other service providers in

Ontario. Of these, roughly 150 organizations are specific to or target young people

and at least 15 of these organizations claim to deliver multiple services for youth (as

of 2012). To identify people in the study I have used pseudonyms. When referring to

the social location of youth, I include the organizational setting from which they

were currently accessing services. Because of the sharing of roles and

responsibilities across settings, to identify staff I have indicated organizational titles

and the location where they were working at the time of the study.

    While I have made every attempt to protect the confidentiality of this

organization and of the people involved in this study, I am unable to guarantee the

privacy and anonymity from those who are knowledgeable about social service

organizations in Ontario. Like Ng (1988) it is important to note that the focus of this

study is not to evaluate people's behaviours, but rather to investigate the relations

that organize the activities of people within social service organizations and the

institutional order produced through these practices.

3.2: CONCLUSION

While I describe these analytical tools consecutively, often throughout the research

processes these strategies were employed in non-sequential ways. For example,

when my conversations with people highlighted inconsistencies across the

organizational settings, I would follow this up with a textual analysis of program

guidelines in an attempt to understand how these experiences were structured

organizationally. I would then make observations about how these processes or

service delivery actions unfolded in real time within/across both settings all the

while mapping when and where these mismatches occurred. But then often in these

observations I would find other processes in motion that needed to be "fit" into the

overall system of social services that I was mapping. This practice then would lead

me to map and re-map my discoveries and then follow up with subsequent

conversations that in addition to the interview guide asked about these newfound

processes. Overall these data collection strategies were effective in responding to

the multiple layers involved in this dissertation's research questions. For example, in

my analysis I map what services youth and staff report clients receive through the

Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch against the presence and operation of

organizational ties (chapter five) and funding contracts (chapter six) in each work

setting. Figure 3.1 depicts how I used these data collection tools as part of a

relational analytical framework to address these questions.

Figure 3.1: Relational Analytical Framework and Data Collection Strategies
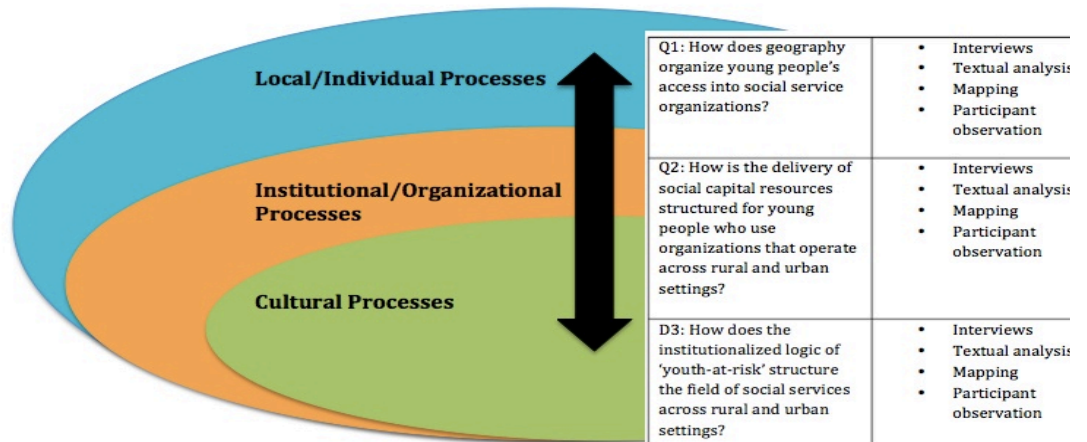
Study Advantages and Limitations

The research design for this study is advantageous for examining how

geography shapes the resources that disadvantaged young people acquire when

they participate in social service organizations. In particular this model allows for an

analysis of the ways that people's experiences with organizations are coordinated by

and intersect with institutional forces.

The body I occupy and my direct experience working in the social service sector were beneficial to the data collection of this study. For example in my interviews with youth, young people would tell me that my age (late 20s at the time of data collection) and race (biracial) were features that made me like them and could put me in situations similar to the ones they were living (interview: Kevan). Likewise my past experience working in social services provided me with some background surrounding processes that young people could not name, but that I could describe and further explore with staff for explicit details.

I found it easy to connect with youth and attribute this to the fact that I dressed casually, wore a backpack, and never brought a laptop (Duneier 2001; Jones 2010; Pascoe 2007). Often young people in the Urban Youth Centre asked if I wanted to hang out at the park to do more interviews where I could "meet peeps, chill and smoke some pot" (e.g., Dixon). I always *(kindly)* declined. Youth in the Urban Youth Centre also often asked if I could direct them or expedite their access into local services (e.g., Joel). When I was unaware of these processes I always referred (i.e., physically took) youth to transitional youth workers inside the organization. In the Rural Branch I was often asked "where" I "came from." These questions almost always centered on my race and ethnicity.

I attempted to move around like youth and staff during data collection. For example, while in the Urban Youth centre I always took public transportation, or walked like all the youth I spoke with did. I also learned to enter through a side door

(an unmarked door and stairway) of the organization like those who worked and

"frequented" the organization. Similarly, in the Rural Branch I always walked around

town to meet young people at the local coffee shop, or on trips with staff to get

program supplies; once there, I did not use a car to do this work. This practice

allowed me to observe what was happening as young people and staff entered and

left the Urban Youth Centre or its Rural Branch. It also helped me to identify

features beyond the organization that were implicated in the delivery of social

services (e.g., lack of public transportation in rural community). Despite the

effectiveness of these research practices and the characteristics and use of my body,

I acknowledge that these may have impacted the study by producing response bias

in my interviews.

It is often believed that marginalized youth like the ones involved in this

research project are "hidden" or are a "hard to reach" research population. Notably

this research only addresses the experiences of youth who are connected to social

services; these young people's lives may not be *as* invisible as those who do not

access services at all. Given the relation to social services among the youth involved

in this study, it is important to describe how I gained access to this study population

through remuneration. In my original ethics protocol I did not include financial

compensation. But after nearly a month of trying to connect with youth I learned

that this would be necessary to move the project forward. At this point I had done

one youth interview and two staff interviews with people in the Rural Branch. I had

not done any interviews with youth in the Urban Youth Centre. It was not until I

participated in a team meeting at the Urban Youth Centre that I learned why I was

having difficulties accessing urban youth. At this meeting I was told that youth

would *not* speak with me unless there was some form of payment because all other

academic groups who had spoken with them had done so ("what do youth get for

doing an interview?"). The precedent that has been established in the Urban Youth

Centre was not spoken about in the Rural Branch. I conceded to this request and

provided remuneration to all[10] youth involved in this project.

Data collection for this dissertation took place between February 2011 and

July 2013. Spanning nearly 2.5 years, this time represents a snapshot in the evolving

institution of social services. During this time I drew on several data collection

techniques to understand the relations between youth and the social services that

they use. The analysis of this current study treats these processes as in motion but

attends to them as contextualized by both time and space. Importantly, the analysis

of this dissertation does not address social service sector events precipitating this

time period (i.e., how changes to programs occur; the history of community based

social support in these communities), nor does it examine the long-term effects of

these processes for youth. This research is concerned with providing a detailed

comparative case study of the ways that this single organization provides support to

marginalized youth in rural and urban contexts. While the empirical details

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[10] A revision to the MREB was completed. I was able to locate the one rural youth I had interviewed
prior to the change and provided him with a $20 gift card for this participation in the project.

contained in this dissertation are specific to what happens in the Urban Youth

Centre and its Rural Branch, importantly the processes that shape these practices

are part of the institutional backdrop that shapes social services elsewhere in

Ontario.

Four

Floodgates and Side Doors: Accessing Social Services

4.1: THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACCESS STORIES

It is widely believed that when people are better connected to others they have better access to social resources (Burt 2001, 2004; Granovetter [1974] 1995; Lin 1999). However research also shows that it is not just your personal ties with other people that matter but also *where* you make these ties (Marwell 2007; Small 2009). This suggests that the routine everyday activities that people partake in may also be important to the mechanisms that constrain or facilitate access to social capital. In other words, social capital and social structure are intimately connected.

Allard and Small (2013) argue that understanding how people move out of positions of disadvantage requires attention to the "local organizations, the systems in which these organizations operate, and the institutions governing the behaviour of both" (1). Studies also show that some institutional contexts are better at providing resources to people than others (Small 2009). But how do people even begin such relationships and how do these processes shape what resources are provided? Moreover, how do institutional contexts shape how these service relationships begin for people who use similar organizations that operate *across* different types of communities?

While focusing on individual level processes, this chapter examines the relationship between youth, the local community, and social service organizations they seek support from. In particular I examine the ways that young people learn about and actually begin service relationships with either the Urban Youth Centre or its Rural Branch. Specifically this chapter asks: *How does geography organize young people's access into social service organizations?* Throughout I also draw on responses from staff to provide more detail about organizational activities that are implicated in young people's social service access stories. Building on previous research, this analysis shows that geography is a social force that affects how social service organizations enter into people's lives and vice versa.

Michele, the Urban Youth Centre

Michele is 23 years old and describes herself like this:

> I'm in a really bad position but I've got a pretty square head on my shoulders
> for the position I'm in. I deal with multiple health issues on a regular basis.
> I've got bipolar and post traumatic stress disorder, anxiety disorders, eating
> disorders. I get asthma and [have] other health issues. I deal with a lot of
> other stuff.

Some of this "other stuff" includes chronic homelessness, keeping herself clean when she "cuts" (self-harming behaviour), and negotiating proper food purchases with the

$191/month that she receives on "street allowance[11]" through Ontario Works for basic needs. Despite these difficulties, Michele says that "Every time I'm bouncing around and havin' a hard time keeping my feet under me, The Urban Youth Centre has always been a place where I can come and get assistance."

Michele learned about the Urban Youth Centre from a friend that was staying in the same house she was living in. This friend told her that the Centre was a place that could help with housing and food. When I asked her what was happening in her life when she first accessed the Centre she said:

I was actually having a really hard time. I was in a really bad relationship that I just got out of. I ended up moving into an apartment that was infested with bed bugs. I couldn't stay. My friend brought me to a place out in [Rossdale]. It was actually a room in the house [....]. I stayed with her for a while. An unfortunate situation happened where one of the other tenants became excruciating [sic] violent and stabbed her in the head 5 times. [...] and so we ended up having to move out. Fairly, you know... obviously... if anybody did that to me I'd be like, "I'm sorry guys. I can't have anybody live with me." So

---

[11] Steph's reference to "Street Allowance" is calculated through the "Basic Needs Allowance" and the "Shelter Allowance" described by the Ontario Works Social Assistance Policy Directives (2008) (see Section 6). These directives are organizes by the Ontario Works Act (1997). Steph does not dwell in any residence including institutional settings such as shelters (see Ontario Works Directives 6.16). Thus, the $191 that she receives monthly through Ontario Works is provided to cover food, clothing, and personal items. Importantly, this allocation takes into consideration where she is geographically located and any additional individualized needs (i.e., special diet – Ontario Works Directives 6.6).

you know, I was livin' in a tent for a little while, living in a van for a little

while, couch surfing back and forth.

Michele says that during this time she would come to the Urban Youth Centre with

her friend and would access the meal program, and other supports including

information about geared-to-income-housing and Ontario Works.

Steph, the Urban Youth Centre

Steph (20 years old) tells me that her experience with Post Traumatic Stress

Disorder (PTSD) and bipolar depression are barriers to her participation at the local

university. She tells me that on the outside she seems different from the other youth

who use the Urban Youth Centre but that "two sides of life can still bring you to the

same spot. Now I have housing. Most of them don't. I'm going to school now. I don't

have an addiction. But I am on OW[12]."

Steph found out about the Urban Youth Centre through a local organization

that she was involved in. During her involvement with this other organization she

disclosed to one of the staff that her sister was giving her until the end of the week to

get off of her couch. She had been there since her parents had kicked her out. The

staff member told her that the organization had recently taken part in a training

session about local resources and that the Urban Youth Centre could help with this

situation. Steph met with staff at the Urban Youth Centre and applied to their

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[12] OW = Ontario Works

housing program. She was later interviewed with staff and was put on the wait-list. In the meantime the Urban Youth Centre supported her in getting onto Ontario Works. At the time of our conversation she had been accepted into the housing program and was still accessing support with food and her mental health through the Centre. When asked how she felt about her involvement with the organization she told me, "If It wasn't for them, I probably wouldn't be sitting here with you right now. I wouldn't be alive."

Jackson, the Rural Branch

Jackson is 16 years old. When I asked him where he lives he told me, "I don't live anywhere." At the time of our conversation he had recently become homeless because, after the passing of his father, his stepmother had kicked him out. Jackson also recently dropped out of high school because he did not "want to deal with people asking" him about what is going on with his living situation. Despite this housing situation, Jackson tells me that he wants to stay in Hewardsville because, "My dad's dream was for me to be here. Even if that means that I have to be homeless."

Jackson tells me that the Branch is "a place to hang out and meet people." He remembers first coming into the Branch with this friend (male, white, 16 years old). The plan was to hang out, check Facebook and then "go across the street" (a known location for the sale and use of drugs). Jackson started using "crack, pot and oxy's"

after the death of his father. He explains that when he first came to the Branch, he

and his friend arrived around noon and walked straight to the back of the Branch to

use the computers – it is customary that all visitors sign in when they first enter,

Jackson and his friend did not. As soon as they sat down Jocelyn, an employment

counsellor, asked why they were not in school. Jackson responded that they didn't

want to be in school. The two were told to leave[13]. I later found out from staff that

this occurred because "it's the law[14]. Unless youth (under 18) have been expelled or

there is some other permission to not be in school, like probation or something, then

they have to be in school. They can't skip and then come here" (Jocelyn).

Jackson tells me that after a few more visits (after 2:30pm) he started

speaking with Maureen, a program facilitator, about the situation that he was in.

Maureen worked with Jackson to see about reconnecting with his biological mother.

This effort was unsuccessful and living with her was not a feasible option. With

Maureen's help, Jackson also tried to access Ontario Works as a single recipient,

Children's Aid Society, and the John Howards Society; again, he was unsuccessful in

getting hooked up with local services. In the meantime Jackson stayed at his

girlfriend's parent's house while he continued to call rental units from the Branch's

housing resource board. Despite difficulties in finding a permanent solution to his

housing needs, Jackson told me that the Rural Branch "turned my whole life around."

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[13] Young people under the age of 18 are kicked out of the Rural Branch if they access the site during regular school hours. Interestingly, the same is not true of the Urban Youth Centre. In my field observations I note several youth under the age of 18 who accessed the Urban Youth Centre for support around housing and substance abuse. In these situations, youth met with workers privately.
[14] Bill 52, Education Amendment Act (Learning to Age 18), 2006.

Since coming to the Branch he no longer uses "hard drugs." He says, "Now, I come here every single day. From 9 o'clock in the morning till 4:30 pm. That's from the moment it opens to the moment is closes just so I stay outta trouble."

Michele, Steph, and Jackson make clear that the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch function as an important part of their lives. What is also clear are the distinct ways that they enter into such significant relationships with this organization. For Michele, the knowledge she gained through her personal networks about the organization was directly tied to her experience. For Steph, her participation with another local organization mediated her involvement with the Urban Youth Centre. And for Jackson while no other institutions facilitated his initial encounter with the Rural Branch nor did his own knowledge about the Branch include the material resources that he eventually came to use (i.e., Housing Resource Board), using the Branch to "hang out" *eventually* led him to engage with staff around his housing needs. Young people across this rural and urban context experience the organization in similar ways in that it becomes central to their every day lives. However, how they actually form a service relationship is different depending on the geographical location where they are actually located. Revealing how these differences occur is an instance to think about the geographical organization of social capital.

Studies about the ways that people make decisions about local service organizations abound (Biddle et al. 2000; Kissane 2003). Generally this research

finds that social ties shape how disadvantaged people gain information about social resources and make choices about participating in institutions including health care systems (Deri 2005; Pescosolido 1992), social welfare services (Bertrand, Luttmer, and Mullainathan 2000), and the labour market (Granovetter 1973; Montgomery 1991). In a similar vein, other research shows that practices of local organizations are also important in providing information about social resources to disadvantaged people (Delgado 1997; Uzzi 1996). For example, Small (2009) finds that the connections between childcare centers and other organizations facilitate poor mothers' knowledge about and entry into other local social services. Small uses this evidence to argue that a person's social support and wellbeing is tied to "the institutional practices of the organization in which the person routinely participates" (177).

While this literature contributes to our understanding of the ways that people gain information about and move into service relationships with local organizations, importantly, we know little about how and why some institutional contexts are better able to "broker" marginalized people into social service organizations while others are not (Small 2009:130). Similarly, the nature of social ties across geographical contexts is also under-investigated; that is we know little about the ways that information becomes available across different settings and how this brokers people's access to social resources. For example, despite the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch operating as a single organization, what explains

my finding that there are fewer accounts of organizational ties facilitating young

people's access into the Rural Branch as compared to the Urban Youth Centre?

Current scholarship provides no clear answer because it is devoid of analyses

examining the interrelation between geographical contexts and the materialization

of social capital (Bourdieu 1984). Addressing this omission is crucial for

understanding how geography organizes people's access to social services.

Research suggests that geography operates as a physical, cultural and social

barrier to people's decisions surrounding the use of social services (Allard 2009;

Allard and Danziger 2003; Allard, Tolman and Rosen 2003; Buzza et al. 2011;

Kissane 2003; Nemet and Bailey 2000). However, there are few investigations of

how geography mediates institutional processes or the types of information people

receive through their interactions with other people (for an exception, see Chiu and

West 2007). If many institutionalized systems (i.e., social welfare, health care, and

education) operate across locales and if context is important to the structure, size

and impact of social ties with others (Jencks and Mayer, 1990; Small and Newman,

2001), then investigating how these processes are themselves geographically

organized is crucial for understanding the acquisition of knowledge and decision

making processes among marginalized people.

This chapter shows that young people enter the Urban Youth Centre and its

Rural Branch with different kinds/amounts of knowledge about what the

organization does. These differences then shape the ways that youth and staff

articulate their needs once the youth is inside the organization. I argue that

operating in a rural or urban context differentially shapes young people's knowledge

about and mobilization of social services. These findings suggest that what happens

before people enter the front door of social service organizations is just as

important, if not central, to what happens once they are inside.

4.2: WHO ACCESSES THE URBAN YOUTH CENTRE AND ITS RURAL BRANCH?

This chapter begins from the standpoint of young people located within the

organization. At the time of the interviews young people were accessing service

from either the Urban Youth Centre or its Rural Branch. Table 4.1 lists responses to

two interview questions I asked of youth: (1) "why did you come to the

organization?" and (2) "was there anything going on in your life that brought you to

the organization?" Responses are recorded in order from the most frequent to the

least frequent and are listed in the language used by youth.

Table 4.1: Youths Reports about their Needs

Location	Q: Why did you come to the organization?	Q: Was there anything going on in your life that brought you to the organization?
Urban Youth Centre	- Homelessness - Unemployment, training, and resume - Food - Hangout - Poverty/poor "Safe place to get away" - To get onto OW and other social benefits - Addictions - Drug use - New to the Grayson	- Homelessness - Unemployment and training - Food - Need to get onto OW and other social benefits - Access to other social services - Addictions - Drug use - Parenting and pregnant - Probations - Affordable housing - Education - Mental health - Depression - Self-harmer - Sexual abuse
Rural Branch	- Hang out - Unemployment, training, and resume - Volunteer opportunity - Networking - Food	- Help with my charges {legal} - Unemployment - Addictions - Drug use - Mental health - Homelessness - Parenting and pregnancy - Theft - Poor - School

There is considerable diversity in the experiences that bring young people into the organization. Nevertheless, several experiences are notable. First, looking across the responses of those connected to the Urban Youth Centre, respondents

most often report becoming involved with the organization because of

homelessness, employment and training, and food (table 4.1, row 2, column 2).

Other reasons include addictions, drug use, poverty, to secure social benefits, to "get

away", and to hangout. Young people accessing the Rural Branch most often report

that they initially come to "hang out" or socialize with friends and for support

around employment, training, and resumes (table 4.1, row 3, column 2).

At first glance it appears that outside of employment, training, and resume

needs, young people come to the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch for

somewhat different reasons. Yet column three of table 4.1 shows that this is not the

case. Here I list youth's responses to my question about any other needs or

experiences that they were dealing with when they initially accessed, or at any time

since beginning to use the organization. The analysis here uncovers *similarities*

among young people who access both sites of the organization. While youth in the

Rural Branch frequently say that they initially began using the organization to "hang

out" and for support around training, employment and resumes, here we see that

their *overall needs* correspond with those of young people utilizing the Urban Youth

Centre. In short, young people who use the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch

have similar needs. Next I describe the ways that young people acquire knowledge

about the organization and how this knowledge gets mobilized in making decisions

around seeking help.

4.3: HOW DO YOUTH LEARN ABOUT AND ENTER INTO THE ORGANIZATION?

Young people report two ways that they find out about the organization. Most often

they say that *friends who use the services* at the Urban Youth Centre or its Rural

Branch tell them about and/or bring them to the organization. Second, young people

say that they learn about and begin using the organization through *their*

participation with other organizations such as Ontario Works, and Children's Aid

Society. Table 4.2 summarizes these organizational entry processes.

Table 4.2: Organizational Entry Processes

How did you find out about the organization?	Location		Total
	Urban Youth Centre[15]	**Rural Branch**	
"Friends" {*other young people*}	12	9	21
"Other organizations" {*local external service providers*}	9	2	11
Total	21	10	32

The results of table 4.2 buttress Small's (2009) findings of the impact of

"organizational embeddedness" on social capital. Specifically, young people's

knowledge about the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch is facilitated by their

---

[15] When I asked Luc how he found about the Urban Youth Centre he told me "I found out from myself." Because of this response, Luc is not counted in the table.

own participation, as well as the participation of others, in organizations. Most often, young people find out about the organization through "embedded" friends. Less often do youth report that other organizations directly facilitate their access into the Urban Youth Centre or its Rural Branch. While both processes occur across the organization, it is clear that they work for young people in varying degrees depending on the location with which the service relationship is formed.

In the next section I describe how these two processes bring young people into the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch. Despite similar reports about their needs, here I show how these organizational entry processes geographically demarcate the ways that knowledge about social services translates into help seeking behaviours among youth. The following analysis suggests that the process of "organizational embeddedness" is a socially coordinated activity that produces geographical discrepancies in knowledge about and entry into social service organizations. In other words, organizational ties are not uniform in their outcome but rather occur in ways that produce gains for some and (incessant) barriers for others.

4.4: FRIENDS AND ORGANIZATIONAL EMBEDDEDNESS

Table 4.3 summarizes the information that youth say friends involved with the organization provide them with. I have listed these responses in order from the most frequent response to the least common. Here we see that young people's social

ties produce differences across the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch with

regards to the type of information that is gained about the organization.

Table 4.3: Information Provided by Organizationally "Embedded" Friends

Location:	Friends tell me that this is a place where: 1): I can go to get support with…. 2): I go to….
Urban Youth Centre	• Food • Shelter and housing • Poverty • Social/peer support • Employment Services and employment training • Education • Needle exchange – addiction services • Homelessness • Hang out
Rural Branch	• Hang out • Employment and training

The Urban Youth Centre

Organizationally embedded friends within the Urban Youth Centre provide

youth with information about what the organization does. In particular, friends offer

information about services delivered by the Urban Youth Centre that help with a

lack of food, poverty, homelessness, shelter and housing, addictions, drug use,

employment, training, education, and social and peer support. Friends were least

likely to tell young people that the Urban Youth Centre was a place to "hang out." My

interview with Darrell and Joel provides an example of how the embeddedness of

79

one young person actually facilitates another's knowledge of and entry into specific programs at the Urban Youth Centre.

Darrell and Joel.

I met Joel and Darrell in a local cafe that was across the street from the Urban Youth Centre. Originally I had spoken with Darrell on the phone about conducting an interview with him for the project. At the time of our scheduled meeting, Darrell showed up with Joel. The young men were roommates at the local Men's Mission. Darrell asked if Joel could also do the interview. I agreed and invited them to both sit down. During the interview Joel often asked me questions about how to navigate services in the community. Often I didn't know the answer and simply shrugged my shoulders. In these moments Darrell stepped in. In the following excerpt, Joel and Darrell speak to each other about the process of accessing services from the Urban Youth Centre. Here we see social ties and organizational embeddedness in action. Joel reports that because of a "threat to [his] life", he had to leave his home in another community. Because of this, he is homeless. In this segment of the conversation, Darrell explains to Joel what he needs to do to access the Urban Youth Centre's Housing Program. Darrell is especially knowledgeable about this service because on the day of this interview he became a resident of the Housing Program.

Joel: How do you get into those places [points to the sign of the housing program delivered through the Urban Youth Centre]? Emma Edwards? [a worker of the Urban Youth Centre].

Darrell: Yeah, any of the ones that are in from 3-7, talk to them. They all have applications.

Joel: I'm gonna have to go after this interview.

Darrell: It's like a pre-application from 3-7.

Joel: I should live there?

Darrell: Yeah. It's a three-month contract that gets renewed every three months. You can stay up to a year.

Here Darrel advises Joel as to what he needs to ask for and the time he physically needs to be present to start accessing this specific service. Later in the interview Joel became visibly upset about his housing situation and again spoke about feeling unsure about how to receive help. Darrell interjected in my questioning and provided Joel with more information.

Darrell: They're {Urban Youth Centre} open 8 to10 and then 3 to 7. [...] You just really need some income to show that you'll be able to make that rent every month [for the Housing Program].

Joel: That would be social assistance.

Darrell: But social assistance told me that at the same time they won't

provide first and last. So if you come up with your first month's rent

somehow then they'll provide you with last months.

Joel: I'm almost certain though I'm eligible for emergency cheque because I

was in danger when I came up here with nothing.

Darrell: Emergency cheque. What's that?

Joel: Faster process because I did have a place in B-dub [previous city] and I

had to come up here because I was in danger.

Darrell: I'll take you to the girl who introduced me to it. She'll take you from

there. And then it's up to you to go and find out who your Urban Youth Centre

worker is and see if you are eligible for the rooms.

Joel: Yeah ok. You have to go there at 1:30 right, I'll just come wit you at

1:30.

Darrell: Yeah, and come back at 3 and talk to one of these people.

Joel: Sounds good.

Darrell prescribes specific actions for Joel. These actions stem from Darrell's

involvement with the Urban Youth Centre and his own needs around housing.

Following this interview I observed Joel go (with Darrell in tow) to the Urban Youth

Centre where an appointment was made to see a Housing Worker at 3pm. Joel

mobilized this newfound knowledge by making this appointment. I later found out

that Joel was awaiting clearance from social assistance to proceed with the housing

application process. In this way, the transfer of Darrell's knowledge coordinated

Joel's entry into the Urban Youth Centre, and Ontario Works for a specific service –

support around housing.

The Rural Branch.

