

**“Never About Them Without Them”:
The Ottawa Police Service’s Youth Advisory Committee as an Opportunity for Youth Civic
Engagement**

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Abstract

Youth civic engagement literature has suggested that the consistently low voter turnout among the youth demographic is because they are either apathetic to the world around them or they participate in other forms of civic engagement that they deem more practical, such as volunteering. Moreover, to build trust with the community, police services have turned to community policing programs and community consultation to establish a collective responsibility for community well-being and safety. This thesis project explores the dynamics and characteristics of the Ottawa Police Service's Youth Advisory Committee as a youth engagement program. Further, these dynamics are analyzed regards to its potential to implement a democratization of the police service. In this way, the project uncovers the bureaucratic tensions that may impact the program's full potential to involve the youth community in the police service. This project has the practical goal to learn more about the characteristics and dynamics of the Youth Advisory Committee within the Ottawa Police Service as a powerful police institution in order to improve other similar initiatives.

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Introduction

Young people are the future is a cliché that summarizes a general attitude towards young people in society. They will soon replace our current leaders and, therefore, we collectively have an interest in the development of a generation that will hopefully be better than ones before. The ways in which young people engage with the world around them as young people, not just as future citizens, are a guiding perspective for this project. To me, to simply focus on the future potential of youth fails to recognize the inspiring work that they actively partake in everyday in their capacity as young people. This thesis explores the ways in which young people in Ottawa demonstrate civic engagement within a police-youth community outreach program that intends to give youth the space to voice issues and have an impact on the institutions that influence their day-to-day lives. To do this, a range of research topics and techniques were deployed, including civic engagement and youth and police perceptions literature, left realist theoretical framework, and constructivist methodological and thematic analytic techniques.

Broadly, I am interested in exploring how young people perceive particular political and sociological aspects of their lives, specifically civic engagement. That is, I wish to explore the ways in which youth participate in and negotiate the social world. Since the most recent Canadian federal election of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, there has been a notable shift in the ways in which young people are being engaged by government institutions. In the 2015 federal election, Elections Canada recorded that the voter turnout for voters aged 18 to 24 increased by 18.3 percentage points—the largest increase that Elections Canada had found since they began collecting demographic data of voters in 2004 (Elections Canada, 2016). In addition, the percentage of first time voters increased by 17.7 percentage points as compared to the 2011 federal election. For young voters who were eligible to vote in past elections but voted for their

first time, an increase of 17.3 percentage points was recorded. Young voters are becoming a political target for some party leaders: they just need to tap into the goldmine that is represented by the youth vote. These statistics may suggest that there has been a shift in how young people participate in civic engagement; or, alternatively, how they were engaged by political leaders.

This change in civic engagement is reflected in an overall strategy to engaging young people through accompanying government programs targeting youth engagement. Most notably throughout the recent federal election, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau engaged with young people in a way that focused on the issues affecting them and created a platform that responded to the concerns of young people. After the election, he named himself the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of Youth to brand his commitment to youth and their votes. Subsequently, the Prime Minister's Youth Council program was created to ensure that the voices of young people had a forum for communication with their government. Overall, the ways in which youth civic engagement is being practiced in Canada is important to contextualize this project. Indeed, aside from education and social welfare organizations, the police are among one of the most central governing agencies that youth come into contact with.

Currently across Canada and the United States, police services face unique challenges when building relationships with communities. Black Lives Matter and anti-use-of-force movements continue to have an impact on the public's trust in the police and police services have a responsibility to respond to the public criticism against them. The use of social media and viral video is also a unique challenge that police services are now facing, especially as it pertains to accountability in officer-citizen conduct. To better respond to the needs of the communities they serve, police services across Canada and the United States have been guided to prioritize engaging with their communities to build stronger relationships with overpoliced and

marginalized groups, such as racialized, LGTBQ, and youth communities. The Ottawa Police Service Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) is an example of such an organization. Indeed, I completed a field placement during my undergraduate degree with the OPS' Community Development Section which houses several community engagement projects and a team that is dedicated to public engagement and community partnership building.

This thesis project merges these two topics that have been addressed separately in the literature: youth civic engagement and youth and police perceptions or programs. To do so, I have surveyed and interviewed youth who participate in the Ottawa Police Service's Youth Advisory Committee (YAC), a program designed provide a space for youth to represent their communities and advocate for the issues they are facing in hopes of creating change in the police service and broader society. I also interviewed adult allies involved with the program as their coordination is integral to its development and integration into the organization. In particular, I have explored the ways in which young people perceive their experiences of working with the police while advocating for their communities. To explore civic engagement among young people who not just volunteer with organizations such as food banks, libraries, or sports programs, but the police service, a powerful institution, is a context jointly part of the civic engagement literature.

Before I outline the thesis, I will take a moment to introduce the program in more detail. The YAC started in 2012 after consultation with local organizations, leaders, and youth. In the consultation phase, OPS management asked questions in regards to what meaningful engagement would look like, what activities it would entail, and how the OPS should go about recruiting young people for it. After significant planning, the first OPS YAC formed in spring of 2012.

The YAC comprises of about 20-25 youth between the ages of 13-24. It is volunteer-based and therefore the youth are not paid for their time. They have meetings around once a month where they discuss recent or upcoming events in the community, as well as plan their next community endeavors. It is at these meetings that community or governmental agencies consult the YAC to ask for their opinions of a product or initiative, or discuss youth issues more generally.

The program has changed over the years as members have come and gone, but has also adapted to the changing demographics and social issues of young people in Ottawa. Over the years, the program continues to evolve by learning from its mistakes, oversights, and feedback from the youth. In particular, its recruitment process has changed over time to better reflect what the youth members believe would benefit the program. This includes a collective review of the application forms, references, and interview with the candidate. With the help of the adult coordinators, the youth make a decision of which new members are accepted. The number of youth that are recruited changes per year.

According to their webpage on the Ottawa Police Service website (Youth Advisory Committee, 2018), the YAC is an opportunity to make new friends, work as a team with peers and the police to improve safety, help make OPS more youth-friendly, become aware of youth issues, and build skills. This description is not very different to what participants described the program to be like. In the words of one of the adult coordinators, the YAC has two primary functions. First, is as an internal resource of consultation for the organization. Second, the YAC's role is to be a voice for youth in Ottawa within the police service. Indeed, the youth are the consultative body for the organization and its partners, including Ottawa Public Health and

Youth Services Bureau Ottawa. They also participate in local events by volunteering, fundraising, and raising awareness for the topic or organization.

The theoretical (Chapter II) and methodological (Chapter III) frameworks used in this thesis complement its goals to uncover experiences of the youth involved with the program. The left realist theoretical framework envisioned by Lea and Young (1993) will guide the thesis analysis, especially pertaining to concepts such as subculture and democratization of the police service. The methodological approach is consistent with the theory and reflects a constructivist framework to best engage with the data. Chapter IV will present my findings in relation to the Applied Thematic Analysis framework. Chapter V will discuss my findings to answer my research questions. Finally, Chapter VI will conclude this project and provide suggestions for future research. The following literature review will first address the literature concerning the characteristics of civic engagement among young people. The second half will address literature concerning reported youth experiences, perceptions, and the programs that attempt to build stronger youth-police partnerships. Together, these two academic areas provide the appropriate context to study the Ottawa Police Service Youth Advisory Committee.

Chapter I: Literature Leading to Research Questions

Democratic Responsibility and Youth Citizenship

It is reported that young people have various degrees of understanding of democracy and the social contract they live in (Flanagan, 2013; Llewellyn, Cook, Westheimer, Girón, & Suurtamm, 2007). For instance, research conducted by Flanagan (2013) suggests that although youth may not be able to specifically define democracy, they have basic understandings of its functions and practices. Flanagan (2013) interviewed a number of American high school aged youth on what they consider democracy to look like. Just over half of the youth interviewed accurately defined democracy and its role. In addition, many identified examples of what it looked like but could not define it specifically. For instance, one student who was interviewed stated that she could not define democracy, but when asked what it felt like to be American she answered, “when I’m around people that treat me like anybody else” and what values were important to her, she stated “stand up for your rights/don’t [sic] prejudice, do good in life” (Flanagan, 2013, p. 89). These answers as interpreted by Flanagan (2013) suggest that the students had a basic understanding of democratic societies, even though they could not transfer these characteristics into a concrete definition or actions. Similarly, Howe’s (2007) analysis of voting practices in New Brunswick demonstrated that youth reported lower rates of reading the newspaper, voting, and general knowledge about the democratic electoral process, they still did not want to be left out of the conversation (Howe, 2007). Rather, they suggested that the way politics are constructed do not welcome young people, so this influenced their voting practices. They did not practice what are considered to be the basic activities of democracy, but knew that it was important for them to have the opportunity available to be involved if they chose to do so.

Moreover, there is some analysis to suggest that youth understand democracy through their nation’s social contract. That is, youth understand democratic principles in the context of

their observations of politics in the area they live in. For instance, Flanagan (2013) notes the differences in how youth from different countries view the social contract and responsibilities of the state. He reports that youth from the United States were more likely to agree that the state has a responsibility to protect human rights, but less likely to report that the state is responsible for controlling or distributing income, as reflective in the United States with its declining welfare state (Flanagan, 2013). It is within these observations and understandings of how the social contract is relevant to their lives that youth learn how their political involvement is valued, and therefore how they should be civically engaged (Duke, Skay, Pettingell, Borowsky, 2009). Duke and colleagues (2009) observe that through positive adult relationships and “internalization of a sense of value, adolescents are given the opportunities for building a foundation of trust that may facilitate commitment to a social contract” (p. 167).

Youth have been seen as *citizens-in-waiting* or *citizens-in-development* as it relates to civic engagement participation (Arthur, 2015; Kennelley, 2011; Lister, 2007). This means that youth are not seen as simply younger versions of adults, but people to be molded to reflect the cultural and civic expectations of contributing citizens to society; recognition as a full citizen is deferred until they reach the age of majority. This status leads to differential treatment from penal and political systems. Indeed, youth are “presumed to be irrational actors and/or making choices based on their parents’ direction...they are [also] perceived to be requiring protection, often extended in a paternalistic form that denies their ability to make reasonable, rational decisions” (Kennelley, 2011, p. 341). The danger of this future-oriented definition of citizenship is that governmental position youth in terms of investment strategies for the future, but do not recognize their citizenship as young people (Lister, 2007).

In response to the citizens-in-waiting rhetoric, Hart (2009) supports a broader cultural definition of citizenship that would better include and engage youth: “In deconstructing and challenging the normative assumptions that underpin much citizenship theory and practice, [a cultural definition of citizenship] offers the possibility of a more inclusive citizenship in which young people’s voices are recognized and heard” (Hart, 2009, p. 642). Similarly Lister (2007) discusses the importance of not viewing children’s citizenship as an extension of adult rights but takes into account their agency. “...if we analyze children’s citizenship solely through the lens of rights, we miss much that is important to their experience of ‘lived citizenship’ and to their claims to be recognized as citizens” (Lister, 2007, p. 717). While some argue that the way for children’s citizenship to be legitimized is to award them the same rights and responsibilities as adult citizenship, Lister (2007) argues that recognizing citizenship as a practice and status would best benefit children and youth. In this way, their lived experiences as youth would be enough to yield respect as young, but not unimportant, contributors to society.

Similarly, France (1998) discusses a cultural definition of youth citizenship that addresses the relationship between rights and responsibilities. Limited access to employment opportunities that would help youth transition to adulthood affects “any desire to undertake social responsibilities” (France, 1998, p. 110). The right to employment and young people’s experiences in the labour market negatively influenced their feelings toward responsibility and contributing to society. In addition, these youth perceived that the adult community viewed them negatively because of their lifestyle choices (France, 1998). If a more cultural definition of citizenship were considered here, the youth may see themselves as more valid contributors to society and feel a stronger desire to be engaged.

In addition, citizenship concerns the actions or participation of young people as citizens. Kennelley (2011) found that police responses to youth activists and the homeless depended upon the space in which they were practicing citizenship. The ways in which a youth can display their potential to be good citizens affected their treatment by the police. This raises questions in regards to how society frames a child's membership to their community and if their perspectives and concerns can be taken seriously. This notion of a participatory citizenship as described by Lister (2007) can be problematic:

children can make their claim to be members of the citizen-community through active participation in it; but in order to be able to participate they first need to be accepted as members of the citizen-community. Yet that acceptance is, in practice, partly contingent on children demonstrating their capacity to be participatory citizens. (p. 701)

Furthermore, the ways in which youth participate in their community and society is more specifically studied under civic engagement practices.

Civic Engagement

Civic engagement can be identified in a few different ways and understood by all differently. One definition includes, "the feelings of responsibility toward the common good, the actions aimed at solving community issues and improving the wellbeing of its members and the competencies required to participate in civic life" (Lenzi, Vieno, Pastore, & Santinello, 2013). It is also distinguishable from political participation, which focuses exclusively on joining political parties, elections, and voting (O'Neill, 2007; Warren & Wicks, 2011). Civic engagement includes political activities but expands the definition to include all forms of participation in community activities and organization (O'Neill, 2007). This inclusion of community activities and organizations emphasizes the development of social benefits through collective action, including social capital and tolerance (O'Neill, 2007; Putnam, 2000). Many programs have been

developed to foster civic engagement among youth, including children's parliaments and councils (Lister, 2007).

It must be considered that the definition of civic engagement that focuses on community activism and youth achievement does not apply equally to all young people. "Youth" are generalized as a single group in much of this literature, so it must be noted that youth are not a homogenous group and do not experience the world, and certainly civic engagement, in the same ways (Flanagan, 2013; Morimoto & Friedland, 2013; O'Neill, 2007). Indeed, Morimoto and Friedland (2013) conclude:

there is no univocal meaning of youth civic engagement. It has become systematically intertwined with the most basic imperatives of maintaining class and status position...The connection between volunteerism and achievement, therefore, not only determines the forms and meanings of civic involvement for the current generation, but also facilitates middle-class advantage and further curtails noncollege young adults from the shaping of American civic life. (p. 541)

Each person experiences the world in different ways. As such, each young person experiences what it means to be civically engaged differently. Importantly, concepts presented in the literature such as civic engagement, community, or even politics will be considered as much as they are interpreted by the author and/or the participants in their work. Among these different definitions of civic engagement, an important aspect includes educating youth on the voting process to create future voters and contributors to society.

Civic Engagement and Voting Among Youth

There has been some concern reported about the lack of youth electoral voting in the United States and Canada in the last 20 years (Blais, Gidengil, Naduea & Nevitte, 2002; Flanagan, 2013; O'Neill, 2007; Turcotte, 2007; Turcotte, 2015A). There is limited Canadian information on this topic as Elections Canada only began collecting demographic information in 2004. Although the General Social Survey by Statistics Canada includes measures regarding

citizen particularly in elections, these numbers are often overestimated when compared to the official rates and not a completely accurate depiction of voting turnout (Turcotte, 2015A). The most recent data on the topic interpreted by Turcotte (2015A) indicates that young people are generally less likely than older groups to have voted in past eligible elections, intend to vote in future elections, or show an interest in politics. Of course, people cannot vote in Canada until they are 18 years of age. These findings show consistency over several years to suggest a gradual decline in voting over several groups of young people.

A number of theories have been presented to explain such a decline in voting. One includes a postmaterialist model first presented by Inglehart (1997), where the differences in voting behaviors between generations are reflective of the issues that that generation faces. For instance, those who were affected by the Great Depression have distinctively different concerns about resources and material needs than do younger generations who have not seen that sort of hardship (Inglehart, 1997). In this way, voting and participating in the democratic system becomes a difference of priorities among generations. Therefore, young people may not prioritize voting as others might.

In response to this, many authors suggest that it is not that youth are privileged compared to their grandparents who lived through economic and resource crisis, but that they are not engaged because issues that matter to them are not addressed (O'Neill, 2007; Turcotte, 2007; Warren & Wicks, 2011). Contemporarily, this response may compliment the 2015 Canadian Federal election statistics mentioned in the introduction of this literature review. The introduction of a new and engaging political leader may have pulled young people to the polls in ways that past leaders have failed to do. It is failure on the part of those who work with youth

such as teachers and parents, as well as the government at large, for not making an effort to engage with youth in meaningful ways (Turcotte, 2007).

The ways in which young people conceptualize community in an age of an increasingly individualistic culture has been applied to modern voting trends. Putnam's (2000) analysis of the decline in youth voting through the 1980s and 1990s claims that individuals do not vote because they are spending less time in community groups engaging in sociopolitical topics, which leads to a decline in social capital and commitment to the collective community. Putnam's (1995) widely recognized definition of social capital includes "features of social organization such as networks, norms and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit" (p. 67). Civic engagement is an important indicator of healthy social capital; therefore, with less commitment to community issues, there is less interest in voting. Put differently, "social capital is commonly invoked as the key to investment in community, and ultimately, democracy (Price, 2002, p. 119). The culture of isolation is disproportionately attributed to young people, which suggests that they contribute to this decline (Putnam, 2000). In other words, young people do not feel that it is their responsibility to vote because it would not benefit them individually or make a difference in the community collectively. Many researchers who analyze youth civic engagement have addressed Putnam's social capital theory of youth voting in their work, especially as it pertains to community involvement and relationships with adult role models (Bennett, Wells & Freelon, 2011; Flanagan, 2013; Howe, 2007; O'Neill, 2007; Turcotte, 2007; Turcotte, 2015A; Warren & Wicks, 2011).

Further, the impact of adult support on young people may suggest why young people do not vote as older generations do. The ways in which families engage with political issues and encourage their children to ask questions, be informed, vote, or volunteer is suggested to be

important for youth engagement (Duke, et al., 2009; Llewellyn, et al., 2007; Warren & Wicks, 2011). Warren and Wicks (2011) suggest that encouragement from parents is crucial for youth to civically engage, as it helps youth believe that their actions can make a difference. Indeed, “engaging in discussion lets the young person know that their opinions are valid and adults ought to listen to what they say” (Flanagan, 2013, p. 93). When youth do not think that their opinions matter, or think that they have the capacity to formulate them, they may not want to vote. Indeed, despite feeling rejected and stereotyped by adults, Hart (2009) found that youth still want to be involved in community activities where they feel valued and respected. Where youth are perceived negatively by adults, they may feel excluded from the wider community and experience little responsibility toward it (France, 1998). In essence, the ways in which youth are taught about civic engagement and democratic processes may have an impact on their likelihood to be engaged.

Other than the home, schools are largely responsible for teaching young people about democratic institutions and civic engagement (Flanagan, 2013; Llewellyn et al., 2007). Flanagan (2013) describes schools as mediating institutions in that they filter the world that youth experience. Flanagan’s (2013) research on how youth feel about their school’s ability to teach them about civic engagement suggests that they want an environment where they can discuss issues at different points of view without fear of being shut down by the teacher. Opportunities for getting involved in diverse community projects were also suggested as important for youth.

Students report a high level of trust and solidarity with their peers in schools where civic engagement is emphasized. This literature suggests that a positive environment where youth are heard, appreciated, and respected is important for youth to be able to learn about different perspectives is imperative to civic learning (Flanagan, 2013; Flanagan, Cumsille, Gill & Galloway,

2007; Llewellyn et al., 2007). Markus and colleagues (1993) emphasize that incorporating service-learning, or community service, into the classroom should not just focus on altruism and helping the community. Instead, options should be available to volunteer in politically charged groups, such as environmental or reproductive rights organizations. In this way, young people “are indeed performing worthwhile public-oriented ‘service,’ an appellation that should not be bestowed solely upon working with ‘needy’ group” (Markus et al., 1993, p. 416). Civic education that is practical, hands-on, and has a bottom-up approach is noted to be the most promising for, and favorable among, young people (Markus, Howard & King, 1993; Llewellyn, et al., 2007; O’Neill, 2007).

However, cultural stereotypes that depict young people as being isolated, selfish, and lazy may also affect the ways in which adults teach them about civic engagement. Llewellyn and colleagues (2007) provide a comprehensive overview of civic education in Canada and the differences between provinces. In Ontario, there is a mandatory civic education class for grade ten students. After interviewing a number of students, they suggest that teachers had an immense impact on their understanding of being an engaged public citizen. For some, they felt as if teachers saw them as too young to form opinions on important political topics, and therefore did not feel capable of engaging in politics like the adults did (Llewellyn, 2007). Feelings such as these have been suggested elsewhere as contributing to youth being cynical about their capability to create change, which may affect their attitudes regarding voting (Barnard, Campbell, & Smith, 2003; Llewellyn, 2007; O’Neill, 2007; Pammet & DeLuc, 2003; Turcotte, 2007). Similarly, Kahne and Westheimer (2003) suggest that a student’s “identity as an engaged, democratic citizen followed his or her capacity to be one” (p. 28). Even within their communities, stereotypes that plague young people as trouble will discourage them from becoming

participating citizens in their local community. These perceptions disempower young people and make them doubt their ability to contribute just as the adults do (French, 1998; Hart, 2009).

Of course, civic engagement does not just include voting habits. Literature that has emerged to try and explain the decline in voting among young people often suggests that we must consider other aspects of civic engagement, such as volunteering, protesting, and boycotting. It is also important to include *youth* as young people who are not eligible to vote because of their age. A young person's ineligibility to vote does not necessarily foster disinterest in engaging in their community. It is not that young people do not care about current political issues or their communities; alternatively, they are engaging with these topics in ways other than voting or joining political party groups that are more reflective to the way they see the world and how they can make an impact, especially for those under the age of 18 (Bishop and Low, 2004; Lenzi, et al., 2013; Lewellyn, et al., 2007; O'Neill, 2007; Turcotte, 2007; Warren & Wicks, 2011). Anyone, of any age, has the capacity to care about their community.

Experiences of connection with a community is noted as important in youth civic engagement literature. Exposure to community life such as volunteering, knowing neighbors, attending meetings or events, has been regarded as among the first experiences of civic life (Llewellyn et al., 2007). Civic involvement in young adulthood, including voting, community volunteer service, social action/solidarity groups, education groups, conservation groups, and endorsement of civic trust was predicted from strong family and community ties (Duke, et al., 2009). In addition, attachment to their community may motivate them to give back the support that they have received (Flanagan et al., 2007). When adolescents have strong ties to their community, it is shown to be positively associated with a higher sense of responsibility toward

their community and the confidence to make a difference (Lenzi, et al., 2013). For some, caring about the world around them may entail engagement that includes more than just voting.

Civic engagement: Alternatives to Voting

One alternate form of civic engagement that youth participate in instead of voting is volunteering. It is reported that youth in Canada have consistently high volunteer rates. According to Barnard, Campbell, and Smith (2003), despite an overall decline in volunteering across Canada, youth aged 15-24 volunteer at one of the highest rates among all Canadians, where the teenagers aged 15-19 within this group volunteering more than those 20-24 years of age. These rates were only second to those aged 34-54. Indeed, young Canadians age 15-19 were reported as most likely to volunteer consistently as indicated by General Social Surveys from Statistics Canada over 10 years (Turcotte, 2015B). However, some of this high volunteer rate may be due to the mandatory community service time that some Ministries require from their students in order to graduate high school (Llewellyn et al, 2007; O'Neill, 2007).

Since we live in an increasingly digital era, it is important to consider the use of online civic engagement among youth. Bennet, Wells, and Freelon (2011) looked at organizations that engage youth and offer civic skills experiences, such as volunteering and learning about social and political issues, online. Bennet and colleagues (2011) therefore call upon researchers to rethink the meaning of citizenship and engagement in an online generation. They discuss different types of websites that endorsed an actualizing citizenship, which indicates a shift toward looser personal engagement with peer networks that pool information and organize civic action using social technology. The use of social media has not been heavily researched and is an important consideration for future youth engagement research, especially as it pertains to online communities and activism (Barnard, et al., 2003; Bennet, et al., 2011; Warren & Wicks, 2011).

Finally, it is noted that young people, particularly those aged 21-25 years old in university, are more likely to participate in boycotts, protests, and petitions than any other age group in Canada (Barnard, et al., 2003; O'Neill, 2007; Turcotte, 2007; Turcotte, 2015B).

Turcotte (2007) suggests that young people engage with the political process and hold a different set of priorities than older adults. Indeed,

young voters want action; they want to *make voting compulsory, pay university graduates for one year of community service, have volunteer groups participate in parliamentary committees and vote over the Internet*. This is a far cry from what has been proposed [about young people] to date. (Turcotte, 2007, p. 18)

Furthermore, Harré (2007) notes that simply offering any volunteer or engagement projects will not be valuable to young people; instead, they must be given the space to be critical about what they see to form their own opinions. It is not that young people do not care about their community or politics so they do not vote when given the chance, but rather they engage with the broader definition of civic engagement in order to better serve their community in ways that make sense to them. One such example of civic engagement projects includes the use of youth advisory councils.

Youth Advisory Councils

Youth councils can be distinguished from other forms of youth engagement, such as voting, protesting, boycotting, or volunteering by their integrated role in governmental or community institutions (Collins, Augsberger & Gecker, 2016). Youth councils are started by adults who are enthusiastic about youth engagement and are often the gatekeepers to youth engagement within the particular institution. Due to their structure and practical connection to local politics and stakeholders, they “embody an ideal form of youth participation and civic competence within this particular vision of democracy” (Taft & Gordon, 2013, p. 91). Youth council programs are developed to build democratic practices in youth to ensure a healthy future

generation of voters and active citizens. Additionally, they help organizations be more youth-centric with their feedback.

Research on youth councils has found a “wide variation in the operations of youth councils and the extent to which they have a substantive rather than symbolic role in governance” (Collins, Augsberger & Gecker, 2016, p. 140). Common activities in such programs include education and prevention activities, youth summits, recreational activities, community service, community assessments, counseling, and policy-specific actions (Collins, Augsberger & Gecker, 2016). The goals across youth councils often bring youth together to discuss youth issues, conduct community-level projects, youth participatory research, advocate for their communities with governmental bodies. Youth council programs “vary in their origins and objectives, their activities and accomplishments, the roles of youths and adults, and their institutional location and level of support. There is no single approach employed...and this strengthens the potential for work of this type” (Richards-Schuster & Checkoway, 2009, p. 30).

Analysis of youth council programs across American cities suggests that the structures of such programs vary widely by membership tenure, funding, adult leader support, and community connectedness (Augsberger, Collins, Gecker, 2018; Cushing & van Vliet, 2017; Richards-Schuster & Checkoway, 2009). The local context and history of the youth council’s surrounding community has an impact on the origins and activities. Cushing and van Vliet (2017) found that the youth councils that formed across the US from 1960-1989 were largely to respond to a specific issue in their community. Youth councils established more recently focus less on addressing a youth-specific issue and more on “the importance of skill-building, leadership development, and civic engagement” (Cushing & van Vliet, 2017, p. 323). This includes providing youth an opportunity to be heard, participate in community decision-making and

organize community events for youth. The switch in priorities may speak to a broader global change in youth engagement following the adaptation and interpretation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which highlights a child's right to participate in decision-making as a citizen in their own right.

Klindera and Menderweld (2001) suggest that the institutional context that the program takes place in has a significant impact on how youth are engaged and the activities that take place. To avoid circumstances where the institution does not have the best interests to work with the youth, five principles to follow are suggested: 1) View youth consumers as advocates and educators; 2) Treat youth on advisory boards in the same way as other members; 3) Schedule meetings at convenient times for youth; 4) Value youth for their experience; 5) Promote equal partnership and respect (Klindera & Menderweld, 2001). These principles are consistent with findings across the youth civic engagement literature that suggest youth want to be heard as contributing citizens and not treated paternalistically (Harré, 2007; Turcotte, 2007; O'Neill, 2007). More research is needed on the use of youth councils, including their functions, activities, structures, and contributions, in order to develop upon best practices (Collins, Augsberger & Gecker, 2016).

The extent to which they are supported by adults in positions of power and their work is integrated into policy and practice varies per community and program (Checkoway, Allison & Montoya, 2005; Richards-Schuster & Checkoway, 2009; Taft & Gordon, 2013). As discussed previously, the stereotypes that adults hold of youth have an impact on both their willingness to engage with young people and ultimately the success of such programs. Although the extent of adult organization or support varies across programs, researchers suggest that steps should be taken to mitigate the inherent power imbalance between youth volunteers and adults within the

organizations (Matthews, 2001A, B, 2003). Augsberger, Collins and Gecker (2018) analyzed the origins, structure, and activities of several youth councils and developed a typology to describe the adult leadership structure in various committees. From least youth-centric to most, they are: adult led, mixed adult led, mixed adult facilitated, and youth led. In each of these, the roles of the adults involved affects the responsibilities and activities of the youth, and therefore their potential for positive engagement.

Youth councils are, of course, only one method of civic engagement. Taft and Gordon (2013) suggest that some youth activists avoid youth council programs because they perceive them as an unauthentic opportunity for engagement. Interviews with youth activists who once participated in conventional engagement programs, such as youth councils, revealed that some youth believe in practicing democracy in a way that moves beyond simply having a voice, but as “representing collective concerns and perceive youth councils as elitist and non-representative” (Taft & Gordon, 2013, p. 87). In other studies on youth councils, youth report feelings of tokenism, disempowerment, and unrepresentativeness, as well as a lack of ownership and leadership opportunities (Matthews, 2001A, B). In perhaps a similar fashion to youth activists who find alternatives to voting, these activists also found alternatives to youth council programs as they believe they are complicit to the bureaucratic rules of a formal institution. To better understand the experiences and intentions of the youth in the committee while working with the police as a highly criticized and visual institution, will provide a better idea of the functions, benefits, and difficulties of these programs.

My specific case explores civic engagement within a youth council program inspired by community policing strategies and involves the collaboration between the police service and the youth of the communities they serve. Therefore, a review of youth and police relationship or

program literature will contextualize this program and the existing relationships between youth community and police presented in the literature.

Youth and Police - Experiences, Perceptions, and Programs

In general, the relationship between the public and police is complex: this is no different than the relationship between young people and the police (Nihart, Lersch, Sellers, & Mieczkowski, 2005). The literature in regards to youth and police relationships generally focuses on youth perceptions of police. Generally, researchers suggest that young people have negative experiences and perceptions of police. In response, there is a call for more programs to improve this relationship.

Youth Experience with Police in General

Interest in studying the public's relationships with and perceptions of police emerged in the 1960s as protests across the United States caused confrontational and often violent interactions between police and the public. These incidents were subsequently published in newspapers and broadcasted on televisions and researchers began to worry about how communities can trust police following these incidents. Through the 1990s researchers were motivated to closely examine the experiences of young people in relation to the police, as most of the past on police and community relationships surveyed the experiences and perceptions of adults and community associations (Hurst & Frank, 2000). Overall, youth have been found to experience more negative perceptions of police as compared to adults (Friedman, Lurigio, Greenleaf, Albertson, 2004; Hurst & Frank, 2000; Williams, 1999).

Young people have unique experiences with police compared to older individuals. For instance, they are an over-policed group because they often interact with school resource officers (SROs) while in school, but also interact with patrol officers often because they perceive youth as causing trouble when out of school (Watkins & Maume, 2012). In addition, interaction with

police officers is likely the only experience with the criminal justice system that they will have at this point in their lives (Hurst & Frank, 2000). Some also suggest that police officers actively contribute to negative relationships with youth by claiming that they have bad attitudes toward them because they lack respect for authority figures: however, the police do not question that they might be disrespectful toward youth to induce such behavior (Taylor, Turner, Esbensen & Winfree, 2001). In relation to youth citizenship research, Hart (2009) found criminal and anti-social behavior to be a central theme in focus-group discussions with youth on their experiences with citizenship in their communities. Indeed, the youth “have themselves internalised some of the currently dominant rhetoric [that positions] youth as a problem” (Hart, 2009, p. 648). Further, negative perceptions reflected by police and media that target youth as trouble-makers can be reflected in how youth see themselves as citizens or contributors to society.

There are some considerations that should be made in regards to the literature on youth and police relationships. First, most of the literature that will be discussed here concerns American youth, particularly those residing in inner-city areas. Canadian research on youth and police perceptions is very limited and calls for further inquiry are common (Chow, 2011). Second, most of the literature is from 1990 to early 2000s, and there are many contemporary issues in regards to youth and police relationships that would not have existed then. Topics such as the use of viral videos of police use of force, social media to criticize police, and body cameras for police, and social justice movements such as Black Lives Matter are not considered in past research that may have an effect now. These are important contemporary factors that would inevitably shape young people’s views and experiences with police agencies and will be considered in my analysis. With these considerations in place, the following will present the current literature on youth perceptions of police.

Youth Perceptions of Police

Literature that concerns the relationship between police and youth generally focuses on youth perceptions of police. Along with the factor of age, the literature presents a number of factors that have been suggested to be associated with negative perceptions of police. These include experience with police or prior victimization, race, and neighborhood factors.

Experience with police and prior victimization

Direct experience with police has been suggested to contribute to negative perceptions of police among youth. It is reported that youth who have been victimized, by police or others in the community, report more negative attitudes toward the police after having dealt with them (Brandt & Markus, 2000; Chow, 2011; Geistman & Smith, 2007; Hurst & Frank, 2000; Hurst, Frank & Browning, 2000; Janeksela, 1999). This is consistent with findings in victimology research in regards to victims of crimes' negative experiences with police (Waller, 2011). Chow (2011) surveyed high school students' perceptions of police in a western Canadian city and included measures of victimization, drug use, attitudes toward school, police harassment, and other socio-demographic measures. Consistent with other American research, youth who were older, held positive attitudes toward school, had no experience with victimization or police harassment, and reported no unlawful activities rated police performance more favourably than their peers.

Aside from victimization, any contact with police is noted to lead youth to perceive police as being unfair and dishonest (Leiber, Nalla & Farnworth, 1998). In contrast, Brick and colleagues (2009) suggest that the above findings are dependent upon other factors as arrests were the only form of contact that produced negative perceptions in their study. Additionally, Watkins and Maume (2012) urge researchers to consider the context of the encounter between the youth and police in order to best understand the results. They suggest that although School

Resource Officers have the potential to get youth in trouble more because of the close contact, youth surveyed see them more positively and less threatening than regular police officers.

Therefore, not all contact with police figures is equal across contexts or young people.

Other factors, including the role of the officer and the nature of the contact, are stated in the literature as possibly contributing to negative perceptions among youth. Similarly, Friedman, Lurigio, Greenleaf, and Albertson (2004) call specific attention to Janeksela (1999) and Leiber and colleague's (1998) analyses of police interactions with youth to consider not just the youth's perspective of the incident, but the context as a whole and be critical of the officer's behavior that may have escalated the interaction (Friedman, et al., 2004; Taylor et al., 2001). Indeed, police officers may encounter the same youth several times, which may contribute to a cycle of existing negative attitudes, negative interaction, and further entrenched negative perceptions among some youth (Friedman, et al., 2004; Hurst & Frank, 2000).

In particular to Canadian homeless and activist youth, however, Kennelley (2011) found that the space youth occupy is significant to their experiences with the police. If youth occupy a risky space, such as a protest, they are not given the chance to explain themselves before being arrested. For homeless youth, their presence in spaces for "good" citizens is unwelcomed by police and they are moved to spaces that will not disrupt other citizens (Kennelly, 2011). Their status as young citizens-in-waiting and the way they occupy space has an impact on their experiences with police.

Janeksela and Miller (1985) suggests that culture and reference point for youth is most important when considering police interaction as contributing to negative perceptions among racialized youth. Their study presents that previous arrests, charges, and delinquency lead to negative perceptions, but not the contact itself. Janeksela (1999) theorizes that being arrested or

watching neighbors and friends get arrested contributes to a culture where racialized communities have an overarching negative perception toward the police, regardless of their own direct experience. Furthermore, experiencing race is identified in the literature as a factor contributing to negative perceptions toward the police.

Youth and Race

Youth who identify as a visible minority have been noted to have negative perceptions of police (Brick, Taylor, Esbensen, 2009; Giwa, James, Anucha & Schwartz, 2014; Hurst & Frank, 2000; Hurst, Frank & Browning, 2000; Janeksela, 1999; Leiber, et al., 1998; Reisig & Parks, 2000; Taylor, et al., 2001). Specifically, many of these studies focus on Black and Hispanic youth in the United States and their experiences with police. Janeksela (1999) suggests that Black youth feel more repressed and harassed by the police compared to their white peers. Similarly, Taylor and colleagues (2001) suggest that youth are generally ambivalent about police officers but African American and Hispanic youth are more likely to be critical and see them as racially prejudice and dishonest. Hurst, Frank, and Browning (2000) specifically suggest that Black youth do not perceive police as effective in performing their duties.

Peirone, Maticka-Tyndale, Gbadebo, and Kerr (2017) offer insight into perceived police or court discrimination among African, Caribbean, and Black youth in Canada. They use survey data to assess experiences with police and the court in their daily lives and social environment in which they live. While finding information consistent with existing research on the experiences of racialized youth with police, they contest that analysis should consider the social environment of the youth. That is, racialized youth are not a homogenous group and do not develop perceptions or have experiences in the same ways.

There has been very limited research on youth experiences or perceptions of police among Indigenous people in Canada (Cao, 2011, 2014) and even less that focus on youth.

Although Cao (2014) does not specifically examine youth perceptions of police, their analysis of General Social Survey data suggests that Indigenous individuals in Canada experience low confidence in their local police.

Although race has been presented as a robust starting place for exploring negative perceptions of police, many authors have questioned how the perceptions are formed due to particular experiences. Neighborhood factors are suggested to contribute to negative perceptions of police, which may relate to race as the makeup of some communities is racially based (Hurst, Frank & Browning, 2000; Reisig & Parks, 2000; Taylor et al., 2001). As such, literature emerged addressing neighborhood factors that may relate to the above studies on racialized experiences.

Neighborhood

Neighborhood and community factors are suggested to impact youth's perceptions of police, but are also the least studied (Geistman & Smith, 2007). In an analysis of the city of Detroit, Frank and colleagues (1996) found that Black individuals had more favorable views of police than any other group. They argue that particular changes to the city of Detroit contributed to this finding, making Detroit a unique case study for police perceptions. At the time of their study, Detroit elected the city's first Black mayor, who worked hard to change the police service's outreach and recruitment strategies to better reflect the city. The researchers suggest that these political changes and the community composition of Detroit transforms the ways that police are perceived in the city (Frank, Brandl, Cullen & Stichman, 1996). Taylor and colleagues (2001) agree and conclude that "The fact that such differences [among racialized groups] exist, however, suggests that researchers should consider the contextual factors of the settings in which the research is conducted when discussing issues of external validity" (p. 303). Indeed, it is also suggested that neighborhoods that are more frequently surveilled by police have more negative perceptions overall (Leiber, et al., 1998).

Some researchers suggest that youth view the police more favorably in neighborhoods with a high fear of crime, (Brick, Taylor, Esbensen, 2009; Nihart, et al., 2005; Reisig & Parks, 2000). These researchers propose that residents who have positive evaluations of police work often fear the consequences of crime and want to see more police presence in their area (Brick, et al., 2009). Police are also able to do something about crime, so youth who fear crime were found to have more positive perceptions of police than other adult figures such as teachers or parents (Nihart, et al., 2005).

Similarly, although not a specific assessment of youth perceptions of police, a Canadian study found that perception of neighborhood disorder was the strongest predictor of negative views of the police, but not of the courts (Sprott & Doob, 2009). This suggests that because police are a visible representation of the criminal justice system through patrol and community outreach programs, community members may blame police for the issues in a way that the courts are not. That is, citizens may view the police as the primary agency responsible for crime and victimization in their communities and the courts are secondary to this. Overall, neighborhood factors are complex. It is of note that majority of the literature above concerns American cities and neighborhood and there is very limited research on the experiences of Canadian youth and communities. Furthermore, the literature on perceptions of youth has been presented. To improve these negative perceptions and improve community relations, programs within the police service that engage young people have been encouraged.

Programs

To change the perceptions that youth have of the police to be more positive, some authors suggest that police ought to develop programs that help build a stronger relationship between the community and the agency (Brick, et al., 2009; Chow, 2011; Friedman, et al., 2004; Giwa, James, Anucha & Schwartz, 2014; Goldstein, 1990; Hurst & Frank, 2000; Leiber, et al., 1998).

This would require police services to welcome community members, especially youth, to become co-producers of safety and allies (Cao, 2014; Friedman, et al., 2004; Hurst & Frank, 2000; Leiber, et al., 1998; Williams, 1999). Specifically, community policing strategies have been suggested to provide police services with the opportunity to work more closely with the communities they serve to develop relationships, build trust, and collaborate on solutions to community issues (Leiber, et al., 1998; Nihart, et al., 2005; Rabois & Haaga, 2002). Williams (1999) says that the involvement of children and teenagers “is essential for community policing success” and community problem solving (p. 152). Indeed, there are strong benefits noted when young people working actively alongside adults (Anderson, Sabatelli, & Trachtenberg, 2007).

Some critiques and considerations for the capacity of police outreach programs to change relationships with the community have been presented in the literature. In communities that have a long history with distrust of police officers and vice versa, this is not a simple task and requires a complete change in policing strategy and outreach to the community (Hurst & Frank, 2000). While perceptions of the general police service may be able to change through such programming, individuals who have had negative specific experiences with police officers will always carry their memories of how they were treated. Indeed, police must not simply conduct programs for the purpose of improving their image, but instead give communities a reason to trust them. For instance, through the use of surveys with youth in a skills-building program, Brandt and Markus (2000) suggest that although perceptions of police behavior may positively change, it does not necessarily affect how they see or feel about their interactions with police. Similarly, Adorjan, Ricciardelli, Spencer (2017) found that youth involved in a community policing initiative in Atlantic Canada did not have overwhelmingly positive perceptions of the RCMP. Although they have generally positive perceptions of the RCMP, some of the youth

continued to express dissatisfaction with their experiences with specific officers and are critical of their role in the community. This point is of interest moving forward in this project, as one of the goals is to better understand the youth's intentions of being involved in the program and their subsequent perceptions of how they are being engaged by the OPS.

It should be noted that each police service across Canada conduct their operations, including community policing, in different ways to best compliment the communities they serve. No community or police service is the same, therefore different strategies are required to compliment the specific circumstances of the community, police service, and the history they share. To suggest that programs can work to change youth perceptions is very overarching and would require massive amounts of time and effort on both sides. In this particular project, the context of Ottawa Police Service's relationship and history with Ottawa communities will be an integral part of this research. The dynamics between the police and youth, particularly those who belong to marginalized communities, are also unique to Ottawa.

Specifically in Ottawa, Giwa and colleagues (2014) analyzed a youth and police consultation session that discussed racial profiling in the city following two high profile racial profiling incidents in 2004 and 2005. Racialized youth leaders from across Ottawa were invited to engage in a dialogue with the police service to discuss racism and police harassment within communities following the incidents. After listening to the conversations between the youth and the police officers, it was concluded that these incidents among others have greatly diminished the youth's trust in the police service. To start fixing this relationship, Giwa (2014) suggested that the police must invest time and money into a number of youth engagement and empowerment programs to increase the dialogue between the two groups. Contemporarily, in summer of 2016, an unarmed, mentally ill, racialized man was killed by an on duty Ottawa

Police Service officer. Reflecting on Giwa and colleague's (2014) findings, this incident may affect communities all over Ottawa in a similar way to the racial profiling incidents. Incidents like these are important to consider in order to contextualize this Ottawa-specific project.

In addition, some argue that programs such as these are outside the responsibility of police and are critical of which youth these programs may attract, such as those who already have positive perceptions of police, and therefore are limited in its potential to engage all youth (Anderson, et al., 2007; Williams, 1999). Williams (1999) interviewed youth who explained that they do not get involved in such engagement programs because of fear of retribution from peers for working with the police. Indeed, these are noteworthy criticisms: the capacity to create change or mobilize the community and police relationships through engagement programs is limited by who the program reaches. Further, are there youth who are excluded from these programs for being critical of police behaviour? These are all concerns that I hope to discuss with the youth to understand their points of view and understanding of the program, their role, and the effects on the community. Despite these criticisms, some assert that "breaking down the formal role barriers remains invaluable to the development of trusting relationships between police and youth" (Adorjan, Ricciardelli, & Spencer, 2017, p. 566). Questions in regards to how police engagement programs function, including their participants, benefits, downfalls, and potential all remain to be better understood through this project. Furthermore, the empirical literature that contextualizes the present research has been presented. The theoretical framework that will be used in this project is consistent with themes presented in the literature and best structures the research and analysis.

Conclusion and Left Realism

Left realism is the most applicable theoretical framework for this project and to address these gaps in the youth and police perception literature. As discussed above, the existing literature has mainly addressed the reasons why youth have negative perceptions of the police and, therefore, do not engage with them in a positive proactive context, such as through outreach programs. Despite outreach programs being one of the central recommendations from both youth and police literature as well as through civic engagement to address gaps, there is little research exploring the use of such programs. Left realists raise the practical problem of how citizens can engage with problematic institutions, such as the police. To address this, left realists utilize a pragmatic approach to crime control policy and community safety with concepts such as social relations of crime control and the democratic imperative that involve the community as an active actor in problem solving. Our institutions not only have a responsibility to adopt strategies that meet the needs of the community, but also to ensure that all voices are democratically heard.

With this in mind, it is therefore necessary to better understand the reasons why some youth do engage with the police in these practical programs, such as youth council programs like the OPS' Youth Advisory Committee. To do this, left realist perspective on subculture theory will be used to analyze the social parameters of the program as a distinct subculture. Collecting this information will contribute to the practical objective of making these programs better and improving police and youth relations.

Several researchers in the area of youth and police perceptions have also applied subculture theories to their analysis; however, their application focused on the use of youth delinquent subculture theories of Cohen, Miller, and Cloward and Ohlin. Leiber, Nalla, and Farnworth (1998) were the first to use traditional subcultural to understand how sociocultural

influences can partially determine youth's attitudes toward police. Specifically, they apply theories about deviant youth subcultures to the development of negative attitudes towards the police. By extension, as discussed above, they suggest that community programs are needed to change the perceptions of delinquent youth and the subcultures they belong.