Young people accessing the Rural Branch also say that friends using the

organization tell them that it is a place to hang out and to get help with employment,

training, and resumes (table 4.3). This is exemplified in one of my observations of a

young man involved with the Rural Branch who brought a new patron into the

organization - "This is Joey. He's new and he wants you to do that resume" (field

note: September 10, 2012). Likewise, Cee, a 24 year old currently working in a

training program at the Branch, explains to me that he became involved with the

organization because his friends told him that "if you're tryna do your resume go to

the Rural Branch." This knowledge transfer is analogous to that of the Urban Youth

Centre where friends provide knowledge and prescribe action that moves young

people into service relationships with the organization. That this process is common

across these locations is one thing. That the knowledge provided by friends is itself

categorically different is another (see table 4.1, column 3).

Dakota.

Young people accessing the Rural Branch are more likely to say that the

organization is a place to hang out. For example, Dakota was a young person I saw

several times while I visited the Rural Branch. She often came into the Branch with

other young people after 2:30pm (end of high school) and always went directly to

the computers in the resource room. On the day of our interview, she approached

me and asked if I was the one doing the project. She had seen the flyers I had posted

inside the Branch. During our interview I asked how she found out about the Rural

Branch, Dakota replied, "Well my friend told me that she'd like to see me come here

and hang out. She was like, 'I don't care if you come or not, it's an opportunity.' I'm

glad that I did. I met half of my friends here." I then asked her "what did you do after

you first came here." Dakota said, "I told other people to come and hang out here."

Once _inside_ the Rural Branch, young people say that they learn about

programs and services delivered through the site that can help with their

employment and training needs. For example, I asked Dakota to "tell me what it was

like when you first came into the organization." She describes what happens like

this:

Dakota: They have paperwork now. It has your name and address. It's for if something were to ever happen here....

Jessica: Ok. So when you first come in then it's like you have to sign up for services?

Dakota: Well there's one for that and there's one for your information. There's one for if you're looking for a job and you rate the Branch after you're done getting help.

Jessica: Ok. And how did you find out about the job help stuff?

Dakota: Once I came in with my friend then I found out about it.

Jessica: I see. And have you accessed the job stuff?

Dakota: I needed to do it but I didn't do it right way. I had to get comfortable first. But yeah, it was great. I've gone out and looked for jobs. Some people comment on my resume and say, "you've got a pretty good resume for being a young girl."

Here we see that like the account of Darrell and Joel, Dakota's friend provided her with information about what she could do in the organization ("hang out"). However, this knowledge did not contain information about employment resources that she also needed. In other words, Dakota's access into social services is similarly

entangled in social ties. But in the rural context important geographical differences

emerge in the ways that this knowledge translates into the actual receipt of social

support.

>   _Sammy._

Sammy provides another example of how embedded friends work in

geographically distinct ways across the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch.

Sammy is a young person who has been accessing the Rural Branch for more than

three years. He is a recent high school graduate who is now looking for work. When I

visited the Rural Branch Sammy was either chatting with other young people, using

the computers, playing "fooseball", or eating (free-snack provided by the Branch or

other food items he purchased). During my interview with Sammy, I asked how he

learned about the organization. He tells me:

> I found out from a buddy who said that there was stuff that you could do
>
> here. Like there were weights and games and stuff. I've been coming for
>
> about three years now. _But now I know you can do other stuff too like meet_
>
> _with the employment counsellor_ (emphasis added).

Like Dakota, Sammy reveals that embedded friends facilitated his knowledge about

and access into the Rural Branch. But unlike friends in the Urban Youth Centre, once

young people are actually _inside_ the Rural Branch they _then_ learn about other

potential services that might be important to others aspects of their lives. The point

here is that youth accessing the Urban Youth Centre know exactly how the

organization can respond to their needs. And yet, despite similar reports of

experiences shaping their lives, rural youth seemingly only attain information about

the more comprehensive list of services once inside the Rural Branch.

These findings suggest that network ties are not all equal (Granovetter 1973;

Singh, Hansen, and Podolny 2010). Specifically, embedded friends facilitate

knowledge about the organization in ways that provide youth accessing the Urban

Youth Centre with more detailed information about and access to services that

address their diverse needs. Despite having comparable needs, embedded friends in

the Rural Branch provide information that moves young people into the

organization to hang out and get help around employment and training. While these

services still address some of their reported needs, information gained through

social ties for rural youth does not address the breadth of needs to the same extent

as social ties do for urban youth. In this way, friends located in the urban location act

as a sort of floodgate of information and access into the organization for other

marginalized youth. This then shapes how young people think about their needs

once they are inside the organization

In their research on the young people's work aspirations, Allen and

Hollingworth (2013) argue that "urban locales produce a place specific habitus that

shape" how youth come to think about their future endeavours (502). In particular

they claim that place is central to young people's thinking about social opportunities.

I extend this finding and others (Cairns 2014) to show how embedded friends shape place-bound thinking into action. In particular this section illustrates that operating in a rural or urban context influences youth such that when they arrive they have different knowledge about what support they can receive in relation to their needs. We can think of this as embodied habitus or as "the materialization of the interconnections between individuals' social networks and relationships and corporeality" (Holt 2008: 241). The geographical location where youth are situated facilitates them (or not) into services (or in part) at the organization. This becomes evident when considering how friends help youth enter into social service relationships. Next, I examine how external organizations facilitate young people's entry into the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch.

4.5: EXTERNAL ORGANIZATIONS COORDINATION OF YOUTH INTO SOCIAL SERVICES

Eleven youth reported learning about and being referred to the Urban Youth Centre or its Rural Branch through their participation in other organizations (see table 4.2). All the organizations and the information that young people say they provided them with are listed in table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Information and Organizational Ties

Location	Who provided information	What information was provided
Urban Youth Centre	• Group Homes through Children's Aid Society • Men's Mission • Ontario Works, Grayson • Youth Service Organization, Grayson • Salvation Army • Street Services for Youth, Grayson • Track Club, Grayson	Food, safe place to hang out, housing support, employment and training, support around homelessness, mental health services
Rural Branch	• Community Employment Agency, Hewardsville • High school, Hewardsville	Employment and training

External organizations coordinate young people's entry into the Urban Youth Centre and the Rural Branch in two ways. First, we see that information provided by these organizations matches the reasons youth say they initially accessed the Urban Youth Centre or its Rural Branch (see table 4.1, column 2). Second, we see that the information provided by external organizations is explicit about how services at the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch respond to their needs. Like embedded friends, organizational ties function in the same way across locales by "brokering" information about social resources to young people (Small 2009). These findings provide support for the influence of organizational ties in coordinating young people's knowledge and access into the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch (Uzzi 1996).

However, further analysis reveals the complex institutional environment where these organizational ties unfold. For example, while brokerage occurs across both sites, for the Rural Branch these organizational ties only provide information that addresses young people's employment and training needs (table 4.4, row 3, column 3). This finding is important because young people accessing the Urban Youth Centre and the Rural Branch report similar needs (table 4.1). Similarly, there is no overlap between the organizations that provided information to young people across the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch (table 4.4, column 2). Except for Ontario Works, the organizations that provide information to youth about the Urban Youth Centre *do not* exist in the community where the Rural Branch is located. In other words, organizational brokerage is *unequally* "embedded in place and affected by its placement" (Logan 2012: 507). Like embedded friends, this finding suggests that how organizational ties are themselves structured is important to the ways that social capital is produced and mobilized into action.

Thus far, I have shown that organizational ties are unequally distributed across the locations of the organization and work in different ways to bring youth into the Urban Youth Centre or its Rural Branch. Next I examine how these organizational ties are geographically constituted to generate differences in young people's knowledge about the services delivered through the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch.

4.6: TEXTUAL COORDINATION OF ORGANIZATIONAL TIES

Textually mediated relationships between the Urban Youth Centre, its Rural Branch, and local community organizations are central to how organizational ties facilitate young people's access into the organization. Table 4.5 shows the formalized organizational ties, established in and through texts, which link the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch to community organizations youth say introduce them to each respective work setting. Here I have listed the organizations in order from most frequently to less frequently reported (column 2).

Table 4.5: Organizational Ties

Location	Organization	Organizational Tie (textually mediated)
Urban Youth Centre	Children's Aid Society	Doing it Together Agenda 2009
	Men's Mission	Network Strategy 2009
	Grayson Youth Service Organization	Network Strategy 2009; Break Out Guide
	Salvation Army	Network Strategy 2009
	Street Services for Youth	Network Strategy 2009; Vulnerable Youth Service Framework
	Ontario Works/City of Grayson	Purchase Agreement; Self Serve
Rural Branch	Community Employment Agency	CEA - Members Directory Chamber of Commerce PTP 2011-12
	High school (1)	CEA - Members Directory Chamber of Commerce PTP 2011-12

The textually mediated relationships that tie organizations to either the Urban Youth

Centre or its Rural Branch are specific to each community. For instance, all of the

250 members connected to the Community Enhancement Association with the

Chamber of Commerce are specific to the Town and district of Hewardsville.

Likewise, nearly all of the regulating texts shaping the organizational ties in the

Urban Youth Centre are specific to the City of Grayson. My analysis finds that the

Purchase Agreement between the City of Grayson and the Urban Youth Centre, the

125 organizations part of the Network Strategy, and the 19 organizational members

who author the Break Out Guide all operate and provide services to people residing

in Grayson. The "Self Serve" document is the exception. That is, while this document

is produced by INFO.GRAYSON and is available in Ontario Works offices in Grayson,

the document includes a directory of services available in Grayson, the Town of

Hewardsville, and other rural locations in the county (see Appendix F). But how do

these context specific organizational ties move marginalized youth into the

organization? In practice, what do these organizational ties look like and what

impact do they have for young people seeking social support?

The Urban Youth Centre: Organizational Ties and Ontario Works

     Caylin, a 20-year old recent high school graduate, has a 3-year-old "mixed"

daughter named April she tells me "has nice skin and curly hair like you!" Caylin

took care of April until she was 2 years old but found it hard being a single parent

with limited income while trying to finish high school. Caylin's daughter was recently adopted through Children's Aid Society to the Vincent family.

About a year ago, Caylin was looking for support around income because she didn't have enough to eat. She tells me that during this time "I wasn't eating correctly. I couldn't afford it. It's not like I was trying to do that on purpose but I ended up losing weight." For financial support she knew that Ontario Works would be the first place to start. In her initial meetings with Ontario Works, her caseworker told her that in order to receive assistance she would need to go to the Urban Youth Centre for support on finding employment. Eventually she conceded and became involved with an employment and training program offered through the Centre. She explained what happened like this:

> Well Ontario Works they say if you're not in school or working you have to be doing something, like job searching, blah blah, blah. So the job searching is something that I was, even when I wasn't really looking for a job, I still was going there so it made it look like I was doing something. When I actually put the work in I got into this program [Employment Service] at the Urban Youth Centre. Then I got into it. But, yeah, I was forced... but not like forced, but like they were like "you need to do that!" And I didn't refuse. I needed the money. It was good help. I got my resume done and I got this job!

Facilitated by Ontario Works, Caylin's involvement with an employment counsellor

put her into contact with an employment and training program at the Urban Youth

Centre. Caylin tells me that her employment counsellor made notes about her

involvement with the program to make visible to her Ontario Works caseworker

that she was "doing what she was supposed to, to keep getting her money." She

describes this employment and training program like this:

> I want to be a chef. [...] Well, the Urban Youth Centre gave me an opportunity
>
> to work with a chef and actually show my skill, that's something that I'm
>
> interested in for my career. I can't believe it. This job is just amazing. It gives
>
> me the opportunity.

Figure 4.1 illustrates the text-mediated relations that link the Urban Youth

Centre to Ontario Works. In bold are the key people responsible for producing work

at each stage. In square brackets I have indicated the texts that are produced by

these actors that coordinate organizational ties linking the Urban Youth Centre with

Ontario Works. Caylin tells me how her involvement with Ontario Works links her to

the Urban Youth Centre. However, the multiple institutional actors involved in

Caylin's access story, including the Ministry of Community and Social Services, The

Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities, Ontario Works, and the City of

Grayson, are invisible to her.

Figure 4.1: Caylin's Access into the Urban Youth Centre.
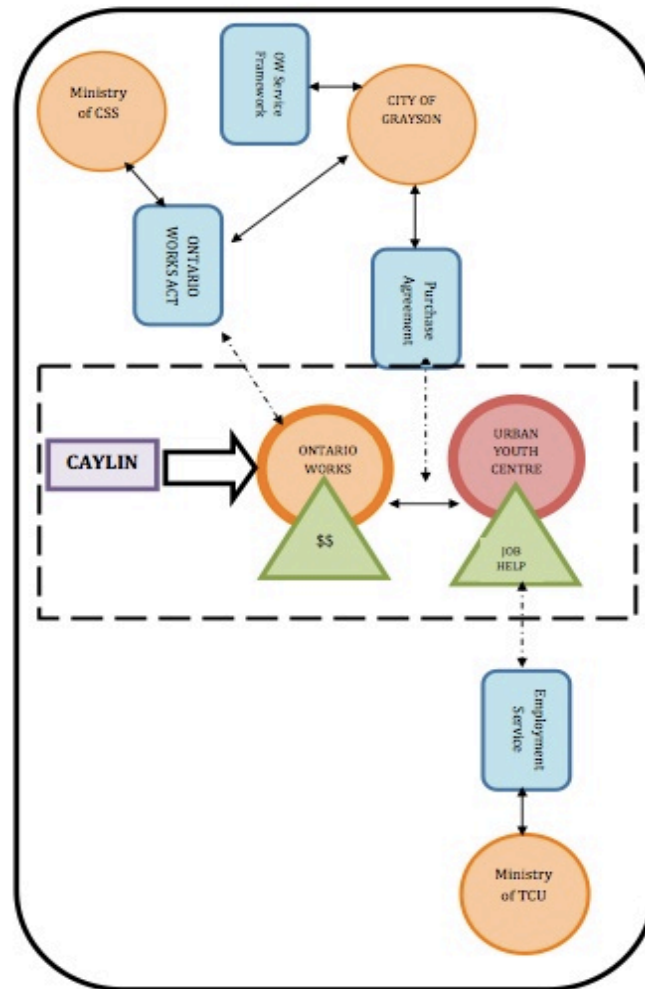
Caylin's work around "getting money" (i.e., Ontario Works) inserts her into a

set of institutional relations that structure a specific service relationship with the

Urban Youth Centre (i.e., employment program). This organizational tie orders her

subsequent activities in an established way. Specifically, the Purchase Agreement

arising from the Ontario Works Employment Assistance Services Framework 2013 –

2018 – a text produced by the City of Grayson – coordinates the work of staff at

Ontario Works, the City of Grayson, and The Urban Youth Centre. For youth, this

means that any young person who accesses Ontario Works in the City of Grayson

will be sent to the Urban Youth Centre for support around employment, and more

specifically *Employment Service*, a program of Employment Ontario delivered

through the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities. Participation in

Employment Service delivered through the Urban Youth is mandated within Ontario

Works legislation (Ontario Works Act) and regulated by the Purchase Service

Agreement (Appendix G).

Staff explain that textually mediated organizational ties shape their initial

work activities with youth. Carla, an employment counsellor, explains how Ontario

Works gets youth into the Urban Youth Centre.

I'd say that the majority of the clients that we see are Ontario Works clients

where a part of their participation agreement with Ontario Works is to

connect with an employment counsellor. Usually the Ontario Works

caseworker does determine you know, "I do want you to go to The Urban

Youth Centre because of your age or the services that they may be providing."

But then there are also people who come from word of mouth.

I then ask her if there is a difference between the youth who come into the Urban

Youth Centre through Ontario Works and those who come in through "word of

mouth." Carla answers:

> I guess there is a little bit more questioning that goes into you know, the
>
> youth who are coming in just because they want a job. Because with Ontario
>
> Works *you know that part of their participation agreement is to find full time*
>
> *employment as soon as possible. And so, we kind of have that in the back of our*
>
> *heads regardless of what the client comes in and says* (emphasis added).

This suggests that textually mediated organizational ties not only coordinate young

people's entry into the Urban Youth Centre, but also organize how they are worked

upon once they are there.

Tessa provides another example of how the textually mediated relation

between the Urban Youth centre and Ontario Works impacts the institution of social

services, more broadly.

> We have a lot of OW clients that come here. They're our best referral source.
>
> It ends up being this really weird tricky world of like you know, when you
>
> have a client that's on Ontario Works but also open in Employment Services
>
> it's almost like *you can get your stats through them having to come because of*
>
> *Ontario Works* and so it's a weird partnership that we have going on 'cuz you
>
> know *it's like if they don't come to this appointment they are going to get cut*

off. And then you have to wonder if they are motivated to get a job or if they are

just here because they have to be. And so it does get tricky in that I wouldn't

say that a lot of our clients are actually just coming in saying that "I want help

finding a job." They're more coming in being like, "I have to be here, but hey,

maybe I can do some cool stuff while I'm here" (emphasis added).

Here Tessa describes how organizational ties (Small 2009) – mediated textually –

both organize how young people are filtered into the Urban Youth Centre and its

Rural Branch, and how their needs are known and acted upon by staff once they are

there.

The Rural Branch: Organizational Ties and the Chamber of Commerce

While the text-mediated organizational ties are more prescriptive between

youth and the Urban Youth Centre, in the Rural Branch these ties are less formalized

and instead focus on communication between staff about "what is done" in the

organization (field note: Adelina). For example, the Rural Branch is a member of the

Community Enhancement Association through the Chamber of Commerce. Mediated

by annual membership, this relationship involves meeting monthly with other local

businesses and organizations to "network" and "showcase their products and

services" (field notes, Event: Business Meets 2012). Adelina describes the

relationship between the Chamber of Commerce and the Rural Branch like this:

My title went from Public Relations Officer in the Rural Branch to Community

Relations Liaison in the Urban Youth Centre. But I'm still on the [Community

Enhancement Association]; I was there this morning. I'm still in Hewardsville;

I'm there every Tuesday. And I go to all the [Business Meets] gatherings. It's

another opportunity for me to connect with community members to tell

everybody else what we do. Again people hear, "Hi, I'm Adelina from The

Rural Branch." So they hear Rural Branch, they start to associate the youth

centre. And I've had other staff go to the meetings too because I think it's

really important to get that message out about what we do. Get it out to

Hewardsville.

Adelina identifies a different character and form of text-mediated organizational ties

for the Rural Branch than is described by Caylin and staff in the Urban Youth Centre.

For the Rural Branch, these ties are not about institutionally coordinating the work

of organizations to respond to youth needs and/or prescribing action for young

people themselves. Instead these ties are about building social ties among

organizational staff[16]. The difference in the effect of organizational ties for youth

---

[16] In making this statement, I question why the social ties that develop among *organizational sta*ff in the rural community do not facilitate youth into the Rural Branch in the same way that *embedded friends* do across the entire organization. Given my discussion in chapter five about the ways that institutional processes produce geographical differences in how social service work unfolds for youth, I suspect that this difference can be explained in two ways. First there is an institutional culture of producing "statistics" that organizes the field of social services. Second there are organizational ties that work in tandem to produce "good stats" for both parties involved (i.e., Ontario Works and the Urban Youth Centre). If no institutional benefits are gained for coordinating young people's access into other social services, why would organizational actors do this work? In this context, power relations that shape organizational boundaries and institutional expectations transcend the structural level in ways that shape youths access into social services.

across the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch suggests that access into social services is a geographically organized process. Chrissy's story elaborates this point.

Chrissy, a young person who was looking for some support around training and employment, reported finding out about the organization through her teacher. When I asked how this happened she said:

I talked to my teacher and he'd said, 'well what about the Rural Branch?' I said, 'Well what's that about?' He said it was for youth and I could get help with my career here. I'd always seen it and always wondered about it. So I came in by myself. I found it interesting. I love it.

Chrissy's account provides evidence of how geographical differences in brokerage work for young people accessing the Rural Branch. Specifically, Chrissy says, "I came in by myself", suggesting that after acquiring information from the school she had to mobilize this knowledge herself to access services at the Rural Branch.

Without a formal referral process used between the School Board and the Rural Branch, staff say that they initially do not know why young people have accessed the organization (field note, various dates). For example, one staff member in the Rural Branch explains that without these formal processes between organizations what becomes imperative is the time spent *"building a relationship, talking with them* [young people]. *This is how you figure out why they have come. When you have that relationship, they want to talk to you, they want to let you know"*

(James). I ask James how this "talking" compares to what happens when young people first come to the Urban Youth Centre through other organizations.

> Jessica: So what happens at the Urban Youth Centre?

> James: There they would make an appointment, they would come in, they would make an action plan, and they would leave with an appointment in a next couple weeks.

> Jessica: Whereas here they could come in everyday?

> James: Oh yeah. I'd say most of the first meetings I have with people aren't scheduled appointments. They're 5 minute chats where I'm just getting to know them. Getting an update, "How are you doing?"

For the Rural Branch there are no organizational ties that facilitate knowledge about young people's needs or how organizational work should respond. Staff employ their own strategies to do this work. While the needs of young people accessing the Rural Branch match those of the Urban Youth Centre, organizational ties facilitate young people's access into services because of the knowledge gained through these relationships. For Chrissy, gaining access to more support through the Rural Branch meant eventually opening up with staff about her ongoing struggle with addictions, and her work in exploring her sexual identity. Chrissy's work of seeking social support takes place in two areas that are not actually institutionally coordinated

because the organizational tie between the School Board and the Rural Branch are

not organized to do this work. Figure 4.2 depicts this process.

Figure 4.2: Chrissy's access into the Rural Branch
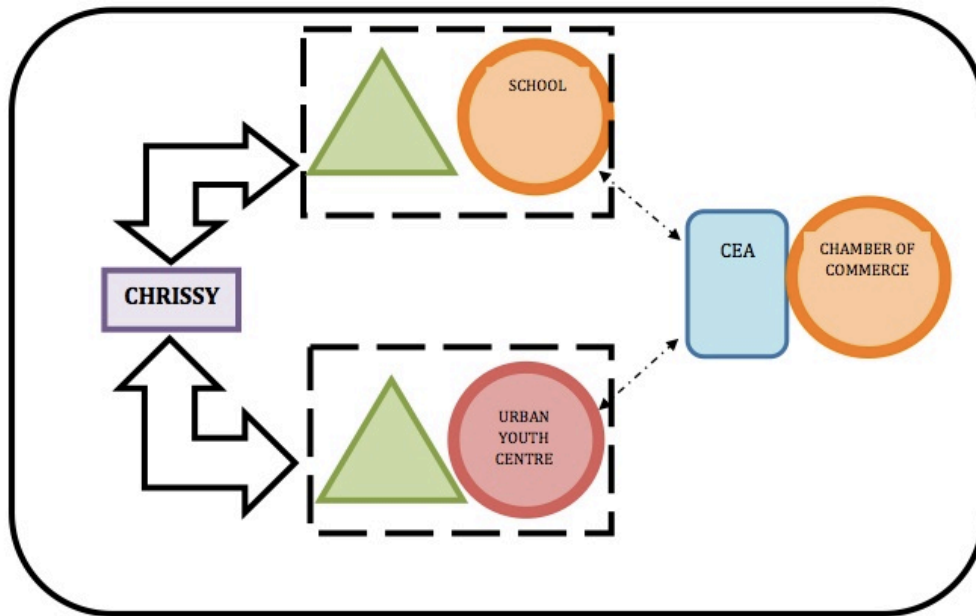
This analysis suggests that organizational ties – established in and through

texts - coordinate young people's knowledge of and entry into the Urban Youth

Centre in ways that are *geographically different* from young people utilizing the

Rural Branch. For example, compared to Chrissy's entry into the Rural Branch,

Caylin's involvement with Ontario Works *requires* her participation with the Urban

Youth Centre. Unlike in the rural community, the organizational ties linking services

providers in the urban setting mandate the actual movement of youth between

service providers. While research has focused on the role of geography in mediating

access to knowledge among people within organizations (Bell and Zaheer 2007),

here I show that there are also institutionally coordinated processes that produce

these geographical differences. In other words, there is a relationship between

geography, knowledge, and institutional ties. Young people learn about and access

the Urban Youth Centre through an institutional 'side door' that literally moves them

into services. In the Rural Branch, conversely, this 'side door' does not exist. For

staff, these organizational processes shape how they know about and begin to work

with young people in these settings. These findings are important because they

show that rather than conceiving of the decisions that people make in accessing

social service organizations as personal or subjective, we ought to consider the

institutional context that facilitates and constrains how this happens. To those

involved, this is often invisible work.

4.8: GEOGRAPHICAL LOGICS AND ACCESS TO SOCIAL SERVICES

Youth who use the Urban Youth Centre know that it is a 'hub' for accessing other

social service providers. This knowledge is gained through friends who use the

organization and through their own participation in other social services located in

the urban community. Conversely, staff tell me that youth who use the Rural Branch

"are just different in the way they access social services" (Sam, Rural Branch). This

chapter suggests that these geographical social processes operate at both the

individual and organizational level in ways that differentially organize knowledge about, and access into, social services.

My findings also suggest that the ways that youth get hooked up to the organization are also embedded in cultural understandings about rural and urban contexts (Lamont 2000; Small 2004). For example, Sam explains the difference in how rural and urban youth access the organization like this:

> Because out here [Rural Branch] we've noticed that the youth take a long time to get to know you and trust you before they'll tell you what's' going on, or use your services. [...] I think.... the difference is urban youth are at risk and vocal about it. Rural youth are at risk and hide it because everybody knows everybody. If you declare you're at risk, than everybody knows and you've got that reputation for the rest of the time you're in that area. And people in this town will make fun of you for it. We [Rural Branch] have free food out there and one of the youth went to get some and one of the youth went, "That food is for poor people. Why are you taking it?" Meanwhile this is a youth who is poor. He walked away.

Sam's account suggests that gaining access to social service organizations emerges through symbolic and social understandings of "place." Being located in a rural setting is "socially and spatially restrictive" for youth who are in need of social services (Allen and Hollingworth 2013: 500). In other words, rural and urban contexts differentially shape the embodied habitus of youth because they produce

different understandings about what is a valid/appropriate social need. Following

Sam's account, I argue that geography operates as a cultural logic that shapes social

capital, particularly knowledge about social services. Importantly, this cultural

dimension is not deterministic; that is, geographical cultural discourses only matter

to the ways that youth arrive to the Urban Youth Centre or its Rural Branch when

they are central to the actions that follow (Swidler 1986).

4.9: CONCLUSION

How does geography organize people's access to social resources? Access emerges

through people's social networks and from institutionalized processes that they

participate in. Working separately or together, these processes produce knowledge

about people's needs and the resources that can support them. This knowledge is

what facilitates people's access to social resources that are important to moving

people out of marginalized positions. But importantly this chapter argues that access

to such resources – in this case, social service organizations – is a geographical

phenomenon that is differentiated across rural and urban contexts. In other words,

geography transcends the ways that social networks and organizational processes

unfold. This has implications for the opportunities that become available (or not) to

people and likewise the ways that inequality is alleviated and reproduced. Put

another way, there is a relationship between the ways that access to social capital

becomes embodied (i.e., habitus) and the larger structure through which these

opportunities become available (Lizardo 2004). To understand how people gain

access to social resources, research must attend to the ways that geography conditions how these opportunities emerge (Allen and Hollingworth 2013). Doing so draws attention to the ways that geography differentially organizes people's capacities to access such opportunities. Young people's access stories into the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch serves as a quintessential example of how this happens.