However, is not just "delinquent" youth who have negative perceptions of police, the literature suggests that youth have generally more negative attitudes than adults. In our contemporary age of massive amounts of information and critiques of powerful institutions such as the police through social movements and quick-breaking news, I would not suggest that it is just youth who are involved in criminal activity that have negative, untrusting, or critical attitudes toward police; although, it may be more common among youth in contact with the criminal justice system. The Youth Advisory Committee, that is part of this study, is not an intervention or diversion program designed to bring together youth delinquents and police officers. In addition, the sole purpose of this program is not to use these youth as informants on Ottawa youth and crime: the aim of this program is for the Ottawa Police Service to foster youth engagement and ensure that the Service is aware of the needs and concerns of the youth they serve.

The deviant subculture premise will not be used here to determine if delinquent youth are involved in this program or if changing the views of delinquent youth should be the focus of police outreach, as this would miss the central goals of the program. Instead, the subcultural approach adopted and expanded by left realism in collaboration with their other concepts will be helpful in exploring this program through a sociocultural and community-specific lens where a number of factors have been found to contribute to youths' perceptions and experiences. The

following chapter will explore the history, concepts, and critiques of left realism as they relate to its application in this project.

Chapter II: Theoretical Framework

This chapter will first explain the practical nature of left realist goals and their emphasis on uncovering real experiences. Second, its contributions to the field of subculture will be used to analyze this partnership and collaboration as a distinct subculture within the police service. In this way, we can learn about the social parameters of this partnership. Finally, left realism will be used to analyze the partnership between the police and community and the need for active engagement from both groups to strive for safer communities through the concepts of subculture and the “democratic imperative”.

Reality of Crime

Left realism began to form in mid 1980s in the UK as a political platform and “policy-oriented intervention focusing on the reality of crime for the working class victim and the need to elaborate a socialist alternative to the conservative emphasis on ‘law and order’” (Lea, 2010, p. 141). During this time, Britain was dominated by conservative federal politics largely under Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. This was accompanied with a list of tough-on-crime and law and order approaches to crime control policy. In 1983, the first-ever British Crime Survey was produced and suggested that crime rates were relatively low, and so politicians concurred that the reality of crime was out of proportion with the public’s fear of crime; in other words, the public’s fear of crime was irrational (Walklate, 2015). In response to these politics, progressive criminologists turned to the Labor Party to help with their social and crime policy development and to have a say in the country’s political activities (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 1991).

These politics, accompanied with Taylor’s (1981) call for a criminology to contribute to “practical, progressive crime control strategies that challenge the right-wing law and order campaign” (Schwartz & DeKeseredy, 1991, p. 53) provided a springboard for left realism to emerge. Several British criminologists, such as Jock Young, John Lea, Roger Matthews, and

Richard Kinsley, were involved in its earliest developments, as well as Elliot Currie and Martin Schwartz in the United States, and Walter DeKeseredy in Canada. Young and Lea's (1993) *What is to be Done About Law and Order?* is considered to be the most central left realist resource and is often used as the basis of other work. As such, this section will focus on their original concepts and its application to my project.

In the past, left realism has advocated for quantitative surveys as an important tool to learn about the realities of crime and experiences of communities. A central belief of research informed with a left realist approach is that "criminology should be faithful to the phenomenon of which they are studying," which emphasizes the importance of studying lived experiences (Young, 1987, p. 337). Some left realist theorists emphasize that both quantitative and qualitative methods should be used to capture the reality of experiences, and critiqued the "pseudo-scientific" positivistic view of crime and behavior (Lea, 2015; Schwartz & DeKeseredy, 1991; Young, 2011). Indeed, Walklate (2006) critiques the ability for a victimization survey to capture the realities of victims and opts for better qualitative methods to do this. For this project, this includes using both surveys and interviews and viewing the information in an interpretivist framework to get close to this lived experience.

Furthermore, Matthews (2014) insists that the research on traditional left realism concepts that were developed with significant political influence, has been methodologically and epistemologically weak. Matthews (2014) identifies strongly with critical realist philosophy and claims that left realism can benefit from incorporating an explanatory-focused epistemology. In response, Lea (2016), argues that the political nature and context of its central concepts are precisely the methodological and epistemological strengths of the framework. The framework is

highly applicable to society and grounded in the experiences of community members, policy makers, and service providers.

In addition to crime policies, left realist criminology also emerged out of a critique of left idealist and administrative criminologies. Administrative criminology does not see the value in searching for the causes of crime and instead focuses on the immediate crime control policies that can be offered by the state (Matthews, 1987). As such, their policies often result in repressive solutions that emphasize deterrence, punishment, and political ideology, and do not consider the realities of victims or communities (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2014). Left idealist criminology views crime as a combination of media-induced moral panics and the crimes committed by the ruling elites that uphold capitalism (Lea, 2010). To left realists, left idealists ignore the study of working class crime in favour of studying the elite and only romanticize the real experiences of the everyday working class person. Indeed, Schwartz and DeKeseredy (1991) summarize the critique with four central premises: idealists oversimplify the lived experiences of poverty as they relate to crime; idealists see criminal law as a tool of the state to create moral panics and therefore ignore the experiences of victims; idealists only pay attention to elite deviances; and finally, idealists offer weak strategies for change and problem solving.

Left realists emphasize an approach to studying criminology that is not paternalistic and does not forget about the average victim. The production of policy should also take this approach. As summarized by Matthews (1987):

For the right, who increasingly express dismay at the 'ungovernability' of contemporary society, the preferred solution is a 'top-down' paternalistic stance aimed at avoiding the repolitization of crime and only reluctantly engaging in consultative situations where they are required to maintain or reestablish legitimacy. For the left, on the other hand, participation, democratization and accountability are key elements in policy construction. For crime control, in particular, it is increasingly being recognized that these three elements are not

only desirable goals in themselves but may be essential ingredients for the development of an effective policy. (p. 379)

There are several differences between the idealists and realists, but it has been noted that these “dated and destructive debates” are no longer the dimensions in which we should be thinking about or applying left realism (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2013, p. 274; Madfis & Cohen, 2016). The debates between traditional idealists and realists still exist today, however a more integrated approach of the dichotomies is encouraged in order to advance the goals of critical criminology (Madfis & Cohen, 2016). Indeed,

there is no value or need for abandoning larger visions of dramatic social change in the name of short-term pragmatic solutions. In other words, although immediate reforms grounded in current policies and practices are needed, these reforms must also be oriented towards a larger, long-term goal of wholesale structural and systemic change. (Madfis & Cohen, 2016, p. 7)

Instead, other central ideas such as the democratic imperative, which emphasizes the participation of communities in politics and policing, should be revisited and taken up by researchers. The theoretical application of this project will consider the dynamic between left idealist and realist criminologies in order to provide a balanced theoretical analysis. Left realism has also contributed to subculture and social deprivation theories stemming from their central premise that the effects of crime on disenfranchised communities are real (Lea, 2015).

Subculture and Relative Deprivation

Along with marginalization, subculture and relative deprivation are among the main concepts of Lea and Young’s (1993) *What is to be Done About Law and Order?*. In its earliest developments, left realism adopted concepts from existing theories of mainstream criminology, including strain and subcultural theories. This was done in order to develop their position that working class citizens were being victimized from all sides: both disproportionately by street

crime and crimes of the powerful or corporate crime above them (DeKeseredy and Schwartz, 2014). There are diverse takes on delinquent subculture theories, but they can generally agree on the following identifying characteristics: norms or rules of conduct in delinquent subculture are conducive to deviant behavior; delinquent subcultures involve delinquent behaviors; and lower class juveniles are most likely to exhibit deviant norms as consistent with their delinquent subculture (Leiber, Nalla, Farnworth, 1998).

In particular, Cohen's concept of status frustration has had some significant influence on the left realist conceptualization of subculture. Cohen (1955) suggests that because societal goals are based on middle income values and therefore more attainable by them, lower income people are assessed less favourably and offered less conventional opportunities. Therefore, the lack of opportunity creates status frustration experienced by young, lower income males, when they cannot succeed in conventional institutions such as school or work as easily as their middle income counterparts can. According to this theory, lower income youth collectively develop values reflecting deviant subcultures that oppose conventional standards and values.

Left realists do not argue that relative poverty or lack of conventional opportunities themselves cause crime. When relative deprivation leads to discontent and when this discontent is not met with political response, subcultures and crime arise (Lea and Young, 1993). Relative deprivation develops when poverty and unequal opportunity are perceived as unfair. When nothing is being done to concretely address these injustices, deviant subcultures form to achieve socially approved goals that oppressive economic policies prohibit. The left realist perspective on poverty and crime diverts from a Marxist view that all crime is a product of capitalistic society. Realists see the presence of crime in socialist societies as a real problem for everyone,

but the most common victims of crime are the lower working classes (Williams & McShane, 2014).

In a similar fashion, Lea and Young (1993) contend that subcultures are created by people to reflect their structural position in society. Subculture is not limited to those of deviant or youthful groups, but can expand to include any unique group and position that differs from mainstream culture, including the police. They specifically focus on subcultures of discontent and believe that it is important to view subcultures not as a group of maladjusted or poor individuals, but as a meaningful and collective response to solve a problem that individuals face. Left realists do not believe that all subcultures lead to crime (Lea & Young, 1993). They claim that one should not assess subcultures objectively as it could lead to a condescending and belittling analysis of the group and their aims. In addition, subculture theory believes that the subculture is a group of individuals with similar experiences. Therefore, analysis should take into account the dynamics of the group (micro) and as they relate to larger (macro) context of society: not the individual experiences (Lea & Young, 1993). They expand subculture to the study of crime to suggest that crime can only be understood in the wider context of society and the structural forces that produce crime.

Left realists not only address deviant subcultures such as the above, but suggest that community and police relations are a subculture. Lea (2010) discusses that the square of crime or social relations of crime control, to be further discussed, can be used in conjunction with a subcultural approach to study the interactions between police, communities, victims, and offenders, and the functioning of state agencies. Through the perspective of subculture theories, the interactions between groups such as the community and police are meaningful and warrant

attention; not unlike the youth and Ottawa Police Service staff involved in their Youth Advisory Committee.

Square of Crime and Democratic Imperative

This concept of the square of crime was developed to best display the interactions between criminal justice agencies, the community and social deprivation, victims, and offenders (Lea, 2010, 2016). On each corner of the square sits one of the four actors and when one changes, each other aspect experiences a reaction (see Figure 1). This is to symbolize the interconnectedness of crime, state, community issues, and the individual experiences of crime. Indeed, “the aim of left realist criminology, as with all forms of radical analysis, is to reveal dynamics of power in order to change them” (Lea, 2015, p. 174). The square of crime portrays these power dynamics of the police and state to the real experiences of crime and victimization. The square of crime, or “social relations of crime control” (Lea, 2010, p. 144), is a framework that can identify how the police and criminal justice system meet the needs of the communities they serve. In this way, powerful agencies such as the police can identify how to serve deprived communities and provide practical interventions that meet their needs. Indeed, “Left Realism was clear that police...must be part of the community and oriented to its needs and crime priorities rather than imposing externally dictated, central government targets” (Lea, 2010, p. 144). This central concept of community activism is the democratic imperative.

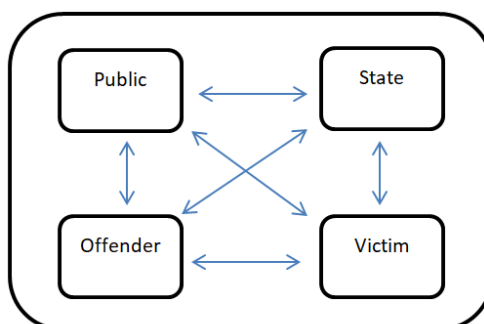


Figure 1: Square of Crime. Lea & Young (1989)

The Brixton riots of 1981 provide an additional political context for left realism's development as well as an example for the democratic imperative. The Brixton neighborhood in south London faced extraordinary levels of discrimination, unequal surveillance, and violence by the Metropolitan Police leading up to multi-day protests. Lord Scarman, as appointed by the Home Secretary, was assigned to investigate the incidents and found significant levels of discriminatory stop and search incidents in the police practices and serious distrust between police and community members. Community police strategies were developed and implemented to recover and rebuild this dysfunctional relationship (Lea & Young, 1993).

Lea and Young (1993) interpreted this incident as an example of how institutions can be democratized as communities mobilize to participate in the local politics and demand better from their institutions. This includes holding the local police service accountable for their actions. They insist that the process of fixing poor relationships between the community and police is reflected in three premises: first, effective policing requires a flow of information about crime from the communities; second, this flow is reflective of trust in police; and third, that broken trust is only restored with democratic accountability (Lea, 2010; 2016). Therefore, they call for reform in politics that puts community's concerns at the center and state interests at the sides. Indeed, "the real issue of political reform facing us now is...how to adapt our political system in such a way that those previously driven to riot can be re-included in the organs of political discourse" (Lea & Young, 1993, p. 232). This restructuring should create a "critical community" that has the tools they need to address and debate the issues that they know well within their communities (Lea, 2016). As best explained by Lea (1987):

The maximization of democratic participation is ultimately the solution both to the problem of what is crime and to the problem of how to deal with it. The solution to the problem of criminal justice is the democratization of its institutions while at the same time recognising their necessary functions. The realist

programme is concerned with the redrawing of the boundaries between and the transformation of the character of institutions and communities in accordance with the values of socialist pluralism. (p. 369)

Lea and Young (1993) state that the best way to “develop, or rather re-develop, the local community as a political entity is to create the institutions for local democracy” (p. 239). The democratization of communities and police also challenges the central tenets of conservative and idealist criminology which states that nothing can be done about crime without the fall of capitalist state (Currie, 2010). They also suggest that participating in victimization surveys is part of participating in the democratized community as these surveys increase the flow of information from community and state.

While they call for community-wide involvement in local politics and police accountability, Lea and Young (1993) insist that “It should be the case that the community consults the police as part of the process of formulating its needs, not that the police consult the community in formulating its strategy” (p. 260). The only way that the community can trust the police and be involved in local politics is if they know that they will be held accountable for their actions. It is also noted that participation from marginalized communities, such as young and racialized people, is particularly important to include in these processes as their voices are often unheard (Lea, 2010, 2015; Lea & Young, 1993). Developing this honest flow of information where the needs of the community are central to intervention policies and the state is responsible to respond to these needs is one of the goals in left realism.

Lea and Young (1993) distinguish the democratization of police and democratic imperative from community policing practices. Although they all encourage positive interactions and collaboration between the community and police, the one crucial difference is that in community policing projects there is an “absence of control by the local community over the

activities of the police” (Lea & Young, 1993, p. 247). Community-police liaison committees are discussed throughout the book in relation to democratic imperative and they have important critiques for implementing such initiatives. Although liaison committees are a step for community consultation, they must be established in a way that the police organization will be held accountable for incorporating that feedback. The community must know that their feedback will be taken seriously or their participation will decline and the initiative will fail to produce anything effective from the police. Without the power of accountability, Lea and Young (1993) claim that “the police are asking for the impossible: greater information flow from the community without fundamental change in policing style, and without answerability to those who employ them” (p. 254). This point relates to the civic engagement literature above that suggests that youth want to be genuinely engaged. If they feel that their voice or opinion will not make a difference, such as with voting, then they will not participate. The way in which this program engages youth and incorporates their feedback will be important information that speaks to the intentions or goals of the program.

In addition, Lea and Young (1993) problematize how representatives or participants may be chosen for these committees. Particularly in lower working-class communities, they worry that those who are chosen to participate are hand-picked by the institutions or already powerful community members and do not fully represent the community. They may only represent a particular side of the community or are simply power-hungry individuals who want to be heard at any cost. This point must be considered for this project, especially since youth must apply to volunteer for the Youth Advisory Committee. Interestingly, the selection and interview procedures are completed by current members in a peer-to-peer process. The survey and interview questions are designed to explore the areas of recruitment and participant intentions for

the program. These questions will explore who has been interested in this program as well as why, and by extension whose feedback the Ottawa Police Service has received.

The left realist goal of criminal justice system reform, particularly of police, has been the cause of significant critique among left criminology. To engage with these state agencies in the form of short term solutions, such as in the form of community engagement, has been critiqued as only strengthening the state's power and continues to ignore the fundamental changes that citizens demand. For instance, radical criminology attests that "any attempts to change the capitalist power structure of the state and its agencies are merely minor attempts to fix a system that will continue to get worse" (Lea and Young, 1993). In response to this, left realists would argue that "it is a legitimate goal to 'chip away' at the capitalist patriarchal order, rather than holding off to await the success of some policy to overthrow all of society's structures" (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2001). Left realism emerged out of critiques of other theoretical and political frameworks; therefore it is not free from critiques. Furthermore, I will focus here specifically on its limitations, the responses to them, and how it will be applied.

Limitations and Project Application

There are a number of limitations with this theory. For one, there is ongoing discussion about the applicability of left realism to circumstances outside of the United Kingdom since its emergence and development are very entrenched in the political and academic landscape of British criminology. Indeed, the specific context of its development may have led to inconsistent applications of left realism in different universities around the world (Schwartz & DeKeseredy, 1991). For the future of left realism in criminology, it may be useful to consider the use of the theory within the context of the 1980s UK Labour Party as a case study of left realist thought in order to encourage more contemporary applications (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 1991).

In addition, left realism relies heavily upon the community and their actions; including, the mobilization of communities to participate in politics and the need for the state to listen to communities for their real experiences of crime are central in all applications of left realism. As discussed by Matthews (1987), community is never thoroughly defined and has caused some inconsistencies in the interpretation and application of the concepts. In addition, Schwartz and DeKeseredy (1991) problematize the reliance on an overly optimistic expectation of a community to create change, as the community may be more vindictive, racist, sexist, or produce more inequalities for victims than the criminal justice system would. In addition, it could be divided in terms of its demands. Also for consideration, the needs of one segment of a community may be prioritized to exclude marginalized people, such as the youth facing troubles, drug users, the homeless, and sex workers.

However, Lea and Young (1993) have discussed some of the issues with the concept of community. Particularly addressing the use of community and police consultations after the Brixton Riots, Lea and Young (1993) discuss that issues can arise in these types of interventions where one or two individuals are chosen by authorities to represent their community. It is possible that these individuals are chosen due to higher status, and therefore they may not be the ones who can accurately represent their communities. Therefore, the notion of community seems to be intended to be not necessarily one cohesive and agreeable group represented by a few privileged individuals, but as a group that experiences similar needs and supports each other's actions for democratization collectively. These notions of community and civic engagement will be important when I explore the experiences of the youth in the youth advisory program. My findings in regards to community will contribute to this criticism and concept within left realism.

When comparing the most recent readings on left realism to the older ones from the 1980s, there seems to be a consistent push for new applications to take up the theoretical framework. Much of this has come from reflections on the field due to the untimely death of Jock Young in 2013. Researchers such as DeKeseredy (2016) have called for new academics to take up the framework, including individuals who are young, female, LGBTQ, or Indigenous, in order to bring new applications of and perspectives to left realism. The application of the central concepts of left realism to youth civic engagement in this thesis project is a step in this direction.

The realistic and practical perspective of left realism provide the appropriate foundation for analyzing police and community engagement projects, such as the Ottawa Police Service's Youth Advisory Committee. The practical objective of this project is to precisely investigate the dimensions of the program as a distinct subculture in order to make short-term projects such as this, a successful engagement tool. As discussed in the literature review, we know about negative perceptions of police or reasons for youth disengagement; therefore, we must learn from the youth who do engage with the state's agencies in an effort to bridge gaps in communication, build meaningful relationships, and advocate for their community. To accompany this practical goal, a subcultural approach consistent with the left realist contributions to subculture theory will be used to help guide my analysis of the Committee in order to best understand the dynamics between Committee members, the Ottawa Police Service, and the community.

Lea and Young's (1993) writing on consultative committees, as both necessary and worth criticism, will guide my analysis. By looking at these programs as an example of youth civic engagement, I am also able to situate the program as an example of democratic imperative between the youth community and the police service. In addition, utilizing the concept of the square of crime will allow me to deconstruct the complex relationship between the youth in this

program, the police agency, and the community in order to explore civic engagement and the democratic imperative as a subculture (Lea, 2016; Lea & Young, 1993). This framework also draws on the central practical objective of this project: to understand the parameters of this subculture and experiences to make programs like these better for the community. Indeed, this goal is consistent with the objectives of left realism. Therefore, my research questions are: How does the collaborative partnership between local youth and the police service staff in the form of Ottawa Police Service's YAC program foster an opportunity for youth civic engagement and democratization of the police service (Lea & Young, 1993)? Through a left realist subculture lens, what are the dynamics between the youth, police, and broader community that characterize this collaboration as a distinct subculture within the police service?

In other words, youth civic engagement is the lens through which I explore these experiences of young people who participate in YACs organized within the police service. In addition, this project will address a number of gaps in the literature. First, it will contribute to the very limited and/or dated Canadian literature on youth perspectives on police, democracy, and civic engagement. Second, this project will contribute to the under-researched area of police youth outreach programs that are not intervention programs, as well as expanding interest in youth advisory council or committees. Third, it will expand contemporary research using the left realist theoretical framework. Lastly, the mixed methods research design will focus on the specific perceptions of young people and their particular interpretations of the world that is not currently common in the literature.

Chapter III: Methods

Before I discuss the specific methodological approaches taken in this project, it is important to provide context for how this project came to light. During my undergraduate degree I completed a field placement with the Ottawa Police Service's (OPS) Community Development Section. This section organizes the community policing strategy, maintains relationships with community organizations, and holds consultations with Ottawa citizens to help the OPS maintain good relationships within the community. Throughout my placement I met several different teams and staff members at OPS. I developed some good contacts and a strong understanding of the organization through learning about their relationship building with community organizations and members of the public. Research that involves decision-makers, particularly qualitative research, can be very beneficial for both the researcher and the organization. Some benefits of such collaboration include the production of research that is highly applicable to real experiences and policies, as well as informed with unique perspectives and ideas (Ross, Lavis, Rodriguez, Woodside & Denis, 2003).

Questions and Goals

My research questions are: How does the collaborative partnership between local youth and the police service staff in the form of Ottawa Police Service's Youth Advisory Committee program foster an opportunity for youth civic engagement and democratization of the police service (Lea & Young, 1993)? Through a left realist subculture lens, what are the dynamics between the youth, police, and broader community that characterize this collaboration as a distinct subculture within the police service?