This chapter shows that organizational and cultural mechanisms intersect with individual level processes to shape the ways that young people gain access to social service organizations. First, this chapter shows that friends who are "organizationally embedded" facilitate young people's entry into the Urban Youth Centre or its Rural Branch because they provide information about what happens inside the organization. Although this process occurs across these settings, the information provided by friends differs depending on the location with which young people seek service. What information is provided to youth through friends not only shapes what they know about social services but how they translate this knowledge into help-seeking behaviour. This finding suggests that information gained through social networks is *not* standardized but rather influenced by the geographical locations where youth reside.

Second, this chapter demonstrates that youth learn about the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch from other organizations that they participate in. This process draws attention to the ties between organizations that facilitate people's

access to resources. Similar to Small (2009), this process reveals how organizational

ties "introduce the possibility of acquiring resources while exercising little agency in

the process" (155). However, like embedded friends, my analysis shows that

organizational ties structure young people's access into each respective site in

geographically distinct ways. Small does not consider the geographically

contextualized aspect of "organizational ties." My analysis, conversely, shows that

for the Urban Youth Centre, organizational ties unfold in ways that *prescribe* explicit

actions for youth. It also articulates for organizational staff the reasons why youth

have arrived to the site (i.e., there is a match between services available and their

articulation of young people's needs). In the Rural Branch, however, these

organizational ties "broker" information and not access between services providers

and/or youth. Thus, in the Rural Branch organizational ties do not move youth into

service relationships nor establish institutional scripts conveying why they have

arrived. Geography is central to this process because it operates as a social force that

produces context specific organizational ties. Looking at the work constituted

through this second process, I argue that like embedded friends, organizational ties

are not standardized networks across single organizations but instead are

characteristic of the institutional settings with which they occur. Together these two

processes affect the nature and amount of social capital that young people have.

My findings in this chapter largely reinforce previous research showing that

social and organizational ties coordinate young people's knowledge of and access to

social resources. While these social processes are successful in bringing young people into both sites of this organization, how this happens across the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch is strikingly different. For example, although describing a similar relationship with the organization, Michele, Steph and Jackson initially learned about and arrived to the organization in ways that were *specific* to the location where they sought services. For Michele the knowledge she acquired through friends allowed her to access a targeted service once inside the Urban Youth Centre that matched her situation. For Steph her involvement with an external organization channelled her into programs that were also specific and responsive to her needs. But for Jackson, despite also learning about the Rural Branch through his friends, his partial knowledge about the services at the Rural Branch and his weak organizational ties actually prolonged his entry into a service relationship that could respond to his housing needs. The geographical location where these youth experienced disadvantage provides the unique context by which they acquire social ties and knowledge about social services. Geography, in this sense, is a social force that organizes social capital.

Five

Stacking The Deck: A Service (Dis)entitlement for Youth[17]

5.1: INTRODUCTION

"If they're (youth) here, they're here for a reason." - Maureen (Rural Branch)

Research suggests that local organizations are important to the lives of disadvantaged people. Some of this research shows that people's ability to "reach" these resources is tied to the context within which organizations are embedded (Allard 2009). It has generally been thought that disadvantaged areas are isolated from important resources needed for everyday life (Wilson [1987] 1996,). In this vein, organizations in disadvantaged areas are thought to be inadequate or completely absent because these areas do not have access to middle-class resources. While there has been much debate surrounding the empirical reality of this argument, generally it is accepted that the configuration of communities and neighbourhoods matters to experiences of inequality (Swaroop and Morenoff 2006).

Recent research focuses on the activities of people within communities that move them out of positions of disadvantage. Generally this research makes two important contributions. First it shows that the ways that communities are

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[17] Portions of this chapter have been published (see Braimoh, Jessica. 2015. "A Service Disparity for Rural Youth: The Organization of Social Services Across the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch." *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare* XLII(2): 31-54).

physically and symbolically organized is central to how inequality is perpetuated or alleviated. For example, Allard, Tolman, and Rosen (2003) find that people's geographical proximity to social service organizations is tied to utilization rates. Similarly, Kissane (2010) finds that access to and use of social service organizations is connected to social understandings of place, particularly people's construction of *which* bodies occupy certain geographical spaces over others. In other words, it is not so much about disadvantaged areas being inherently depleted of resources, but rather how social processes organize how these contexts respond to disadvantage.

In addition to the physical and symbolic mechanisms that shape disadvantaged contexts, recent scholarship also focuses on the ways that local organizations work collaboratively to "broker" resources for people (Small 2006: 277). This research is important because it draws attention to what occurs once people are inside organizations. For example, in a study of childcare centers, Small, Jacobs and Peeples Massengill (2008) find that organizational ties are important in helping parents access social resources beyond childcare. In short, local organizations have access to their own social capital that then facilitates people's access to other social resources (Leana and Van Buren III 1999). Research also shows that institutions beyond the purview of local organizations are important in shaping whom, how, and what social resources are brokered to people (Jossart-Marcelli and Giordano 2006; Jossart-Marcelli 2007).

Together, this literature suggests that geography (whether physical or symbolic), organizational processes, and the extended institutional environment are important to understanding the broader contexts of people's experiences of disadvantage. However, few contributions to this scholarship consider how standardized organizational processes actually facilitate the delivery of social services to people. Moreover, we know little about how organizational processes unfold when they occur across geographical settings. This oversight is problematic because when we consider the expectation of standardized organizational processes to provide uniform social resources to people. Thus, limited attention has been given to the institutional practices that take place when people access ostensibly uniform social programs that are delivered by local organizations across different types of communities. Not attending to these processes has implications for how we think about the ways that people move out of disadvantaged positions.

In this chapter I aim to fill this gap by examining how standardized organizational processes transform young people's needs into social resources across the Urban Youth Centre and the Rural Branch. The analysis starts from my conversations with employment counsellors about what happens when youth come to the organization for support around employment. Generally when young people come for this support they access *Employment Service*, a program that is funded by Employment Ontario and the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities (hereafter, the Ministry). The purpose of this program is to help people in Ontario

find and keep employment. In the Rural Branch employment counsellors say that

young people's experiences of homelessness, inadequate shelter, addictions, and

sexualities *are not captured* in their documentary practices used for the program.

Yet, in the Urban Youth Centre, employment counsellors say that their *same*

documentary practices capture these needs. This discrepancy is peculiar given that

across these work sites employment counsellors say that their use of the

Employment Service intake process functions as a guideline for how they decide

what services, resources, and opportunities young people gain access to. In other

words, while both sites exhibit isomorphic practices (i.e., the use of similar

documentary practices) (DiMaggio and Powell 1983), in practice this may not

translate into social services that effectively respond to the lives of both rural and

urban youth.

This chapter examines how organizational processes unfold to produce social

capital opportunities for youth. Specifically I investigate how the reporting of young

people's needs and the subsequent services they receive happens across the Urban

Youth Center and the Rural Branch. To do this, I start by assessing what occurs

during the intake process for *Employment Service* when youth first meet with

employment counsellors to determine their individual needs. In particular this

chapter asks: *How is the delivery of social resources structured for young people who*

use social service organizations that operate across rural and urban settings?

Despite reports that young people experience similar forms of marginalization across both locales, my analysis shows that the organizational processes of *Employment Service* occurs in such a way that further disadvantages rural youth. Specifically, what counts as a 'client' in employment counsellors' initial textual work – and by extension an organizationally visible need – is connected to the available services that can be pulled into place to respond. To put it differently, the standardized processes that identify young people's needs and determine what services they actually receive are embedded in an arrangement of social services that is tied to the larger institutional context where each site is located (Emirbayer and Johnson 2008). These geographical differences uncover processes that shape people's abilities to move out of disadvantaged social positions.

5.2: THE INTAKE PROCESS FOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

Employment Service, a program of Employment Ontario, helps people find work. In order to achieve this mission, this program is expected to provide people with information about the labour market including job research boards, local training opportunities, and community supports. In addition, employment counsellors often work one-on-one with clients to locate job leads and help them prepare for the labour market. They do this by delivering job preparation workshops including interviewing skills and writing resumes. In Ontario, *Employment Service* is delivered by 415 local organizations (Employment Ontario 2014a). Of these organizations, 117 are specific to, or focus on youth (Employment Ontario 2014b). The intake

process for this program is centered on the work of employment counsellors and is

organized by Employment Ontario and the Ministry guidelines. These guidelines also

standardize how staff determine what services will be delivered to youth. In the

Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch the intake process involves two forms.

Intake form 1

In order for employment counsellors to produce clients in *Employment

Service*, young people must be "out of school, out of work, or underemployed (less

than 20 hours/week)" (various staff). These items are referred to as "eligibility

criteria" in the regulating guidelines (Employment Ontario 2011: 17, 48) and appear

on the first form used in the intake process (see Appendix H). On this form,

employment counsellors check off boxes indicating that these eligibility criteria are

present. Unchecked boxes mean that the young person can still seek support around

employment but must do so without the one-on-one support of the employment

counsellor or other individualized services offered through the organization. In

short, employment counsellors use of this first form to screen youth for entry into

Employment Service based upon their employment and educational status. However,

decision-making around program eligibility is not so straightforward.

Employment Ontario and the Ministry define who should be *most* served

through *Employment Service*. These "strategic priorities" organize how employment

counsellors use this first form to identify young people's needs (Employment

Ontario 2011: 18). For example, staff say that "a lot of youth might be out of school and out of work" (Laura, Rural Branch), but what matters is identifying characteristics like "being under 18 years of age, having less than a high school education, being new to Canada, having Aboriginal status, and/or having a diagnosed disability" (Tessa, Urban Youth Centre). Making visible these explicit characteristics on this first form "ensures that service providers are providing services to clients who are most in need" (Employment Ontario 2011: 33). Thus, in addition to determining eligibility, this first form generates institutional accounts about particular populations that the program serves.

Importantly, employment counsellors use this first form to understand young people's lives. James (Rural Branch) tells me that this first form is "something like 11x17 and double sided. It's huge. And most of it is statistical collection with half of an 8x11 piece that allows the employment counsellor to fill in the blanks on *what they feel is necessary to include*" (emphasis added). While exemplifying the autonomy of staff, how they actually document these experiences is still loosely defined by Employment Ontario and the Ministry. For example, employment counsellors say that they listen for "subjective things like job search skills, your work skills, how good are you on the job and your communication skills" (James, Rural Branch). "Subjective things" are depicted by staff as providing "wiggle room" in how they document young people's eligibility for *Employment Service*. James explains how "subjective things" are equivalent to the "suitability indicators" listed in the program

guidelines that categorize people's lives based on "workplace performance and

interpersonal skills" (Employment Ontario 2011: 20). James' account illustrates this

point.

> There are guidelines to meet the more intensive one-on-one support where
>
> youth are on a case load and they have an employment counsellor managing
>
> their action plan and helping guide them through the steps, and then also
>
> maybe even eventually through job matching placement incentives putting
>
> them into a job. There's 16 different profile factors … so there's actually a
>
> little bit of wiggle room with a couple of those factors that you can kind of
>
> write, "well they're not really a strong communicator"; there's a profile factor.

In practical terms, how young people's experiences get translated into "indicators"

and "criteria" required for *Employment Service* are always fitted back into the

guidelines of Employment Ontario and the Ministry (i.e., "there's a profile factor").

This suggests that institutional explanations surrounding inequality are often fitted

into established organizational accounts about why people become involved with

social service organizations (McQuaid and Lindsay 2005).

Intake form 2

Once the employment counsellor fills out the first intake form, a second self-

assessment form is completed by the youth (see Appendix H). Tessa (Urban Youth

Centre) and James (Rural Branch) tell me that the first intake form is centered on the

Employment Service guidelines, while this second form, constructed by management in the organization, uses knowledge about other issues tied to unemployment. Like the first form, the second form is used in both the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch. Employment counsellors say that this form is used in conjunction with the first to determine the "other barriers that are preventing them [youth] from starting their career or getting their survival job that aren't exactly employment related but very much can be the reason they are out of work" (Carla, Urban Youth Centre). Youth read through and check off all of the items that apply to their lives. There is no space provided for youth to elaborate or provide additional items. Barriers contained on this form include statements such as, "*I feel my gender prevents me from getting some jobs*"; "*I feel employers might not hire me because of how I look*"; "*I sometimes have a hard time controlling my anger*"; "*Are you going through any personal issues at this time?*"; "*Do you have a criminal record?*"; "*Do you have any health concerns or disabilities that could prevent you from working?*" James explains why the organization uses this self-assessment form like this:

> The purpose is to help us figure out a little more about them, the youth, that might not be covered in the first intake form and to learn about how they view themselves. It also can help see which areas they feel insecure about and can give *insight on which areas to focus on*. For example, you can see from reading it that somebody might have anger issues; that usually comes

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through. You know, things like that; things that aren't usually statistically

caught (emphasis added).

In this way, this second self-assessment form is used to dig beyond the eligibility

criteria captured by the employment counsellor on the first form to help construct

interpretations about why the young person needs support.

Together these forms help orient the subsequent work that follows.

Importantly this action is tied to the knowledge that these forms produce. For

example, James (Rural Branch) explains how this second intake form helps him

determine why a young person is currently "out of work." He says,

The first form, and the way that the stat is captured might suggest job

retention issues. Well, if they haven't had a job before you might look at that

and examine a little further. Then on the second form you find out that they

admit to having trouble with anger or getting in trouble with the law. As an

employment counsellor we want to remember this. *You want to teach them*

those workplace skills; how do they keep their job before they lose it (emphasis

added).

Although the items captured on this second self-assessment form are not required

for the participation of *Employment Service*, James' account shows how the

knowledge it produces organizes his later work. Finding out and documenting why

the young person has "job retention" issues helps James organize what he does to

help (i.e., "teach them workplace skills"). This documentary activity does not influence what type of knowledge is collected for funders. For example, while the documentary activity on the second intake form helps to organize what services will be provided to youth through the Rural Branch or Urban Youth Center, it does not alter the information that is collected for funders; What is recorded in EOIS-CaMS (Employment Ontario Information System Case Management System) is that the youth has job retention issues rather than trouble with anger. Thus, while the documentation of young people's needs on this second form organizes what happens next, how these needs are made accountable to Employment Ontario and the Ministry are made to fit into a particular institutional order (de Montigny 1995).

Service Plans

Employment counsellors move from the intake forms to the actual delivery of services through the service plan. The service plan is an outline of the activities that the young person will do to achieve their employment and training goals. Employment counsellors document these goals at the bottom of the first intake form and the youth and staff sign the consent and participation agreement portion that outlines what will happen next in order to meet these goals. In this way, the service plan operates as an institutional response that intervenes in people's experiences of unemployment in order to help them find and keep work. Tessa makes this point when she describes how she starts the intake process with youth.

I tell them, "Hey we're going to have a really great discussion and that will help us determine what your goals are and where I can help you." When you memorize the first form that's what it becomes; it doesn't become like we're filling out a form it becomes, "*hey we just need to get this captured on paper so I know going forward what our plan is*" (emphasis added).

Employment Ontario (2011) defines these service plans as necessary for "achieving successful outcomes" (48). Often these plans include employment and training workshops and one-on-one appointments with staff that focus on finding jobs for youth. However, Employment Ontario and the Ministry also note that through the intake process, people may be referred to *other* services "either before or concurrently with Employment Service" (Employment Ontario 2011: 49). Across both the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch, these plans allow staff to address the multiple sources of disadvantage in young people's lives. This suggests that the delivery of *Employment Service* is expected to purposely broker people to other social services[18] that they may need (Small 2009). Tessa, an employment counsellor in the Urban Youth Centre explains how this works:

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[18] In this chapter I write about the field of "social services" as opposed to the field of "youth services." While both are institutionally differentiated, I use the concept of "social services" for two reasons. First the services delivered through the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch engage with social services generally (e.g., Employment Service), and youth services more specifically (e.g., Endeavor and SEB). In this way, differentiating the field of social services from youth services does not reflect actual practice. Second, the field of social services conceptually captures a wider array of services than does the field of youth services. Accordingly, I have used this broader category in an attempt to capture any service that is used to support disadvantaged youth.

Every time you see them it could change. So, yeah, 'cuz it is like I said, they can be all over the place. When they first come in I do a lot of ranking systems with them, like on a scale of 1-10 where would you say you are in terms of needing a job, or needing to finish your high school. At that initial snap shot I can get a sense of, "OK where's this person's at? Is their main priority today just maintaining their Ontario Works cheque and they're coming to us because OW said 'go to the Centre or you're cut off!'" And so, it just helps me to better know like do I have to book a resume workshop and start talking about job strategies tomorrow, or do we have time that we can really work on their other stuff? That's how I determine. But every time I see them it's gonna be different, 'cuz the next time they come in it could be like, "Ok I got kicked out. I need a job yesterday!" So then I work with what I see. So they could be doing very well and so you bring them into Employment Service and next thing you know they're homeless and all this life is happening. I think they see the Centre as a place where they can come for all kinds of different things and not just, "I go to see Tessa 'cuz she's going to help me find a job." I think its like, "I go to see Tessa 'cuz she can help me find resources for everything." So yeah, I'm still going to take them in as a client but we're gonna have to figure out a plan to get stats.

Tessa's account[19] suggests that in practice *Employment Service* does involve the brokering of other social services. Importantly, the account also shows how pre-determined institutional outcomes (i.e., "stats") serve as a constant backdrop to how this practice unfolds. In other words, outcomes produced by Employment Ontario and the Ministry shape how young people's needs are responded to, and how the provision of these services is actually measured.

Employment Service Outcomes and 'Good Stats'

Generating service plans in the intake process is connected to the service outcomes employment counsellors' work is expected to achieve. Here is what Carla (Urban Youth Centre) tells me:

> Part of the model that we're working under needs someone unattached to the labour force and unattached to school in a full time way in order for them to qualify for Employment Service. So those indicators have to be present. [...] Also I try to look for other barriers; that's what our programs are designed to help - those who are highly barriered. [...] *But we do want someone to be successful in the program so that's another kind of something that you have to listen for – is the client too highly barriered they aren't going to be successful in the program?* (emphasis added).

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[19] Tessa's account also draws attention to the social capital resources of youth themselves that are implicated in this brokerage process ("I go to Tessa 'cuz…"). This finding is discussed in chapter four, and again in chapter seven. Here I note that the urban and rural character of young people's social ties is embedded in the brokering of *Employment Service* with other social service resources.

Carla's account makes visible the intricate relationship between documenting "indicators", providing service to "highly barriered" youth, and achieving "success." Notably, it is not just the complex lives of young people that make it difficult for employment counsellors to put together a service plan but also the expectations surrounding what *Employment Service* should actually accomplish. Rural staff also speak about this complex relationship. For example Sam, a program facilitator involved with clients in *Employment Service*, tells me that, "We are having problems with people in the program having a certain level of hygiene when working with food. So that makes it really tough; *but then you need those people for the stats to keep the funding so then you're in a catch 22. What do you do?*" (emphasis added). In situations like this, reporting program outcomes takes precedence over providing service to more vulnerable populations.

These accounts reveal that it may be harder to provide services to those youth with more than employment needs because despite representing a "strategic priority" on paper (Employment Ontario 2011: 18), in practice these types of clients are harder to transform into successful outcomes as defined by *Employment Service*. As James put it, "there is sort of a balancing act that has to take place" between (1) identifying youth needs on paper that correspond to eligibility criteria, (2) working with marginal youth, and (3) transforming the work that is done with these youth into "good stats." Potentially lost in this process are "highly barriered" youth whose

multiple needs make it more challenging to respond in ways that signal

institutionally defined "good stats."

Despite these constraints, the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch are

required – as outlined in their funding contract – to have 69[20] percent of clients

leave *Employment Service* as employed in either full time work or in something

better than when they first arrived. In addition to this, 10 percent of clients must

"exit" the program as having returned to school or having entered some form of

employment training (Carla, Urban Youth Centre; Employment Ontario 2011; Leni,

program manager across both organizational sites). Consultants from the Ministry

regularly come into the organization throughout the fiscal year to assess the work

being done by the Urban Youth Centre and the Rural Branch in meeting these targets

(Tessa, Urban Youth Centre).

Together, the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch have continued to

receive ongoing funding to deliver this program (Organizational Annual Reports

2009-2010; 2011-12; 2012-13). Although this might suggest that the organization

has been successful at meeting program outcomes, Tessa (Urban Youth Centre) tells

me that the reporting of this work is not as clear-cut as it seems. She says, "Youth

can be in school. But really that doesn't ... being in school doesn't really... it counts. It

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[20] Most staff that I spoke to rounded this number up to 70 percent. Having said that, all Employment Service documents produced by the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities/Employment Ontario state that this deliverable (e.g., employment) should be produced at 69 percent.

sounds really weird, but the best thing ever is to have them have a job." When I ask

her to elaborate about what this means in terms of reporting outcomes she says,

> The stats are scary. With Employment Service it's like, if you hear they're
>
> employed you exit them right now. Even if they have to come back next week,
>
> you bring them back in. To me it's frustrating because I've closed so many
>
> people as being employed even though I know this is not sustainable
>
> employment; this isn't going to last. But I have to have the stat so I'm gonna
>
> close them knowing that they're going to come back a week later and we're
>
> gonna have to go through this paperwork again. And they're gonna wonder, "I
>
> already did this, why am I doing it again?" And you don't want them knowing
>
> that they're a stat within this big thing because it doesn't make them feel very
>
> special.

 What counts as a reportable stat also comes into play in the ways that employment

counsellors interpret education outcomes. Tessa says that,

> Education gets tricky 'cuz when you're working with youth so many of them
>
> go back to school and unfortunately you can't have that high of an education
>
> stat 'cuz you're working towards having 70% employed. And 70% employed
>
> it's like, you know, you get some wiggle room for education. So you want to
>
> celebrate the success of education but in the same sense you're like, "OK, do

you want a part-time job?" And they don't. They're like, "No, I'm in school, I'm

happy." And it's like, "I'm not happy."

These findings suggest that program outcomes not only organize what is expected to

happen for/to youth, but also how service providers think through their own work

(Rao and Kenney 2008).

The Production of "Good Stats" as a Capital Catalyst

Young people come into the organization for many reasons beyond

employment support including poverty, homelessness and insecure housing,

addictions, issues surrounding sexual health and sexuality, and mental health. In the

Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch, *Employment Service* clients often receive

support for these multiple needs while in the program. Determining these other

needs is expected to occur during the intake process for *Employment Service* where

services providers then facilitate clients' access to additional social services (Burt

2004; Employment Ontario 2011). Finding out about these other needs can also

happen after youth have been involved with the program. The point is that access to

social services has a ripple effect. Notably, connecting *Employment Service* clients to

other services is important for documenting "performance management indicators"

to funders on the ways that *Employment Service* outcomes are produced

(Employment Ontario 2011: 69). What this means is that there are external

motivations for brokering young people to other social services (Small 2009).

Connecting *Employment Service* clients with other social services in effect fills

a structural hole between service providers and youth (Burt 2004). I find that this

activity happens in two ways across the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch.

First, in the intake process and/or during regular 'check-ins' with clients,

employment counsellors give information to youth about "referrals" (James, Rural

Branch; Carla, Urban Youth Centre) and "resources for everything" (Tessa, Urban

Youth Centre). This process works the same across both settings in that staff direct

youth to the available services within each respective community. In these instances,

youth are expected to take this information and acquire these services

independently. Through my participant observations I find that in practice this

occurs with food and basic needs programming.

Second, information contained on the *Employment Service* intake forms is

shared (physically and virtually) with other staff from the Urban Youth Centre and

its Rural Branch as well as other service providers external to these sites. In this

way, what gets written down on *Employment Service* intake forms gets "reactivated"

(de Montigny 1995: 115) such that multiple service providers both *inside and*

beyond these sites simultaneously work on young people's multifaceted needs. For

example, James (Rural Branch) tells me that information contained on the intake

forms is shared between employment counsellors, youth, and other staff in such a

way that creates "client centered support" and "good stats" for *Employment Service*

(field notes; February 24, 2012 and April 4, 2012). The important point here is that

this brokerage activity provides more resources to youth *and* functions as a strategy for achieving *Employment Service* outcomes. Carry, a manager of a training program delivered *in* the Urban Youth Centre, but *outside* of *Employment Service* explains how she gains information about the needs of youth involved like this:

> The blended service comes from the intake with an employment counsellor. That's where it's identified that we have this program. And then I connect with the employment counsellor. Usually the employment counsellor sends me the first form and comes to me and says, "I've got this really great client. I think they're ready. This is what they have. These are the barriers, etc." I can see this on the form, too. I set up an interview with the youth. We interview. And based on how the interview goes, bring them through our program for the next available spot. So the youth is both in *Employment Service* and in our program.

Carry's account reveals that the intake process for *Employment Service* activates the work of other service providers.

Connecting youth to services and programs beyond *Employment Service* does not stop at the actual activity of brokerage. For example, in addition to sharing information contained on physical intake forms, employment counsellors and other organizational staff use "webtracker", an online organizational reporting system, to

monitor any services including, and beyond, *Employment Service* that clients use.

Tessa (Urban Youth Centre) explains why this happens like this:

> It's to track their every movement; "Oh they did a workshop; make sure you
> make a note about that. Oh they did that, make note of it." And so you have to
> really document in your notes almost the wording that *Employment Service*
> wants to see. 'Cuz they're like, "Oh we want to know exactly what did they
> do." And so sometimes you'll meet with clients and you're thinking to
> yourself, "Oh, you went into one of our other workshops? I should probably
> talk about this 'cuz then I could link it to getting a stat."

Once more, the work involved in connecting youth to multiple service opportunities

is crucial for achieving "good stats" in *Employment Service*. This brokerage activity

not only benefits the youth but also the organization. Tessa tells me that when she

works with trans youth, the issues of gender and sexuality come up and have to be

addressed by multiple service providers. In these situations, Tessa tells me that

connecting the youth to other service providers is important to producing

Employment Service outcomes. She says:

> You have to keep telling the Ministry these clients' stories so that they're
> hearing that, "yeah it might have taken me 9 months to get an employed stat
> but here's all the stuff that *we've* had to do to get to that point. And so you

need to know that it's not just me dropping this client. *It's all of us doing all of these little things" (emphasis added).*

Although there are multiple service providers involved in young people's participation in *Employment Service*, Tessa's documentation of an "employed stat" is fitted back into the institutional reporting framework for this program. Ironically, while the reporting of these stats anticipates and involves multiple service providers, what gets documented only counts towards *Employment Service* outcomes.

I refer to the benefits that result from the brokering of *Employment Service* clients with other social service opportunities as a *"capital catalyst."* Importantly this notion draws attention to the dialogical benefits of this activity. On the one hand, the capital catalyst refers to the use of multiple social services and programs that are used to move clients through *Employment Service*. In this way, this brokerage activity provides additional social capital opportunities for youth beyond their participation in the program. On the other hand, this brokerage activity pulls other social services into place to meet the institutional outcomes of *Employment Service*. In other words, this activity also benefits the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch in producing "good stats" that are then reported to Employment Ontario and the Ministry.