The main goal for my research project is then to identify what the youth do in the Ottawa Police Service's Youth Advisory Committee as well as their perceptions of that work and collaboration. This goal recognizes that there are often tensions between youth and communities

with police in general, so their participation in the program may be affected by these tensions (Friedman, et al., 2004; Hurst & Frank, 2000; Lea & Young, 1993; Taylor, Turner, Esbensen, & Winfree, 2001). In order to make programs such as youth committees and powerful institutions such as the police better, we must learn from the youth who choose to engage with the police. To do this, this project will identify the intentions of joining the program, the extent of community advocacy, and dynamics between the Ottawa Police Service and the communities they serve. I will also identify the youth's different perceptions of civic engagement in consideration of left realism's democratic imperative and their involvement in the program (Lea, 2016; Lea & Young, 1993), as youth are not a homogenous group and each experience everything differently (Flanagan, 2013; O'Neill, 2007).

Overall, I want to hear from youth themselves about the ways in which this program allows them to contribute to their communities, as well as the adults who empower them to do so. It will explore their motivations and intentions to participate in this program, as well as how these youth practice civic engagement while working with the police service. To deconstruct these characteristics and dynamics with subculture as a concept, I will build on Lea and Young's (1983) original ideas as well as later developments by Lea (2010; 2015). This research is exploratory in nature, as the combination of the different areas of literature used, frameworks, and methodological approaches have not been used in this way. To analyze exploratory research, the data comes from the interaction between the researcher and the participant or community who the researcher wishes to engage with (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2011). Consistent with left realism's focus on uncovering experience, a mixed methods approach will lead to rich and detailed data suitable for thematic analysis.

Methodological Approach and Paradigm

This project exists within a constructivist paradigm framework that focuses on the lived experiences of individuals and how our realities are shaped by them (Denicolo, Long & Bradley-Cole, 2016; Glesne, 2010). In this way, exploring the lived experiences and perceptions of the youth is central to my project. The constructivist paradigm recognizes and embraces the complex nature of social life and the variables used in social science research. This accompanies the left realist framework that recognizes the complexity of crime within the concept of the square of crime, which places the lived experiences of crime on victims, offenders, community, and law enforcement agencies as central (Lea, 2016).

Left realisms' ontological perspective is consistent with the realist side of the relativism scale, which "asserts that reality exists externally, independent of human activity" (Denicolo, Long & Bradley-Cole, 2016, p. 28). While realism does not align with the constructivist's typical approach of relativism, the constructivist interest of exploring human perspective coincides with the left realist goal of exploring the reality of crime.

The "realism" largely lies in the original conceptualization that crime, especially property and street crime, is not a construction of the media or by politicians, but is a real phenomenon that affects communities, victims, and the services that help them (Lea & Young, 1993). Left realism "takes to heart the problem of translating radical ideas into realistic social policy" (Williams & McShane, 2014, p. 135). As such, left realism aims to deconstruct the complex factors of crime and social life in order to understand the public's experiences and form realistic solutions such as better policies or programs to address the issues (Young, 1987). Indeed, "through exposing the complex dynamics of criminalisation at work in particular scenarios...shows precisely how that reality is built up out of concrete social relations" (Young, 2016, p. 59). The constructivist paradigm will be used to emphasize the parts of the theory that

apply closest to my project about young people's civic engagement, the democratization of police services, and learning about their experiences of advocating for their community in the program. The constructivist focus on individual lived experiences also informs my perspective on objectivity or subjectivity in this project.

I will work with subjectivity in the constructivist sense. As I interview the youth, it is important to acknowledge the multiple realities that they individually express. As such, the only way to explore the many subjective points of view is to consider the various interpretations of the world that they have (Denicolo, Long & Bradley-Cole, 2016). Due to a variety of life experiences and circumstances, each young person that I interview will have a different understanding of what community, civic engagement, and police means to them. Again, this is consistent with the left realist approach to the reality of crime whereby the youth's lived experiences and perceptions of their involvement within the program are focused on.

The following concepts concern my methodological approach to the status of the material the factist and testimony perspectives presented by Alasuutari (1995). The factist perspective is particularly useful in research that uses interviews to explore "the actual behaviour, attitudes or real motives of the people being studied" (Alasuutari, 1995, p. 47). It is particularly well suited for research informed by left realism and its understanding that crime and police dysfunction and their effects are real things that people experience. In addition, the factist definition of facts is information that reflects the truth in the real world (Alasuutari, 1995) and is well suited to left realism's emphasis on the reality of crime and the complex individual realities affected by the square of crime. In addition, left realism "embodies the view that there is a reality independent of our knowledge and that this reality is stratified, containing emergent properties whose effects should not be conflated with our experience of them" (Matthews, 2014, p. 55). This is consistent

with Alasuutari's (1995) assumption of factist perspective that there is a "clear-cut division between the world or reality 'out there' ...and the claims made about it" (p. 47). The factist element consistent with the testimony also helps emphasize the reality of experience that I wish to explore.

The testimony approach views the material as "a testimony about the things one is studying, for instance the habits or belief systems of a community" (Alasuutari, 1995, p. 51). As I learn about the youth's experiences with program, their responses to my questions will represent a lens into their reality. To focus on keeping their perspectives at the center of my analysis will also be coherent with the left realist perspective that respects individual's perspective as truthful of their own experience. As a group in research that is often spoken for, it is important for me to consider the youth's statements as a testimony to their experience and avoid filling-in or misinterpreting their statements. Furthermore, the methods techniques to gather these experiences will be discussed.

Means of gathering data

A sequential mixed methods approach was used for this project with survey and semi-structured interviews. There are several definitions, typologies, and approaches used to describe mixed methods within the social sciences. The most commonly agreed upon characteristic of mixed methods is the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods in a single study and analysis (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2011). As the focus in interpretivist research is on uncovering experience and understanding meaning, the use of qualitative methods are often favoured over quantitative ones (Denicolo, Long & Bradley-Cole, 2016). While it is true that qualitative methods can help access human experience in a way that quantitative methods cannot, a mixed methods approach for my project was chosen for a few reasons. Indeed, Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) identify several potential advantages to using different methodological

approaches, including that it can provide more comprehensive evidence and encourage interdisciplinary collaboration. The latter was important for this project, as it combines and borrows literature, concepts, and theories from different disciplines. A mixed methods approach was used to gather a wide range of information and blend the literature and framework in a concise manner.

The use of both survey and interview data is consistent with the recommendations voiced in the research fields and theoretical frameworks that I am working. As discussed above, left realist theoretical framework has historically favoured quantitative research but is now showing enthusiasm for qualitative methods. Given that this method is focussed on gathering information to learn about the reality of human experience, this is consistent with the general goals of qualitative methods. In addition, much of the literature that concerns youth and police relationships or perceptions have involved the use of quantitative surveys. Surveys are effective for gathering large amounts of information quickly, but researchers who have used this method to explore youth perception of police also call for qualitative interviews to balance the abundance of quantitative research in the area (Hurst, Frank, & Browning, 2000; Hurst & Frank, 2000; Friedman; Lurigio, Greenleaf, Albertson 2004).

In addition, the use of various methods produces rich data to analyse in an exploratory project (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2011). Since the concepts of youth and police community-based programming and civic engagement have not often been studied together, the mixed methods approach allows me to gather a greater variety of data. Indeed, consistent with the constructivist approach to research, “exploring constructs and eliciting deep inner meanings is not possible through quantitative data collection alone” (Denicolo, Long, Trevor, & Bradley-Cole, p. 35). In addition, the survey was a convenient method to recruit participants for

interviews. At the same time, through surveys, I was able to collect more information on an under-researched group and recruit for interviews.

Lastly, in discussions with the Ottawa Police Service about the possibilities of this project, they mentioned that they appreciate if I could to incorporate a survey to the project. I began this project with an intention of building a working partnership with OPS, so their input was paramount. The following will discuss the questions used in the survey and interviews¹.

The questions asked in both the survey and interviews reflected a few central areas of interest. First, general demographic information was collected in order to determine information about age, level of education, and how long youth had been involved with the YAC. Indeed, a lack of diversity in youth council programs is noted as a barrier to success as it affects community representation and potential for advocacy (Collins, Augsberger & Gecker, 2016). Next, in line with the youth and police perceptions literature, four global measures of satisfaction with police were used. These measures were developed by White and Menke (1982) and are used across the research on public perceptions of police, including that of youth perceptions (Geistman & Smith, 2007; Hurst & Frank, 2000; Hurst, McDermott & Thomas, 2005; Leiber, Nalla, Farnworth, 1998). These measures assess global or neighborhood perceptions of police and are designed to measure general attitudes as opposed to specific attitudes; however, to distinguish what is general or specific and how they develop has been debated in the literature (Brandl, Frank, Worden & Bynum, 1994; Frank, Smith, & Novak, 2005).

Specific attitudes are attitudes that result from direct contact with a specific police service, such as being stopped or questioned by the local police (Brandl, Frank, Worden & Bynum, 1994). In this case, the specific attitudes or contact with police of interest are the experiences that the youth have in the program itself, which are addressed in several of the

¹ Refer to Appendix A to review the survey and Appendix D and Appendix E for the interview guides.

survey and interview questions. The empirical evidence regarding how global and specific attitudes toward police develop or interrelate is inconclusive. Frank, Smith, and Novak's (2005) study on citizens' attitudes toward police provided some support for Brandl and colleague's (1994) assessment that specific attitudes contribute to general attitudes, rather than these being completely separate measures. That is, citizens use information from their specific experiences with police, whether plentiful or nonexistent, to make general assessments of police. Therefore, the relationship between experiences and specific or general attitudes toward police require more inquiry (Frank, Smith, & Novak, 2005). The global measures will nevertheless be helpful in assessing the youth's attitudes toward the police in general while contrasting their experiences in the program and contribute to this debate.

In addition, participants were asked to rate in surveys and discuss in interviews what their perspectives are in regards to the effects of the YAC on the OPS. These questions were designed to target the youth and police relations, perceptions, and programs ideas of this thesis. The other set of questions aimed to address civic engagement elements, including effects of being involved in the program as active members advocating for their communities. These questions are similar to those in a recent study on the structure of youth councils in municipal governments (Collins, Augsberger & Gecker, 2016). The questions that ask how the youth perceive their impact on the organization are crucial to understanding the full potential of these programs. This also contributes to my practical goal of improving these opportunities for collaboration to be effective for all parties involved, although research has not been able to identify the impact of these programs (Checkoway, 2011)

Lastly, I asked about the intentions youth may have for choosing to be involved in the YAC. When researching the effects and characteristics of youth and police programs, Anderson,

Sabatelli & Trachtenberg (2007) indicate that it is important to consider the existing skills and background of the youth who are participating. In doing so, we can learn who these programs reach and by extension what community members the police agency are best engaging with. Particularly in civic engagement research, it is essential to consider the particular characteristics youth that may lead to particular forms of civic engagement.

I asked OPS coordinators if there was anything that they would like to know about the program. I kept this discussion in mind when developing the survey and interview guides. They asked me to explore the reasons for the high retention rate that the YAC saw every year. That is, many of the eligible youth continued to participate in the program year after year. This is not something that had directly occurred to me as an outsider to the program, nor had it emerged from the literature. A section of questions were developed to address reasons why the participant may have initially chosen to get involved in the program and reasons why they stayed involved. Answers to these questions may speak to the variety of factors that lead them to continue to be involved in the program or why some left, which may provide insight to what specific experiences or aspects of the program were deemed valuable to the youth.

Survey

A SurveyMonkey account was granted through the University of Ottawa's Information Technology Services in November 6th, 2017. A survey was first sent to all individuals who have participated in this program in the last three years about their experiences in the program. This was done in order to provide a broader understanding of the program and the participants as this type of program has not been studied before. In addition, completion of the questionnaire led to recruitment for the interviews. The survey largely included Likert scale questions about the themes discussed above. Participants had the opportunity to provide further contact information if they wanted to participate in a follow-up interview on the same topics covered in the survey.

Participants were informed that they could participate in the survey without being interviewed if they do not wish to be interviewed.

Recruitment and Sample

The objective was to reach a specific group of youth who had participated in the Ottawa Police Service's YAC and officers who have worked with the youth program. Therefore, criterion sampling was used to identify participants who "had a specific experience or being engaged in a particular bounded activity" (Denicolo, Long & Bradley-Cole, 2016, p. 113). Consistent with my ethics application with the University of Ottawa's Research Ethics Board, the OPS YAC coordinator helped me with the recruitment. They were responsible for compiling a list of email addresses for the recruitment emails. This was to limit my access to the personal contact information of the youth as well as to provide the organization with the opportunity to speak to the project. The strategy to include an individual that participants knew and trusted in the first steps of data collection added legitimacy to my request and might have helped me reach those who I otherwise would not have. I created the recruitment documents, email message, and instructions for them to send out in the emails. My supervisor and I were carbon-copied on recruitment messages and the participants were blind-copied in order to protect their identities. They were advised to direct any interest or questions to me, not OPS staff.

To obtain a recruitment list for the survey, the coordinator compiled a list of youth who have participated in the Youth Advisory Committee since it began in 2012. In total, 61 youth were sent the recruitment email message (Appendix B), 22 of which were current members. The first recruitment email for youth participants was sent on January 22nd 2018 and participants were given a deadline of February 4th, 2018 to complete it. A reminder email was sent to the youth on February 1st. In this time, I collected 17 complete surveys and the contact information of 6 youth who were interested in being interviewed. To obtain more responses, a second round

of survey recruitment was launched from February 12th to February 19th, and a third again March 1st to March 12th. In total, I received 32 responses to the survey with 5 being incomplete. In all, 7 of the 27 respondents expressed interest in being interviewed and 5 agreed to be interviewed.

While the recruitment message was sent to all members, there is a chance that sampling error could have affected the results. The coordinator does not have any administrative help in the Ottawa Police Service's Youth Services and was solely responsible to gather the required information. They sifted through years of emails to compile the list and it is possible that some individuals were missed. Similarly, some of the emails that she was able to collect may be outdated or no longer active by the user. This may limit the number of older participants that I was able to reach for the survey or interview.

Recruitment to interview Ottawa Police Service members involved with the program began on February 27th (Appendix C). I received emails from two respondents who were interested in being interviewed. In an effort to obtain more interest a follow-up email was sent on March 19th. I did not receive any more interest from this sample and therefore conducted interviews with two OPS staff members who were involved with the YAC. Again, the OPS coordinator was responsible for the recruitment list and sending of the emails in order to protect the anonymity of those involved with the program. If anyone was interested or had any questions about the research, they were directed to contact me.

Interview

In addition to surveys, interviews were undertaken to gain the youths' perspective. Inquiry in regards to the perspectives and experiences of youth through interviews is something lacking in both the youth and police relationships and youth civic engagement literature (Collins, Augsberger & Gecker, 2016; Hurst, 2007; Larkins, 2014; Williams, 1999). At the end of the

survey, participants were asked if they would like to be interviewed on their experiences with the program. If they said agreed, they provided an email and phone number as contact information. Out of the 27 complete surveys, 7 participants included contact information to be interviewed and 5 agreed to be interviewed. None of those interviewed was under the age of 18 and required parental consent to participate.

I used semi-structured one-on-one interviews with the youth participants and adults involved in the program. Semi-structured interviews provide the interviewer with some flexibility in how the discussions and topics flow (Noaks & Wincup, 2004). I used some probing techniques in order to further discuss, clarify, or validate answers from interviewees. I was cognizant not to guide or persuade answers, but to further develop a theme, topic, example, or idea. Open-ended questions will be used to be consistent with the narrative analysis approach (Chamberlain, 2012). The semi-structured interview technique is consistent with the goal of this project to give the youth an opportunity to express their perceptions and lived experiences with civic and youth engagement in their communities.

In-depth interviews are best suited for investigating experiences in order to understand an individual or group's perspective in their own words (Hammersley, 2013). These interviews should be unstructured in order to let the participant say what they want at length. Although often interpreted as favoring quantitative surveys, academics that use left realism also recognize the importance of qualitative methods to uncover the reality of experiences (Lea, 2015; Schwartz & DeKeseredy, 1991; Walklate, 2006). The interviews with the youth are the best way to deconstruct the complex experiences that they have while participating in these programs.

The semi-structured interview also has specific implications for skills of the interviewer. In order to be flexible in the discussion, the interviewer must practice discretion and reflexivity.

Reflexivity in qualitative research involves reflection of one's own perceptions, role, and decisions made throughout the process (Chamberlain, 2012; Noaks & Wincup, 2004). This style also requires the interviewer to have knowledge and context of the program and topic in order to have a rich discussion, which my experience as a youth program worker and OPS employee fulfills. As indicated throughout Sherrod, Torney-Purta and Flanagan's (2010) *Handbook of research on civic engagement in youth*, it is important that the researcher has insight and context around the complex and interdisciplinary qualities of youth civic engagement programs in order to accurately and ethically research the topic. Indeed, as a young person researching youth issues, I am in a particularly unique place to do so and this is a consideration for my reflexive practice.

The choice of venue for interviews is an important ethical consideration. The space should be comfortable, relaxed, and relatively private (Denicolo, Long & Bradley-Cole, 2016). The office space for the Criminology Graduate Students Association in the Faculty of Social Science Building at the University of Ottawa was used as the primary interview space. If youth were younger or in high school, I would have arranged to meet them at their local community center if they would have preferred; however, all youth agreed to meet with me on campus. A plan for my own safety was also in place throughout the interview process and included, but was not limited to: giving my supervisor a complete interview schedule, calling a friend before and after every interview, and, if they do not hear from me within an hour of when I was expected to be finished, to take further action in ensuring my safety and wellbeing.

Post-interview, my contact information will be made available for all participants, and the youth's parents, for any follow up questions or concerns. I also checked with the youth that they have a safe arrangement leaving the interview. Parents will not have access to their child's

interview transcript, but will have the information to contact me if they have any concerns or questions for me.

Interviews with youth lasted approximately 20-45 minutes. The interview guide (Appendix D) outlines the introduction and conclusion notes as well as the 6 specific questions similar to those asked in the survey in order to build on the themes presented there. Similar to above, the interviews with OPS staff lasted between 30 minutes to 1 hour. The Interview Guide (Appendix E) included an introduction and conclusion script as well as 6 questions. Interviews were semi-structured in order to provide space for the conversation to flow genuinely along with the interests and opinions of the participant. In order to take full advantage of the interview, rapport building was important in establishing trust with participants.

Rapport building and data ownership

A vital step to qualitative research and successful interview practice is to build rapport with the participants, especially in research with youth or police officers. I built rapport by being open to their questions and concerns throughout the recruitment process. My work with youth in my capacity as a Youth Policy Analyst and program developer of the RCMP's National Youth Advisory Committee has provided me with the skills to work well with youth. I also met with the YAC group in October 2017 to explain my upcoming project and answer their questions about the research process and my experiences as a university student. I was also able to establish myself as the researcher and clarify OPS' role in the project as a supportive one, but not directly involved in the data collection or analysis. At the interview, I did my best to make the interviewee comfortable. This included offering snacks, asking about their day, and ensuring that the interview should take about 40 minutes at most. I introduced myself and provided information about how the project developed, including my work at the Ottawa Police Service and with RCMP's National Youth Services. A comprehensive review of the consent forms

(Appendix F; G) and interview questionnaires (Appendix I; J) that they signed as well as the principles of anonymity and confidentiality provided the interviewee with an understanding of my project and its goals. An assent form (Appendix H) was also prepared as it was possible that I would be interviewing youth under the age of eighteen; however, it was not used as all participants were over eighteen.

The humanistic approach requires the researcher to develop strong rapport with the participants to build trust that allows them to speak freely and truthfully (Alasuutari, 1995). My experience working with youth, particularly high school-aged students, within a youth program setting will help in this rapport building. Furthermore, I will approach my data ownership with transparency in order to accurately represent their stories. This included providing the opportunity for participants to review their interview transcript. One of the youth and both of the adults interviewed requested to review their transcript. In addition, participants were provided the opportunity to review the direct quotations that I used from their interview for this thesis. Any adjustments that were requested were acted upon prior to it being submitted as the final version.

As for data ownership, it was important for me to establish that although I have worked with OPS in the development of this project in multiple stages, I own the data. By this I emphasize that OPS does not have access to the raw data, interview transcripts, codebooks, or analysis notes. This is consistent with the ethical requirements to protect the participants' anonymity and confidentiality. While respecting my ethical requirements and in an effort to demonstrate my thankfulness to the YAC for welcoming me into their world for this research, I look forward to presenting my analysis to them and OPS in general upon its completion.

Analytical framework

Quantitative statistics

SPSS statistical analysis package was used to organize and run analysis on the quantitative data from the surveys. As discussed, although I obtained 32 responses to the survey, five were incomplete and therefore excluded from the sample. The survey was sent to 61 youth who had participated in the program since its inception in 2012. With a sample of 27, population of 61, and confidence interval of 95% the margin of error percentage is 14%.

Due to this small sample size, statistical analysis is limited. Due to a small population, the primary goal with the survey was to obtain general demographic information and recruit respondents for interviews. Likert scale questions were used throughout the survey. Descriptive and frequency statistics were gathered on general demographic answers. Survey sections on perception of police, engagement with the OPS, and community advocacy were compared on their frequencies. A paired samples t-test was used to determine differences in the reasons why youth joined the program versus why they stayed. Information from the survey was used to accompany interview data, which was analyzed using thematic analysis techniques.

Qualitative analysis

A thematic analysis framework is used to analyse the interview data. There is no single way to conduct a thematic analysis (Denicolo, Long & Bradley-Cole, 2016). However, in general, thematic analysis guides the researcher to focus on the dynamics of the natural storytelling instincts that humans have (Chamberlain, 2012). In this way, thematic analysis is more concerned with the flow and sequences of how the participants explain their points of view in the analysis, rather than analyzing the information with pre-set codes. Therefore, codes are developed to address implicit and explicit ideas throughout the text and not just specific recurring words and phrases (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2011). This requires more

interpretation from the researcher while reading, rather than relying on predetermined codes. This makes thematic analysis unique compared to other techniques, such as grounded theory, as they focus on the “unfolding content of the story as it is being told” (Chamberlain, 2012, p. 112). In a constructivist approach, I approached the data as an interpretive segment of reality for that individual, in which they are expressing themselves in reflection of their life experiences.

More of the general goals of this project include the development of rich data and hearing from those who are socially marginalized and often silenced. Thematic analyses, particularly in criminology, emerged from the movement within the social sciences for more constructivist forms of research and knowledge building to challenge quantitative-dominant positivistic research. Thematic analyses and qualitative research challenge the singular notion of truth to account for different experiences of “real” life or truths to focus on how people use their narratives as “social tools for giving meaning to personal experience, constructing a sense of personal identity, as well as placing life events within a broader socio-cultural context” (Chamberlain, 2012, p. 111).

Chamberlain (2012) also brings attention to an important ethical consideration for this type of analysis. Consistent with other forms of qualitative research, we must guide the quality and process of research through concepts such as authenticity, credibility, rigor, and trustworthiness. In this way, it is my responsibility to remain cognisant of the reasons why I am asking the questions I ask participants. I will ensure that their narratives are treated with a high level of sensitivity and respect; although I do not suspect the conversation will contain graphic or overly sensitive information, I will be prepared to treat their responses with support and respect.

Thematic analysis also concerns giving voice to those who are generally marginalized or ignored in society. The narrative approach targets the traditional power relationship that controls

the dynamics between researcher and the participants being researched. To acknowledge this dynamic, I will give participants the freedom to share their experiences in interviews and analyse their transcript afterwards. This reverse of traditional power is addressed in the youth engagement literature as important (Sherrod, Torney-Purta, & Flanagan, 2010). It would be hypocritical to contribute to youth civic engagement literature in a way that does not empower and put their experiences at the centre of the research. Furthermore, a specific guide developed by Guest, MacQueen, and Namey (2011) was helpful in developing my analytical strategy.

Applied Thematic Analysis

Applied Thematic Analysis (ATA) was a comprehensive resource for those using thematic analysis in projects that concern the presentation of human experience. In general, ATA “draws from a broad range of several theoretical and methodological perspectives, but in the end, its primary concern is with presenting the stories and experiences voiced by study participants as accurately and comprehensively as possible” (Guest, MacQueen, Namey, 2011, p. 17).

Specifically, ATA draws on grounded theory and phenomenological frameworks to create a flexible method that can be applied to different types of projects. It draws on the inductive approach of grounded theory, but broadens its scope to go beyond building theory (Guest, MacQueen, Namey, 2011). In addition, ATA shares the flexibility for analysis and interpretation that grounded theory offers, yet is done systematically. It then borrows ideas from interpretive phenomenology to uncover human experiences that are often overlooked, consistent with its overall aim.

Throughout Guest, MacQueen, and Namey’s (2011) book they emphasize their goal is to combine humanistic phenomenology with a positivist framework to make human experiences more systematic in research. The authors discuss the divide between positivist and interpretive

research and offer ATA as an approach that emphasizes the strongest elements from both.

Indeed, Guest, MacQueen, and Namey (2011) explain:

Although more comfortably applied within a positivist framework, many of the principles of ATA (all really, except quantification) can be incorporated into an interpretive analytic enterprise. There is nothing about the systematicity and transparency of process within ATA that is inherently at odds with interpretivism. (p. 19)

Aside from the quantification of data, their focus on research being “transparent, efficient, and ethical” is appropriate for this project and consistent with the methodological concepts set out in this chapter (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2011, p. 19). Therefore, consistent with their suggestion, ATA will be used with an interpretivist framework and the positivistic tendencies presented in this guide will be corrected to apply best to my constructivist project. This incorporation of various frameworks, methods, and techniques leads to a practice that can be applied to an array of disciplines. Its flexibility and applicability also means that it is best suited for research that is guided by life experiences.

Guest, MacQueen, and Namey (2011) also address the use of mixed methods with ATA. The flexibility of the approach is well suited for different methods and method integration techniques. Consistent with other mixed methods guides, they encourage an organized approach to justify why the researcher is using multiple approaches. As discussed, the survey and interview included questions concerning similar topics and themes. The quantitative information was collected to provide basic demographic information and information on perception on a sample of current and past YAC members in order to get a better understanding of the youth involved in this program. Building on this information, the qualitative data will help to provide more in-depth examples of the participant’s experiences in the program and views on engagement. Together, the two methods will fill the gaps in the literature and in practical

knowledge about youth and police collaboration as well as youth civic engagement practices in Canada.

Ethical Considerations

Ethics approval and permission are essential steps in qualitative research. Approval from the University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board (REB) was required for the interview portions of this project. Partial approval was granted on September 11th, 2017 and full approval on November 10th, 2017 after the signed letter of permission from Ottawa Police Service was provided on November 7th, 2017. The Ethics Approval Notice from the University of Ottawa (Appendix K) and the Letter of Permission from the Ottawa Police Service (Appendix L) are included at the end of this report.

Aside from the ethics approval process from University of Ottawa's REB, I needed to also carefully consider youth engagement and the constructivist approach in an ethical manner. Indeed, while the constructivist perspective is "methodologically powerful and has sharp instruments for accessing people's worldviews" it is imperative that the increased vulnerability of participants that comes with this approach is ethically accounted for (Denicolo, Long & Bradley-Cole, 2016, p. 201).

Confidentiality and anonymity were also guaranteed for all participants. Every interview began with a debrief where I reminded participants of their rights, which includes their right to review the transcript of the interview and leave the interview at any point if they no longer wished to participate. In addition, I reiterated my responsibility to uphold their confidentiality. This includes that I write about and discuss my research in any way that does not reveal to anyone that they were in contact with me or interviewed for this project. I explained that a pseudonym will be used in any publications of this research, including this thesis dissertation. I also have the responsibility of maintaining confidentiality and anonymity through the ways in

which I discuss the data and findings as to not reveal identifying factors which could lead a reader, such as an OPS employee or YAC participant, to narrow-down who was spoken to in my project. Although none of the topics discussed in the interviews were identified as risky to the psychological or emotional wellbeing of the participants by myself, the University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board, or Ottawa Police Service's Research Board, anonymity and confidentiality are central to all social science research and must be upheld.

Chapter IV: Findings

This chapter will present the findings from the survey and interview portions of the research. The next chapter will answer my research questions with reference to empirical literature and debates as well as theoretical applications. The purpose of this chapter is simply to present the findings and themes. To later answer my two research questions, four central themes and subsequent sub-themes were developed with the use of Applied Thematic Analysis techniques. The quantitative data will accompany qualitative data relative to the theme of which it applies best. Rather than separating the data by quantitative and qualitative analysis, bridging the two methods by theme provides a more integrated approach to the analysis. Themes discussed below include: characteristics of the youth, dynamics between members, youth engagement environment, and bureaucracy.

Theme I: Characteristics of the Youth

To answer my research questions I gathered information on the characteristics of those involved with the OPS YAC. This includes characteristics of the youth who were at once or currently involved in the program. Quantitative analysis through the survey data brought forward basic information on youth involved in this program. Qualitative analysis of the interviews also exposed discussion on representation and characteristics of those who are typically engaged in this program.

Demographic and Voice

Through the interviews, both youth and adult coordinators discussed the importance of representation on the YAC. The purpose of the program is to give youth a voice in regards to the activities of the police service; therefore, the composition of the group is considered carefully by the youth and coordinators. As discussed by one of the adult allies involved with the YAC, “Um and I think that’s [representation] an important piece to have but you need to have balance right.

Don't just take down demographics for the sake of taking it like that won't help this work.”

Another coordinator said, “We can't be sitting around the table talking about young people without young people around the table, and not just one young person like they don't represent all young people”. In addition, another youth stated:

Youth 5: ...So the fact that YAC shows that [representation] and it kind of reflects our community is really cool, cause I'm sure if you got all the demographics on how many of us say twenty five of us, I don't think anyone would be the exact same so they do a good job representing everybody for sure...they don't ignore it they definitely properly represent and it's great.

A specific topic that was discussed in regards to representation on the YAC was age.

Some adult coordinators and youth mentioned that the YAC comprises of largely older youth along the age requirements of 13-24. Some hypothesized this is due to the nature of the recruitment process, which might favor youth with more organized and refined résumés.

However, some recognized this as an issue.

Adult coordinator 1: Age wise it is more weighted toward eighteen, nineteen, twenty year olds, even twenty one. And we have an interview process to help us determine...and I think the earliest age is about fourteen or fifteen and I think just the development over the years how it's just progressed is that we've hired older youth. And I think that lends itself to the interview process says how well you're answering questions it is a bit of a maturity thing, however we do also recognize that. And that is in the top as far as our interviews go is ok we need more, we gotta swing the pendulum to the other side, let's get some younger youth involved.

Similarly, another youth discussed how the younger members generally have to be very strong applicants to compete with older youth.

Youth 2: But we do have high school students on the committee, like I said, that contribute super well. I think part of that comes down to when we go through applications high school students generally have weaker applications just because of their sort of where they are in their life, so those that make it through as high school students are very sort of well rounded, smart high school students, so they contribute really excellently.

Relatedly, another youth member discussed how they are impressed with some of the younger members on the YAC.

Youth 5: I believe the youngest person there might be fifteen, and seeing them contribute like when I was fifteen I only cared about myself and my friends and like “mom can I have twenty bucks to go shopping” I wasn’t like “hmm how can I contribute to my community, oh let me find me find this policing volunteer thing.” Like, no I was finishing up my hours selfishly so that I could graduate so um it’s nice to see the maturity of some kids in there trying to make a difference.

On the other hand, being among the younger age group within the YAC can be an intimidating experience. As one youth expressed, “So I applied and I was very pleasantly surprised that I got in. I felt like I was one of the youngest everyone ... so I felt a little bit intimidated, but you know it worked out.”

Indeed, one of the youth explained that they believe that the committee should focus on younger, high school aged youth as they have a different relationship with their community than older, post-secondary aged youth may.

Youth 2: I don’t think that university students are necessarily the best people to be on the committee, I think high school students is a much better demographic...because high school students I think or the greater majority, they live in their communities, they go to school in their communities, and they have like a pulse on their communities, university students usually come from afar, live in student slums if you will, like Sandy Hill and stuff, and they don’t necessarily have that same pulse on the community. That’s one thing I’ve noticed because when there is really good uhh contributions I find it does come from high school students or people that are native to Ottawa who are still at home who commute to Carleton or wherever.

In another way, it was discussed that having a wider age gap between members was beneficial for balancing the committee with youth who have different experiences and are at different stages in their lives. One of the adult coordinators mentioned, “Some [youth] are obviously in high school still, some are in college, some university, some working purely, some are trying to figure out where they want to be and I think we’re helping them figure that out.”

However for Youth 2, the same person who mentioned that the YAC may be better suited for high school aged youth, they also explain that the mix of ages can be good for the program.

Youth 2: I know I talked about how like high school is a good demographic for this, but that's not something I'd change because... I mean having university students on that committee provides a really good level of discussion and sort of criticism and analysis that might not be possible with only high school students.

Additionally, incorporating youth at their various stages of their lives may be beneficial in helping to learn from one another.

Youth 4: I think as our program grows and the group develops and younger youth kids, well youth, come into our program and their fresh ideas of them growing up and still being in high school and me being out of university our perceptions of the world are totally different, I feel like with more youth coming in it'll bring new ideas, fresh ideas, and it'll help impact even bigger than we are right now.

Within the survey portion of the data collection, I collected information on which part of the city they reside. Six selected Central, four selected Orleans, ten selected Nepean, two selected Kanata/West Ottawa, two selected South Ottawa, one selected Vanier, and two selected Other. Some youth mentioned location as a factor that may contribute to the composition of the group and the exclusion of potential members, such as the location of the monthly meetings.

Youth 2: I guess one thing that is curious is the location of the meetings. I mean they're accessible for me, but I wonder if that impedes anyone... it's very central so I mean it's accessible for a lot of people or a lot of people on the committee, so it would be interesting to see if you know, could we meet at the east end, central, west end, or how is that impeding potential members. I think there's a whole load of factors to think about, I don't have the statistics or composition of the committee, but you know how many male versus female or visible minorities and all this stuff... I don't know if you have that information... it's good to look at that. It's curious.

Representation in regards to cultural diversity on the YAC was also discussed in some interviews. One youth in particular explained their approach to the importance of diversity among the participants in the YAC.

Youth 3: I think it is definitely important in terms of yeah just having everyone from every different community there is really important. Yeah we've got the Indigenous

community, and then people who speak English and French, just as simple as that because we're such like— in Ottawa we're in such an interesting spot where we've got really half and half. So I think we definitely are really well represented and I think that's something we've looked for on the interview process as well. Not that we're like “no white people” we're just like you know everybody—we want a little bit of everybody um from around the community so that we can be inclusive and like really represent the city.

Also connected to the recruitment process, one of the adult coordinators discussed how it is important for the youth to decide what they think the committee needs.

Adult Coordinator 1: Yeah but just on that note I think demographically we don't purposefully look for like to say like racially we need X amount of this race and X amount of males or females, like it's actually been pretty organic it's worked out well. We have such a diverse group it's very well evened out and we have a lot of different pockets of the community involved in this. And again it comes down to the interview process um and if the youth also are interviewing other kids right which is kind of cool. We're part of it but not to the larger sense it's more the youth, so it's kind of neat right. So when we need to take a step back, you're like “ok yeah we're really getting a lot of communities that are in need coming to the table here, it's cool right.”

Other Characteristics

In addition to demographic information such as age, diversity, and location, other characteristics of the youth involved in the YAC include personality and their involvement with other commitments. Both youth and coordinators discussed how youth in the YAC differed by personality. For instance, one young person explained, “I was very shy in the beginning but I slowly like opened up and started to have my ideas heard more.” Indeed, one coordinator expressed the need to be accommodating to these differences.

Adult Coordinator 1: They may have ideas and they may be a little shy to share them and so I think that's something important to recognize. And the way we've probably deal with that is by engaging them in conversation right, encouraging them to talk, but that's just it's just group dynamics in general.

Further, another coordinator explains how the youth differ from one another. “They really are so very different you know, some are academic, some aren't; some want to be officers, some

don't; some are quieter and some more outspoken; some started off quiet and are now really outspoken." This is a characteristic that they are proud of:

Adult coordinator 2: And I'm proud to say that they're a diverse group of young people they're definitely not a homogenous group nor are they... because I have been at some that are future wanna be politician types—that's not what they are at all. They're an awesome group of diverse young people.

Some survey measures also relate to different personality characteristics among YAC members, including their social media use and description of their social circle. Please refer to Appendix M to view the frequency table related to the description of their friend group. Of the seven options, responses were relatively evenly dispersed across the options. This may suggest a variety of social characteristics among the youth, with some having smaller close group of friends as opposed to a large amount of acquaintances. In addition, only one youth listed Not Active ($n=1$) when asked about their social media presence. Most youth listed that they were at least Somewhat Active ($n=9$), Regularly Active ($n=13$), or some Very Active ($n=4$) when asked about their social media presence.

Finally, both interview and survey data suggested that the youth who are involved with the YAC may be busy youth. That is, they are involved in other commitments such as school, work, and other volunteer activities. In regards to the survey data, many youth work and/or are in school either part time or full time. Sixteen youth identified that they were currently enrolled as a student, twelve of which in a post-secondary program. In addition, all but one respondent listed their academic performance as Average ($n=10$), Above Average ($n=12$) and Top 10% of the class ($n=4$). There were some youth who were not employed at the time of the survey ($n=4$), while some were employed part-time ($n=11$) and full-time ($n=12$). Indeed, most youth who are currently enrolled in school are working part-time ($n=11$) or full-time ($n=1$) (Appendix N). All youth who were not enrolled in school were working full time ($n=11$).

Theme II: Dynamics between Members

This second theme examines the dynamics between the members as opposed to individual characteristics, such as those in the first theme. The YAC aims to be a collaborative effort among young people, and this theme was quite necessary. Overall, each youth brings with them different experiences and goals to create the dynamic between members. Through this dynamic the youth, with the help of coordinators, achieve their goals as members of the OPS' YAC. Subthemes discussed here are intentions and goals, and respect and working together.

Intentions and Goals

As youth are not a homogenous category of people, each will bring with them different reasons for joining and continuing with the YAC program. Young people, whether in high school, post-secondary, or not in school at all, develop plans for their future and participate in initiatives that contribute to their goals. Volunteering is an essential tool in that development. In particular, Ontario high school students must obtain 40 hours of community service hours signed by a supervisor in order to graduate. Youth in the interviews admitted that this is a great opportunity to build skills and their network.

Youth 1: That's why I stay connected with Tom, Jess, Sabrina, all of them because they all help my chances or further my chances or application to being one [a police officer] someday. Indeed, another youth mentioned "It's definitely good for making connections and getting to know people.

Specifically, young people who want to be police officers may be very interested in this program, as one youth said that it is an experience that may be valuable for their applications.

Youth 5: I met with one of the lead inspectors in the police... who was willing to sit down with me and look over my resume, stuff like that and [they] told me that the first thing [they] noticed in my resume was that I was a part of YAC. And [they] said "Right there, that's a check mark on my list of things that you need to be a police officer." So [they] said what [they] saw was a huge booster in my personal slash professional life and [they] said kids that go through the YAC and are a part of this...some people have been there for seven years kinda thing, [they] said that it definitely gives them an insight into the police force which is something that otherwise I wouldn't get unless I joined or I knew someone super personally.

Indeed, youth who are interested in policing may be more likely to visit the Ottawa Police Service's website for volunteering opportunities.

Youth 2: Umm I do want to get into policing, so that is definitely a big reason to look at OPS' website to see what sort of ways to get involved and I stumbled across YAC and I heckled Jess with emails, then I applied.

This program may naturally, therefore, attract young people who aspire to become police officers in the future; however, this was not true for all youth who join the program. Some youth have been clear that they do not want a career as a police officer. A coordinator explained, "Some want to be police officers and some have no interest in being police officers. That dynamic for me has always been something that I have um been cautious of but also appreciated." Even more so, some parents of youth involved in the YAC have expressed that they do not wish to encourage their child to pursue a career in policing, but still supported their involvement in the YAC. The same coordinator expanded, "I've also had conversations with some of their parents and they do not want them to be police officers, they don't. So anyways it's an interesting dynamic but yeah I think it has a role to play."

Indeed, a dynamic has developed between youth who want to be police officers and those whose goals do not include working in law enforcement. By no means are they divided amongst each other in a competitive manner and that is not what I intend to imply with this distinction; however, their intentions and reasons why they joined the program speak to its purpose and outcomes. One youth expressed concern that the goals for the YAC as a youth engagement program could be obscured if it is overpopulated with youth who want to be police officers.

Youth 2: Because I mean, it's cool and I get really cool experiences, but is that what it's meant for? Is it meant for breeding ground for new police officers or is it meant for support for police officers that are already police officers and work with youth? Like I hope one day to be a police officer and I'm sure being on YAC will help, but I don't think that's what it should be there for... [Someone in the YAC] just assumed that I wanted to

be a police officer. I mean [they] was right, but I don't like that attitude on the committee, it's not what the committee is for. It's not to, it's not like a police cadet program it's to help with youth and police relations in the city of Ottawa and help officers who work with youth to do their jobs better.

This is a dynamic that the coordinators have been cognizant of since the beginning of the program. They are looking for a balance of unique characteristics within the committee of well-rounded youth.

Adult coordinator 2: Some want to be police officers and some have no interest in being police officers. That dynamic for me has always been something that I have um been cautious of but also appreciated. So there's a really interesting dynamic there where you don't you want to be cautious of it because you don't want someone strictly using the committee or wanting the committee as an agenda to become an officer. So those we try to weed out in the interviews um however the ones that genuinely are interested and are a little while off of becoming [an] officer but want to be become very invested in the committee and are there for a lot of help to people like myself right and that is greatly appreciated.

Moreover, the recruitment and interview process has an important role in achieving this balance.

Adult coordinator 1: It comes down to the interview process. It is glaring when someone wants to be a police officer and that's ok. But it questions the motivation behind joining YAC. So are you doing this to pad your resume or are you doing this because you actually care about stuff and being a cop is something you want to do down the road? And that's fine but that's definitely a question that arises when we throw it back to the group.

Similarly, coordinators and youth do not want to simply use the committee for whatever it is they need, such as: volunteer hours for school or a scholarship; a good reference letter for police service application; or something to add as experience to the resume. From the survey, most youth Strongly Agree ($n=17$) or Agree ($n=9$) that the YAC is an effective way for youth to get involved in their communities. Beyond the practical intention of some of these reasons, youth and coordinators want to maintain the youth engagement focus of this program and want youth involved who want to make change.

Youth 2: Now when I'm on the committee, like I guess I don't see it just as a way to throw on the resume and be like oh I was involved look at this. But like I do try and see it as a way to get involved in your community.

When asked if they believe that their motivations have changed one youth explained:

Youth 3: at that time volunteering in high school was a necessity so I was like yeah this is something I can volunteer for, but it is something that interests me and it is something that like I didn't realize how...special it is to be a part of that Committee.

Some coordinators explained that they are not only here for practical development reasons, but that they enjoy working with one another and having a say in their community.

Adult coordinator 1: Well they aren't doing it for the hours. They're not doing it for money; they're doing it because they love it and have a genuine interest in it. And I think that's critical in any volunteer position for it to be successful um and I see it first hand when a youth has to go fulfil the forty hours they're not doing it because they want to they're doing it because they have to, you know. And these youth are they have seeked out this opportunity you know and frankly I think that if we came across an application that said "the reason I want to do YAC is because I have to fulfil forty hours of volunteer time" then maybe this isn't for you, right.

Furthermore, another coordinator reflected on how the youth in the YAC are not there only to obtain the volunteer hours that many youth require to graduate high school.

Adult Coordinator 2: You know what? I think out of the unscientific number of sixty-ish and the six years I think I have only ever twice signed off on volunteer hours. Do you know what, that means that no one except for two people ever have been here volunteer hours. I've never thought about that until this second. But that's not why they're here. Now, you could say that we're screening out the ones that had wanted to be here for those reasons in those interviews or the youth are screening them out in the interviews um and that we're getting the right people for those reasons but that being said I have no issue like signing off on hours I have no problem with that, that's no problem I don't judge that, that's great. Those two who I did that were fantastic people um but I don't think that's why they're here.

From the survey data, I completed a paired sample t-test in order to measure the differences between the young people's answers for why they joined the committee in comparison to why they stayed (Appendix P). Eight reasons (want to be a police officer, have a say in their community, build resume experience, etc.) for being involved were asked in two sets

of questions. First, youth were asked why they joined the YAC on a Likert scale of 1-5 for each of the eight identified reasons. Second, using the same reasons and scale, youth were asked to identify the reasons why they stayed involved. Only survey participants who were involved for longer than six months answered both sets of questions. Newer members have not yet made that choice to continue or not, therefore the survey was designed so they would skip these questions.

Most youth ($n=22$) answered both sets of the Intention survey questions. Two of the eight pairs were found to be significant. Pair 2 represented “To what degree did you initially get involved with the YAC to learn more about policing in general?” received an average of 3.7273 and its complimentary “To what degree do you continue to be involved with the YAC to learn more about policing in general?” saw an average of 3.1362 on the Likert scale. Overall, youth were less interested in learning about policing as they continued to participate in the program $t(21)= 2.43., p<.05 (0.024)$. I would suggest that learning about the OPS and police work became less of a priority compared to other components, such as the community and relationship building components of the YAC as suggested in the interviews.

In addition, Pair 5 represented “To what degree did you initially get involved with the YAC to build your resume or get volunteer experience?” with an average was 4.382. Its complimentary “To what degree do you continue be involved with the YAC to build your resume or get volunteer experience” average was 3.8636. Again, youth ranked their reasons for continuing with this program to build their resume lower than why they had started. This could be because they have already gained the experience as a spot on their resume, so it is less of a priority when continuing with it. However, the other skills development and relationship building components may have taken priority, although they were not statistically significant in these t-tests.

In the interviews with youth, many distinguished their work in the YAC from other volunteer programs not by the fact that it is part of the police service, but by the functions and characteristics of youth committees.