5.3: THE GEOGRAPHICAL CHARACTER OF THE CAPITAL CATALYST

The *Employment Service* intake process requires that employment counsellors fit young people's lives into categories focused on employment and training. Nevertheless, young people's lives consist of more than just these difficulties. Because the production of *Employment Service* outcomes by employment counsellors is often improved when clients are referred to services beyond the program, the availability of resources located within the Urban Youth Center and the Rural Branch and within each respective community is an important feature in the production of "good stats."

This section shows that despite standardized brokerage practices involved in the delivery of *Employment Service*, the field of social services is unequally distributed across rural and urban contexts. In other words, the geographical arrangement of social services mediates the brokerage processes essential to responding to young people's lives and achieving outcomes in *Employment Service*. These findings have implications for how we think about organizational effectiveness through standardized processes as well as the institutional response to young people's lives (Claéye and Jackson 2012; DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Meyer and Rowan 1977).

Rural Branch: "Other" service opportunities linked to Employment Service

In the Rural Branch *Employment Service* clients often partake in the Self-Employment Business Program (SEB) that is delivered on site. This program is not offered in the Urban Youth Centre. The SEB program runs for 12 consecutive weeks and involves training workshops including Workplace, Hazardous Material and Information System (WHMIS) and First Aid and information sessions aimed at teaching young people about how to start their own businesses. To be entered into this program young people first meet with the employment counsellor where they are produced as clients in *Employment Service* as I have described above. The information gained by employment counsellors through the intake process is shared with the program facilitators in the SEB program. In addition to the SEB program, the Rural Branch has a resource centre that lists available housing, and employment opportunities, an afternoon snack program and recreational programming. Youth learn about all of these other services from their employment counsellors. In the Rural Branch, staff document in the *Employment Service* reporting system when clients enrol in the SEB program. This happens because this program requires that clients be screened to ensure eligibility before they use the program. However, when clients use other services inside the Rural Branch that are more "self-serve" (i.e., snack, and the resource room), staff tell me that it is "tough" to keep track and document these activities (James and Sam).

Beyond the other organizational services available in the Rural Branch, often the delivery of *Employment Service* links clients to *external* service providers whose

services are provided *within* the Rural Branch. Leni, the program manager for

Employment Service across both sites, tells me that this is called an "in-kind

contribution" that is a "partnership between service providers without money being

exchanged." For example, *Employment Service* clients are often referred to Ontario

Works and community counselling services that provide support to youth within the

Rural Branch. When clients use services beyond *Employment Service*, employment

counsellors and other staff in the Rural Branch document these activities using the

online reporting system (i.e., EOIS-CaMS and webtracker). Despite the importance of

these external services to this institutional process, clients' access to these resources

is sporadic – that is, young people are put on waitlists and are at the mercy of

external workers schedules (Leni, Program Manager). In other words, many of the

external service organizations connected to the Rural Branch offer services

intermittently.

Interestingly, in the Rural Branch youth needs surrounding homelessness,

addictions, and sexuality are less likely to make it onto employment counsellors'

documentary practices. Staff in the Rural Branch explain that this happens because

when employment counsellors decide to bring a youth into *Employment Service* their

work focuses exclusively on producing "good stats" (employment, education or

training). This work, Laura tells me, "counts." But if the young person is also dealing

with homelessness or issues around sexuality, staff say that their response is to "do

nothing" (Laura, Rural Branch) because "there are no places to go. There's nothing"

(Maureen, Rural Branch). These comments suggest that there is a limited service framework available in this setting to address the multiple needs of rural youth (Allard 2009).

Importantly, this limited service framework does not mean that support is not in some way provided to rural youth or that staff are unable to meet the expectations required for *Employment Service*; rather, missing in the current social service system is a scope of concrete services *intended* to meet the diverse needs of rural youth. For example, Sam tells me that when staff in the Rural Branch learned of a homeless male youth connected to *Employment Service* who did not having appropriate outdoor gear, they had to improvise. Because there were no formal services available (inside or outside of the Rural Branch), the staff responded to this need by using an existing drop-in program to make a blanket using the sewing machines and scrap pieces of recreational supplies. Ironically, this activity was never tied to this homeless youth in their reporting activities for *Employment Service* but instead was documented as a recreational activity that involved three other youth. In other words, providing a blanket was not counted towards the production of a "good stat" in *Employment Service*.

Rural Branch staff did not document the young person's experience of homelessness through the reporting system for *Employment Service* because it would appear like an unmet need. Recall on page 118, Tessa (Urban Youth Centre) says that it is important to tell the Ministry about all of the "little things" that are

done with the client. However, I suggest that documenting the work that is done to

show how "good stats" are produced reveals a structure of services that is severely

limited in the rural setting. This is why the staff improvised. Because there are no

formal services available, homelessness is not made visible to funders and does not

become part of the story of producing "good stats." Irrespective of the fact that

Employment Service is a standardized provincial program being delivered by the

same formal organization, geography mediates how it actually unfolds for youth. So,

returning to the example, there are no formal services available in the rural setting

that can respond to homelessness. More specifically, there is no internal

programming at the Rural Branch that deals with homelessness. Moreover, the only

shelter available in town is for women and children leaving abusive situations.

Instead of the documentary processes detailing the institutional constraints in

brokering other services to produce "good stats" in *Employment Service*, the complex

lives of rural youth who use this program disappears.

Urban Youth Centre: "Other" service opportunities linked to Employment Service

Unlike in the Rural Branch, employment counsellors in the Urban Youth

Centre say that when they learn that young people are dealing with homelessness,

addictions, poverty, mental health, and sexualities they "write down everything"

(field note: April 2, 2012), and "include it all on the first or second form" of the

intake process (field note: April 3, 2012). They tell me that this information becomes

important for generating service plans and producing "good stats." Emma, a

program facilitator in the Urban Youth Centre explains:

> Often these other services focus on the basic needs. The way it ties into our
> *Employment Service* is that we know that it is really hard to look for a career
> or a job or get into school and be successful in that if you don't have your
> basic needs met first; it's just human nature to make sure that you have those
> needs met first.

Employment Service clients in the Urban Youth Centre have access to a

broader array of services delivered by onsite staff than in the Rural Branch. Services

in the Urban Youth Center include: industry specific employment training programs,

recreational programming, a resource centre, a monthly food bank, daily meal

programs, needle-exchange and safe needle drop bins, laundry services and hygiene

supplies, and transitional housing programs. Compared to the Rural Branch, in the

Urban Youth Centre there is a wider array of resources and services available that

can be pulled into place to produce "good stats" for *Employment Service*. This also

matters for responding to the lives of marginal youth. Table 5.1 provides a list of the

services that *Employment Service* clients are connected to through the Urban Youth

Center and the Rural Branch.

Table 5.1: Resources Available through the Capital Catalyst

	Urban Youth Centre	**Rural Branch**
Services delivered by internal staff	- Meal programs (3x a day) - Industry specific employment training programs - ("Endeavour") - Recreation - Resource centre - Monthly food bank (including baby food) - Needle-exchange program and safe needle drop bins - Laundry services and hygiene supplies - Transitional housing and affordable housing programming	- Snack (1x day) - SEB Program - Recreation - Resource centre
Services delivered by external service providers	*Ontario Works* *School Board* – Alternative Education, GED testing *RHIV AIDS* – Harm Reduction and HIV education *Community Health Agency* – Counselling, anonymous HIV testing *Other community organizations* – recreational activities, housing support, addiction support	*Ontario Works* *School Board* - Alternative Education[21] *Family Community Agency* – Personal counselling, abuse *Other community organizations* – recreational activities

Compared to the services offered by external organizations in the Rural

Branch, *Employment Service* clients in the Urban Youth Centre have access to in-kind

partnerships that are more routinized and stable (Annual Report 2012-13). These

external service opportunities are an essential part of the regular on-going

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[21] While staff report an organizational tie between the Rural Branch and the local school board, I did not speak with any clients that were connected to these services (i.e., alternative education programs). This observation can be explained by the fact that I only interviewed *Employment Service* clients from the Rural Branch who had completed their high school degrees.

programming offered within the Urban Youth Centre. Services provided by external service providers include weekly anonymous HIV testing and other health services (e.g., distribution of condoms), counselling, parenting groups, access to an Ontario Works Trustee, and alternative education programming including GED testing. Like the Rural Branch, all of these external resource opportunities are located *inside* the Urban Youth Centre. What differs, however, is the number and range of services available to young people. This difference is attributed to the fact that many of the external service organizations do not operate in this rural community. Thus, there is an unequal institutional arrangement of social services available to youth who access the same standardized program across geographical contexts.

Like in the Rural Branch, young people's access into these other resource opportunities in the Urban Youth Centre is embedded in the *Employment Service* intake process. Josie (Urban Youth Centre) provides an example of how sharing information contained on intake forms with other staff initiates young people's access into non-employment services opportunities. She says,

> We help them with food. Whatever we have here on site they're welcome to take home. We also help them with our local food banks. We have to teach them where you can get food, where all the food banks are, how often you can go, baby food banks – if they don't know, we give them booklets on where everything is. And unfortunately, as a community all of our social service hours run until 4 o'clock. So, we schedule work time around getting to the

food bank to make sure they have food at home. *This is important so they're*
successful at work. 'Cuz the goal of the end of the program is to either have
them with a goal to go to school and/or be employed. That's our goal. But,
they're not employable if they don't have food (emphasis added).

Josie illustrates how the work of connecting youth to multiple service opportunities
both inside and beyond the Urban Youth Centre is important for accomplishing the
outcomes required for *Employment Service*. However, in practice how this is
achieved *across* these organizational sites institutionally differentiates the response
to young people's needs.

5.4: TIME IN SERVICE AND THE GEOGRAPHICAL ORGANIZATION OF SOCIAL SERVICES

This chapter shows that field processes beyond the local level shape how
standardized institutional processes take place. Importantly, the arrangement of the
field of social services is differentially ordered across rural and urban contexts in
ways that produce differences in organizationally documenting and responding to
young people's needs. In this section I shift attention to the implications of this
service disparity while youth are actually *in service*. More specifically, I argue there
is a relationship between the unequal positioning of the Urban Youth Centre and its
Rural Branch within the field of social services and the time young people spend
involved with its services.

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When young people access the organization in either a drop in manner or through more formal programs they are counted as clients. In more formal programs, youth are considered to be "closed" or "exited" when they age out of service (i.e., are no longer defined as 'of age' for the service}, become housed, employed or return to school, and/or when they move out of the community. On average youth using the Urban Youth Centre report accessing service for *2.60 years* compared to *5.68 months* for youth using the Rural Branch (see Appendix I). Youth tell me that their time in service is not a linear or constant occurrence; that is, youth are not accessing the organization every single day or to the same extent each time they enter the front door. Instead, youth access the organization's programs and services intensely at some times and fleetingly in others. They also become connected to numerous workers over time. At the outset this discrepancy in the duration of service utilization across the organizational sites may suggest that urban youth are "more" in need and/or are more "dependent" on social services. I argue, however, that this is not the case. Instead these differences are institutionally produced and are the result of a set of services that is structured to keep urban youth connected at higher rates than rural youth (see table 4.1 and 5.1).

The type of services that youth are entered into in the Urban Youth Centre or its Rural Branch provides evidence for this argument. For example, when a young person becomes a client in *Employment Service* the clock immediately starts ticking

to get them out. When I asked James (Rural Branch) about how long youth stay on

his caseload for *Employment Service* he says:

> They shouldn't be... I think on average you're looking at 3 to 6 months,
>
> sometimes shorter, sometimes longer. I think once you reach that one year
>
> mark you have to come back and kinda say, "What are your goals
>
> realistically?" At that point I think you have to think about exiting them just
>
> as it wasn't successful. Because after a year, unless there's a really good
>
> reason, that's an awfully long time without work, especially if you don't have
>
> a specific profession.

Yet, accessing support around basic needs does not seem to operate under these

same time constraints. Emma, a program facilitator in the Urban Youth Centre

explains:

> Youth can access up until their 24th birthday[22]. So if they started coming here
>
> for basic need services when they were 16 they could access it until they are
>
> 24. With the work that we do we hope that that's not the case, right? If we're
>
> doing our jobs well then that's not gonna be the case. Because we don't want
>
> people to become reliant on the service when then all of the sudden when
>
> they turn 24 they find themselves saying, "Now what am I gonna do?"
>
> Hopefully by that time we've worked well with them and given them other

---

[22] During the course of my fieldwork this changed. Now youth can continue to access service across
the organizational sites until they turn 25.

resources but also helped them be self-sufficient. So helping them gain skills,

life skills, employment, housing, stable housing, all of that. You know? It

definitely happens, but that's the thinking behind it; that that won't happen.

These accounts draw attention to another important feature embedded in the

arrangement of social services. In the Urban Youth Centre services delivered by

internal and external providers beyond *Employment Service* are a durable feature of

service delivery. In the Rural Branch, conversely, these services either do not exist

or are delivered irregularly.

Theoretically then, youth across the organization can be similarly

institutionally tracked and connected to social support because of their time-

sensitive involvement with *Employment Service*. However after this point (~3-6

months), urban youth are more likely to remain organizationally involved and

institutionally documented because of the more permanent delivery of other

services available to them through the Urban Youth Centre. Because of the

institutional arrangement of the field of social services, receipt of social services in

this rural context is a time sensitive experience. In other words, it is not just the

number of services available in an organization and/or community that matter to

moving people out of disadvantaged positions but also the institutionally defined

parameters by which social services are expected to alleviate inequality. For rural

youth, the deck of possible social services is stacked against them.

5.5: CONCLUSION

Employment counsellors' decisions to produce clients in *Employment Service* involve

a process that is organized by the expectation to generate explicit outcomes defined

by Employment Ontario and "the Ministry." Staff refer to these outcomes as "good

stats." This chapter reveals that on paper the standardized intake process looks the

same across both sites in that it identifies pre-determined eligibility requirements

for the program and devises plans to achieve particular outcomes. However, how

this institutional process transforms clients into these service outcomes produces

inequalities between those located in rural and urban settings.

While *Employment Service* is focused on addressing employment needs,

young people come into the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch also dealing

with poverty, homelessness and insecure housing, addictions, issues surrounding

sexual health and sexuality, mental health, and limited education. Across both sites,

clients produced through the intake process for *Employment Service* have access to

other services (i.e., advice, counsellors, food, employment placements, housing).

Often accessing these other services involves organizational ties with other service

providers (Small 2009). Current scholarship might interpret these findings as

evidence of "the character of social relations within the organization", or

organizational social capital (Leana and Van Burn III 1999: 54). However this

thinking precludes any analysis of the ways that organizational capital – as a

property of the organization itself – is organized across sites. This matters to

thinking about how social service organizations provide resources to people

because it draws attention to the ways that the institutional arrangement of

resources is implicated in the outcomes that it achieves. I refer to impact of

organizational social capital on young people as a *"capital catalyst"* because these

organizational resources provide increased support to youth and are used as a

strategy for achieving "good stats" for the institution; in other words, addressing

needs beyond those defined by *Employment Service* is, in practice, important to the

well-being of youth and to achieving institutional outcomes (i.e., 70% employed,

10% return to school).

On the outside it appears that the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch

are uniform in the delivery of this standardized program. That is, on paper it looks

like the organization, as a whole, is able to align its practices with the institutional

expectations of *Employment Service.* However, in practice these organizational sites

do not produce the same service for youth because of the geographical organization

of the field. That is, what services actually become available to clients through each

site is different for youth located in rural and urban settings. These differences

produce a service disparity for rural youth that can be explained by the unequal

positioning of the Rural Branch within the field of social services (Emirbayer and

Johnson 2008).

The *Employment Service* intake process works to transform youth needs into

"good stats" in a way that assumes an organizational context that is set up to

respond to the diverse needs of youth. In the Urban Youth Centre staff document

and transform most youth needs into 'good stats' because there are services

available at their "reach" that are expected to do this work (Allard 2009). In practice,

a 'good stat' represents an institutional fit between youth needs and their

geographical location. By contrast, in the Rural Branch this standardized

documentary practice does not translate young people's experiences of

homelessness, addictions and sexualities into the same form of action. This happens

because in the Rural Branch and rural community there are no other established

services that render these experiences into 'good stats' for *Employment Service.*

Thus, the network of organizations that each site is embedded in is important to

whether it can meet institutional expectations of standardization (DiMaggio and

Powell 1983; Meyer and Rowan 1977).

Findings discussed in this chapter uncover geographical differences in the

service opportunities that emerge for youth once they begin a service relationship

with the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch. In particular, the service disparity

that emerges is problematic for supporting the lives of disadvantaged rural youth.

The limited service framework is also institutionally problematic because it does *not*

get captured in the documentary practices that transform rural youth needs into

service outcomes required by the funders (Pence 2001). In other words, everything

on paper points to isomorphic practice, but behind this paper trail we see how the

arrangement of the field of social services exacerbates inequalities faced by rural youth.

     Employment Service is a provincially standardized program that is expected to help Ontarians find and keep work. This chapter shows that not all service providers can actually meet such standardized expectations because of the unequal distribution and availability of resources available to them. Importantly, the geographical context through which standardized processes gets taken up is important to *how* institutional relations circumvent the experiences of disadvantaged people. That the standardized processes within *Employment Service* obscure the identification of and response to the diverse needs of rural youth is evidence of how inequality is sustained and reproduced (Acker 2006).

Six

Unequally Acknowledged: Structuring the Field

6.1: CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Institutional environments are produced through the establishment of cultural or

'rationalized' systems (Scott 1991). Central to 'rationalized' systems are shared

meanings that "can serve to communicate information about the organization to

both internal and external audiences" (Tolbert and Zucker 1996: 177). This thinking

about institutional environments is important because of its attention to the

cultural, symbolic and material factors that shape the activity of organizations

(Greenwood et al. 2008). Similar to other approaches (Giddens 1990; Swidler 1986),

this notion of institutional environments suggests that rationalized systems

structure boundaries around that which organizational actors can select, and are

compelled, to act (DiMaggio and Powell 1991; Scott 1991). While some research

shows that organizational actors are active in the ways that they interact with these

environments (Binder 2007), generally, it is thought that institutionalized

environments produce the conditions for isomorphic organizational behaviour

(Meyer and Rowan 1977); that is, organizations contained within fields and

institutional environments are thought to adopt the behaviour of one other.

Shared social meanings are important to the ways that institutional

environments get constructed. For example, meanings about social disadvantage

become institutionalized in such a way that structure how social welfare systems

define who is eligible for professional practice (Hansfield 2000; Hays 2003; Heath

2012; Mohr and Duquenee 1997). What this means is that organizational actors use

these institutional elements in their work (Rankin and Campbell 2009). In other

words, institutionalized meanings serve as a sort of governing logic that "provide[s]

for the standardized recognizability of people's doings as organizational or

institutional as well as for their co-ordination across multiple local settings and

times" (Smith 2001: 160). Once institutionalized, shared social meanings function as

"pivots" between institutions and the activities of people within organizational

settings (Barley and Tolbert 1997: 99).

Current research *does not* investigate how institutional logics shape the

context where institutionalized activities unfold. The issue, more specifically, is that

we know little about how logics get used *across* fields and institutional

environments. Filling this gap is important if we are to understand how institutional

environments organize what action is possible and/or likely at the local level. For

example, McPherson and Sudder (2013) argue that within the "drug court",

organizational actors (i.e., probation officers, public defender, clinicians, and state

attorneys) draw on diverging logics, or social meanings, to define the case/client

being heard before the court. These findings have been taken as evidence that

organizational fields are confronted with multiple and conflicting logics both at a micro and macro level. The interplay between these logics is thought to produce variation in organizational activity while also shaping how fields are constructed, maintained and changed (Thornton and Ocasio 1999).

But this interpretation suggests that these organizational actors are *equal* in their position within the field. For example, McPherson and Sudder's (2013) analysis does not consider the ways in which these logics are indicative of power relations (Smith 1987) which, inherently tied to the construction of institutional logics, mediate the structuration of organizational fields and the institutional environment (Bourdieu 1993). What is required is a more nuanced understanding of how the institutional environment shapes which logics are available (or not) to differently positioned organizations, and relatedly how this arrangement is implicated in practice. In this chapter I contend that geography is an important social force that conditions how institutional logics shape what organizations can (or cannot) do to respond to social disadvantage.

Despite operating as a single formal organization, *Floodgates and Side Doors* (chapter four) and *Stacking the Deck* (chapter five) provide evidence of non-isomorphic organizational behaviour across the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch. For institutionalists, this may suggest that these work sites operate in *diverse* organizational fields differentiated by geography. However, this interpretation evades the fact that together the sites operate as a single formal

organization and share a similar understanding of the logic of 'youth-at-risk.'
Together these factors suggest that the Urban Youth Centre and the Rural Branch
are part of the same field (DiMaggio and Powell 1991).

By and large, external organizations, local newspapers, and front-line staff
say that the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch are tied to the concept of
"youth-at-risk." Staff describe this concept with words such as "blocked potentials",
"right directions", "instability", "unemployment", "barriers", "homelessness",
"poverty", and "addictions." These accounts are characterized by a *similarity*[23] in the
needs of young people who are involved in the organization's services. That is, staff
say that young people who access the Rural Branch and the Urban Youth Centre
share "risk" experiences. This understanding is especially salient among staff that
work, or have worked, *across* both organizational settings. For example, Laura an
employment counsellor who has worked for over 10 years with the organization –
the last few of which have been with the Rural Branch – explains that both sites
work with young people who could be "at risk of anything." When asked about the
specific experiences across geographies that make young people "at risk", Laura
states that *both* settings work with young people who are dealing with housing
issues, addictions, and mental health. Her job across these settings, she explains,
focuses on these experiences.

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[23] While the issues and barriers faced by disadvantaged people are unique, research shows that forms
of marginalization do indeed share similar aspects. For example, Waegemakers Schiff and Turner
(2014) find that mental health, addictions, and domestic violence are often prominent aspects in the
lives of people who experience homelessness in both rural and urban regions of Canada.

Governing institutions[24] within the field of social services currently note that

the following "facts" and groups of youth as more likely to be at risk: youth on social

assistance or who are living in poverty, Aboriginal youth, youth with a disability,

youth with poor educational attainment and employability, youth involved in the

criminal justice system or in state care, racialized youth, LGBT2QQ youth, youth

living in a single family home, and street and homeless youth. Thus, the same

ideological frame used by staff to understand their work and the youth who use the

organization is shared institutionally. However, in practice staff tell me that the

work activities structured by this construct *do not* produce uniformity but instead

demarcate the lives of disadvantaged youth between rural and urban settings. Thus,

despite unvarying understandings of 'youth-at-risk', this shared meaning *does not*

translate into isomorphic organizational practice. Chapter four and chapter five

provide evidence for this claim. Specifically I show that the social service

organizations are embedded in geographical contexts that differentially influence

what social capital opportunities become available to marginalized youth. That

geography mediates the relationship between youth and social service organizations

has ramifications for how rural youth, in particular, move out of positions of

disadvantage.

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[24] Key governing institutions include those who regulate the work of the organization and/or who provide funding central to the provision of social services. Governing institutions include: The Government of Canada, The Ministry of Child and Youth Services, Employment Ontario, and the Ministry of Education, Eve's Initiative, Raising the Roof and the United Way.

Chapter six extends these findings by investigating the arrangement of the institutional contexts where the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch are located. Guiding this chapter is the following question: *How does the institutionalized logic of 'youth-at-risk' structure the field of social services across rural and urban settings?* Below I examine how geography mediates the structured institutional dimensions that shape the positions of the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch. In doing so I show how these positions shape the subsequent social capital opportunities that become available for marginalized youth. The analysis continues in three parts. The first part of the chapter demonstrates that although the logic of 'youth-at-risk' appears standardized, the application of this knowledge happens in uneven ways across geographical settings. In the second part of the chapter I present evidence that shows that funding relations produce responses to 'youth-at-risk' in ways that construct and reconstruct geographical disparities between the lives of marginalized rural and urban youth. These two sections show that cultural processes organize geographically distinct interpretations and responses to social disadvantage. Finally, I examine the consequences of people's interpretations of geography for service provision. Here the focus is on understandings of geography that are separate from institutional features. In this section I assess how – while existing beyond these institutional features – cultural interpretations of geography maintain boundaries between the lives of rural and urban youth. For marginalized rural youth, this evidence suggests that cultural processes play an important role in explaining their restricted access to social capital opportunities.

6.2: THE LOGIC OF RISK

Social meanings come from and are produced through multiple sources, including

the media, higher education, professionalism and the state (Abbott 1988; de

Montigny 1995; Griffith 1992). For example, while not assessed in this chapter, staff

enter both sites of this organization with knowledge about social disadvantage

acquired from university and college programs including social service education

(Child and Youth Worker, Community and Social Services, and Recreation and

Leisure diplomas), career practitioner diplomas (Addictions Certificates), and

undergraduate and graduate degrees (Bachelors degrees in Sociology, Psychology,

and Ontario certificates in Teaching). This training[25] undoubtedly informs their

work with youth (Carla, interview April 2, 2012; James, interview February 24,

2012; Maureen, field note January 17, 2013). While staffs' prior knowledge is

important, in this chapter I focus on the governing bodies explicitly connected to this

organization to show how the logic of 'youth-at-risk' institutionally organizes the

positions and activities of the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch. In this way

my analytic focus is on *how* the cultural processes that construct the institutional

notion of 'youth-at-risk' get used across geographical contexts and how this

influences the arrangement and density of social capital opportunities for youth. In

this section I show that these cultural processes frame what actually takes place

inside each organizational setting (Thornton and Ocasio 2008) and reveal how the

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[25] Staff members across both sites of the organization must have a degree/diploma/training and work related experience relevant to the work of social services in order to be considered for employment. Perhaps not surprisingly, this training is unavailable in the Town of Hewardsville.

geographical differences in the response to 'youth-at-risk' are institutionally configured.

6.2.1 Institutional Notions of 'Youth-at-Risk'

'Youth-at-risk' is an institutional concept used to refer to young people who face barriers in making the transition to adulthood (i.e., home-leaving, completion of education, labour force participation, and family formation) (Gaudet 2007). This concept emerges from a cultural shift in the preoccupation and concern of young people (Zelizer 1985). While the transition to adulthood poses difficult conditions for many, research shows that it is especially problematic for certain populations of young people. For example, making up 25 percent of the Canadian youth population, often the most vulnerable and marginalized young people experience involvement with the criminal justice and the social welfare system, non completion of high school, poverty, high rates of drug use, and teenage parenting (Brezin 2010). Notwithstanding the specific details of these young people's lives, the transition to adulthood is also shaped by the intersection of class, race, ethnicity, immigration status, and gender (for a review see Franke 2010: 13). Thus, the transition to adulthood is organized by a myriad interplay of social structures that privilege some while disadvantaging others. Below I examine two of the ways that this notion about 'youth-at-risk' is institutionally produced and applied across the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch.