Youth 3: I don't see this as a volunteer opportunity. I think that's the biggest thing. In high school I would really kinda just do stuff to get my hours right, and that sounds sad but there was nothing that like I was so passionate about that I was volunteering for that like made me wanted to continue. There was YAC then an after school kids homework program to like help the kids do their homework that and YAC were like the things that I really stuck to and that really I was passionate about that I didn't really see as a job or something I had to do, it was something I really wanted to do. In that I just saw as like something that I could be a part of right.

Further, another youth discussed how the YAC is different from other more short-term opportunities.

Youth 4: It gives you a voice to be like this has happened to me or this has happened to my friend and as to where my volunteering with youth with special needs so kind is parallel but not really and had this program existed when I was in high school I'm sure I would have wanted to participate and be a part of it because when doing your hours you can do it and be a part of just, you can be a Christmas elf at the mall... you bring a smile to the kid's face for three minutes it's not really impacting their life or the way that their community interacts with each other, as to where working with kids with special needs or working with at risk youth or working with OPS and having a voice in that manner, affects not just one person right now it affects a lot of people long term.

In addition, youth distinguished their work in the YAC from other volunteer programs because of the recruitment process. It is a program that where must submit an application, be interviewed, and then selected in order to join. This process is generally different than other volunteer programs which will accept most youth.

Youth 5: I saw it a bit as a specialty thing because we had the interview for it so it's not like we called up Ms. Jones from the library and begged her to let us come and sort books and she as like "Yeah I will pay you nothing to do that" it kind of seems like "Ok we've picked you guys because we think that you have something to offer us in return we expect some stuff from you."

Indeed, it was after the first YAC group was selected from a committee of OPS staff and community leaders that they decided it would be best to allow the youth to have a more

substantial role in the selection process. One coordinator explained, “so we said ‘ok guys this is how we recruited you, what worked and what didn’t, what do you want to change?’ and they definitely said ‘we want to interview, we want to meet these people’”. Furthermore, respect and teamwork are paramount elements of the YAC.

Respect and Working Together

Young people and coordinators respect one another, which creates a positive environment to work together. Part of this dynamic is due to the tone set by the leadership involved with the program.

Youth 3: Obviously we have them all over we have a Sergeant, a school officer, and then an officer from the airport so it’s also like a mix of officers I guess so we get different perspectives in that sense. Then obviously Jessica she’s got like so much knowledge and so much passion for her job and for what she does. So yeah she’s really what makes this committee YAC.

The environment that coordinators create sets a tone for engagement.

Youth 5: Jess has been amazing I think she’s perfect for the job it’s kinda made for her. She creates a very nice environment we kinda go, chill, we all eat, you chat with the people around you, what’s up what’s new, because it’s only monthly so you’re still kinda building relationships with everyone.

When asked if they had any tips for other organizations who want to set up a program similar to YAC, one coordinator suggested that they need leadership and patience.

Adult coordinator 1: ...the leadership component like I said you need somebody like Jess who is in tune with the civilian population, the police service with the higher ups, because those entities have the big picture in mind right. Um and they are also collaborating too on their levels so with somebody like Jessica who is an ear in all that I think that’s really awesome and she can filter down the big picture messages to the group.

Leadership from the adult allies involved with the youth is critical to the success of the program. Without committed leadership, the youth would not be able to build these trusting relationships and work together.

Adult coordinator 2: And the officers um and the civilians that have been involved with the committee and continue to be are phenomenal as well and really cool to see the

relationship that they've made with those young people. You know whether it's at a meeting, whether we have a team building activity over the course of the year, so it's giving lifts to those team building activities and the conversations that happen in the car or you just um. When I sit back and I watch those relationships I think wow how cool is that right like when an officer and I leave and I hear how energized he is after a meeting or I see the young people go up and talk to him at the end of the meeting it gives or when officers are preparing for their interviews for policing and they have coffees and meet with the officers who've been involved in the committee to try to get their insight like it's that relationship stuff is organic and you can't measure it... I'm super passionate about this, it's magic, it's awesome it really is.

Indeed, when asked to what degree they continue to be involved because of relationships they build with other YAC members, 63% of youth stated that they Agree ($n=4$) or Strongly Agree ($n=10$). Notably, when asked about maintaining relationships built with OPS staff involved with the program, 77% stated Agree ($n=6$) Strongly Agree ($n=11$).

Group dynamics, in this context, refer to the respect that they have for one another and the relationships developed as a result. In addition, as one young person explained, the YAC requires "a lot of communication, a lot of building on each other's ideas, and it [collaboration] works." These group dynamics inevitably characterize their teamwork. The program can only function as it does with these dynamics present.

Adult coordinator 1: I think they have all looked for active listeners [during recruitment]. They want people who are going to share ideas and that are accepting of others' ideas as well. I think it's socially very interesting to watch because I know there have been a couple youth in the past that we have selected that we weren't quite sure about like well we'll see how this plays out. And it's almost like group dynamics like everybody plays nice in the sandbox it's really good and I think because you know you have a large majority of them which are good kids that are listening and that want to work together.

For some of the youth, to have the space to problem solve and collaborate with one another is a key pillar in the success of the committee.

Youth 3: ...but when it's between us I guess it's more of a conversation. And in the conversation everyone is very respectful of each other like I don't think a fight has every broken out you know. Everyone just really shares their opinion and I think that's what is so great about the group, like we all have different opinions but we're all cohesive and all

like kind of are going in the same direction even though we might have little things that like we would change. We are all so really come together with our ideas.

One youth expands on this topic to explain that it is something that community partners or guest speakers miss when they engage with the committee, including myself when I visited the group.

Youth 1: Yeah so what you saw I don't think you saw the complete thing... So I think you came and you did your speech which was great um I think what you could have seen or should have seen I guess is how we actually interact together. So normally people wouldn't see us actually coming together and talking to each other and collaborating our ideas together so what normally a guest speaker would see is us sitting down at the table, eating our food, and looking at them doing their presentation, but they would never see the side of us that actually comes together in a square or circle and talk to each other bouncing ideas back and forth which is something I guess people should see and should know about us but they don't get the chance to because usually whenever they come in they're the person like at hand or the guest speaker I guess.

For some, too much work with community agencies can interfere with that time.

Youth 3: ...or even just brew ideas and start something right. I feel like there's lots of opportunity to do that because when we are on the once a month meetings we do have like a guest speaker then less time between us to just like talk and see like how can we move forward, what's a personal project of YAC, how can we move that forward like I feel like I love the guest speakers but sometimes they take up too much time and we just want to have our little time with our committee, and just yeah.

Along with respect, trust within the committee also seems to be important. Without trust in their colleagues, one could not fully be themselves and contribute to the best of their ability.

Youth 4: It is, it's a very trusting group...we all talked about the randomest things that you know won't get out and it's not necessarily just there but we've done team building, we did archery games last year which was super fun and we've done different things that help you build your trust in your team and then from that trust we all follow each other on social media, or most of us do, some of us have hung out outside of this and we support each other in our life decisions as well as we do in our group decisions. But yeah trust is a huge part of it for sure... knowing that you can say something that may not necessarily make a ton of sense but you don't know how else to express it knowing that someone will be there to be like "oh do you mean that this way" is great because we can really not fall on each other but kind of lift each other up together as to build this group that's stronger and more involved and more developed as we go along.

With respect and trust, genuine connections on the committee have formed between youth and the adult allies. For some, it is this aspect that makes this different from other volunteer opportunities.

Youth 3: And I think that's like the term committee right? It's really just you're a committee like you're not just you don't just come in and do something and leave. You're really in a group of people and you're really moving forward with ideas and stuff like that.

Again, the connections built between members, coordinators, and community groups have an impact that may not be present in other volunteer opportunities.

Adult coordinator 2: I think that relationships piece is so critical, like it's massive it really is. And I know people joke about me not wanting to let them leave and they stay forever but I think there's, there's something that's created that is like a family you know what I mean. We eat together and we bring ziplock bags to put food in to take home to their families ...there's a genuine caring and nurturing and it's not me that loves them I think we all love one another and care deeply for one another genuinely. And I think that really plays a big part in this experience so I think that's what makes it different.

As shown above, the characteristics of the youth, leadership, and their dynamics together creates an environment where they can work well from. The next theme will build on this and discuss the more practical characteristics of what happens in this program, the projects they work on, and what the youth gain from it.

Theme III: Youth Engagement Environment

There are central characteristics of the YAC as a youth engagement program. First are general characteristics of the environment within the program; second are the functions and activities as part of the program; third are the outcomes associated with it among the youth.

Environment

Although this is a community consultation program, we cannot forget that this is one developed for young people, some as young as 13 years of age. Therefore, there must be elements that young people would find ideal from an engagement perspective. In the YAC, this

includes flexibility, food, and fun. In this sense, flexibility means a few things. For one, committee coordinators understood that the young people's schedules can be hectic as they are mostly full-time students, working, and involved in other extracurricular activities, as well as facing familial responsibilities that may affect their availability for the YAC meetings and outings. In addition, the committee is flexible in the amount of commitment that members undertake. That is, as one youth summarizes "it is what you make it." Some youth live far from the location of meetings or start careers and post-secondary programs and the committee involvement is responsive to changes in the young people's lives.

Youth 4: Jessica is super understanding of like if you can't make it to a meeting then it's totally fine... There's no sense of pressure if you can't make it this week you're out, you're done. Doors are very open and accepting and nothing you say is going to be judged or written off or turned around to be made out to be something that it's not.

One of the coordinators expands on this to explain the importance of having different levels of responsibility for youth to take on.

Adult Coordinator 2: So if you want to come to meetings once a month for two hours and participate and be involved in that two hour period but have that be your commitment that is what it will be for you. And I'm fine with that and that's fine and there are people who that is their level of commitment. There are other people however and there are a ton of opportunities there's opportunities to go out and do chat sessions in the community opportunities to go to info booth at fairs or conferences or community events, crime prevention week activities, police week activities, Pride fair... tons of opportunities will be provided to you or offered to you so you can make of it what you want and I think that's kind of the beauty of it too is that it suits different types of people... It's almost like a menu, take from it what works for you and leave the rest... it's not in the box, it's flexible and dynamic and fluid and it works for different people in different ways you can make of it what you will. The more, I would argue that the more however, you give the more you get back versus if you just are someone who comes to the two hour meetings we may not retain you as long um because you may not get as much from it and therefore not be as invested in staying as long.

In addition, the committee is flexible in its ability to adapt to change in issues facing youth and Ottawa in general. Without strong control from upper management (to be discussed in the next theme), the youth and coordinators set their own priorities and are able to dynamically

change as issues that affect youth change. One such example is with regards to the regulated interactions decision that was announced by the Government of Ontario in 2016². The youth had concerns about what these interactions would look like with youth. Therefore, they developed a resource to help youth better understand how to react to a regulated interaction.

Youth 3: ...actually a few of my fellow YACers and I got to write like a plain language, youth-friendly version of the new regulated interactions. And so for me that was like I actually like “I did this, I created this” like wow I can actually make a difference.

To focus on a project such as this, the YAC also adapted its structure slightly in order to work on this priority.

Youth 3: Sometimes for the regulated interactions we’ll actually breakout in a focus group because it’s easier and because there are quite a few of us, so for that specific project there was four or five of us I think so that was a great number to just focus and get the work done.

As mentioned above in the findings related to demographic information within the committee, the YAC is also flexible in its representation of *youth* population. They are aware how factors such as age, gender, culture, neighborhood, and education are represented in the committee. As the youth set the strategy and focus for the recruitment process, the YAC continues to change and progress by including young people who will contribute to the direction that they are going in.

Adult Coordinator 2: So as the group of young people change, the group change, the dynamics change naturally the group evolves in what they want to work on and what they want to do changes and also I think also change in the community or demands from the community right so they’re responsive to requests that we get whether they’re internal requests or work or ideas as well as projects externally and so that hasn’t changed, the responsiveness to trends or ideas but inherently that is always changing as the community is changing the group is changing.

Along with flexibility, the young people and coordinators in the interviews identified food as a characteristic in their engagement strategy. Food keep the participants energized

² In March 2016, the Province of Ontario announced changes to the way police conduct street checks to ensure that they are completed without bias and discrimination.

throughout their meetings, but can also be associated with socializing, bringing members together, and routine. When asked what else they think I should know, Youth 2 answered, “Walter knows the best food places in Ottawa... food is a bonding tool, like it you know you get up get a plate of food you’re more relaxed, you’re more willing to chat I think instead of just sitting there.” When describing the atmosphere at a community event, another youth also mentioned that the food at the event along with the feeling of togetherness.

Youth 1: [At a community event] just you can feel like feel all the happiness I guess. I don’t know if that’s the right word but you can feel everyone just like happy and feel everyone in a great mood because everyone is just coming together. Oh yeah the pizza that comes too.

Indeed, another coordinator describes that when eating together, “there is that natural socializing, right. Whether it’s over food or afterwards somebody might need a lift home, it’s little things like that that go a long way.” In addition, the food provided in the meetings may also engage OPS officers or employees to learn more about the YAC. One youth described “Even if an officer is walking by and he smells the food and comes in and like has no idea who we are so we’ll tell him and officers are usually ...really respond well to us.” Furthermore:

Adult Coordinator 2: I think the ones that have been exposed to it [YAC], are really impressed by it. And exposed to the young people who are a part of it who are passionate and articulate and committed and just wonderful young people so I think the people who have been exposed to it, and exposed in different ways whether they’ve come to the committee or come and gotten food from us that night because we had leftovers whether we’re having our annual fundraising bake sale downstairs and they come for their annual samosas they all love so much...I always get an email afterward like “hey, wow I spoke to one of the youth in the youth advisory committee at the fundraiser and wow can I come and talk to your group about whatever”.

Certainly, whether it is the food at their meetings or events, it draws them in to learn more about the YAC. Along with flexibility and food, value was associated with simply enjoying the committee and having fun, whether in the meetings, YAC events, or team outings.

Youth 3: One year we went to archery games and did archery tag and what else did we do... I don't know we just do activities like that and so it's not related to anything but it does help the team and you get to know people within the team.

Moreover, most youth gave the impression that they enjoy program.

Youth 4: So I think it's a great opportunity to have and it's a great way to kind of learn and develop and impact yourself as well as your community and once you're there most people love it. Like I haven't heard anyone say that they don't love what we do or love our group or love that we meet once a month and it's great.

Indeed, another said, "But for me anyway I love like YAC as a volunteer opportunity."

Among their busy lives, YAC is something that many of them look forward to.

Youth 5: I take it quite seriously, I look forward to it and it definitely to me is more of a commitment than just volunteering at various places. And it's uh you know it's a small commitment but it's something that if you put a small amount of effort you can have a large impact.

Flexibility, food, and fun characterize the youth engagement portion of this program. In addition to this, young people and coordinators discuss components of youth voice and the tangible projects they partake in.

Voice, Engagement, and Tangible Projects

The YAC meets about once a month. In most cases, they welcome presentations from local organizations on upcoming initiatives or community issues and voice issues or concerns that matter to them. In doing so, they help the police service and other community agencies to develop strategies that lead them to be responsive to the needs of young people in the community. In this way, the function is both to have the symbolic space for youth to voice their perspectives but also to be involved in tangible projects and knowledge exchange that occurs in this program.

Adult Coordinator 2: Well I think I think the youth advisory's role is twofold. One is to be a voice for youth in the community so they go out and hear from youth in the community what their concerns are, what their ideas are, as well that's what they represent around the table I'm proud to say that they're a diverse group of young people they're definitely not a homogenous... and they're also [secondly] to be a resource for

the Ottawa police service internally. So when the Ottawa Police Service wants to do youth-targeted work whether it's guns and gangs, whether it's drugs, whether it's robbery, whatever it may be, this is their reference group that they can come to get insight. As well as to community like Ottawa Public Health has come to meet with them, Crime Stoppers has come to meet with them, RCMP just recently came here so um I think that's also their role as well as external agencies. So that's really, that has remained constant throughout the five years or almost six now.

To add to this, 81% of youth who took the survey Agree or Strongly Agree that they got involved to network with community organizations. Another central aspect of this program is that it embodies a for-youth-by-youth philosophy that involves young people on campaigns or initiatives. This program is described as an opportunity for youth to have an impact on issues that matter to them.

Youth 3...[it is] just youth really taking on projects to really make their communities better and then when I got in it was really like it the first time you go in there you meet everybody, and everybody gives their story and we do icebreakers and you really get to know everyone. Like everyone is there for some sort of purpose and they all want to accomplish things. And this is just a way for them to accomplish some of the things they want to accomplish in their communities. And so that's pretty much why it's special, and it's pretty unique as an organization.

In fact, 81% of the youth Agree or Strongly Agree that they got involved with the YAC in order to have a say in issues that mattered to them. In this way, it is recognized that youth are the future and therefore engaging youth is important for the future of society.

Adult coordinator 2: ... I think in the same way it's important to engage young people to get their buy in terms of the future. Like if they are just, never about them without them, is how I've lived my work is, you know we can't be working on youth issues without youth.

To have a seat at the table and the opportunity to be consulted on issues that matter to them was important for the youth. The YAC also aims for the program to be a "super open communication portal" between youth and the OPS, as one of the youth described it. Youth also find it valuable to know that the police service cares about what they think enough to create a space where they could express themselves.

Youth 2: They want to know what we think. If you volunteer at the library like you're definitely appreciated and you're there to support the library's goals, whereas at YAC we're not there to support the Ottawa police service we're there to provide our personal input. Like if I don't like Ottawa police I can still apply to the committee and get on and be like 'hey I don't like Ottawa police and this is why I think we should change this'. We don't have anyone like that which is maybe unfortunate...

As for survey data, most youth Agree ($n=21$) that they believe the YAC has contributed to changing OPS perceptions of youth in Ottawa. However, being heard and engaged does not simply mean having a seat at the table, but the opportunity to provide recommendations and exchange their knowledge with them. For one youth, this is something that could be improved.

Youth 2: But I feel like overall like we act as like an organ sort of volunteers of Ottawa police and we help out at events and we sort of the youth face or one of the youth faces of the Ottawa police but I think something that can be improved is how we actually sort of convey our opinions to the Ottawa police and then get sort of follow up of what happened with what we said.

One way is to provide practical advice about how police interact with young people in the community. Most youth Agree ($n=14$) or Strongly Agree ($n=7$) that the OPS as an organization respects youth; however, they also Agree ($n=12$) and Strongly Agree ($n=10$) that YAC has the potential to change young people's perceptions of police in Ottawa. Some youth discussed why their perspectives are important for OPS to consider.

Youth 1: ... we're the voice of the youth right and I think us knowing the youth mind I think we can bounce that off to the OPS officers so I think we can help them with that I guess since we're youth-based and I guess Ottawa's more youth based I guess too and so I think we can help them in the fact that we're youth mindful and they're Ottawa police so I think we can help them with that.

For instance, they can provide advice on how to better interact with youth.

Youth 3: a big thing for us is to encourage officers to go to more community events, go to more school events, and really because the problem the basically our biggest mandate is bridging gaps between youth and police and so a good way to do that is for police to get out there and really interact in a more casual way rather than just you know "Can I see your ID" kinda thing. Uh so it's just about creating a relationship and a trusting relationship like not to be scared of police...I definitely think there's a lot more work to be done and I think that every police service around the world can improve on I think.

Specifically, the youth conveyed that communication with youth is an area in which police officers can improve.

Youth 4: I think it's helped them bring their understanding almost to the same level as the youth and kind of be able to communicate with them on that deeper level and communicate with them as opposed to it be like "hey I'm the authority you need to listen" it's become "I've talked to people who are where you're at, here's what I've learned, here's where we can get together kind of thing".

On this subject, youth in the survey responded to the youth perceptions of police measures. Overall, 26 youth at least Agree ($n=15$) or Strongly Agree ($n=9$) that they generally trust the police. Similarly, 23 youth Agree ($n=12$) or Strongly Agree ($n=11$) that they generally like the police. See Appendix O for the full frequencies table for these questions.

Significantly, young people find value in the tangible projects that they partake in as part of the YAC. These projects include fundraising, product creation, public consultation sessions, community group consultation, hosting information tables at community events, and social media engagement. To participate in tangible events and projects was identified as one of the best ways for them to feel that the YAC was making a difference in their communities and is something they wish to do more. For instance, Youth 3 explained: "Like I've seen tangible, actual things that have been done that have come out of our work and so, yeah. That's why it's special." In addition, another young person wants to spend more time in these tangible projects. "Yeah that's what I would change, more activities I guess and less sitting down and listening to someone speak to you...because we are based for the community right but we're never in the community."

Some youth also recognized that their work in the YAC can have a long term impact in the future. Indeed, many youth who answered the survey Strongly Agree ($n=10$) or Agree ($n=12$) that YAC has the potential to change young people's perspectives of police in Ottawa.

Youth 5: I'll say that definitely having police show interest or be a part of it and the chief taking it seriously as part of his, maybe not day-to-day but overall um view on the police is very promising for future that gives a crap about what youth have to say pretty much so knowing that what we say has any impact that anyone really cares is helpful it gives definitely a boost of confidence to what we're offering or else we would not be there.

Specifically, being consulted and engaged by community partners for their perspective on issues was seen as another key aspect of the YAC. As described by one youth, their responsibilities comprise of "definitely small things, but they connect with a lot of community partnerships." A coordinator described the youth's role in that consultation.

Adult Coordinator 1: Yeah um we engage them in that and so whenever we have a speaker come in like you can see that they're thinking, they're asking great questions, they're not just absorbing everything ... they'll fire back questions and it's really cool. And that to me lends itself to intellect, they're digesting the info, they're coming up with questions whether it's clarification or just the way that whatever that is is designed, like "hey what about this, do you guys do this, have you ever tried this" and that's when or usually when you see the presenters they raise the eyebrows like "oh, yeah, good question"...it truly is an engagement piece like we've got dialogue going. It goes back to be saying that their voices are being heard.

Development

Young people in the YAC also learn practical skills and develop a stronger understanding of topics than they had before. Skills and knowledge development occurs as a result of the guest presenters, organizations involved, and learning from one another.

Youth 2: And I always walk out of those meetings with like learning stuff that's so cool, like the pharmacist that came in to talk about naloxone...[and] the service initiative, like I see that on the news and actually having a police officer stand there and tell me what that was I was like "ok, I understand".

The youth even learn about recent technology trends from one another. One described, "And so important cuz I even learned things ...there's technology changing, there's apps out there, there's a lot of stuff that you can't keep up on." In another way, one youth described gaining knowledge as part of the YAC.

Youth 1: Like knowledge as in like we get like presentations each month right ... We get other guest speakers and presentations about other different organizations and that's what I kinda mean by knowledge, like getting to know different organizations and different

guest speakers and have them tell us what they know and we can give feedback to them so that we can kinda collab with each other.

In addition, young people learn skills through the recruitment process while they choose who is interviewed, interview them, and work together to make a decision.

Adult Coordinator 2: So we said ok, and it's great because it gives an opportunity for skills development and coaching and mentoring of them as well because they can learn to interview and we can coach them through it and it's empowering them too and they're a part of the process, and anyway it was very cool.