Example 1: The 'Break-Out Guide'

Member Agencies and a Monitoring Body, which encompasses 19 organizations including the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch, author the 'Break out Guide' (BOG). From this group, three agencies provide service *across* both geographical settings where the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch are located (City of Grayson and Town of Hewardsville). The remaining 16 are exclusive to the City of Grayson. Emerging from over 15 years of organizational activity on understanding the "needs of vulnerable youth" (item 6), the BOG seeks to standardize a community response to these circumstances of disadvantage. The following experiences are listed as the conditions that classify young people between the ages of 16 and 24 as 'at risk': high school non completion; low levels of literacy and numeracy; disability; street involvement, contact with justice; child welfare or social assistance systems; lone (single) parent; homeless or the potentiality of becoming homeless; lack of social supports; health, drug – and/or alcohol related problems, living in a rural setting, and racial, sexual and gender discrimination (BO Guide 2009: 5).

The BOG (2009) positions social service organizations are central to the community response to 'youth-at-risk' (p. 4). Higher-level institutional actors, such as child welfare, education policy, and the legal system influence the expectations of this work. In particular, "minimum standards" are constructed as a way to ensure a standardized response to 'youth-at-risk' (p. 4). Importantly, these standards are "dialogically engaged" with these other higher-level institutions (Emirbayer and

Johnson 2009: 5). For example, these standards regulate how social service

organizations work with youth who they suspect are being abused (Child and Family

Services Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. C.11, Section 72. (1)). They also define what should

happen in social service organizations when youth are absent from school without

permission (Education Act, R.S.O. 1990, C. E. 2, Section 21.1, 21.1(1)), as well as the

conditions and decisions that are made when a young person interacts with the

criminal justice system (Youth Justice Act, S.C. 2002, c. 1). Together these details

reflect conformity to, and legitimacy with, other institutions central to the provision

of social services (Meyer and Rowan 1977). They also show that the notion of

'youth-at-risk' operates as a social relation that coordinates activities across

institutional sites (Smith 1987).

The BOG structures institutional knowledge about 'youth-at-risk' and the

organizational activities that are expected to respond. In order to understand how –

produced through the logic of 'youth-at-risk' – these "minimum standards" translate

into practice, I now turn to the ways that they actually unfold across the Urban

Youth Centre and its Rural Branch.

Structural Fortuity: The Urban Youth Centre and the BOG[26].

Early on in the project I attended team meetings in an attempt to acquaint

myself with the programs and people working inside the organization. At one of

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[26] Field note: March 19, 2012

these meetings (Urban Youth Centre), the Team Leader introduced me to staff and asked if my project had been "cleared by the BOG." Having never heard of this policy, I explained that the Manager of the organization had "Ok-d" my speaking with young people who were using its services. She explained to me that BOG was important to their work and that I would not be allowed to talk to "our youth" until I found out if I needed to comply with these "rules." Speaking with the Team Leader afterwards I asked for more details about the BOG. She explained that the Urban Youth Centre used the BOG in order to "make working with these types of youth the same." The Team Leader elaborated:

> To serve these kids we all have to do the same thing. Staff, students, and volunteers need to have the same message so this can happen. So, if a kid comes in high off their ass, we have to work around that. We have to be sure they're safe first, and then we can try to work with them around the substance use issues. Or, if a kid comes in under 16 or has AWOL-d we're supposed to call CAS. Same with weapons. You gotta know what you're supposed do. Sometimes we do, sometimes we don't. The main thing is that we all want to help these kids and we all know what needs to happen.

In order to comply with the "minimum standards" of the BOG I completed a vulnerable police screening and signed a confidentiality agreement that protected me in talking with young people inside the organizational settings. I also reviewed protocols outlined in the BOG around supporting 'vulnerable' and 'at-risk' youth.

Although the Team Leader's remarks that "we all have to do the same thing" suggest that organizationally there is an expectation for continuity, in practice some decoupling happens (Meyer and Rowan 1977). My interview with Emma, a transitional youth worker in the Urban Youth Centre, provides insight into why decoupling occurs. In her work, she tells me,

> You always come up with something that you never anticipated. And you think, "ok how did we handle that, and how will we handle it better in the future." Especially around behaviour and stuff because you can't, you try and use the BOG standards as best you can but with this population you always have to go case by case really; you have to be flexible with those things. Something will come up that doesn't fit into a box and you have to talk as a team about how you're going to approach it. Especially around suspensions, school absenteeism and things like that. So, the times we would suspend someone is always with weapons, or violence or drugs, or alcohol. But if they come in high and they're not bothering anyone, we'll let them stay. This is a safe place. Or, if they're not going to school because they're homeless, then this is ok. *We help them work through it.* So yeah, we always have to talk as a team and consider that individual and their situation and past history at the Centre and all of that stuff. So that's always challenging. And ever-changing, really. But we just try to make things better (emphasis added).

Emma's elaboration of "help them work through it" involves two organizational

activities. The first is counterpoint[27]/needle exchange services that are delivered

inside the Urban Youth Centre. The second involves referrals to outside service

providers who deal with addictions, mental health and sexual health. Emma's

explanation of these activities reveals how in practice the BOG, alongside other

authorizing texts[28], assumes a particular organizational context that *can* be

responsive to the lives of 'youth-at-risk.' These remarks suggest that while

decoupling may be part of what happens in the Urban Youth Centre (e.g., "you try

and use the BOG standards as best you can but with this population you always have

to go case by case really; you have to be flexible with those things."), more central to

explaining what *actually* happens is the overall structural context that is shaped by

cultural processes within which the site is located. Emma elaborates by saying:

> If someone comes through the door and they say, "I have nowhere to go",
>
> then I'm working with that person to find a place. So lots of housing and lots
>
> of *referrals*, tons; cuz there's a lot that we don't do here. […] Referrals are a
>
> huge part of the work. And it is *knowing about resources in the community* and
>
> that's always changing. So we have to keep up with it as best we can. And

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[27] Counterpoint is a form of harm-reduction social service that seeks to provide individuals with free, safe, and clean supplies used by drug users. These items often include needles, syringes, ties, spoons, condoms and other cooking supplies. Counterpoint services often also include referrals to other social service providers and health care services (Centre for Addictions and Mental Health 2002)

[28] Other authorizing texts include: (1) the Grayson Youth Network (2007) which organizes a "Strategy" (2009) for social service organizations, government, and the community to respond to inequalities facing youth and families in the city of Grayson; (2) Poverty Reduction Strategy (2011) produced by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services sets out specific activities for other ministries that are delivered inside the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch (i.e., the summer job opportunities of Employment Service, a program of Employment Ontario).

anytime we hear about something new that pops up in the City that we didn't

know about before, we are sharing that with each other on the team so that

everybody knows and everybody can use these for youth (emphasis added).

Notably the Urban Youth Centre is located in a position in the field of social services

where its staff have access to resources both internally and externally to provide

support to youth (Leana and Van Buren III 1999). Conversely, while the Rural

Branch engages with the same institutional logic of 'youth-at-risk', it does not

occupy a similar position in the field and thus is unable to offer these same

resources to youth.

Structural Constraint: The Rural Branch & the BOG.

Maureen, a program facilitator in the Rural Branch often spoke with me after her

shifts over coffee about "the real deal with this place." On one such occasion I

discovered that the BOG was being used differently in the Rural Branch. Below is a

portion of my conversation[29] with Maureen about a staff meeting that happened

earlier that day where the BOG, 'youth-at-risk', and organizational responses to

young people's needs was debated.

> Maureen: Here youth are treated like rats. They are expected to scurry during
>
> the day and come out at night when we're closed.

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[29] Field note: July 5, 2012

Jessica: What do you mean?

Maureen: During the meeting they [Team Leader, other youth workers, volunteer] brought up all these issues. Laura was like, "So what are we supposed to do when a youth comes in here high? Patty went on to say, 'well lets turn to the BOG.' I'm like, "well it says that we can't search them and if they are not in clear possession and we don't find it we can't really prove it[30]. If you find drugs or drug paraphernalia then you need to call non-emergency police and they will come and pick it up or dispose of it. You have to ask them [youth] to leave, but you have to be sure that they are safe." Laura is like "well they shouldn't be here if they are. We can't deal with that. We don't do that."

Jessica: So the Guide is only for the Urban Youth Centre, then but not for here?

Maureen: Ya.

Jessica: But isn't what the Guide says common sense? Isn't it standardized?

Maureen: Yeah I thought so, but apparently not. I told you about the time the (youth) brought a gun into the Branch?

Jessica: What?

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[30] Maureen's suggestion of "what is says" is found in the BOG (page 15).

Maureen: Well it wasn't real, but that doesn't matter. It was one of those ones with a barrel but it didn't shoot anything. I basically just told them, "you can't have that here and you need to hand it over to me or I'll call the cops." They didn't believe me but I said, "trust me, these are the options."

Jessica: So what happened?

Maureen: They left.

Jessica: Wow, no I didn't know anything about that! That's crazy! How did you know to do that?

Maureen: It's common sense *and* its in the Guide[31]. Oh and recently Patty found a knife in the back. And she brought it into the building?

Jessica: She picked it up?

Maureen: I know, right.

Jessica: So what, she brought it up front and was like, "look what I found?"

Maureen: Basically. Yeah, she just asked me to wrap it up in a paper bag and throw it out. I said, "uh no. We need to call non-emergency police." She's like, "oh no....it's not that big of a deal. This isn't the [Urban Youth Center], we don't deal with that here. " I couldn't believe it!! So I put on a glove and put it

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[31] BOG (Appendix M, page 17, "Sharps")

in a bag. Then I called. This is what we're supposed to do, it's in the Guide, but

for some reason, at the Branch it doesn't happen and we're not allowed to

deal with these things. It isn't allowed. It's fucked. We didn't even write a

report. We talk the talk, but don't walk the walk. We reel youth in but then

send them back out with nothing. We fail them. We promise all this stuff and

then we lie (emphasis added).

I ask Maureen about the outcome of this meeting. She tells me it was "repeated that

we are not able to help youth with these issues. They gotta go. Period."

Decoupling, or the differences that emerge between the actual activities of

organizations and the expectations of their formal structure, might be used to help

elucidate these findings (Meyer and Rowan 1977). Meyer and Rowan (1977) among

others (for a review see Boxenbaum and Jonsson, 2008) have argued that

decoupling maintains legitimacy while creating efficiency for the organization.

However, as a conceptual tool the explanation that efficiency explains decoupling

does little to explain *how* institutionalized activity (i.e., "minimum standards" of the

BOG) can produce two different forms of action *across* organizational settings.

Specifically, when young people come into the Rural Branch "high" they are asked to

leave the site, whereas in the Urban Youth Centre they are encouraged to stay if they

are not disruptive or aggressive. Engaging in the *same* activity across sites – allowing

youth to stay – would theoretically increase the organization's efficiency at

providing services to 'youth-at-risk.' Likewise, such uniformity of practice may

increase the likelihood that the organization could meet institutional expectations around social service targets (see chapter five). But as this evidence suggests, service cannot be provided when young people are not physically in the Rural Branch and/or are turned away without specific referrals to other service providers. Decoupling is not at play here but rather an unequal structural position within the field of social services.

Decoupling alone cannot explain why the BOG is used as a tool to rationalize *two* different forms of action across a single organization (Vaughan 1996). What unfolds in practice is not tied to efficiency, or "practical activity" (Meyer and Rowan 1977: 360) but to a form of institutional coordination that uses geography to shape organizational responses to social disadvantage. Like chapter five, these findings suggest that the different response to youth needs across the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch is the result of different institutional positions within the field of social services that make certain activities unlikely in one setting over an other.

Decoupling, thus, is only a partial explanation of the disjuncture between organizational structures and activities (Meyer and Rowan 1977). Instead the structural constraints that shape how the field of social services plays out *across* geographical settings needs to be emphasized. Decoupling, as an explanation, does not attend to the fact that the field of social services is stratified– both culturally and materially – such that the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch are not equally positioned.

While the Urban Youth Centre provides services to youth who use drugs and deal with addictions (Emma, Joelle, and Quinne Urban Youth Centre), Maureen makes apparent that the Rural Branch engages in the logic of 'youth-at-risk' in such a way that produces a different social service response to these same experiences. This does not happen because of legitimacy or efficiency (Meyer and Rowan 1977), but as Maureen suggests, because of the ways that social services unfold in rural settings. In other words, through the BOG institutional knowledge about 'youth-at-risk' gets reshaped in the rural setting in such a way that produces a different response to drug use and addictions than occurs in the urban site. These differences reflect the larger organization of social services that shape what type of response is structurally possible.

Example 2: The Toque Campaign

I met Adelina in a local coffee shop in Grayson in March 2012. Adelina works in both the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch. At the time of the interview, her title was the Community Relations Liaison. In the interview I asked about the needs of young people in the Town of Hewardsville and the City of Grayson. She described their needs like this:

> The situation that youth are going through is the same. Both in rural and urban, it's the same, but I feel like you can see it much more here in Hewardsville because it's a smaller town […]. The whole idea of youth in a community sticks

out in a smaller town. You see it more [...]. But here in the Rural Branch it's hard.
It's really hard.

Adelina uses the example of the Raising the Roof Campaign and homelessness to
explain why it is hard in the Rural Branch to respond to the needs of rural youth.

Adelina: For example, the Raising the Roof Toque Campaign last year, that's
when I said, "Dear Hewardsville, there's homeless youth in Hewardsville".
The response I got was like 'we don't want to talk about that too much.'

Jessica: So where are the homeless youth if they don't want to talk about it?

Adelina: They couch surf, they're living under bridges, they're living in
abandoned buildings, they're living in forests.

Jessica: And no one wants to talk about it?

Adelina: You know, I can't hundred percent say that they're not talking about
it behind closed doors and I'm not hearing about, but I definitely can tell you
that when I was doing the Raising the Roof Campaign I was on the radio
every week talking about youth homelessness in Hewardsville and how we
could help, and we sold 125 toques that year because we let the community
know that there is.... they're listening. I'm sure they're listening. I'm sure that
Hewardsville is listening. I think I was one of the first that really said,
"There's youth homelessness here."

Adelina makes clear that the Rural Branch is involved in producing knowledge about

'youth-at-risk.' The Raising the Roof Campaign is central to how this knowledge is

constructed.

Raising the Roof Toque Campaign is a national strategy that seeks to raise

money to support local organizations working to end long-term homelessness.

Examining the Campaign's website[32] reveals that money raised is distributed in the

following ways:

80% of net proceeds from the Toque Campaign benefit grassroots community

Partner Agencies helping homeless people in cities and towns across Canada.

The remaining 20% of net proceeds supports Raising the Roof's national

homeless initiatives, e.g. Child & Family Homelessness and Youthworks

Although Adelina suggests that the Rural Branch is active in making visible

the needs of young people in the community, I later determined that the result of

this knowledge producing activity does *not* render organizational support to rural

youth who use the Rural Branch. In other words an organizational gap remains

despite the organization *knowing* about rural youths' needs.

This finding emerged through my field notes and participant observations at

a local community event held for the entire organization in the City of Grayson. The

event opened with the Executive Director telling the audience of over 670 people

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[32] Source: http://www.raisingtheroof.org/Our-Programs/Toque-Campaign.aspx. Last accessed
August 25, 2014.

that "Today is Toque Tuesday which is part of the National campaign to raise

awareness about youth homelessness. We sell toques and a portion of the proceeds

comes back to *us here at The Urban Youth Centre in Grayson"* (emphasis added).

While central to the construction of knowledge about 'youth-at-risk', rural youth

disappear in the organizational solutions that emerge. The Executive Director's

claim is substantiated by a list of all the organizations and locations across Canada

who receive funds gathered through this campaign work. For example, of the 150

national organizations listed, 8 operate in communities with less than 15,000[33]

residents, only 2 of which are located in Ontario (see Appendix J). Interestingly,

these national funding allocations contradict claims by Raising the Roof's, among

others (Gaetz et al. 2013; Justice Report 1992), who suggest that "we know that

rural communities face similar as well as unique issues regarding youth

homelessness" (Raising the Roof 2009: 23). Moreover, research shows that many

homeless youth have "rural origins" (see Skott-Myher, Raby and Nikolaou (2008:

88) for a review). Nevertheless, close attention to national responses to

homelessness reveals that a distinction is produced in the response to the lives of

rural and urban youth. Regardless of the knowledge that is produced through the

Campaign, without the equal allocation of these funding dollars across the

organization, the Rural Branch becomes disadvantaged in relation to other social

service organizations in terms of actually supporting homeless youth.

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[33] I include this value as a comparison because the Town of Hewardsville has a population less than 15,000 people. Importantly, Statistics Canada defines rural areas (RA) as communities with populations less than 1,000 whereas small population areas refer to are communities with populations between 1,000 and 29,999 (Statistics Canada 2011a).

Decoupling is inappropriate for explaining the differences in activities that occur across the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch because the knowledge about 'youth-at-risk' is not applied equally across geographical settings to produce such standardized organizational responses. In essence, the practice that emerges through each organizational site is a reflection – not disruption – of their unequal position within the field of social service. Next I extend these findings to examine how funding processes maintain the unequal position of the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch in the field of social services.

6.3: FUNDING PROCESSES: THOSE WHO PAY THE PIPER CALL THE TUNE

Rural Staff offer reasons as to why there is a gap between the knowledge about 'youth-at-risk' and the service opportunities available for youth in the Rural Branch. Some of these reasons include that "the service world forgets about us" (Maureen), that "they [the organization] don't care about people out here, the need, or us [the staff]" (Sam) and that "funding all goes to the Urban Youth Centre" (Sam). I explore these claims by examining the structure of funding across these work sites. In observing funding relations, I focus on how funding bodies organize what services become available to youth delivered by this organization.

This section shows how funding processes organize a context that differentiates what the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch do to respond to the needs of marginalized youth. Here I show that the differential acquisition and

receipt of funding by these two sites advantages urban youth while further

disadvantaging rural youth. Specifically, social capital opportunities are influenced

by the type, source, and form of funding. When funding in each site does not match

the institutional knowledge about 'youth-at-risk' the effect is to produce a structure

of social services that distinguishes the experiences of rural and urban youth.

Funding bodies are central to the field of social services because they govern

the action of organizations. Notably, funding relations are not one-way processes

between granting bodies and social service organizations. Moreover, although the

acquisition of funding legitimizes social service organizations (Meyer and Rowan

1977), research shows that more powerful organizational actors within fields shape

the receipt of such monetary resources. For example Lu (2015) finds that non-profit

organizations are more likely to acquire funding if they reveal behaviour that is akin

to granting bodies (i.e., "bureaucratic structure"), and if they have long-lasting

interorganizational relationships with granting bodies (i.e., funding histories). In

other words positions of power within a field are central to defining who acquires

funding and subsequently what organizational action takes place (Emirbayer and

Johnson 2008).

Table 6.1 describes the funding relations that organize the services at the

organization and the specific services that result for youth. Here I have included the

name of each funder that staff and young people speak about. I then provide details

about authorizing texts (i.e., contracts, state policies) that are central to the funding

dollars, what service results, and which site is implicated.

Table 6.1: Funding Relations across the Organization

	Name of Funder (level):	Organizing Text:	Service Provided:	Organization Site implicated in service and/or contract:
1	Breakfast for Learning (national)	Contract	Breakfast program	Urban Youth Centre
2	United Way (local chapter)	Contract 1. Contract 2.	Basic needs, Education Programming Skill and job training	Urban Youth Centre Rural Branch
3a	Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities (provincial)	Contract	Employment Services and Training – "Employment Service", "SJS"	Urban Youth Centre (***services shared with Rural Branch)
3b	Employment Ontario (provincial)			
4	Government of Canada (national)	Infrastructure Canada Canada's Economic Action Plan	Transitional Housing Program Business program	Urban Youth Centre Rural Branch
5a	Human Resources and Skills Development Canada[34] (national)	Youth Employment Strategy	Employment and Training services – "Endeavour"	Urban Youth Centre
5b	Service Canada (national)	Skills Link Contract		
6	Ministry of Community and Social Services (provincial)	Purchase Agreement	Ontario Works Trustee Program (Under 16s)	Urban Youth Centre
7	City of Grayson (local)			
8	Ontario Works (local chapter)			
9	Homelessness Partnering Strategy (national)	Contract	Transitional Housing	Urban Youth Centre

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[34] Currently called "Employment and Social Development Canada.

10	Eve's Initiative (national, directed at registered charities)	Award/Grant	Program	
11	Raising the Roof Campaign (national)	Partnering Agencies	Housing services	Urban Youth Centre
12	Canadian Institute for Health Research (national)	Grant	Housing services	Urban Youth Centre
13	Mental Health Commission of Canada (national)	Grant		
14	Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Employment (provincial)	Contract	Business Program	Rural Branch
15	Community Economic Development (CFDC) (local)	Contract		

There are three key issues that emerge when looking at table 6.1. First, there are

funding sources that operate inside the Urban Youth Centre that are *not* present in

the Rural Branch. For example, the Urban Youth Centre's transitional housing

program is funded through multiple sources including the Government of Canada

(not displayed), The Homelessness Partnering Strategy (#9), Canada Housing and

Mortgage Corporation (not displayed), and a grant from Eve's Initiative (#10). There

are also many local contributors to this program including the City of Grayson, and

the Grayson Reaction to Homelessness (both not displayed). None of the national

funding sources that shape the housing program in the Urban Youth Centre operate

in the Rural Branch. Likewise, the Endeavour Employment and Training program

offered inside the Urban Youth Centre and their funders – specifically, Human

Resources Development Canada (#5a) and Service Canada (#5b), both federal level

government sources, are *not* involved in the work of the Rural Branch. One Manager

explains to me that this funding disparity results from long-standing contracts in the

Urban Youth Centre that they are encouraged to reapply for because they continually meet the expected and required outcomes (Lu 2015). Thus, although federal funding relations begin in institutional settings beyond the Urban Youth Centre, they continually shape what is possible (and impossible) in organizations across geographical contexts.

The second noticeable item in table 6.1 regards the funding bodies *that are the same across* these sites. For example, there is one United Way contract that is allocated across both sites yet reported separately (Leni, interview July 25, 2013). In the Urban Youth Centre this funding is allocated for the provision of education programming, community resources, and basic needs such as meal programs and hygiene supplies to street involved youth, 'youth-at-risk', and transient youth. In The Rural Branch, these funds are allocated for the provision of life skills programming, such as learning to use a computer program or the development of social skills inside the site. Although both sites work with 'youth-at-risk', through these funding relations this administrative concept gets translated into characteristically different practices across contexts. Here we begin to see a slightly different understanding of 'youth-at-risk.' Up to this point I have established that staff and key institutions within the field of social services construct similar understandings of 'youth-at-risk.' However in terms of the allocation of funding, which is central to shaping what actually happens, we see how institutionally the logic of risk organizes practice

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differently across geographical contexts. These funds are not used to support the same issues.

Finally, table 6.1 shows the organizational strategy of "sharing funds" acquired from The Ministry of Economic Development Trade and Education (#3a) and Employment Ontario (#3b) between sites. This is a *reciprocal* strategy that benefits both the organization in terms of legitimacy to the institution of social services and the funders in terms of ensuring that dollars are spent as per contract expectations. One Manager that works across both sites explains to me that "sharing funds" is done in an attempt to respond to the needs of rural youth and because, "compared to the other pots of funding that are available for the urban community... rural funding opportunities are far and few between." However, how this shared funding process occurs shows that this practices does *not* change the fact that allocated funds remain explicitly tied to the Urban Youth Centre. As the Manager explains,

> We have those funds and can deliver those services however we see fit, as long as we meet our targets. We decided as an agency to leverage those funds and to put some staff and resources in the Rural Branch because of need. All of the outcomes count toward our overall contract.

Although in practice the organization uses these funds to support rural youth, the funder does not see this work as tied to these young people's needs or to rural communities. Therefore, in the Rural Branch the work and outcomes produced

through this "sharing" are counted back towards the initial contract. In other words, "sharing" funds is documented for the funder in a way that captures this service as simply meeting the expectations outlined and regulated by the Service Agreement/contract between it and the Urban Youth Centre. Here we see a link between funding and accountability processes described in chapter five. For example, the contract between Employment Ontario and the Urban Youth Centre outlines the number of clients that will be served through Employment Service and the particular outcomes that are expected to emerge through this work. While these outcomes are standardized across other service providers, the number of clients served is specific to each contract. The contract outlines that the Urban Youth Centre will provide "assisted" service to 6700 clients in a year and will provide a certain amount of workshops and training activities. In terms of outcomes this work is expected to lead to 69% of clients leaving the program by entering into employment and 10% having left entering in school or training. While the organization shares these funds to provide service to rural youth in need, any related activities and outcomes are 'counted' as evidence of these contract details. As the Manager put it, "As long as we meet our targets, it's all good." Paradoxically, even in this practice rural young people still disappear.

Focusing on the allocation and distribution of funding, I find that financial resources amass in the urban area, *and perhaps more importantly*, address many more of the elements that are known to represent 'youth-at-risk.' Conversely,

despite the consensus that those who access the Rural Branch are also "at-risk", the institutional distribution and allocation of funding to this site does not provide an organizational context that can address the same breadth of youth needs as does the Urban Youth Centre because what funding is provided to the Rural Branch is allocated to do different things. This suggests two things. First, the institutional understanding of 'youth-at-risk' is not uniform but rather mediated through geographical understandings of disadvantage. People across communities may share experiences of marginalization and disadvantage; however, institutionally some places are better equipped to deal with them. Thus, funding processes construct and reconstruct – through established and continually funded social services – particular geographical settings as more able to respond to 'youth-at-risk.' Second, these cultural processes use geography to differentially position organizational sites within the field of social services. That more financial resources amass in urban communities means that there are organizational resources in place to respond to the hardships of people's lives. Conversely, limited access to funding in rural contexts means that organizations are less able to respond to the needs of marginalized youth.

6.4: GEOGRAPHY AND THE ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSE TO 'YOUTH-AT-RISK'

I started this chapter outlining the institutional interpretations of 'youth-at-risk' that appeared to be uniform across the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch. Yet, throughout the chapter I have shown that this understanding takes a particular

urban perspective in the ways that it organizes (i.e., through protocols, campaigns, and funding processes) what social service organizations can, and cannot, do to help marginalized youth. In short, this chapter shows that geography intercedes in the ways the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch are positioned within the field of social services. Despite operating as a single organization, these sites occupy unequal positions within the field of social services. But that the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch are positioned this way is not just a feature of the institutional environment.

Rural and urban contexts themselves are imbued with cultural meanings (Arkette 2004; Halfacree 1993; Masuda and Garvin 2008). That is, people's conceptualizations of place constitute and reconstitute distinctions between rural and urban contexts. While such interpretations are diverse, research shows that aspects of rurality are often interpreted by people as incompatible with forms of inequality most often attributed as urban problems. For example, although seemingly contradictory, Edwards, Torgerson, and Sattem (2009) find that residents in 'Fredrick *County*' interpret it as a place that is "characterized by the individuation of problems, self-reliance, and privacy, along with a naiveté about the extent and experience of" social problems (emphasis added: 352). This cultural interpretation of geography is argued to impede social service organizations that seek to respond to forms of inequality in rural settings. In other words, beyond the institutional organization of social services, understandings of geography (urban vs. rural) may

be an important feature of the ways that organizations are positioned to respond to social problems.

Staff provide insight into how understandings of the rural and urban context influence what happens in the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch. For example, Adelina, a Public Relations Officer, speaks of the meaning of geography to her work *across* the sites. Here she explains how understandings of rural versus urban places shape the visibility and organizational response to youth homelessness. She says,

> Look at this perfect example of this beautiful building {pointing to Housing Now, a building of the Urban Youth Centre}. There's 30 apartments here, 30 units for youth to live in because housing is very minimal in this urban community. So 30 youth are able to live up there, they look to access the Urban Youth Centre's services whether it's the food bank, whether its employment counselling, employment preparation skills, Endeavour, GED; it's all here, they get to access those services. That's huge. That's big. *But what about Hewardsville and the Rural Branch? [….].* If you look at Grayson, obviously it is a *bigger city*. Talking about youth homelessness here, we are always talking about it. It's at the forefront. And maybe, youth homelessness because we don't see it in Hewardsville, we don't see that person on the curb. We don't say that we have what 6 or 7 shelters completely packed with beds like here in Grayson. We have one. Maybe when we don't see that or hear that

we don't think it's [homelessness] is going on. Maybe that's why there's

nothing in the Rural Branch for homeless youth (emphasis added).

Adelina indicates that youth homelessness is a form of inequality experienced across

both geographical areas; however, the distinct meaning of "the city" and "the town"

intersect with the institutional position of the organizational sites to render these

experiences invisible in the Rural Branch.

Staff working in the Rural Branch know that the site is differentially

positioned compared to the Urban Youth Centre and that the organization as a

whole, has to manage juggling cultural interpretations of 'the rural' alongside

institutional expectations to respond to forms of inequality. In my interview with

Maureen I learned that there was a definite rural logic that shaped how youth needs

were understood. In this conversation Maureen said that, "This is the county and in

the county (pause) sadly we're all a bunch of rednecks and that whole crossing lines

doesn't happen as far as they're concerned." I later met with Maureen one afternoon

(May 9, 2012) and she spoke candidly about this "line" and the ways that the

organization responds to the needs of rural youth. She tells me that, "we fail them.

We promise all this stuff and then we lie." When I asked her to elaborate she

provides an example of the difference in identifying and responding to the needs of

youth across rural and urban contexts. She tells me that she is frustrated by the fact

that she is unable to connect youth to appropriate resources in the Rural Branch and

in the local community. Here she gives the story of Dakota. She says, "no one is able

to help this kid. Over there, he's not 'bad enough to qualify.' He uses pot, but he's not

a crack head. He couch surfs, but he's not a street youth. So he's *not eligible in the city*

because he's not really those 'bad' things. But even worse, he's *not eligible here in*

town because apparently we don't do those things. What else can I do when that's

what they tell me?" (emphasis added). Maureen continues by explaining that the

organization as a whole knows that there are similar issues facing youth across

settings but that they do not take the necessary steps to alleviate them. She tells me

that her proposal for a community garden for rural youth who needed an

appropriate outlet was denied by the organization. When I asked why she thought

the idea was rejected she tells me that, "the organization knows that there is a line

between here and there. We see it. We know it exists. But in the Rural Branch we

stay as far away from it as possible so as to not step on anyone's toes." The "line" and

"toes", I suggest, are cultural interpretations of geographical places that intersect

with the organization of social services to produce more opportunities for some

youth and further barriers for others. Importantly, these local level interpretations

of rural versus urban places intersect with institutional understandings of 'youth-at-

risk' to maintain the unequal positions of the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural

Branch in the field of social services. Below I provide two examples of how

geography mediates the institutional organization of social services.

The Position of Urban Youth Centre in the Field of Social Services.

The Urban Youth Centre until very recently provided counterpoint and needle exchange services for youth. Emma, a program facilitator at the Center explains that this decision to cease service was made at the management level. The decision, however, did not actually disrupt service provision for youth who accessed the Urban Youth Centre. She tells me that there are three other organizations that have continued to provide this service in the city. Now with this seizure of service at the Urban Youth Centre, there have been strategic partnerships with other organizations. Specifically, the Urban Youth Centre has partnered with the Regional HIV/AIDS chapter and other health providers to offer recurring in-house/internal services including anonymous HIV/AIDS and hepatitis testing. Access to counterpoint and needle exchange services involves physically taking youth between the Urban Youth Centre and other service providers who provide this support. That the Urban Youth Centre is able to provide a bridge or continuity of service surrounds the fact that the site is located in a geographical context that has a high density of social services. There is no gap in social service because this larger geographical context where it is located is institutionally set up to continually respond; the organizational players might change, but the response to social disadvantage endures.

The Position of Rural Branch in the Field of Social Services.

While it is known that there are youth who access the organization who use drugs and/or deal with addictions, the response in the Rural Branch is vague. In one sense the organization actively seeks to keep youth with these experiences out of the site (i.e., BOG), while on the other hand they also have access to material resources that are often used to support people in these situations. Geographical interpretations of 'rurality' are central to how this happens. For example, Maureen (program facilitator) tells me that the relationship between the Regional HIV/AIDS and the Rural Branch is stifled through place-based understandings of rurality and 'youth-at-risk' (Little and Austin 1996). Below is a portion of a conversation we had (September 10, 2012).

> Maureen: We actually have to contact HIV/AIDS because we need to get new kits.
>
> Jessica: Oh, you do needle exchange?
>
> Maureen: We have them, yes. But we aren't supposed to do drug counselling.
>
> Jessica: So theoretically.
>
> Maureen: Ya.
>
> Jessica: Do youth know that you do that here?

Maureen: No one does.

Jessica: I never knew you had them.

Maureen: We do. But we can't use them.

Jessica: Why not? I know you've said there are youth here who are using.

Maureen: Oh yeah, they're here. But the community is very... this is the *county*. No one wants to talk about it. No one wants to address it. If we don't talk about it then it doesn't exist. So the [Branch] is not gonna start doing all this stuff to then go around and tell the community that, 'yup, there's a drug problem here'. […] Homelessness, addictions, mental health, all of it. It doesn't happen here.

Jessica: But it does.

Maureen: Exactly. It's a big joke (emphasis added)

Here we see that even when the Rural Branch has resources at its reach, there are cultural attitudes of the relationship between forms of marginalization and 'place' that obstruct the organization from using them. This inability to actually use these resources maintains the position of the Rural Branch within the field of social services. In addition to resources being unequally distributed across rural and urban contexts (i.e., see chapter five), the field of social services must also contend with

understandings of geography that are instrumental in organizing and sustaining the social service response to 'youth-at-risk.'

6.5: CONCLUSION

Institutional dimensions are thought to mediate the activities of organizations (Friedland and Alford 1991; Owen-Smith and Powell 2008). In other words, there is a dialectical relationship between institutional environments and the organizational activities that result (Thornton and Ocasio 2008). This chapter shows that these institutional processes also shape the position of organizations within the field. The geographical location of organizations is important to how these positions are established.

Geography and spatiality have somewhat been implicated in institutionalists' thinking about logics and fields. For example, Lounsbury (2007) examines how competing logics differentially shape the activities of money management firms across geographical settings. Although Lounsbury's analysis suggests that geography explains this variation, the analysis does not theorize *why* geography itself becomes part of the structuration process. Of those who do theorize geography, there is often ambiguity around *how* geographical contexts get drawn into the institutional logics that are thought to structure the activity of fields (Marquis and Batilliana 2009). In this chapter I show how geography mediates cultural processes that shape the positionality of organizational fields and how – through organizational practice –

these processes reproduce inequality.

Throughout I have examined the ways that institutional notions of 'youth-at-risk' enter into the activities of social service organizations giving particular attention to the ways that this understanding is applied across the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch. My analysis shows that the meaning of 'youth-at-risk' necessitates a particular organizational context that can actually do this work. In other words, the structuration of institutional knowledge about 'youth-at-risk' requires an organizational context that is set up to respond. That an organizational context is structurally available to act then reifies notions about 'youth-at-risk.' In short, there is a mutually reinforcing relationship between the institutional notions of 'youth-at-risk' and the structure of the social service field that emerges.

Importantly, the logic of 'youth-at-risk' and the field of social services are not consistent across geographical settings. My findings demonstrate that geography constitutes/reconstitutes different organizational "posts" within the field (Bourdieu 1993). I argue that it is this unequal positioning of the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch that illuminates how social service disparities emerge for rural youth. Figure 6.1 displays these findings graphically.

Figure 6.1: Geography and Mediation of the Cultural Processes Inherent to the Field of

Social Services
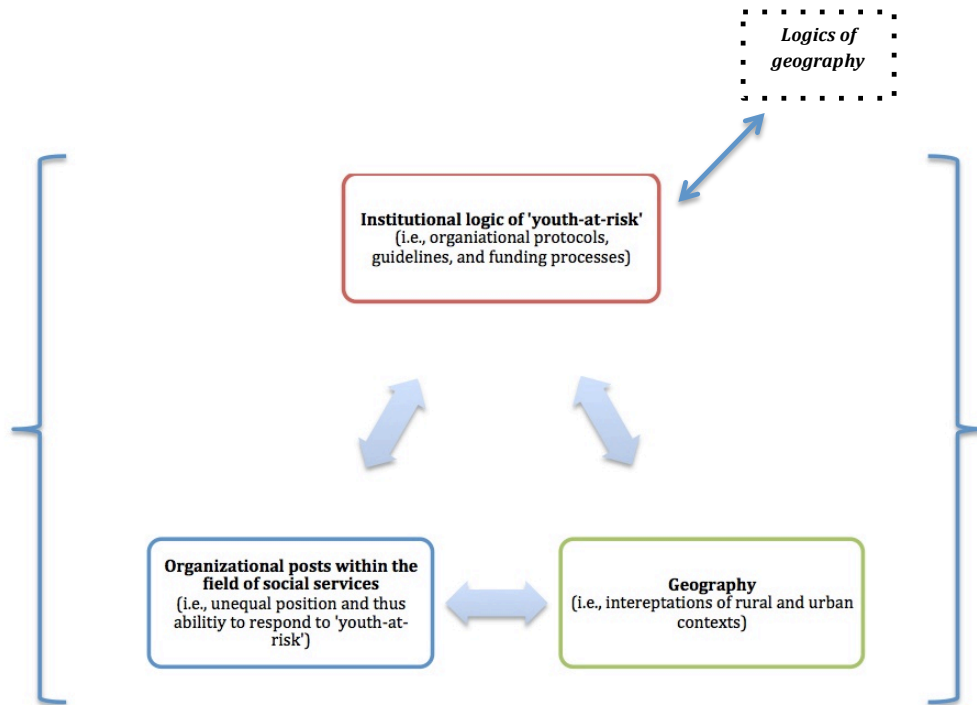
Figure 6.1 shows that geography is far from irrelevant or trivial to the ways that

young people's needs become institutionally visible and responded to by

organizations. Within the institutional environment (bracketed in blue), the

geographical organization and density of social services reproduces differences

between the lives of young people located across rural and urban contexts. Still,

beyond the institutional environments I show that there are other interpretations of

'youth-at-risk' (bracketed in black) that work to geographically demarcate what it

means to be 'at-risk.'

My intention in this chapter has been to think about the relationship between geography, institutional logics, and the organizational positions of the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch within the field of social services. This chapter offers important insights into the ways that each site is able, or not, to transfer resources to marginalized youth. Cultural processes that shape the structural position of each site define the essence of the differences in the ability of the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch to respond to the needs of youth. Theoretically, these findings open debates for thinking about the ways that geography intersects in the processes through which the acquisition of social capital occurs. These findings also point towards geography as itself a cultural logic that is important to the construction of institutional environments. These findings are supported by others working within the field of social services. For example, a recent report by one governing institution (2013) that regulates human services in the county where the Rural Branch is located states that "rurality can negatively affect the recognition, experience and manifestation of numerous social and economic issues and subsequent service provision and access. [...] these factors also affect the delivery and design of services" (4). This chapter shows that emphasizing the relevance of geography complicates how we think about social services as a response to social disadvantage. Specifically, it is not enough to think about social services as distinct from the geographical contexts with which they are located. Rather, we must consider the fact that there is an organization to the ways that marginalized people access and receive social services. Geography is central to how this organization unfolds.

That social services delivered in rural contexts are somewhat disadvantaged because of their "design" is a reality that has consequences for people's lives (Fischer et al. 1996). Institutionally, change is thought to come when "The optimal system [has] services available locally in order to raise awareness, serve local need and build social capital" ([Governing Institution] 2013: 4). While encouraging, these types of suggestions assume that organizations within the field of social services are equally positioned. But, as this chapter shows, the field is organized through power relations that use structured institutionalized understandings – in this case, 'youth-at-risk' – to differentially shape what organizations can (and cannot) do.

These findings should not be observed as a "bug" in an institutional system that in practice responds consistently and uniformly to young people's lives. Instead these findings should be observed as inherent "features" of an institutional system that – paradoxically – reproduces social disadvantage (Ganz, as cited in Abramsky 2013). In other words, the inequity inherent to the positions of the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch are tied to the "landscape out of which it bubbles" (Abramsky 2013: 11). As it stands, uniformity is a pipedream. Unless the entire system re-shifts and redefines these institutional dimensions, including what it means to be located in a rural setting, these suggestions will remain empty promises for rural youth.

Seven

The Geographical (In)compatibility of 'One-Stop Shops'

7.1: DISSERTATION OVERVIEW

Canadian social policy is moving towards a model that seeks to provide people with 'one-stop' access or a 'single window' point of entry into services. Although this approach is thought to be client centered, efficient and cost effective, in practice it assumes that social service organizations are standardized sites that operate with a similar understanding of need in the delivery of similar services to people. In this way, a 'one-stop' or 'single window' approach to the provision of social services decontextualizes the relationship between people's experiences of disadvantage and the organizations they use to get out of these positions. But are these types of social service organizations really seamless?

Using the case of the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch, I show that geography is important to young people's experiences of inequality and the organizational responses that attempt to alleviate them. Throughout I focus on three intersecting social processes. In terms of individual level processes (chapter four) I show that youth across geographical contexts do not have access to the same amount, form, and type of knowledge about social resources that can be used/deployed when they are in need. In other words, being situated in a rural

versus an urban context affects how youth think about their needs and consequently how they access social service organizations. With regard to institutional and organizational processes (chapter five), my findings indicate that services provided to youth through 'one-stop' organizations rely on the density of organizational networks with which they are geographically located. And finally, an examination of cultural processes (chapter six) reveals that the conceptualization of need and the allocation of funding required for the provision of social services are uneven across geographical contexts.

Taken together these findings suggest that distinctions between rural and urban settings make the standardization of social services to people in marginalized social positions impossible. Importantly, the 'one-stop' approach denies the geographical embeddedness of disadvantaged people's lives and the social service organizations that try to help. In short, geography is obscured through an institutionalized system that promises different outcomes. I argue that it is this distorted vision that allows for the reproduction of inequality.

Paying attention to geography helps to explain why and how Amy received distinct and unequal support for her needs across the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch. Under such circumstances, disadvantaged and marginalized rural youth, who stay and seek help from organizations in rural settings, will continue to be held back. To understand the theoretical relevance of these findings, I review the gaps in existing sociological thinking about neighbourhood effects, institutionalism,

and social capital.

7.2: FILLING THEORETICAL GAPS

This dissertation examines how social welfare responds to 'youth-at-risk'. Generally, 'youth-at-risk', refers to young people who face barriers in making the transition to adulthood (i.e., home-leaving, completion of education, labour force participation, and family formation) (Gaudet 2007). While the transition today poses difficult conditions for many, research shows that it is especially problematic for certain populations of young people. For example, making up 25 percent of the Canadian youth population, often these young people's lives include: involvement with the criminal justice and the social welfare system, non completion of high school, poverty, high rates of drug use, and teenage parenting (Berzin 2010).

Researchers suggest that organizations are central to the ways that people move out of such disadvantaged positions (Allard et al. 2003; Small 2006). Here organizations are understood to be "containers of information, expertise, special facilities, government funding, and social support—all relevant components of social capital generally referred to as 'resources'" (Levine 2013: 312). Importantly research shows that even in disadvantaged settings, organizations are important sources of resources for people (Small et al. 2008). This happens through organizational ties that seemingly mitigate the disadvantage experienced by people who access such services. Accordingly, organizations emerge out of institutional

environments that produce social capital that can then be transferred to people (Lena and Van Buren III 1999).

While this scholarship seeks to examine the influence of place on the mechanisms by which organizations alleviate and/or reproduce inequality (Small 2004), it does so without theorizing the role of geography. For example, Levine's (2013) research examines organizations within the field of youth services and finds that inter-organizational network ties are 'placed' within neighbourhood contexts that both "materially and symbolically promote resource exchange" (327). These findings suggest that organizations that support marginalized people are 'place' specific. However, we know little about the ways that geography, itself, coordinates organizational activity. In other words, if resources are 'placed', how does this affect the ways that organizations do standardized work across geographical settings? This limitation, therefore, requires more investigation into the ways that socially and materially constructed spaces shape the organization and receipt of social services. Doing so helps to illuminate important dynamics that influence how some people move out of disadvantaged positions while others remain stagnant.

Institutional theory contends that organizations are embedded in networks of social relations that orient their action (Meyer and Rowan 1977). In this way, institutionalist research acknowledges that there is a relationship between organizational fields, and institutionalization (DiMaggio 1991). Organizations that are designed to do the same institutional work will be expected to perform in similar

ways. This suggests that social service organizations that are coordinated to take up a 'one-stop' approach will be more akin in terms of "structure, culture, and output" (DiMaggio and Powell 1983: 147). In other words, "in enacting their roles in the workplace, the worker and the manager may never think about the institutional arrangements that these work roles and settings imply" (Powell, 1991: 192).

Institutional research continues to empirically overlook how institutionalization takes place across local and non-local environments. I suggest that investigating how the differential positions within organizational fields are structured and the impact this has on institutional activity is critical to addressing this omission (Emirbayer and Johnson 2008). This is where research that provides evidence of the role of geography to institutions becomes important (Kissane 2010; Small 2009). For example Allard (2009) shows that despite the expectations of the safety net, the *reach* of social services is shaped spatially which influences how people move out of poverty. Irrespective of this evidence, the influence of geography has not been integrated into theorizing about processes of institutionalization (Meyer and Rowan 1977).

We cannot be satisfied with just knowing about whether and how organizations matter to the lives of disadvantaged people; alternatively we need to know about the mechanisms that shape the landscape and coordination of this institutional system, the resources that emerge (or don't), and the processes by which people come into contact (or not) with these resources. Focusing on the role

of geography offers a needed corrective to this theoretical gap.

7.3: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The evidence collected through 47 interviews with youth and staff, one year of

participant observations, and analysis of over 250 documents leads to a paradoxical

conclusion: the seemingly uniform institution of social services – and the ways that

social capital opportunities are conferred to marginalized young people – is

organized through geographical distinctions of 'place.' While previous research finds

that organizations are important to experiences of inequality, this dissertation

reveals an important feature that shapes how this relationship unfolds. This central

discovery of the role of geography helps to contextualize the ways that inequality is

institutionally sustained and reproduced.

In *Floodgates and Side Doors* (chapter four), I showed how geography shapes the

ways that young people learn about and enter into service relationships with The

Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch. While this organization is successful

across both settings at providing information about and access into the services that

it does deliver, my findings show that these processes are geographically

differentiated. For those accessing the Urban Youth Centre, "organizationally

embedded" friends provide more detailed information about how the organization

responds to multiple forms of disadvantage (e.g., employment, training, education,

housing, poverty, mental health, addictions, etc.). For young people accessing the

Rural Branch this information only addresses their employment and training needs. Likewise, organizational ties and activities that bring young people into services also produce geographic differences in *who* is targeted for service and which needs of young people are treated as significant. Although staff report that once young people arrive at the organization they become "organizationally actionable" (Green 1983: 14), their arrival stems from a process that geographically demarcates knowledge about experiences of social inequality. In other words, how young people enter into the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch geographically distinguishes the individual and organizational articulation of need across these contexts. Being located in a rural as opposed to urban context shapes how youth and organizations think about experiences of need. Importantly, this also shapes how young people actually gain access into social service organizations.

In *Stacking the Deck* (chapter five), I examined what happens when young people begin to receive services in The Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch. Here I follow what happens through the organization when young people seek support around employment in *Employment Service*, a standardized provincial program. Here I find that across both settings the standardized process of becoming a client in *Employment Service* moves young people into *other* services both internal and external to the organization. However, the service opportunities that are accessible through this process produce a service disentitlement for young people accessing this program through the Rural Branch. That is, accessing *Employment Service* from

the Rural Branch is limiting on the social opportunities that become available to young people using the *same* program through the Urban Youth Centre. Like the ways that young people come to know about and enter into the organization, the service opportunities that are available to young people is institutionally organized to produce and reproduce geographic differences between rural and urban contexts.

Finally, in *Unequally Acknowledged* (chapter six) I examine how the institutional construction and application of the notion of 'youth-at-risk' organizes the positions of the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch within the field of social services. Here I investigate the ways that knowledge about 'youth-at-risk' translates into organizational protocols and funding relations in ways that establish which organizational site is more adept to respond to young people's needs. In this chapter I argue that the seemingly standardized interpretation of 'youth-at-risk' is actually constructed in ways that denotes 'risk' with particular contexts. Importantly, these contexts then shape the unequal organizational positions of the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch. For example, the organizational response to 'youth-at-risk' requires an institutional context that is set up (e.g., funding, organizational ties) in ways that match the discourse of 'youth-at-risk'. Urban contexts fit this bill. But there are also cultural meanings imbued in geographical contexts that reproduce the unequal positioning of the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch in the field. In short, cultural processes produce geographical barriers to providing standardized social services to people in need.

7.4: UNEQUALLY PLACED

This dissertation argues that geography is a social force that affects the ways that social service organizations support people in marginalized positions. In particular, this dissertation shows that geography directly and indirectly shapes the work of social service organizations. For example, while homelessness is a form of inequality experienced by young people across the City of Grayson and the Town of Hewardsville where the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch operate, in practice, youth homelessness intersects with geographical social processes that differentially condition how young people interact with its services.

The geographical character of the organization, use, and receipt of social services has important implications for young people's lives. Most problematic is the assumption of a standardized organizational response to young people's needs across localities. My research shows that the institution of social services constitutes a series of power relations that is mistakenly thought to unfold in rural settings. The problem is both one of discourse and structure; together discursive and structural mechanisms organize forms of inequality in consciousness and through practice in ways that sustain and perpetuate inequality. Moving out of positions of disadvantage is more difficult for young people in rural areas because of these power relations. Simply put, rural contexts produce distinct individual and organizational barriers that thwart attempts to move people out of disadvantaged social positions.

7.5: THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

This study contributes to sociology in three key ways. First, the analysis poses significant questions for institutional theory. Within institutional scholarship, organizations are understood to arise out of institutional contexts that are structured by persistent cultural practices. Implicit in this orientation is the treatment of organizations as homogenous entities that yield static and consistent institutional phenomena within its formal boundaries. For example, institutionalism has traditionally assumed that there is a uniform relationship between organizational fields and isomorphic organizational practice within formal structures (Powell and DiMaggio 1991). Or, likewise, that organizations as entire units produce discrepancies in practice (decoupling) that challenge the institutional environment (Meyer and Rowan 1977). These tenets ignore the reality that many organizational forms operate between multiple physical boundaries; boundaries that I show are institutionally organized to produce discrepancies in organization activity. By and large, one important aspect that is lost in current institutional analyses is the investigation of how geographical contexts constitute and reconstitute organizational action within institutional environments (Wooton and Hoffman 2008).

Focusing on the activities of organizations that operate across geographical contexts illuminates power relations inherent in the institutional response to inequality. In particular, my research shows that while the organizational activities

of the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch seeks to provide a standardized

service to 'youth-at-risk', what actually happens to, and for, young people differs

depending on the context with which they are taken up. Importantly, geography, as

interlocking dimensions of institutional boundaries, material forms, and people's

understandings of 'place', are central to how this context is organized. Investigating

the source of this disjuncture between seemingly equal social service sites reveals

that the activities and practices of the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch do

not disrupt the larger institutional context. For example, the resources that are

available to youth using the Rural Branch are actually in accordance with the overall

order of the institution of social services. In both settings, therefore, practices

conform to the formal structure of the institution. It is only when we investigative

the geographical organization of the institution that this observation becomes

visible.

Second, this dissertation contributes to literature dealing with inequality and

the role of organizations. In particular, I have shown that geography is central to and

permeates how the state and other authorizing bodies discursively construct

organizational responses to inequalities faced by youth. These observations suggest

that service organizations can only shape people's lives in so much as the

institutional contexts – structured around and between geographies – provide the

framework to do so. For sociological understandings of inequality, this analysis

contextualizes how social resources – particularly, improvements in social capital –

emerge through people's participation in organizations. Simply put, young people gain social capital not as a reaction to participating in or being "embedded in the right organization" (Small 2009:177). Instead, critical to moving young people out of positions of disadvantage are structured institutional contexts *that in particular geographical contexts* coordinate what action, and inaction, is possible inside social service organizations. So, continued disadvantage may not be so much about people's involvement with organizations or the organizational practices and ties that provide social resource opportunities, but rather about how organizations are institutionally structured to do this work. Understanding the intersections of geography, organizational practices, and institutional level processes informs scholarship on experiences and responses to inequality.

Finally, the analysis supports evidence of the geographical nature of social capital (Holt 2008; Mohan and Mohan 2002; Nemet and Bailey 2000). Specifically I show that youth located in rural and urban spaces develop different forms of social capital (e.g., knowledge and social ties) that then affects their help-seeking behaviour (Bourdieu 1984). Importantly these findings suggest that social capital mechanisms may not produce the same outcome, but rather varying kinds and amounts of social resources. I argue that the geography of social capital illuminates the relationship between the physical location of people and the resources and knowledge they acquire because of this locality.

While this geographical character of social capital in and of itself is not

problematic, how rural youth as compared to urban youth mobilize these resources

towards and within the institution of social services is. The system is expected to

provide people with the necessary resources to alter their experiences of

disadvantaged and marginalized social positions. But my analysis shows the

deployment of social capital among youth reproduces the social capital of

organizations (Giddens 1986). For example, rural youth seeking support from the

Rural Branch does not afford access to a more comprehensive support system (like

the one available through the Urban Youth Centre) but rather one that is limited in

what it can provide. That rural youth are *not* equipped with the resources to ask for

more from the Rural Branch reproduces this institutional order; rural youth have

needs that are not matched by rural organizations or the institution of social

services. Conversely, urban contexts produce opportunities for social capital that are

not available in rural settings. In other words, ones geographical location shapes a

particular dialectic relationship between their embodied social capital and the

resources that are available through their participation with social service

organizations.