For some youth, it is important for them to share new information to their communities and peers. One youth explained, "I'm able to bring that perspective back to my community, my friends, and when people ask me about it and I'm able to offer my youth voice." Another said, "So I guess it just starts with bringing the knowledge from YAC to the community and then it can just bounce around from there." Furthermore, another youth discussed how they used the information gained at YAC with friends.

Youth 4: But it [involvement in the YAC] didn't affect my job so much as it kind of friendships and that because my friends and it—it brought up topics that maybe we wouldn't have talked about. They would ask like the most random things and I would bring up like things that I learned at the YAC kind of thing and it would kind of snowball effect into other conversations which as cool.

Survey data also suggests that youth's involvement in this program has helped them discuss and understand current events and issues. When asked if their involvement in the YAC made them more confident to discuss community issues with others, most selected Agree ($n=11$) or Strongly Agree ($n=11$), while others were Neutral ($n=4$) and one Strongly Disagreed ($n=1$).

Overall, the environment of this program includes its characteristics, functions, and outcomes. At its core, the YAC is a youth engagement program that focuses on empowerment and incorporating the youth voice into the work of the OPS. Inherent to this is a struggle between maintaining a youth perspective within the needs of the bureaucratic police institution.

Theme IV: Bureaucracy

The influence of the bureaucratic environment in which the YAC takes place has a clear impact on the functions of the YAC as well as the youths' perspectives on their work. By bureaucracy, I am referring to the rules, policies, processes, and levels of approval that accompany initiatives within the organization. The organization contains a hierarchical chain-of-command structure that is intended to facilitate smooth operations. The bureaucratic structure can also create an environment that may affect the youth engagement portion of the YAC in terms of having an impact. As presented above, the youth value being able to see the tangible affects of their work. In a para-military organization such as the OPS, rules, "red tape", and an intensive hierarchical structure affect every action of every member. To create the program:

Adult Coordinator 2: I soon discovered that it's quite bureaucratic and there was quite a process to undergo to make this happen. And so we pushed forward... So we moved forward um it took about a year to get it going. It involved the creation of a terms of reference, create a detailed branding, all those things.

To balance this culture with a for youth-by-youth engagement practices requires strong leadership and a commitment to its integrity. The YAC was built and is maintained within the OPS environment and has adapted to the expectations of the organization. A central part of this is how the YAC was set up by the adult coordinators, who were knowledgeable of these processes and therefore strategic in their work. Coordinators have been strategic in the ways that the YAC is exposed to the rest of the organization in order to shield it from the negative aspects of the bureaucratic environment.

Adult Coordinator 1: There's always something coming down the pipe as far as an idea or something goes and I'm not sure what she does in the background to facilitate all that whether it's coming from the Superintendents or people she's liaising with in the community, maybe both, but I think that's one reason for its success um because without that framework or organization or strong person to help lead it I think it would kind of fall apart.

Indeed, the adult leadership involved with the YAC is very important. Coordinators recognized that to include OPS staff who wish to be involved for selfish reasons other than to work with the youth, such as the experience to enhance their resume, could compromise the integrity of the program and therefore the youth experience and overall impact they can have.

Adult coordinator 2: I'd rather have fewer officers or fewer people involved but have the right people... Right and the relationships that are here and the comfort and the frankness that is here I want officers who are here because they want to be here and genuinely care. Like that's what it's about... And so I think that's another thing I haven't really been sending out these big emails saying "hey recruiting officers to join the committee." No... so it's more word of mouth, it's more reaching out... So yeah I think it's all about getting the right people not just anybody.

In addition, the youth involved with the YAC distinguished themselves from the other Ottawa Police Service committee programs. These are two adult committees called COMPAC, which focuses on diversity relations, and the LGBTQ committee, which focuses on the LGBTQ community in Ottawa and the OPS. These other two committees have not fared as well as the YAC and have endured public and internal criticism for their dysfunction. Perhaps proud, the youth and coordinators recognize their ability to thrive in the police environment. Comparing the YAC to the other community engagement committees Youth 2 said, "I've seen in the news too like their...pride and diversity committees are having a shit show right now, and youth is just floating along." Similarly, Youth 1 noticed that the YAC seems to be the favourite committee:

Youth 1: Yeah I think they do [respect the YAC] because on multiple occasions we have heard that the chief of police always picks our committee as the best youth committee or committee... So I think we are well respected in the OPS because we are considered the number one committee in the OPS organization I guess. So to answer your question I think we are [respected].

To build on this, when asked if the YAC has made a in the OPS, one coordinator discussed its influence as a model for other public engagement programs.

Adult Coordinator 1: Yes, without a doubt. And what kind of a difference has that made? And I think from my observation I think the first one that came to mind was how it's a

model for other agencies within Ottawa police. For example, the LGBTQ committee as well as COMPAC those two committees um have faced their challenges and I know that they've looked to YAC as a model for a successful entities to address issues right. So I think that's a huge win for YAC in the way it's been developed.

Indeed, one of the coordinators believes that the relationships and respect that the youth and adults on the committee have with one another is what makes it different to other volunteer opportunities. "I think we all love one another and care deeply for one another genuinely. And I think that really plays a big part in this experience...so I think that's what makes it different."

In regards to the survey data, all but two respondents listed Agree ($n=5$) or Strongly Agree ($n=20$) when asked if teamwork is important to the success of the YAC. Similarly, most respondents chose Agree ($n=11$) and Strongly Agree ($n=14$) when asked if building friendships with other YAC members and coordinators is an important aspect to the success of the YAC.

The youth and coordinators discussed the fact that buy-in from upper management within the organization validates their work. Specifically among the youth, to see upper management within the OPS take interest in the YAC was an indication of their value as a program.

Youth 5: I know Jess is always mentioning that people are bending over backwards to try and be a part of [the YAC]. They're all just saying, "Can I come speak to them" "Can I send them a survey that they can all fill out?" "Can I come and just hear their ideas?" Um there's talk about a lot of future things about getting even the Chief involved ... but they truly do respect what has been created there and what it's offering and every time I'm there there's a different police sitting in and hearing what we have to say so it definitely feels important.

To add, when asked if they think the OPS takes them seriously, one youth answered:

Youth 3: So I really think that they're open to it and I think that even like especially the Chief, I know he especially when the other Ottawa police committees meet he really wants us there and he wants the co-chairs there, he really wants a youth perspective there. Because if all the groups are represented, well, we need youth there as well. So yeah I do think that the police takes us seriously.

As discussed above, it is important that the youth have the opportunity to work on meaningful projects.

Adult Coordinator 1: This is probably why they like it but it's being done in a manner that isn't just echoing into space if you will. It's not hitting a vacuum they are actually being listened to. And we know that they're being listened to because we're going to do, we're going to try something, try this project and we're going to see it through... I think they also like it because it's the completion everything is seen through. We're going to be structured and organized and here's what we're going to be looking at or who is going to be talking to you.

However, the structure and chain-of-command can limit the youth feeling that they are making an impact. As one youth said, "like, sometimes in our Committee we give info and... I don't know where it goes after." They later added that seeing more follow up for their work could be a potential area of improvement for the YAC. Further, one youth mentioned that it may be difficult to have an impact on some areas of the police service.

Youth 3: I mean it's hard because we're not at like the trainings or the police academy where they train, so if we could go there and be like "listen, your program should include this, this, and this", with more of a youth perspective while policing I think that would be better, but I feel like if they already are in their established careers that it's a little bit more difficult I guess.

Nonetheless, data from the survey suggest that young people in the program have generally positive feelings toward their engagement and contributions. For instance, when asked if they believe that their opinion was taken seriously, most answered with Strongly Agreed ($n=14$) or Agree ($n=10$) and some were Neutral ($n=2$) or Strongly Disagree ($n=1$). Relatedly, most Agree ($n=10$), some Strongly Agree ($n=8$) or Neutral ($n=8$) and one Strongly Disagree ($n=1$) when asked if they believe the OPS fully takes into account their feedback in the YAC.

The interaction between the youth and the OPS as an exchange of information and experience is seen as a win-win for youth and the organization. One youth explained, "I think what she does is beneficial to both us and her because she gets help from us and we get help from her so I guess it's a win- win for both of us." Moreover, another coordinator explained that in order to be fair, "It's gotta be win-win for everybody involved." Aside from the information

exchange, the youth also provide a valuable youthful energy for the coordinators, OPS teams, and community agencies involved. This is refreshing for OPS members, as with any public servant, they can become absorbed in the bureaucratic structure and forget to think creatively.

Adult Coordinator 2: meetings are six o'clock at night and you have this long day ...you're like "do I really want to do this?" And you're tired going in but when we end that meeting and we walk out those doors you are energized and we say "Oh my gosh if only we could end every day this way." Because young people are not jaded they are not cynical, generally speaking, there are some that are, and the ones we have here are here because they want to be here because they want to make a difference because they still believe that they have hope they aren't bogged down with adult stuff like bureaucracy and cynicism and they're just about hope and inspiration and positivity and they speak truth and that's what we need, you know what I mean.

Chapter V: Discussion

This chapter will present the findings from the previous chapter within the context of the findings and debates in the literature and theoretical concepts related to this project while answering my research questions. Again, they are: How does the collaborative partnership between local youth and the police service staff in the form of Ottawa Police Service's Youth Advisory Committee program foster an opportunity for youth civic engagement and democratization of the police service (Lea & Young, 1993)? Through a left realist subculture lens, what are the dynamics between the youth, police, and broader community that characterize this collaboration as a distinct subculture within the police service?

Overall, the goals of this research were to identify characteristics of this program and how they relate to existing civic engagement literature, as well as youth police perception in relation to left realist theoretical framework. To have an understanding of initiatives such as these, we have the potential to improve them. The following structure will answer both interconnected and exploratory research questions. First, findings related to empirical work on the topics of civic engagement and youth and police perceptions will be presented. I will then attend to the left realist and subculture theoretical implications of police-run youth advisory committees. The latter will largely answer my second question, about the subcultural elements related to the program, while the former will address my first question in how the program exemplifies civic engagement and democratization.

Civic Engagement

In response to the first research question that asks whether the YAC is a viable opportunity for youth civic engagement practices, the activities that the youth are engaged in were shown to be of importance in the interview and survey data. To them, it seemed that the practical element of being involved in a community event or providing feedback on a local

initiative was the gateway to feeling that their work on the YAC was making a difference. Many of the tangible projects youth and coordinators discussed were consistent with research by Collins, Augsberger and Gecker (2016), who found common activities included community service, political advocacy, and education campaigns. To add to this, some of the youth discussed that their favourite part of the YAC was simply working with one another and talking through issues or concerns together. This may be characteristic of the law enforcement environment that the committee is in, where issues discussed are typically more serious in nature, such as substance use, gun and gang violence, and treatment of racialized community members.

Their emphasis on tangible activities is also consistent with existing literature on youth civic engagement. Research on voting habits among young people has suggested that young people may not experience voting as an engaging opportunity to be involved as much as volunteering or protesting (Lenzi, et al., 2013; O'Neill, 2007; Turcotte, 2007; Turcotte, 2015A; Warren & Wicks, 2011). A key element of youth engagement is being able to see the results of their efforts and is most cited as the reason why young people are least interested in “traditional” forms of civic engagement such as voting. Young people prefer opportunities they feel that they are making a difference and where they think that actions matter. Volunteer opportunities such as youth advisory councils address this feeling because the central purpose of the youth council is to recognize that young people need a space to be heard within institutions.

However, not all volunteer opportunities or even youth advisory councils are created equally or have the same impacts. Youth advisory councils are created specifically for youth to address issues that pertain to them within an institution such as schools, social welfare, and in this case, police. Even more so than, for instance, volunteering at the library, councils such as these are constructed for youth to have a say and be heard within a system that typically works

for youth but not with youth. Councils then seem to be one of the most engaging forms of volunteering out of many civic engagement opportunities for youth.

Traditional vs Non-traditional Engagement

Current civic and political engagement research and theory have often differentiated the difference between traditional and non-traditional forms of engagement. Pirk and Nugin (2016) question if the categorization of conventional and non-conventional activity is a productive way to define civic activity, particularly among young people. These dichotomies were produced with the understanding that the goal for youth civic engagement programs in non-traditional realms is to encourage youth to vote in traditional realms. The definitions are therefore created by and for the benefit of the government. Youth councils may be considered more conventional forms of engagement because they are created and maintained by a recognized institution; however, “these institutional settings have also shifted their meanings, and young people are involved in these organizations in similar ways to those who are not directly involved in political participation” (p. 92). Pirk and Nugin (2016) suggest that organizations are changing to reflect a renewed energy for public engagement. On that same point, they also theorize that perhaps these new forms of participation, such as youth councils, are not so new at all: instead, the motivators for political participation have not changed; merely the avenues to express them have expanded. Critical analysis should be considered for why some forms of advocacy are seen as valid and others are discredited as invalid.

Volunteering

As shown in the Findings Chapter, one of the significant paired t-test results on the reasons why youth joined and continued with the YAC was to do with volunteer experience. Many of the youth cited that they gained volunteer experience for their resumes as a reason for joining this committee. In assessing why they stayed, the average rating of this reason decreased

significantly (Appendix P). This could be due to several reasons. For one, it could decrease once they were able to add this on their resume, even just after a few months, because they got what they joined for. Alternatively or at the same time, their priorities for staying may have shifted to be stronger for other reasons, such as making a difference in the community.

Over the course of the interviews, the youth and adult coordinators compared other traditional volunteer opportunities to the YAC. In full transparency, I expected them to focus on volunteering for the police service as a powerful institution in that comparison; however, instead most of those discussions focussed on how the functions of the youth advisory committee differed from other traditional forms of volunteering. The example I provided in the questions was roughly: “How does this opportunity with the Ottawa Police Service compare with other volunteer programs offered in Ottawa, such as volunteering with the library?” Unexpectedly to me, most discussed how the engagement level is much higher in a committee-type program than other volunteer programs. From working and learning from community organizations to discussing tough topics that matter to them, it seems that the YAC carries with it a more meaningful volunteering experience than other ones that may be used to fulfill the volunteering requirement set by the Ontario high school curriculum standards.

Indeed, while most of these youth are surely adding this experience to their resumes, discussions revealed that some youth may not see this as solely a volunteering opportunity. They defined volunteering as something almost less than what they are doing, despite the fact that they are not being paid for their time and therefore technically volunteering. Youth and adult coordinators mentioned that participating in the YAC exhibits a far higher expectation of work, commitment, and prestige than other forms of volunteering. This may not necessarily be the case for all volunteer opportunities; however, their perception of this is significant. Their perception

may stem from the fact that they are working with a highly recognizable organization such as the police service. However, the nature of the engagement being that they were chosen to advocate for themselves and their communities to the police service and other organizations characterizes their involvement as particularly impactful.

To add, one of the coordinators discussed that they rarely give the youth volunteer hours for school or other requirements. This is not because they refuse to do so, but the coordinator believes that the focus on relationships and effective problem solving in the YAC shadows the more selfish intentions for volunteering with the YAC. The above distinction between volunteering and working with the YAC highlights issues with mandatory volunteering requirements in high schools. Youth and adult coordinators associated volunteering to simply complete the mandatory forty hours requirement with forced, not genuine, engagement. This is certainly the opposite effect that such policies intend to have. The benefits of volunteer requirements for high school still has many benefits; however, my research may suggest that there is a distinction between those volunteering for their own benefit and those volunteering because it is something that they believe in.

This program carries with it a certain level of expectations to the community and to other young people, which may seem intense or overwhelming. The sense of responsibility communicated to me from the adult coordinators and youth that I spoke with was significant. The coordinators were passionate about the YAC and youth engagement as a whole and the youth were committed to its goals. This recognition of youth as citizens in their capacity as youth exemplifies a broader, more cultural application of youth citizenship (France, 1998; Hart, 2009) as opposed to a future-oriented citizens-in-waiting approach. The environment created specifically for youth engagement and respect that coordinators show the youth, as discussed in

sub-theme Respect and Working Together, shows a commitment to respecting their perspectives as youth citizens.

Youth Advisory Committees

As discussed earlier, the consultation was essential in order to identify what Ottawa youth would expect from a youth advisory committee program. Indeed, building partnerships with local organizations was essential in order to get their support for the program. These partnerships with local groups help in the development, recruitment, and running of the program activities; however, the YAC also returns the favour with volunteer support or feedback from the YAC.

Augsberger, Collins, and Gecker (2018) remind us that the origins and intention for the youth advisory committee significantly affect what the program does and its potential. Indeed, how would characteristics of youth who participate in these programs change across the origin and environments of different youth councils? Does the idea of youth voice differ among different police services, or even institutions? These are questions for future research.

Characteristics

The characteristics of the youth and program address the second research question in regards to the dynamics of the YAC. There is limited information about the origins, purpose, or strategy of youth advisory council programs because all of them across communities and societies are different. Further, many of the committees that are discussed in the literature exist in local political offices, schools, or youth services work. Characteristics of the program and the youth who participate in them also vary by community.

Some central characteristics of these youth in the YAC include that they are older, post-secondary educated, highly engaged, and busy young people. The youth have key roles in the recruitment process, including setting standards for what they are looking for, reviewing resumes, recommending peers to apply, interviewing candidates, and making decisions of who to

add to the program. As mentioned by some of those I interviewed, being cognizant of who is applying and accepted into the YAC was important. This exemplifies that the youth are committed to the potential of the program and care to make it even more representative of Ottawa.

One other defining characteristics of most these youth is that they likely have some sort of interest in policing or the criminal justice system, whether they wish to engage in a career in law enforcement or other social services. Indeed, 77.7% of youth Agreed ($n=12$) or Strongly Agreed ($n=9$) that they got involved with the YAC to learn more about policing in general.

In interviews I asked all participants a question on how the YAC is different than other volunteer opportunities. When I created this question, I was expecting participants to discuss their experience working within police organization's hierarchy, and what it means for them to work with the police specifically. Instead of focussing on points about the police service structure, most identified characteristics of the YAC itself as being unique, including: having a say, volunteering in the community, getting to know local organizations, collaborating with other motivated youth, and working closely with upper ranks in the Ottawa Police Service. Unlike what I initially expected, the defining characteristics of the program are what makes it different than other volunteer opportunities, not necessarily supply the fact that it is in the police service environment. This may suggest that despite recognizing the bureaucratic tensions, as identified in Theme IV, this remains primarily a youth engagement program focused on the perspectives and wellbeing of the youth first, then the needs and benefit of the institution second.

Indeed, Augsberger, Collins, and Gecker (2018) identify four factors that influence youth-centric engagement in youth advisory council programs. These include: youth representation, youth decision-making, youth initiative, youth leadership. While typologies can

be excluding and inaccurate, they can be helpful in developing a definition and guidelines on how to make programs like these successful. In the case of OPS' YAC, these characteristics are very consistent with the themes presented previously. The sub-theme of Demographic and Voice displays their concern with who is involved in the program and their commitment to including diverse voices and experiences. Additionally, the youth hold a significant decision-making and initiative role in the activities of the committee, despite it being created by adults. In addition, youth leadership is exemplified in the use of the co-chair role: a more senior youth acts in this role and takes on more responsibility than other members, liaising more closely with OPS management. Overall, these youth-centric principles are present in this analysis and help characterize this program and the participants involved.

Adult Coordinator Role

Research in the areas of youth civic engagement and volunteering have long discussed the importance of youth-adult relationships. The attitudes and actions of parents, community, and the school system have an impact on the ways youth conceptualize their capacities to be engaged in society and make a difference. Particularly among the youth advisory councils, some research has focused on the role and impact of the adults involved in these programs (Havlicek, Curry, & Villalpando, 2018). Their role clearly speaks to the dynamic between the youth and coordinators, but also can reflect the program's commitment to youth engagement and empowerment.

Some typologies have recently been developed by researchers in order to characterize different kinds of youth advisory councils. In interviews with facilitators and youth from 47 youth advisory boards, Havlicek, Curry, and Villalpando (2018) found that characteristics of most of the programs fell between the two of their four typologies: Adult-Driven Youth Input and 50-50 Youth Adult Partnership. Indeed, in comparison to the the typologies described in

their article I would argue that the Ottawa Police Service's YAC would fall between these two typologies.

The Adult-Driven Youth Input typology where “adults engage in a traditional youth-adult relationship where youth have the opportunity to voice their preferences but they do not have much power in driving decision making” (Havlicek, Curry, & Villalpando, 2018, p. 262). In this format, adult coordinators take a somewhat formal role in organizing the meetings, setting an agenda, and providing transportation and food for the youth. Similarly, OPS YAC facilitators help youth with more formal support in organizing meetings and team outings, as well as attending community events. By organizing the activities so that the youth take on as much as they please, facilitators in Havlicek and colleague's (2018) research create a feeling of being a non-judgemental “family”. Similarly stated by the OPS YAC adult coordinators, the program functions on a basis where youth take what they need and leave what they do not.

The 50-50 Youth Adult Partnership (Y-AP) typology is “an approach to youth participation that involves youth and adults sharing in the planning and decision-making responsibilities in order to meet goals” (Havlicek, Curry, & Villalpando, 2018, p. 264). This approach is similar to characteristics found in the YAC. They strive to share the room with youth and create spaces for mutual collaboration; youth are not the only ones who benefit from this collaboration. As shown above, there is a demonstrated effort from adult coordinators to organize the meetings and presentations, but also to step back and allow the youth to be empowered in their decision making.

Facilitators also explained their approach to the program as series of trial and errors. They were flexible to the needs of the youth and changed their approach when necessary. This is similarly found in interviews with OPS YAC coordinators and youth, as discussed in the

Findings chapter. The ability to be fluid and adaptable to change is difficult to achieve in bureaucratic institutions. Given that the adult coordinators make this a priority speaks to their commitment in maintaining quality youth engagement and empowerment practices.

In order for an engagement program to function within an adult-driven bureaucratic professional environment such as a police or government service, there must be some form of adult leadership to facilitate between the youth and organization. Organizations such as the police service are not naturally structured to engage with the public or disenfranchised groups such as young people. Without a strong leadership figure with a pulse on the needs of the organization and has the trust of upper management, the program would have limited organizational impact. Therefore, in order for a program to be Youth-Led, the entire organization from which it is housed would have to be built with this as its central premise. That is, leadership and hierarchical structures within the institution must be organized for the youth to be fully integrated and engaged. Therefore, the adult leadership and subsequent relationships developed with youth can make a big difference in the program.

The recruitment process for the Ottawa Police Service YAC is also important to note (Augsberger, Collins, & Gecker, 2018; Havlicek, Curry, & Villalpando, 2018). Existing literature emphasized that adults take on the role in coordinating the program for the youth. As discussed above, it is an important skill for coordinators to know when to step in and when to allow the youth to take on a leadership role. In the case of this program, a key indicator to me that the coordinators focus this program as a youth engagement program first is the recruitment process. As discussed in the findings chapter, the youth have a huge responsibility in developing the recruitment priorities and ultimately choose the next members. Adult coordinators aid in the institutional responsibilities (handling emails, public questions, sorting initial applications), but

let the youth strategize what new perspectives and life experiences they believe the committee needs. Again, this recognition demonstrates the coordinators' commitment to a primarily youth engagement initiative.