In this dissertation, I have sought to demonstrate the benefits of putting

geography at the forefront of research that investigates organizations, inequality,

and social capital. The root of my argument is to identify the ways that social

processes unfold across different geographical contexts and the ways that

geography, itself, is implicated in these mechanisms. This argument does not assume

that varying geographical contexts *will* produce differences. Instead it treats

geography as a condition that shapes how what happens in social services

organizations, for example, actually unfolds the way that it does. This argument of

geography as a social force that conditions organizational behaviour, inequality, and

social capital can be used by scholars to understand: (1) the institutional constraints

on organizational behaviour (i.e., why some organizations are unable to deliver

standardized programs) (2) institutional change (i.e., the ways that standardized

programs get taken up across geographical settings and how this differs from other

community responses to social problems [e.g. religion, family]) (3) the organization

of power relations (i.e., the allocation of funding to some organizations and/or

settings and not others) (4) the relationship between structure, agency, and

inequality (i.e. social mobility in relation to the geographical organization of social

services) and (5) neighbourhood effects (i.e., the distribution of social disadvantage

across geographical settings).

7.6: POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Beyond the theoretical contributions of this research, this dissertation has a number

of implications for practice. Generally, we can and should acknowledge how

geography affects social policy, organizational practices, knowledge about, and

access to social services in ways that are not always obvious. To this we do not need

a complete overhaul of this existing social system. Instead what is needed is a

revision to the system that produces a safety net that fully and comprehensively catches people *where* they are located. Simply put, revising the welfare system requires meeting people where they are. I suggest that this can be done through the following efforts:

Policy Response One: Revise Institutional and Cultural Thinking

Efforts must be spent revising institutional thinking about the needs of communities. Specifically the outcomes of 'awareness campaigns' must remain in the communities with which this knowledge is obtained (see chapter six). More effort must also put into constructing strategies for challenging stigmas in rural communities that surround thinking about social inequality. To do this I suggest that local councils be erected where discussions can be had between residents and social services organizations about the state of everyday life in the community. These efforts should include a diverse group of people who live with these social difficulties, and who have stakes in (e.g., organizations), or are sympathetic to addressing these needs (e.g., advocates). The outcome of these efforts may shape the ways that people in marginalized social positions advocate for what they need (see chapter four). I am mindful to the fact that people living in/resisting marginalized social positions should "be at the table" for policy activities that affect their lives. However such strategies must recognize that people's participation is not a sure thing (St. Denis 1992). It may be difficult for people to participate because of the constraints on their lives (e.g., precarious employment, limited childcare,

transportation). Being cognizant and responsive to these issues can ensure that the process of raising awareness is truly inclusive.

Policy Response Two: Enhance Organizational Capacity

In order to rethink organizational capacity, money and resources should be allocated to either *bolster* existing social service programs across geographically disparate contexts to meet these needs, or to create *different* programs that effectively respond to needs. Doing so will respond to local needs identified in awareness strategies (i.e., the distribution of monies will better translate knowledge about people's needs into organizational practice). I am not suggesting that monies be removed from organizations but that more work is done to define/redefine what can be done. Doing so may respond to the inability of some organizational actors to document structural barriers in their provision of social services (see chapter five).

Importantly, while this dissertation shows that one-stop shops are shaped by geography in ways that do not match policy expectations this does not mean that we should necessarily get rid of these policy models. My suggestion for the enhancement of organizational capacities means that there can still be a widespread policy *expectation* to respond to people's needs in ways that are standardized, but what that response actually looks like on the ground can be specific to the setting where people are located. For example, when young people across geographical communities do not have a roof over their head, are couch surfing and are homeless,

we can provide a response that is appropriate given where they are situated. For
example, in a rural community it might not be feasible to have a 46 bed shelter but
instead maybe a host-home program where youth acquire housing by staying in the
homes of community members. The important part here is *that there is a response*
and that the need is met with institutional recognition albeit funding, documentation
and most importantly the concrete resource. In essence, we need to keep this one-
stop model but revise it to insert geography. This is how we support young people in
marginalized social positions.

Policy Response Three: Establish Brokerage Processes

How rural contexts impact people's experiences of disadvantage and the
organizations they use to get out these positions is indisputably unique. My guess is
that in rural contexts there may be other informal means beyond social services that
are important to dealing with experiences of disadvantage. In the absence of both
organizations and other informal avenues of support, some people may find rural
contexts so deprived that they leave in search for something better.

In thinking about Amy I am struck by the potential of policy strategies to fill
structural holes (Burt 2004) between people and social service organizations. Amy
undoubtedly did this work by herself because there were no established
organizational processes to link her to the Urban Youth Centre or services in the city
of Grayson (i.e., services that responded to her needs). To this, I suggest that

processes seek to mobilize people *across spatial contexts* to existing organizations. This can happen when people are literally organizationally supported in moving towards social resources (i.e., transportation). This may also require an investment in communication strategies between social service organizations that regularly and continually move resources across contexts (i.e., efforts that provide consistent *mobile* resources that can be delivered within organizational settings that are more disadvantaged in terms of social capital).

Together these efforts may produce *mutual* discursive/cultural and structural change to the field of social services. For example, if we revise our thinking about social disadvantage, we may then change what social resources become funded to local organizations. Subsequently, the redistribution of resources to organizations may – over time – alter the positions of organizations within the field of social services. We cannot know if these policy recommendations will bring parity in terms of people's access to, and receipt of social services. Moreover, the uptake of these suggestions will not, or will be slow to, alter the histories of established organizational ties, and social invisibility. Theoretically the notion of fields, by definition, suggests that equality is impossible among organizational positions (Emirbayer and Johnson 2008). Moreover, institutional scholarship suggests that there is *some* agency (tied to positions of power) that makes standardized institutional behaviour always a contested matter (Clegg 2010).

Nevertheless, we can imagine that if fulfilled, these policy changes may bring the welfare system *closer* to the promise of a client-centered, "one-stop shop."

7.8: FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research that investigates the organization of institutions and/or the relationship between local organizations and experiences of disadvantage should consider drawing on the insights gained from this dissertation. As this research has shown, geography is a social force that is important to – individual and organizational – social capital. Importantly, the geographical dimensions of social capital have important implications for how we think about social inequality. Whether physical, material, and/or symbolic, geography enters into the ways that people experience and move out of marginalized social positions. Geography also shapes the institutional processes that organize how social services respond to people's needs.

Throughout the research process four complexities were identified that myself or other scholars might investigate in future research:

1. The impact of the acquisition of social capital on future action.
2. Institutional processes and the intersection of power relations.
3. Variation of social service delivery across geographical contexts.
4. Marginalized young people's migration from rural to urban settings.

Investigating these research complexities may provide a more nuanced analysis of

the role of geography in the experiences of, and responses to, inequality. Below I provide details about how each of these suggestions emerged through the research process.

The Impact of the Acquisition of Social Capital

Many young people I spoke with across the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch said that organization was important to their lives (see chapter four). In particular, I found it intriguing that despite the disparate ability of the Rural Branch to provide a more comprehensive response to their lives, young people felt that the organization was successful in providing them with necessary and important skills. Continuing with a comparative case study approach, I suggest that future research might take up this observation in two ways.

First, drawing on social capital theory, future research should consider how the acquisition of social resources through organizations becomes embodied and translated into future action (Bourdieu 1984). Maintaining a focus on the ways that geography shapes experiences of inequality, such research might comparatively investigate the intended consequences of social institutions *once people leave their purview.* Drawing on this dissertation, such future research may consider how access to social resources renders subsequent *action* (i.e., maintaining employment, completing schooling; staying housed) within broader contexts that, for some, are organized in ways that maintain positions of disadvantage.

Second, future research ought to investigate the ways that youth who are *not* connected to social services deal with experiences of marginalization and disadvantage. What forms of social support exist for youth beyond social services? How do these youth fare in comparison to those integrated into institutionalized systems of support? How do these informal support systems work across geographical locations? Addressing these questions will help to extend my findings of the relationship between social resources and geography.

Institutional Processes and the Intersection of Power Relations

In my field observations it became increasingly apparent that social and organizational ties were coordinated to bring some young people, and not others, into the organization (see chapter four). In examining how this process of inclusion and exclusion happened, I observed an interesting racial component that differed across the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch. In particular I found that there were differences in the ways that the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch tried to get racialized and immigrant youth to access its services.

The Urban Youth Centre and Immigrant Youth.

In the Urban Youth Centre I interviewed a worker who had been hired to find out "why immigrant youth don't come here" (Beulah). Specifically, Beulah was involved in a one-year contract called the *Me and You Project* with the Urban Youth Centre. She explained that in this role she was expected to

> Go out into the community and share my own experiences that I went
>
> through and what I did to sort of get over those experiences. And then I
>
> talked about the Urban Youth Centre and their services and how the
>
> organization helped me overcome any barriers that were there because I was
>
> a newcomer.

Beulah tells me that in the City of Grayson the immigrant population includes

Columbians, Hispanics and Africans. Beulah's work determined that "The Urban

Youth Centre doesn't generally serve immigrant youth. Immigrant youth don't come

downtown to Sherway and Weirs unless there's something specific that they want."

This was a peculiar discovery for Beulah who tells me that from her own experience

she knows that there are barriers – beyond what the Urban Youth Centre sets out to

support – that immigrant youth are faced with. In her efforts to find these youth she

discovers that:

> Hardly no one comes from that experience. And that was the whole point of
>
> my project. So for a long stretch of the summer I would be just sitting,
>
> reading, or in the office doing paper work trying to book speaking evenings
>
> so I can go and talk to immigrants. But then I think... I would be more nervous
>
> if those people came to the Centre. Do I even want immigrants coming to
>
> here? Is this a place that's good for them? And sometimes I think "no", cuz'
>
> when I went to places like the Resource Centre or The BackYard the people
>
> there have a lot of support for people like me. So part of me was like, "Oh

there should be more immigrants here", but then the other part was like, "no

this is not the place for them."

In Grayson, organizations that serve immigrant youth are primarily connected to the

Urban Youth Centre through the Children's Aid Society (i.e., see table 4.5, Doing it

Together Agenda). Ironically, this tie does not enmesh the work of the Urban Youth

Centre with immigrant serving organizations. Rather, these organizational ties

demarcate *boundaries* around who does what and with whom.

The Rural Branch and Indigenous Youth.

In the Rural Branch interviews revealed that staff physically go into the local

Indigenous Reserve to "get more clients" (James). James tells me that as an

employment counsellor he tries to get as many young people as possible onto his

caseload. Most often this work involves arranging workshops in the only local high

school where he "gives the usual spiel about what we do and how we help" (field

note February 2012, Rural Branch). These workshops also take place in the Urban

Youth Centre and are effective at bringing young people into the organization

(Adelina, interview). However, in the Rural Branch the organizational practice of

going to where young people are involves another context. James tells me that he

often goes into the local Indigenous Reserve (with 30km) to meet with potential

clients. These young people *do not* come to the Rural Branch but rather service goes

to them. James tells me that he does this because the "Manager knows someone in

the Centre there." So here we see an informal social tie being used to organize young people's interaction with social service organizations. This practice matters, James continues, because "the Indigenous community is part of our program catchment area. We have to get at them."

The activation of social and organizational ties has implications for the types of young people that actually make it *inside* the Urban Youth Centre or its Rural Branch. Taken together, these observations show that in the Urban Youth Centre immigrant youth are *not pushed* into the organization because other organizations are already providing service to them. Here organizational ties seem to be important for delineating which institutional actors do what and whose needs are addressed through its services. Conversely, Indigenous youth *are targeted* through the Rural Branch because it can provide a service that others are not already delivering. However, in this instance, Indigenous youth are never seen inside of the organizational setting.

At the outset these observations suggest that the larger network of organizations in the urban setting as compared to rural explains this discrepancy in the organizational activities that target racialized and immigrant youth. Perhaps less obvious are the racialized effects that these organizational ties produce. Indigenous youth do not/rarely come into the Rural Branch, likewise, racialized youth do not/rarely go into the Urban Youth Centre. In the urban context, immigrant youth are still visible, just through particular organizational spaces. Yet in the rural

context, racialized youth remain obscured, despite being in the "catchment area" of the organization. Future research might investigate the ways that race intersects to shape the field of social services and the organizational activities that provide opportunities for marginalized people. But perhaps race relations are only part of what is going on.

From an institutionalist lens, institutional arrangements that shape organizational behaviour reflect social understandings of the everyday world. I suggest that future research should more actively put this theoretical tenet in conversation with notions of power relations. For example, feminist institutionalists argue that gender relations are embedded in the ways that institutional environments facilitate and constrain behaviour. Such a focus helps to elucidate the "gender dynamics in broader institutional processes" (Mackay, Kenny, and Chappell 2010: 579). Yet, from a feminist institutionalist perspective, the *intersection* of gender with other power relations is ignored. For example, examining how the intersection of gender, race, and class influence how 'need' is constructed and responded to by organizations across geographical contexts may help to clarify how particular experiences remain invisible in rural as opposed to urban contexts. Such a focus on the intersection of power relations may also help to explain the shape and form of organizational ties across geographical contexts (e.g., what is the relationship between organizational "posts" within the field and the intersection of gender, race, and class? Specifically, why does the Urban Youth Centre not have

formal ties with the 'BackYard' but the Rural Branch has ties to the Reserve?

Moreover, what institutional processes (e.g., allocation and distribution of money)

shape these relationships?

Variation of Social Service Delivery Across Geographical Contexts

While this dissertation argues that geography is a social force that organizes

people's experiences of inequality and the organizational responses to them, it

attempts to avoid making sweeping theoretical claims about the effect of rurality or

urbanity. Although my case demonstrates that the expectations of standard and

uniform responses to inequality are undoubtedly shaped by the locations where

people access them, I recognize that not all rural contexts are the same. They are not

all going to be difficult in the same way for disadvantaged people, just like urban

contexts are all not going to be advantageous (Small 2004, 2008). Future research

should investigate mismatches identified in *Unequally Placed* and the work of other

social service organizations. For example, addressing such variation may help to

demonstrate how organizations in rural contexts acquire social capital in ways that

better respond to the needs of communities; concerning *Unequally Placed* this will

illuminate how institutional environments change (Jepperson 1991) and how this

affects organizations relations within the field (Emirbayer and Johnson 2008).

Marginalized Young People's Migration from Rural to Urban Settings

This dissertation investigates the relationship between organizations and

inequality within bounded geographical contexts. But coming back to the account of

Amy reveals one remaining concern. Amy migrated between the Town of

Hewardsville and the City of Grayson. In doing so, she became connected to a

different social service landscape that better responded to her needs. This feature of

Amy's story is not unique. At least seven[35] other youth spoke about accessing social

services across geographical contexts. The motivations young people spoke about

for moving between contexts was generally twofold: 1) to escape the difficulties

they were facing (e.g., criminality, violence, addictions) or 2) to *move towards* better

organizational supports (e.g., Ontario Works, housing programs). Migration poses an

interesting process that people actively engage in that may mitigate embodied social

capital processes. Future research might investigate how geographically embodied

habitus (see chapter four) shapes migration decisions, social service use, and

outcomes.

7.7: STUDY LIMITATIONS

There are three limitations to this dissertation that should be addressed. First this

research employs a comparative case study method. While the analysis attempts to

provide an in-depth analysis of the interaction between micro, meso, and macro

level processes, it should be noted that the articulation of these processes "develops

within the case" (Swanborn 2010: 9, emphasis added). For example, this approach

did not allow for an analysis of all/more of the organizations within the field of

---

[35] Kevan, Cee, and Marissa (urban-rural), and Dixon, Joel, Luc, and Mitchell (rural-urban).

social services. In short, while the case details may not generalizable the argument I

make throughout highlights important social processes are embedded in many

social support systems.

The second limitation surrounds the strategies I used to collect data about

organizational and institutional processes. While I was able to observe some of these

processes in practice, for others I relied on interviews with youth and staff to

document how these practices take place. I do not believe that this hindered the

analysis, but rather served as a research complication that centered on my ability to

access confidentiality agreements inherent to the work of social services. For

example, although youth and staff separately agreed to let me sit in on intake

processes, I did not gain access to completed documents. This limited my ability to

assess the ways that staff documented young people's needs (i.e., Rural Branch staff

have approximately 30 clients each on their *Employment Service* caseloads while

Urban Youth Centre staff have roughly 100 clients each). Despite this obstacle, I used

interview data to map out these processes. I then went back into the field to ask

more questions about any missing or unclear pieces. This allowed me to gain access

to regulating texts (e.g., policies and protocols). I do not believe that a more

observational/textual approach would have altered my findings.

Finally, it is important to note that the field of social services is always in

motion. By this I mean that social policies, organizational protocols, organizational

structuring (e.g., staffing, and program delivery), and funding allocations are always

changing. This might make coming to widespread or permanent understandings of the role of geography in experiences of, and responses to, inequality more challenging. Or maybe this dimension of the institution of social service will encourage those interested in helping to support the lives of marginalized people to identify, challenge, and redesign the entire system. I suggest we start by paying closer attention to how people in marginalized positions use social service organizations across geographical settings and what happens once they are there. For some, this relationship is *unequally placed*.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A
McMaster University Research Ethics Board Certificate

MREB Clearance Certificate   Page 1 of 1

McMaster University
Inspiring Innovation and Discovery

McMaster University Research Ethics Board (MREB)
c/o Research Office for Administrative Development and Support, MREB Secretariat, GH-305, e-mail: ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca

CERTIFICATE OF ETHICS CLEARANCE TO INVOLVE HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH

Application Status: New ☐ Addendum ☑ Project Number: 2011 212

TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT:

Inequality Regimes, Youth Service Organizations, and Youth Identities

Faculty Investigator(s)/ Supervisor(s)	Dept./Address	Phone	E-Mail
M. Heath	Sociology	23620	mheath@mcmaster.ca

Student Investigator(s)	Dept./Address	Phone	E-Mail
J. Braimoh	Sociology	905-536-3895	braimoja@mcmaster.ca

The application in support of the above research project has been reviewed by the MREB to ensure compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement and the McMaster University Policies and Guidelines for Research Involving Human Participants. The following ethics certification is provided by the MREB:

☐ The application protocol is cleared as presented without questions or requests for modification.

☑ The application protocol is cleared as revised without questions or requests for modification.

☐ The application protocol is cleared subject to clarification and/or modification as appended or identified below.

COMMENTS AND CONDITIONS: Ongoing clearance is contingent on completing the annual completed/status report. A "Change Request" or amendment must be made and cleared before any alterations are made to the research.

Reporting Frequency:	Annual: Feb-06-2013	Other:

Date: Feb-06-2012   Chair, Dr. Br. Detlor:

Amendment #1, cleared Apr. 2, 2012

https://ethics.mcmaster.ca/mreb/print_approval.cfm?ID=2747   4/2/2012

Appendix B

Recruitment Materials

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR RESEARCH IN YOUTH SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

I am looking for volunteers to take part in a study of
youth social services provided by organizations on the following days:

MAY 24,25,31 and JUNE 1

As a participant in this study, I look to:

- Conduct interviews where I would ask you questions about your experience in accessing services from ███████████████ (name of the organizational site)
- ███████████████ (Organization name) will not be given the names of people who decide to participate in this study.

*Your participation would involve meeting with me
for approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour.*

FOR YOUR TIME YOU WILL BE GIVEN A $20 GIFT CARD TO EITHER TIM HORTONS OR McDONALD'S

For more information about this study, or to volunteer for this study, please contact:

Jessica Braimoh

Department of Sociology, McMaster University
at: (519)878-8707 or Email: *braimoja@mcmaster.ca*

The results of this study will be available in 2013. You can contact me by email if you would like to receive a summary of these results

This study has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the Office of Research Ethics, McMaster University

McMaster Research Ethics Board Secretariat
Telephone: (905) 525-9140 ext. 23142
c/o Office of Research Services
E-mail: ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca

Sample Recruitment Script

Jessica Braimoh,

Doctoral Candidate in Sociology

Study Title: Youth Services Organizations, Inequality Regimes, and Youth Identities

***NOTE: Email Recruitment Script sent on behalf of the Principal Investigator, Jessica Braimoh, by the Manager and/or members of the Leadership Team of the Organizations of interest.

_____

Sample E-mail Subject line: A Study about Youth Services in Rural and Urban Communities

Dear Staff,

Jessica Braimoh, a McMaster student, has contacted the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch asking us to tell our employees about a study she is doing on youth services in rural and urban communities. This research is part of her Doctor of Philosophy program in Sociology at McMaster University. The following is a brief description of her study. If you are interested in getting more information about taking part in Jessica's study please read the brief description below and or **CONTACT HER DIRECTLY** by using her McMaster telephone number or email address. **Tel: 905-525-9140 Ext: 21345** or **braimoja@mcmaster.ca**

Jessica hopes to learn more about how youth access service in rural and urban communities and how organizations respond to those needs. Jessica intends to conduct one-on-one interviews (45min-1hour) in a mutually decided place and time that is a convenient for you. She will work out those details with you. In addition, with your permission, and the permission of your client, Jessica looks to study how youth access service by observing our intake process and how their needs become translated into service plans. With your permission, and the permission of your client, Jessica looks to analyze these intake forms off-site.

Ms. Braimoh has explained that you can stop being in the study at any time. She has asked us to attach a copy of her information letter that gives you full details about her study and how a summary of the study results can be obtained. The names of those who decide to participate in this study will not be given to the organization or the Leadership Team. In addition, this study has been reviewed and cleared by the McMaster Research Ethics Board. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a participant or about the way the study is being conducted you may contact:

> McMaster Research Ethics Board Secretariat
> Telephone: (905) 525-9140 ext. 23142
> c/o Office of Research Services
> E-mail: ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca

Sincerely,

[Leadership Team]

Appendix C
Letters of Information and Consent Forms

DATE: _____

YOUTH LETTER OF INFORMATION/CONSENT

A study about organizations that provide support to youth living in rural and urban communities

Principal Investigator:	**Faculty Supervisor:**
Jessica Braimoh	Name: Dr. Melanie Heath
Department of Sociology	Department of Sociology
McMaster University	McMaster University
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada	Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
(905) 525-9140 ext. 21345	**(905) 525-9140 ext. 23620**
E-mail: braimoja@mcmaster.ca	E-mail: mheath@mcmaster.ca

What I am trying to discover:

- You are invited to take part in this study about how organizations provide services to youth living in rural and urban communities. Generally, I am interested in exploring how organizations respond to youth needs in rural and urban communities. I look to study the ways that services are created and delivered to meet the needs of youth in these different communities and what organization do to help youth. With your help, I hope to learn about how you access services provided by the One Stop Youth Centre (OSYC)[36] and the You-Turn Youth Centre (YTYC). I also hope to learn about what makes these services successful for youth and what things can be improved.

---

[36] Like other identifying material, the names of the two organizational sites have been given pseudonyms. In my letter of information and consent forms I purposely did not use geographical distinguishers in these names so as to not bias the responses from the research participants. Moreover, while geography differentiated where the delivery of social services took place, prior to data collection I had little evidence that geography was in fact a social force shaping what actually takes place. Later I denoted The One Stop Youth Centre (OSYC) as the Urban Youth Centre and the You-Turn Youth Centre (YTYC) as the Rural Branch.

What will happen during the study?

- In order to complete this study I would like to:
    - (A) conduct one-on-one interviews with youth who access services through One Stop Youth Centre (OSYC) and the You-Turn Youth Centre (YTYC);
    - (B) observe how the intake processes works for youth accessing services; and
    - (C) examine completed needs determination forms (intake forms)
- In order to partake in this study you may choose which element of the study you would like to participate in. You may also choose to be involved in all elements of the study.
- During the **one-on-one interview** I will ask you questions about your experience with the OSYC and/or the YTYC. I will also be asking you for some background information like your age and gender. With your permission during this interview I would like to audio-record our conversation. The interview will take approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour complete. The location of this interview is up to you. The interview can, if you wish, be held at OSYC or the YTYC, but please be aware that others may see that you have chosen to participate.
- Questions that I ask will help me to examine how services at the OSYC and/or the YTYC are meeting the needs of youth. In order to do this I will ask you some personal questions. These questions will help me examine the needs of youth and how organizations respond them. Examples of these questions include:
    - What things were happening in your life that brought you to the OSYC and/or the YTYC?
    - What does the OSYC and/or the YTYC do for youth?
- If you participate in the one-on-one interview will be given a $20 gift card for your time to either McDonald's or Tim Hortons
- With your consent, and the consent of your assigned worker from either the OSYC or the YTYC, I would like to **observe what happens during the needs determination process (initial intake)**. During the intake I will observe how youth needs are translated into services offered by the OSYC and/or the YTYC. With your permission, and the permission of your assigned worker, I will ask for the release of a copy of your intake forms for analysis. In looking at these forms I look to analyze how youth needs become plans for service. For your privacy, your name, and other identifying information, like your date of birth, will be removed from these intake forms.
- In addition to these interviews and observations I will be coming to OSYC and YTYC to hang out in the Resource Centre. Here I hope to learn what it is like to access service from the One Stop Youth Centre and the You-Turn Youth Centre. During this time you are invited to tell me about how their programs and services work.

Are there any risks to doing study?

- It is not likely that there will be any harms or discomforts associated with your participation in this study. However, you may feel uncomfortable (anxious or uneasy) about answering questions during the interview. You may also worry about what others would think if they knew what you said.

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- You **do not** need to answer questions that you do not want to answer or that make you feel uncomfortable.
- Please be aware that by participating in this study on-site at the OSYC or the YTYS others (youth clients or agency workers) may see that you have chosen to take part in this study. This may lead to others asking you questions about what you said and what occurred during your involvement in the study. You **do not** need to answer any questions that others, including agency workers, ask of you about your participation in this study.
- Below, I describe the steps I am taking to protect your privacy.

Are there any benefits to doing this study?

- The research may not benefit you directly; however, my research goals may indirectly benefit you by giving the One Stop Youth Centre and the You-Turn Youth Centre better information on the services that are useful to you. I hope that what is learned as a result of this study will help us better understand youth services and what makes them successful or not. This could help other youth who are looking for assistance and support and could help organizations and funding groups better create programs that meet the needs and requests of youth.

Who will know what I said or did in the study?

- You are participating in this study confidentially. Every effort will be made to protect your confidentiality and privacy. However, if you choose to participate in this study in either an on-site interview or on-site observations, others may figure out that you are participating in the study.
- If you agree, all information that you tell me during the interview will be audio-recorded. After transcribing (writing out our conversation) will, the audio-recording of our conversation be destroyed. My transcripts and notes will be seen only by me and the professor who is supervising my work. All notes and transcriptions made during the one-on-one interview will only be kept in my possession on a memory stick and in hard copy in a locked password protected cabinet. No one will know you have participated in this study unless you choose to tell them. Once the study is complete, an archive of your transcriptions, without identifying information, will be kept in my possession in a secure location.
- All intake forms collected and analyzed will be kept in my possession in a locked password protected cabinet. These forms will not be analyzed at the YTYS or the OSYC. All forms released to me will be de-identified (will not include personal information, like your name, age, and address). Intake forms released to me will be destroyed after I share my research findings.
- During the study I will create a pseudonym (false name) for you. This pseudonym will be used in my written submission for my doctoral dissertation at McMaster University and any other research publications that come out of this research. The work setting, job title, and name of the community will also be given pseudonyms. Your identity and/or pseudonym will not be given to Youth Opportunities Unlimited, the Next Wave Youth Centre, Youth Opportunities Unlimited, or any other community partner or service provider. *However, others may be able to identify you*

on the basis of the comments you make. Please keep this in mind in deciding what to tell me.

Legally Required Disclosure

- If legal authorities require the information you have provided, such as in the case of child abuse, I am obligated to reveal it.

What if I change my mind about being in the study?

- Your participation in this study is voluntary. It is your choice to be part of the study or not. If you decide to be part of the study, you can decide to stop, at any time, even after signing the consent form or any time during the study. If you decide to withdraw, there will be no consequences to you. If you decide to stop any information you have shared will be destroyed unless you indicate otherwise.
- You can refuse to answer any of my questions and still remain in the study. Your decision whether or not to be part of the study will not change or stop the way you use services at these agencies.
- If you participate in the one-one-one interview and then decide to withdraw from the study you will not be asked to return the $20 gift card.
- Please be aware that after I analyze the data you will no longer be able to withdraw from the study. If you wish to withdraw from the study please do so by **December 31 2012.** You can withdraw by either contacting me via phone or email.

How do I find out what was learned in this study?

- I expect to have this study completed by approximately September 2013. If you would like a brief summary of the results, please let me know how you would like it sent to you.

Questions about the Study

- Please note that I have given false names to the youth centres to protect the identities of research participants.
- If you have questions or need more information about the study itself, please contact me, or my faculty supervisor at:

Jessica Braimoh   Dr. Melanie Heath, Assistant Professor
Department of Sociology, KTH #606   Department of Sociology
McMaster University   McMaster University
1280 Main Street, West   1280 Main Street, West
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, L8S 4M4   Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, L8S 4M4
(905) 525-9140 ext. 21345   905.525.9140 ext. 23260
E-mail: braimoja@mcmaster.ca   **E-mail:** mheath@mcmaster.ca

This study has been reviewed by the McMaster University Research Ethics Board and received ethics clearance. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a participant or about the way the study is conducted, please contact:

McMaster Research Ethics Secretariat
Telephone: (905) 525-9140 ext. 23142
c/o Research Office for Administrative Development and Support
E-mail: ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca

CLIENT/YOUTH CONSENT

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by **Jessica Braimoh, of McMaster University.**

I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my involvement in this study and have received additional details if I have requested.

I understand that if I agree to participate in this study, I may withdraw from the study at any time. I understand that **after December 31, 2012 I will no longer be able to withdraw from the study**. I have been given a copy of this form. I agree to participate in the study.

Please indicate **YES or NO** for your choices in participating in this study:

1. I agree to an interview: _____

2. I agree that the interview can be audio-recorded: _____

3. I agree to have Jessica Braimoh observe my intake with my assigned worker: _____

4. I agree to release my intake form to Jessica Braimoh: _____

5. I would like to receive a summary of the study's results: _____

    Please send the results to (i.e., mailing address, email):

    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____

Signature: _____

Name of Participant (Printed) _____

(For Jessica to fill out) Pseudonym given: _____

DATE: _____

WORKER LETTER OF INFORMATION / CONSENT

A study about organizations that provide support to youth living in rural and urban communities

Principal Investigator:	**Faculty Supervisor:**
Jessica Braimoh	Name: Dr. Melanie Heath
Department of Sociology	Department of Sociology
McMaster University	McMaster University
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada	Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
(905) 525-9140 ext. 21345	**(905) 525-9140 ext. 23620**
E-mail: braimoja@mcmaster.ca	E-mail: mheath@mcmaster.ca

Purpose of the Study:

The study looks to investigate the ways that organizations provide services to youth in rural and urban communities. Generally, I am interested in exploring how organizations respond to youth needs in rural and urban communities. I look to investigate the ways that services are created and delivered to meet the needs of youth in these different communities and the work processes that are involved in helping youth. As such, you are invited to take participate by provide input about the ways that you deliver services to youth in your position at either the One Stop Youth Centre (OSYC) or the You-Turn Youth Centre (YTYC).

Procedures involved in the Research:

In order to complete this study I would like to: (A) conduct one-on-one interviews with Agency Workers who provide services to youth through the aforementioned agencies; B) observe how the intake processes works for youth accessing services; and (C) examine completed needs determination forms (intake forms). In order to partake in this study you may choose which element of the study you would like to participate in. You may also choose to be involved in all elements of the study.

During the **one-on-one interview** I will ask you questions about your role in providing services to youth. I will also be asking you for some background information like your education and training. With your permission during this interview I would like to audio-tape our conversation. The interview will take <u>approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour to complete</u>. The location of this interview is up to you. The interview can, if you wish, be held at the OSYC or the YTYC, but please be aware that others may see that you have chosen to participate. Examples of the type of questions I will ask include:

- What types of youth access service at the One Stop Youth Centre and/or the You-Turn Youth Centre?
- Describe a typical day for you at One Stop Youth Centre and/or the You-Turn Youth Centre

With your consent, and the consent of your youth client, I would like to observe what happens during the needs determination process (initial intake). During the intake I will observe how youths' needs are translated into services offered by the OSYC and/or the YTYC. With your permission, and the permission of your youth client, I will ask for the release of a copy of the intake forms for analysis. In looking at these forms I look to analyze how youth needs become plans for service. For your privacy, your name, the name of the youth, and other identifying information will be removed from these intake forms.

In addition to these interviews and observations, I will be coming to the One Stop Youth Centre and the You-Turn Youth Centre to spend time in the Resource Centre. Here I hope to learn what it is like to provide services to youth through the One Stop Youth Centre and the You-Turn Youth Centre. During this time you are invited to tell me about how organizational programs and services work.

<u>**Potential Harms, Risks or Discomforts:**</u>

It is not likely that there will be any harms or discomforts associated with the interview process described above. You may feel find it difficult or uncomfortable to recount the processes involved in the work that you do with youth clients. You may also worry about what others would think if they knew what you said. You do not need to answer questions that you do not want to answer or that make you feel uncomfortable.

Please be aware that by participating in this study on-site at the OSYC or the YTYS others (youth clients or agency workers) may see that you have chosen to take part in this study. This may lead to others asking you questions about what you said and what occurred during your involvement in the study. You **do not** need to answer any questions that others, including agency workers, ask of you about your participation in this study.

Below I describe the steps I am taking to protect your privacy.

Potential Benefits:

The research will not benefit you directly; however, my research goals may indirectly benefit you by giving the One Stop Youth Centre and the You-Turn Youth Centre better information on the support you need to better provide services to youth. I hope to learn the social processes involved in providing assistance to youth in rural and urban communities. I hope that what is learned as a result of this study will help to better understand the role of organizations in providing assistance to youth. The findings of this study could help organizations and funding groups better create programs that meet the needs and requests of youth.

Confidentiality:

You are participating in this study confidentially. Every effort will be made to protect your confidentiality and privacy. However, if you choose to participate in this study in either an on-site interview or on-site observations, others may deduce that you are participating in the study.

If you agree, all information that you tell me during the interview will be audio-recorded. After transcription the recording of our conversation will be destroyed. All notes and transcriptions will only be kept in my possession on a memory stick and in hard copy in a locked password protected cabinet. My transcripts and notes will be seen only by me and the professor who is supervising my work. Once the study is complete, an archive of your transcriptions, without identifying information, will be kept in my possession in a secure location.

All intake forms collected and analyzed will be kept in my possession in a locked password protected cabinet. Forms released to me will be de-identified. These forms will <u>not</u> be analyzed at the YTYS or the OSYC. Intake forms released to me will be destroyed after the dissemination of my research findings.

No one will know if you have participated in this study unless you choose to tell them.

During the study I will create a pseudonym for you. This pseudonym will be used in my written submission for my doctoral dissertation at McMaster University and any other research publications that come out of this research. The work setting, job title, and name of the community will also be given pseudonyms. Your identity and/or pseudonym will not be given to the One Stop Youth Centre, the You-Turn Youth Centre, or any other community partner or service provider. *However, others may be able to identify you on the basis of the comments you make. Please keep this in mind in deciding what to tell me.*

Once the study is complete, an archive of the data, without identifying information, will be kept in my possession in a secure location.

Legally Required Disclosure:

If legal authorities require the information you have provided, I am obligated to reveal it.

Participation and Withdrawal:

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It is your choice to be part of the study or not. If you decide to be part of the study you can decide to stop at any time, even after signing the consent form or any time during the study. If you decide to withdraw there will be no consequences to you. If you decide to stop any information you have shared will be destroyed unless you indicate otherwise.

You can decline to answer any of my questions and still remain in the study. Your decision whether or not to be part of the study will not change or stop the way the terms of your employment at the One Stop Youth Centre or the You-Turn Youth Centre.

Please be aware that after I analyze the data you will no longer be able to withdraw from the study. If you wish to withdraw from the study please do so by **August 31 2012**. You can withdraw by either contacting me via phone or email.

Information about the Study Results:

I expect to have this study completed by approximately September 2013. If you would like a brief summary of the results, please let me know how you would like it sent to you.

Questions about the Study:

Please note that I have given false names to the youth centres to protect the identities of research participants.

If you have questions or need more information about the study itself, please contact me, or my faculty supervisor at:

Jessica Braimoh   Dr. Melanie Heath, Assistant Professor
Department of Sociology, KTH #606   Department of Sociology
McMaster University   McMaster University
1280 Main Street, West   1280 Main Street, West
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, L8S 4M4   Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, L8S 4M4
(905) 525-9140 ext. 21345   905.525.9140 ext. 23260
E-mail: braimoja@mcmaster.ca   **E-mail:** mheath@mcmaster.ca

This study has been reviewed by the McMaster University Research Ethics Board and received ethics clearance. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a participant or about the way the study is conducted, please contact:

McMaster Research Ethics Secretariat
Telephone: (905) 525-9140 ext. 23142
c/o Research Office for Administrative Development and Support
E-mail: ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca

AGENCY WORKER CONSENT

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by **Jessica Braimoh, of McMaster University.**

I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my involvement in this study and to receive additional details I requested.

I understand that if I agree to participate in this study, I may withdraw from the study at any time. I understand that **after August 31, 2012 I will no longer be able to withdraw from the study**. I have been given a copy of this form. I agree to participate in the study.

Please indicate **YES or NO** for your choices in participating in this study:

1. I agree to an interview: _____

2. I agree that the interview can be audio-recorded: _____

3. I agree to have Jessica Braimoh observe my intake with my assigned worker: _____

4. I agree to release my intake form to Jessica Braimoh: _____

5. I would like to receive a summary of the study's results: _____

    Please send the results to (i.e., mailing address, email):

    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____

Signature: _____

Name of Participant (Printed) _____

Pseudonym given: _____

Appendix D

Staff Employment Details

Staff Name	Work Location	Position	Number of Years with the Organization
James Moore	Rural Branch	Employment counsellor Job developer Recreational worker	4+ years
Maureen Grant	Rural Branch	Business program staff Recreational worker	1 year
Sam Christensen	Rural Branch Urban Youth Centre	Business program supervisor Recreational worker Student placement	2 years
Adelina Williamson	Rural Branch Urban Youth Centre	Public relations officer	6+ years
Laura Hilderberg	Urban Youth Centre Rural Branch	Employment counsellor	10 years
Tessa Zimmerman	Urban Youth Centre Rural Branch	Employment counsellor	6+ years
Emma Edwards	Urban Youth Centre Rural Branch	Transitional youth worker	3+ years
Leni Pakulski	Urban Youth Centre Rural Branch	Program manager - Job help services	5 years
Carla Moreno	Urban Youth Centre	Employment counsellor	2 years
Carry Matthews	Urban Youth Centre	Entrepreneur program facilitator	3 years
Josie Stone	Urban Youth Centre	Entrepreneur program supervisor	4+ years
Gill Sanders	Urban Youth Centre	Entrepreneur program staff	2 years
Beulah Willis	Urban Youth Centre	Diversity officer	1 year

Appendix E
Interview Guides

Client/Youth Participant Sample Interview Guide

Questions asked of youth participants will begin with some demographic questions. Below is a list of sample questions that will be asked of youth interview participants. Pseudonyms have been given to the organizations.

1. Do you agree to have our conversation recorded?
2. What things were happening in your life that brought you to [The One Stop Youth Centre, or the You-Turn Youth Centre]?
3. How did you find out about [The One Stop Youth Centre, or the You-Turn Youth Centre]
4. What were your first impressions of this place, the staff, and the services?
    ▪ What types of youth come here?
5. Have you been to other youth service organizations?
    ▪ If so, does [The One Stop Youth Centre, or the You-Turn Youth Centre] differ from these places? How?
    ▪ If so, is it similar to these other places? How?
6. What does [The One Stop Youth Centre, or the You-Turn Youth Centre] do for youth?
    ▪ Can you tell me about the specific stuff that happens here?
    ▪ Who uses these services?
7. Does [The One Stop Youth Centre, or the You-Turn Youth Centre] help youth-at-risk?
    ▪ How do they help?
    ▪ In your job here, do you work with youth-at-risk?
8. Do you see yourself as being a youth-at-risk?
9. Do you think other people would see you as being a youth-at-risk?
    ▪ Who are these people?
    ▪ Why do you think they would see this?
10. What kinds of things do you do here at [The One Stop Youth Centre, or the You-Turn Youth Centre]?
    ▪ What are your work responsibilities here?
        ○ What's the hardest part of your job?

- o What's the easiest part of your job?
- o Do you interact with other youth while you are at work? How do you find this?
- o Do you interact with people from the community while at work? How do you find this?
  - ▪ Have you had other jobs?
    - o If so, does this job differ from your others?
      - o How?
    - o If not, does this job meet your expectations of what a job should be like?
  - ▪ How do you feel being a staff here at [The One Stop Youth Centre, or the You-Turn Youth Centre]?
11. What has [The One Stop Youth Centre, or the You-Turn Youth Centre] done for you?
12. How do you feel the community in [Grayson or Hewardsville] reacts to you working here?
13. Are there things about yourself that this agency is not able to help you with? If so, what are those things?
14. Is there anything that you would change about your participation in these services?
15. Is there anything that you would change about the work that you do here?
16. If you could change anything here at [The One Stop Youth Centre, or the You-Turn Youth Centre] what would it be?
17. What's the best thing about working at the [The One Stop Youth Centre, or the You-Turn Youth Centre]?

Agency Staff Sample Interview Guide

Questions asked of agency participants will begin with some demographic questions. Below is a list of sample questions that will be asked of agency interview participants. Pseudonyms have been given to the organizations

    1. Do you agree to have our conversation recorded?

Organization and Work Questions:

    A. Can you tell me a little bit about what [The One Stop Youth Centre or the You-Turn Youth Centre] does?
        1. What type of youth access service here?
            ▪ What kinds of issues are they facing?
        2. How does this agency respond to those issues?
        3. Would you say that these youth are "youth-at-risk"?
            ▪ What does it mean to be a "youth-at-risk"?
        4. Are there issues that youth present here that you feel this organization is not able to help with?
        5. How does the community respond to the type of work that is done here at [The One Stop Youth Centre or the You-Turn Youth Centre]?
        6. What works well here at [The One Stop Youth Centre or the You-Turn Youth Centre]?
        7. What things could be improved?

Work Specific Questions:

    B. What is your work title?
        1. How long have you been in this position?
        2. Were you provided with any training for this position?
            ▪ Did you come with any specific work training?
        3. Please describe a typical day of work for you?
        4. Does your typical day differ from other agency workers here at the agency?
            ▪ If so how?
        5. What does the initial point of contact between you and a new youth client look like?

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            ▪ Is this always the same?

6. What is the typical youth client that you work with?
            ▪ How do you determine the type of services that youth need?
7. Does your approach change when working with youth clients?
            ▪ If so how? Can you provide an example?
8. Can you describe a time when you worked with a difficult client?
            ▪ What made this experience so difficult?

Appendix F

"SELF SERVE" by INFO.GRAYSON: The Geographical Distribution of the Field of Social Services

Social Service[37]	Location		
	City of Grayson	*Town of Hewardsville*	*Other rural places in the county*
Food banks	15 (includes the Urban Youth Centre)	2	3
Meal programs	30 (includes the Urban Youth Centre)	0	0
Emergency and Transitional Housing	6 (includes the Urban Youth Centre)	1	1
Drop in Centers and Street Outreach	13 (includes the Urban Youth Centre)	1 (includes the Rural Branch)	0
Employment	20 (includes the Urban Youth Centre)	3 (includes the Rural Branch)	4
Mental Health	9	2	1
Addictions	18	1	2
Newcomer and Immigrant Services	10	1	0

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[37] Not included in this list are the 1-800-***-**** numbers that are listed in this document. These numbers are not included because they are not specified in the document as tied to a particular region/location; that is, the assumption is that people across geographical settings can use/access these services. However, as my findings reveal in chapter four, knowledge about social services is tied to the geographical location with which one is located. As such some young people located in the Town of Hewardsville may not be knowledgeable about services only available via telephone.

Appendix G

Purchase Agreement between for Employment Service between the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities and Service Providers

The following link is an example of a 'blank' contract between the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities and Service Providers. This contract details the expectations of service providers in the provision of Employment Service.

https://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/publications/ohcrif_2015_2016_agreement.pdf

Appendix H

Employment Service Intake Forms

Intake Form 1: The Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities provides the following template for Service Providers delivering Employment Service. In the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch, this form is used first and is followed up with a second "self-assessment form" that is administered by young people themselves.

Ontario — Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities

Employment Service Participant Registration

EMPLOYMENT ONTARIO

Case Reference					
Person Reference					

Ce formulaire est aussi disponible en français

Last Name	First Name	Middle Name/Nickname

Details

Gender

☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Undisclosed

Date of Birth DD MM YYYY

Marital Status

☐ Single ☐ Married (or equivalent) ☐ Undisclosed

Status in Canada

☐ Canadian Citizen ☐ Permanent Resident ☐ Other: _____

Date Arrived in Canada DD MM YYYY

Please complete if you wish to self-identify as a member of a designated group(s). Your response to this question is entirely voluntary and will not affect your eligibility. This information will be used by the Governments of Ontario and Canada for policy analysis and statistical purposes related to employment programs and services.

☐ Newcomer ☐ Person With Disability

☐ Visible Minority ☐ First Nations

Preferred Language of Service

☐ English ☐ French

Social Insurance No.

☐ Métis ☐ Inuit

Address

Primary Mailing Address

Unit/Suite/Ap	Street Number and Name	City	Province	Postal Code

Alternate Mailing Address

Unit/Suite/Ap	Street Number and Name	City	Province	Postal Code

Contact

Primary Telephone

☐ Home ☐ Mobile ☐ Other

Area Code Tel. number Ext.:

Alternate Telephone

☐ Home ☐ Mobile ☐ Other

Area Code Tel. number Ext.:

Email Address

Education

Select your **Highest** Level of Education **Completed**

☐ Grade 0 - 8 ☐ Grade 11 ☐ Certificate of Apprenticeship ☐ Applied Degree

☐ Grade 9 ☐ Grade 12 *(or equivalent)* ☐ Journeyperson ☐ Bachelor's Degree

☐ Grade 10 ☐ OAC ☐ Certificate/Diploma ☐ Post Graduate

Institution of Highest Level of Education **Completed**

START Date DD MM YYYY	**END** Date DD MM YYYY	Type ☐ Full-Time ☐ Part-Time	Country of Institution

Program Description

Additional Education

☐ Some Apprenticeship ☐ Some College ☐ Some University

Institution of Additional Education *(may or may not have been completed)*

START Date DD MM YYYY	**END** Date DD MM YYYY	Type ☐ Full-Time ☐ Part-Time	Country of Institution

Program Description

1

Employment

List your work experience below, including volunteer work. Start with the most recent job/volunteer activity.

Employment Type

☐ Paid ☐ Self Employed ☐ Unpaid ☐ Volunteer

Name of Employer	Job Title / Duties

Country of Employment	Employment START Date DD MM YYYY	Employment END Date DD MM YYYY	

Wage Amount $	Per ☐ Hour ☐ Week ☐ Bi-weekly ☐ Month ☐ Year	Employment Hours per Week	Service Provider Use Only NOC NAICS

Reason for Leaving

Employment Type

☐ Paid ☐ Self Employed ☐ Unpaid ☐ Volunteer

Name of Employer	Job Title / Duties

Country of Employment	Employment START Date DD MM YYYY	Employment END Date DD MM YYYY	

Wage Amount $	Per ☐ Hour ☐ Week ☐ Bi-weekly ☐ Month ☐ Year	Employment Hours per Week	Service Provider Use Only NOC NAICS

Reason for Leaving

Employment Type

☐ Paid ☐ Self Employed ☐ Unpaid ☐ Volunteer

Name of Employer	Job Title / Duties

Country of Employment	Employment START Date DD MM YYYY	Employment END Date DD MM YYYY	

Wage Amount $	Per ☐ Hour ☐ Week ☐ Bi-weekly ☐ Month ☐ Year	Employment Hours per Week	Service Provider Use Only NOC NAICS

Reason for Leaving

Additional Information

How did you hear about this program?

What are your **short-term** employment/career goals?

What are your **long-term** employment/career goals

What types of work are you interested in doing? *(List by order of preference)*

Identify any necessary adjustments or accommodations at a job location,
e.g. access and/or equipment needs, that may be required due to a health issue or disability

Have you applied for Employment Insurance Benefits in the past 52 weeks?

☐ Yes   If "Yes", where? _____   ☐ No   ☐ Unsure

Last Name	First Name	Case Reference	Person Reference

Client Summary (Service Provider Use Only)

Internationally Trained Professional

☐ Yes   ☐ No

Labour force attachment

☐ Employed   ☐ Unemployed   ☐ Under-employed   ☐ Self-employed   ☐ Full-time Student   ☐ Part-time Student

Credentials not recognized in Ontario

☐ Regulated trade certificate   ☐ College diploma

☐ Regulated professional   ☐ University degree

☐ High school diploma   ☐ N/A

History of poor work retention?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

Job search skills:	☐ Unknown	☐ Needs development	☐ Satisfactory	☐ Strength
Employment skills:	☐ Unknown	☐ Needs development	☐ Satisfactory	☐ Strength
Language skills:	☐ Unknown	☐ Needs development	☐ Satisfactory	☐ Strength

Recent job loss due to labour market change?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

Employment Experience

☐ No work experience   ☐ Worked in Canada   ☐ Worked, but not in Canada

Source of Income

☐ Employment Insurance (EI)   ☐ Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)

☐ Ontario Works (OW)   ☐ Dependent of OW/ODSP

☐ Crown Ward Extended Care and Maintenance   ☐ No Income

☐ Other, *specify:* _____

Highest Level of Education/Training Completed

_____   ☐ In Canada   ☐ Outside Canada

Time out of school/work

☐ Less than 3 months   ☐ 3 to 6 months   ☐ 6 months to 12 months   ☐ more than 12 months

Validation of OW/ODSP or EI status on file?	Validation of income on file *(if Training Supports are provided)*?	
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Applicable	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Applicable	

ES proof of eligibility has been reviewed and verified *(age, legally entitled to work in Canada, etc.)*?	Case Worker *(First Name, Last Name)*	Date
☐ Yes ☐ No		DD MM YYYY

Notice of Collection and Consent

By signing below, I give consent to the Ministry to indirectly collect, use and disclose my personal information for the purposes set out above.	*By signing below, I acknowledge that my Service Provider has explained its use and disclosure of my personal information for its purposes.*
Signature of Participant Date DD MM YYYY **X**	Signature of Participant Date DD MM YYYY **X**

Intake Form 2: The Urban Youth Centre and the Rural Branch pair the first intake form with a second that includes questions that the youth is asked to indicate with a check mark if they apply to their lives. Below James (employment counsellor, Rural Branch) provides more details about this form.

> "Yeah, there's a sort of self-assessment form that is white. It has a bunch of statements followed by a ticky-box that says "me". For instance, one question might be "I feel my gender prevents me from getting some jobs" or "I feel employers might not hire me because of how I look" or "I sometimes have a hard time controlling my anger". There are also a couple longer questions like "One thing I feel I am really good at is".

> It's completely up to them to identify which questions to identify with. The purpose is to help us figure out a little more about them that might not be covered in the interview and to learn about how they view themselves. It also can help see which areas they feel insecure about and can give insight on which areas to focus on to build confidence and tune into their strengths to use as a reminder for how valuable they really are. It doesn't always help, but it can be a difference maker in some cases."

Appendix I

Young People's Time in Service across the Organizational Sites

	Rural Branch		Urban Youth Centre	
	Youth Name	Time in service [38]	Youth Name	Time in service
1	Adam Lewis	2 months (2)	Ariana Young	4 months (4)
2	Aimee Pender	1 month (1)	Kelley Brown	2 years (24)
3	Cee Jackson*[39]	1 month (1)	Blake Morrow	7 years (84)
4	Chrissy Steel	2 months (2)	Caylin Andrews	2-3 months (2.5)
5	Dakota Bryson*	1+ year (13)	Dave Baxtor	5-6 years (66)
6	Jackson Pierce	1 month (1)	Dixon Sims	~ 2 years (23)
7	JT Francis	1 week (0.25)	Joel Summers	1 week (0.25)
8	Kevan Henry*	3 months (3)	Darrell Pittman	2 months (2)
9	Marissa Alva*	< 1 month (0.75)	Joelle Black	On and off for 7 years (84)
10	Pam Wilcocks	6 weeks (1.5)	Quinne Martel	~ 3 years (35)
11	Sammy Carson	3+ years (37)	Keira Miller	On and off for 5 years (60)
12			Liam Fischer	On and off for 5 years (60)
13			Luc Boyd	3 years (36)

[38] Youth reported how long they had been using social services from either the Urban Youth Centre or its Rural Branch. In brackets I have approximated the time reported in months. This bracketed number is what has been used to calculate the average time in service for young people who use either the Urban Youth Centre or its Rural Branch.

[39] I have used an asterix (*) to signal those youth who spoke about accessing both the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch. While these instances were rare (5/33 youth) the table in Appendix I seeks to capture young people's time in service across the Urban Youth Centre and its Rural Branch.

14	████████████████	Mark Swartz	5 years (60)
15	████████████████	Michael Roland	~3 months (2.75)
16	████████████████	Michele Richard	~ 1 year (11)
17	████████████████	Nick Lawson*	9 years (108)
18	████████████████	Phil Little	3 days (0.033)
19	████████████████	Roy Pollard	3 months, but also previously accessed in 2007 (3)
20	████████████████	Sarah Luso	1 year (12)
21	████████████████	Simon Peeters	~ 3 months (2.75)
22	████████████████	Steph Hodge	8 months (8)
Average	5.68 months	2.60 years	

Appendix J

Geographical Distribution of Monies Raised by the Toque Campaign (Raising the Roof)
1994-2014

Service Providers				
Province	Located in rural settings *Population < 15,000*	Located in rural settings *Population < 30,000*	Located in urban settings *Population > 30,000*	Total
Alberta	1	-	12	13
British Colombia		1	7	8
Newfoundland	3	-	8	11
New Brunswick		-	6	6
Nova Scotia	5	-	12	17
Manitoba	1	-	4	5
Ontario	2	10	62	72
PEI		-	1	1
Quebec	2	-	9	11
Saskatchewan		-	1	1
Yellowknife		3		3
	14 (9.3%)	29 (19.3%)	121 (80.6%)	150