Youth and Police Perceptions

Generally, existing research has determined that young people have more negative perceptions of police than the general population. Factors such as experience with police (Hurst & Frank, 2000; Hurst, Frank & Browning, 2000), race (Brick, Taylor, & Esbensen, 2009; Giwa, James, Anucha & Schwartz, 2014), and neighborhood (Frank, Brandl, Cullen & Strichman, 1996; Geistman & Smith, 2007) have been identified as affecting experiences with police and therefore youth's perceptions of them. The survey in this project included four questions on global perceptions of police (Appendix O) and the responses present a very positive view of police, with each question averaging very high on the Likert scale. Some considerations must be made regarding this finding.

These positive perceptions could suggest that the program has improved or created positive experiences with youth and police. However, without a measure of police perception prior to starting the program, it is difficult to make this determination. Many of the youth involved in this program may have had relatively positive attitudes to begin with due to their previous experiences with the criminal justice system or their family's positive perceptions. Furthermore, many who responded to the survey indicated that they were interested in a career in law enforcement. Indeed 62.9% youth answered Agree or Strongly Agree when asked if they joined the YAC to learn more about policing as a career.

In addition, the positive perceptions of police expressed by these select youth are not necessarily an indication of a successful program. To simply have positive reviews of police behavior is not necessarily indicative of the program's genuine engagement or ability for youth

to be heard and make a difference in the police service. Again, Taft and Gordon's (2013) research suggests that youth council engagement opportunities within powerful institutions may be seen as illegitimate to youth who are more critical of society and its institutions and identify within the 'activist' community. Although the four measures that assess perceptions of police were helpful to characterize the global attitudes of these youth, they should not be automatically understood as an indication of a successful program.

Speaking to one of the more specific perception measures, 23 youth answered Agree or Strongly Agree to if they believe that this program has changed or will change youth perceptions of police in Ottawa. Indeed, the youth that I spoke to provided very positive evaluations of their experience with the YAC. It would be insightful to continue this project to assess overall youth global perceptions of police and the potential for programs like these to establish trust in the broader community beyond those youth in the YAC. In addition, while it is important to know why youth start and continue with the YAC to learn what makes this program worth their time, it would also be beneficial to know the reasons why some youth left. Further, it would be helpful to know why some youth in Ottawa may avoid this program or ones similar to it.

There was only four youth who stated in the survey that they would not return to the YAC if given the opportunity. The responses for one of these youth throughout the survey reflected that they had a poor experience with it. Unfortunately, they were not interested in being interviewed. Had I interviewed them, I would have been able to gain an even clearer picture of this program's participants, downfalls, and community effects. Adorjan, Ricciardelli, and Spencer (2017) remind us that generally positive experiences with police programs do not stop youth from being critical of police actions. Indeed, when speaking with the youth in interviews many had some constructive feedback about the program. In the interviews, one youth in

particular had more critical feedback than the others. However, whenever youth presented criticism of the program or things they wish could be improved, they made it clear that the feedback comes from a place of appreciation for the program and the police service.

As discussed in Theme II, sub-theme Respect and Working Together, their honest feedback, good or bad, indicates a strong level of respect for one another and the police service. This respect is not unconditional or unwavering, but contingent on the genuine engagement goal within the program. The Ottawa Police Service YAC build on this foundation as an engagement program to address the tough issues related to police and community relations. Those connections and relationships as their base reaffirm a positive environment from which those problem-solving practices can flourish.

Theory

Left realism as a theoretical framework complimented many parts of this project. Specifically, many of their central concepts point to the citizen's right to have a say in the criminal justice system, including democratization of the police and accountability, bridging the policing and civic engagement literatures. The following will discuss democratization of the police service, subculture, social relations of crime control, and left realism versus idealism.

Democratization of Police Service

Indeed, the intentions and role of the organization is important to the success of the program. Efforts to democratize the police service have long been discussed as an important step in making the police service more responsive to the needs of the community. Lea and Young (1993) affirm that to concretely include the community in the decision making process in the police service is necessary for them to be accountable to the people they serve. This accountability will direct police services to focus their efforts in addressing the *real* issues in the

community and improve the wellbeing of community members, including marginalized groups such as youth and racialized communities.

Beyond the left realist framework, other sociological scholars have addressed the challenge of creating democratic police services. Aitchison and Blaustein (2013) suggest that the relationship between democracy and police can be summarized in policing for democracy (what they can do for democracy) and democratically responsive policing (how society can govern police actors). They argue that the former is required to attain the latter, as the police institution must first make a commitment to the community and to enhancing democracy. In their analysis of policing initiatives in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Aitchison and Blaustein (2013) conclude that the role of external actors had a significant effect on the country's ability to develop democratically responsive policing. The institution in question must be able to prioritize developing a capacity to police *for* democracy beyond the influence of other powerful governing bodies.

In another application of democratic policing, Harkin (2015) recently used Simmel's theoretical framework to explore police consultation in Edinburgh as an opportunity for democratizing policing. Indeed, Simmel's social theory on police and public interactions states that secrecy and trust trump genuine efforts to engage the community. As Harkin (2015) describes, "The structure, form and bureaucratic method of the police means there is only so much engagement, cooperation and integration that can be achieved before partners and the public are pushed back and kept at-a-distance" (p. 743). These critiques are consistent with Theme IV called Bureaucracy, where the institutional rules, red-tape, and hierarchical structure impede the youth from fully knowing where their feedback is being taken to or if their efforts are being used completely.

Lea and Young (1993) advocate for a democratization of the police service that ultimately involves the community and local control of the behaviors of the police service. For them, this is the most promising strategy for police accountability and maintaining safe communities. As best summarized: “Left realism starts from the following assumptions: we need a police force because crime is a real problem...The issue is to get a police force that will deal properly with these problems” (Lea & Young, 1993, p.259). This is built on three premises. First, they explain that “only the local community knows its policing needs” (Lea & Young, 1993, p. 259). Second, this collaboration between community groups would create an environment for them to collectively address issues that they both face. Thirdly, an accountable police service will be monitored and trusted by the community. This trust will translate to better communication between the community and police and it “is this flow of information and not the numbers of police or the high-powered technology at their disposal which is most important single factor in solving crimes” (Lea & Young, 1993, p. 260).

Lea and Young (1993) are critical of the use of police liaison committees in that they may only have limited power to hold the police accountable. The issue of which community members are chosen, listened to, or taken seriously is tremendously important to Lea and Young (1993) in an effort to avoid misrepresentation and pseudo-engagement efforts. Despite the issues associated with police-chosen community groups, they do still believe that the structure can be used to develop democratic accountability. Indeed, “The key issue is the establishment of the machinery of democracy as a way of re-establishing the sense of community” (p. 249). They argue that only when community members can be expected to be listened to and the police are accountable to their feedback will everyone, across communities and demographics engage with these attempts to democratic accountability. As already discussed, representation is a significant

theme for the Ottawa Police Service's Youth Advisory Committee as it dictates whose voices and experiences are being presented to the police service.

The YAC exemplifies democratic accountability in the ways that the youth wish to see more of the effects that they could have on the OPS. Although many of the youth I interviewed generally enjoy working with community organizations by providing them with feedback, some expressed that they wish for more time to work just with each other in the YAC. They value the work that they can accomplish together on the issues that resonate with them the most. Coupled with their request for more feedback on where their efforts amount to, this indicates a level of critical thinking that requires the OPS to be accountable to what they believe the program needs; and by extension, what they need in order to best represent their communities and perspectives to the police service. As a developing and growing program, the OPS coordinators have been, and should continue to be, responsive to the needs of the youth and further encourage the youth and the organization to allow the YAC to challenge the OPS more. However, the more responsibility that the YAC takes on, will require more policy and involvement from upper management, which, in turn, could interfere with the youth engagement element of this program, including their leadership and decision-making capacities. A thoughtful process is required in order to balance bureaucratic needs, youth engagement, and increased accountability to the needs and requests of the youth. Given the care taken to create and maintain the YAC program, I believe that this is well within the capabilities for the coordinators that organize it and the youth who give their time to it.

The YAC's capacity to make the Ottawa Police Service accountable to their advice or concerns is dependent on the OPS leadership involved in the program and the buy-in from upper management. As a relatively new program in the organization, they have needed to build its

reputation and presence within the OPS as a functional body of youth to work with. By building this program, its potential as a committee to bring about real accountability in the police service in regards to youth community relations continues to grow. As discussed by some youth and adult coordinators, other similar committee groups are not as strong as the YAC and contain many more interpersonal and functional difficulties among their members and infrastructure. Due to the high level of respect and connectivity developed through the youth engagement focus of the YAC, their capacity to further develop into a serious means of accountability for the service will come with time and institutional commitment to this goal. Interview discussion in the theme Buy-In signalled to the youth that they are making a difference and that their work matters to the organization and the community.

Recognition of the YAC across the OPS, particularly among upper management, is indicative that their presence within the organization is growing. Further assigning resources to this program can strengthen its capability to be a strong source of constructive criticism and community outreach for the police service, however, those involved in the program have been weary of adding more resources, as attached to it is control and policy that may impede the engagement function of the YAC. Therefore, so long as the intention of this program remains focused on the youth first and the added support is on their terms, this program has the potential to grow further into a force for democratic accountability as a body bridging the community and OPS.

Subculture

The following section will speak to my second research question concerning subcultural elements that characterize the YAC within the Ottawa Police Service and broader community. Many of the youth evaluated the committee's effectiveness or success on the basis of organizational buy-in or hierarchical support. This is an indication that they see themselves as

youth committed to making their communities better and simultaneously being an established part, or subculture, of the Ottawa Police Service. Subculture here is not referring to the thin-blue-line or police culture throughout the service, but rather as a subculture that is a distinct area of the police service with its own defining characteristics and connections to the community and, in this case, the youth involved with the YAC (Lea, 2015).

As detailed by Lea (2010, 2015) community and police relations can be analyzed as a subculture in order to break down such interactions between democratic institutions, such as law enforcement, and community members. Indeed, Lea (2010) claims that since its earliest developments “Left Realism was clear that police (and similar agencies) must be part of the community and oriented to its needs and crime priorities rather than imposing externally dictated, central government targets” (Lea, 2010, p. 144). The aim is to deconstruct the dynamics between police, community, victims, and offenders, and “as with all forms of radical analysis, is to reveal dynamics of power in order to change them” (Lea, 2015, p. 174). Through my data collection, I am confident that I have gained and hopefully portrayed a clearer picture of this program including its youth members, adult coordinators, community organizations, and the police service. Using the social relations of crime control and subculture theory together helps to reveal the particular dynamics that define the relationships between these groups, such as: the balancing act between youth engagement and institutional meaningfulness described in Theme IV Bureaucracy; the interpersonal dynamics described in Theme II; the youth engagement environment demonstrated in Theme III; and the characteristics of the youth who participate in the YAC described in Theme I.

As a distinct side of the police service, the youth only engage with police officers who are hand-picked for the program. While these are the best officers who have the best intentions

for this program, this could limit the exposure to the reality of policing service. Indeed, the environment is carefully thought out to insulate the program from exposure bureaucratic influence. While the bureaucratic structure can impede youth engagement, it is also an integral defining characteristic that shapes this, and any other, youth engagement program. Therefore, I would encourage other research or program coordinators to consider the environment that the program exists in and be realistic about how it has to adapt and negotiate with the organization's surrounding culture and rules.

Coordinators and youth also discussed the impact that community organizations had in the development of the program and its functions. Indeed, when setting up the committee, one of the adult coordinators detailed that consultation with community organizations, local youth, and OPS management was of utmost important in order to create an initiative that was consistent with the needs of the community. To collaborate with all of the relevant parties to develop the program ensures a high level of integrity and a positive program that represents the interests of the community. In addition, the community partners are involved in recruitment for the YAC as well as in its activities as presenters that consult the youth. The involvement and support of other agencies addresses Lea and Young's (1993) notion that subcultures have micro, or within group, and macro, societal, influences. The macro influences here could include community organizations that are involved with or support the YAC, but also societal perceptions of young people and their potential to have an impact on the world. Indeed, these macro influences such as buy-in and support from the community affected how the YAC functions in terms of who they provide feedback to and the community events they support; however, the YAC also influences these macro influences by way of their advocacy and voice. This collaboration provides an opportunity for organizations to take up youth engagement when they otherwise may not have

thought to consult youth on what they think. In this way, the social relations of crime control, or square of crime, and subculture are present here in that the YAC functions as an interconnected entity of the community, local agencies, and the police service.

Left Realism vs Left Idealism

In the beginning stages of early left realism and idealism, the debates between the two frameworks defined the two perspectives. Now, academics are moving away from this dichotomous debate in favour of recognition that both left realism, idealism, and everything in between are stronger together than they are conflicting (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2013; Madfis & Cohen, 2016). The short-term, tangible focus on the left realist framework would not deny the macro-level institutional abolitionist; nor do I think that the idealists would pull support for small initiatives while working toward broader change. Going forward, I agree that the left realist and idealist camps should be utilized on a scale to consider both the short term things that can be changed while contributing to challenging institutions. The goal to create a safer and less discriminatory society is common in all critical criminologies and creating accusatory arguments between like-minded frameworks or academics is hardly productive. Surely, adopting a more comprehensive and less strenuously divided approach to work inspired by left realism and its concepts will be beneficial to research and analysis of social issues.

Conclusion and Future Research

This thesis project aimed to collaborate with the Ottawa Police Service in order to learn more about one of their community outreach programs, the Youth Advisory Committee. The central premise of this project was practical in nature: the more we know about such initiatives, the better chance we have in improving them. Engagement between democratic institutions, such as the police service, and the communities they serve is important on many levels. Powerful organizations are expected to serve society with utmost rigor and professionalism. In an effort to ensure that they are being responsive to the needs and negative perceptions of the community, including marginalized groups such as youth, programs such as these have been established across police services to invite the community to be partners of in community safety. One such initiative is the Ottawa Police Service's Youth Advisory Committee.

A mixed methods approach allowed me to obtain a variety of types of information. This effort to analyze the dynamics between those involved with the program, their intentions of being involved, and their attitudes toward their community advocacy role, has resulted in a greater understanding about youth and police programs as well as the ways in which youth practice youth civic engagement in this context.

Incorporating the youth civic engagement literature was necessary in order to contextualize the program. Its central premise to give youth a voice for issues that matter to them is related to civic engagement principles. Indeed, the civic engagement literature is compatible with the left realist framework and with concepts like the democratization of the police service and democratic imperative.

For Practitioners:

Volunteering has been a mandatory part of the Ontario government's high school curriculum for since the year 1999. Civic engagement research should also continue to question

the meaningfulness of mandatory volunteer structures such as these. The intention is for students to build connections in the community and practice being civically engaged early on in their lives. However, the principle of volunteering to gain something may have unintended consequences of such engagement and have an impact on understanding volunteer work, as indicated in the Intentions and Goals sub-theme within Theme II.

For those who work in youth engagement, whether in government or community-based institutions the themes presented here should raise questions and implications on their work. I would recommend that coordinators critically think about the reasons why this engagement is important to their organization. Misguided intentions will set the program up for failure, as the youth will sense that their work does not make a difference which will affect retention and the overall impact that it can have. In addition, they should assess their recruitment strategies and consider those who are not only being accepted, but those who they are not reaching or denying to the program. The type of leadership involved also clearly has an impact on the function and integrity of the program. If the program exists in an effort to improve the image of an organization or person, I would suggest that management reconsider if youth engagement is genuinely important to their organization. If it is not, it is not worth creating the program as the young people involved will likely see through this when they are not being truly engaged.

Additionally, I would encourage program coordinators and participants to reflect on who is involved and who is not. Do the policies or approach to recruitment exclude some potential applicants; why is that? Both the youth and coordinators here discussed the positive impact of embracing representation and diversity on the YAC. Programs that provide marginalized groups an opportunity to voice their concerns must be thoughtful in how they choose members. If they

are not their initiative will miss critical perspectives and possibly misrepresent the group in which they are attempting to empower, regardless of intentions.

For Future Research:

Future research should continue to explore the characteristics of youth advisory council programs, as I expect programs such as these to only become more common post-Justin Trudeau's commitment to youth engagement. Particularly, their activities, goals, and effectiveness in achieving their goals should be examined closely (Collins, Augsberger & Gecker, 2016). To what extent is there a gap between what the youth expected from the program and its impact in the organization or community? Analyses of how youth advisory councils function can also speak to how the public can be engaged with other powerful democratic institutions. Research on such advisory councils can contribute to strategic political advocacy in other areas of social justice and bureaucratic engagement, including prison, health care, and educational reform.

More consistent research on youth perceptions of police in Canada will help speak to the effectiveness of community policing initiatives. Much of the youth and police literature was completed in the United States over twenty years ago and more research should be undertaken regarding how Canadian youth and police perceptions compare. This research should note the similarities and differences between Canadian and American policing structures. Furthermore contemporary research should examine the effects of high levels of police scrutiny and use of social media on perceptions of youth people.

Left realism as a theoretical framework was chosen in order to address the practical goal of this project: to better understand the reality of this police and community outreach program in an effort to improve it. To speak to this, this program and others like it surely have the potential to act as a positive force in the future of policing. Societal institutions such as law enforcement,

education, and health systems are only as effective in serving the public as they are successful in responding to its needs. A government that is responsive and representative of the people is the goal in democratic societies; this is difficult to be fully realized when bureaucratic procedures prevent such engagement.

Researchers should consider the potential of the left realist framework to address relationships between the community and the police service. In particular, its subcultural elements could be further used to analyze dynamics between citizens and organizations, including their policies and programs (Lea, 2015). New directions are also on the horizon to be collaborative with left idealists by utilizing the best of both dichotomies to address failures and injustices (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 2013; Madfis & Cohen, 2016). While left realism was developed in a political context in a different country at a different time, its potential to guide critical criminological inquiry is not to be overlooked; indeed, its goals of challenging bureaucratic structures, supporting marginalized populations, and implementing impactful, tangible change provide an excellent pathway to criminological research.

The future of policing in Canada will likely contain a string of new innovations to increase public satisfaction, offset criticism from academics and experts, and boost overall morale within the police service. Techniques implemented to improve policing will continue to be developed, including renewed independent review committees, body-worn cameras, and use of social media. What remains is the essential role of the people: Grassroots movements (such as Black Lives Matter) and community activism (such as Justice for Abdi) that involves passionate, everyday citizens who will continue to demand a better more, just society. When spaces are made for voices to be heard and acted upon, collaboration with the institutions in control will grow as long as the people show up to the call. Indeed, a government that is created to be

responsive to the needs of society is one that is democratically supportive both *for* and *with* the people.

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Appendix A: Survey

Survey for: Ottawa Police Service's Youth Advisory Committee as an Opportunity for Youth Civic Engagement

(Page 1: Welcome Message)

Hello!

Thank you for being willing to participate in this survey. It shouldn't take more than 10 minutes to complete. Before you proceed to the survey itself, please read the following information carefully before you consent to participate.

(Page 2: Consent)

Invitation to Participate: I am invited to participate in the Youth Advisory Committee survey portion of the above-mentioned research study conducted by Renee Komel in the context of a Master's thesis, under the supervision of Professor Michael Kempa.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of the study is to learn about the ways that young people aim to make their community better by participating in programs such as Youth Advisory Committees.

Participation: My participation will consist of completing this brief online survey about my involvement in the Ottawa Police Service's Youth Advisory Committee.

Risks: My participation in this study will entail that I discuss my involvement with the Ottawa Police Service's Youth Advisory Committee. This may cause me to take time out of my free time to complete the survey. I have received assurance from the researcher that every effort will be made to minimize these risks, such as being flexible and understanding with my schedule by providing ample time to complete the survey on my own time. The researcher has assured me that the information I provide will be anonymous (see Anonymity below) and that my participation is completely voluntary (see Voluntary Participation).

Benefits: My participation in this study will contribute to research that reflects what really youth think and feel. My participation in this study will contribute to evidence of how youth programs such as Youth Advisory Committees can help better the community around us and empower young people.

Confidentiality and anonymity: I have received assurance from the researcher that the information I will share will remain strictly confidential. No one will access your answers here except the main researcher. This Survey Monkey account is only accessible to Renee. However, since Survey Monkey is an American company, the data collected from this survey is subject to the USA Patriot Act. This does not guarantee my absolute confidentiality in relation to the purposes of the USA Patriot Act.

Anonymity will be protected the guarantee that the researchers will not disclose who chose to participate in the study. If the participant discloses to friends or Ottawa Police Service staff that

they participated in the study, the researcher can no longer guarantee confidentiality and anonymity outside of the research paper itself. When the thesis is published, participants will remain anonymous.

Conservation of data: The data collected here will be kept in a secure manner on an external hard drive with a password on it and in a locked filing cabinet. The data must be kept for at least 5 years after collection, so it will be locked away until the researcher is allowed to destroy it. When that time comes, all electronic documents will be securely deleted and paper copies will be shredded.

Compensation: I will not be compensated for participating in this survey.

Voluntary Participation: I am under no obligation to participate and if I choose to participate, I can withdraw from the study at any time without suffering any negative consequences and none of my peers or past supervisors will be informed. If I choose to withdraw from this survey, none of my answers will be submitted to the researcher.

(Check Box) Acceptance: I agree to participate in the online survey portion of the above research study conducted by Renee Komel of the Department of Criminology, Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Ottawa who is under the supervision of Dr. Michael Kempa, interim Director of the Department of Criminology.

If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the researcher or her supervisor.

If I have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this study, I may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, Tabaret Hall, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5
Tel.: (613) 562-5387
Email: ethics@uottawa.ca

(Page 3: Survey)

Demographic Information

1. How long have you served on the Ottawa Police Service's Youth Advisory Committee?
 - A) Less than one year
 - B) Between 1-2 years
 - C) Between 2-3 years
 - D) Over 3 years
 - E) I no longer serve on the YAC

If you answered E:

How long did you serve on the YAC?

- A) Less than 6 months
- B) Between 6 months to 1 year
- C) 1 to 2 years

D) More than 2 years

2. How old are you?

- A) 13
- B) 14
- C) 15
- D) 16
- E) 17
- F) 18
- G) 19
- H) 20
- I) 21
- J) 22
- K) 23 or older

3. Are you currently enrolled as a student?

- A) Yes
- B) No

If yes: Which level of education are you currently pursuing?

- A) Elementary/Jr. High
- B) High School
- C) Post secondary (College, University)
- D) Post secondary-Graduate Program

If No, what is your highest level of education?

- A) Elementary/Jr. High
- B) High School
- C) Some Post secondary courses
- D) Post Secondary diploma or degree

4. What is your first language?

- A) English
- B) French
- C) Arabic
- D) Somali
- E) Spanish
- F) Cantonese
- G) Mandarin
- H) Persian (Farsi)
- I) Other:

5. Which of the following languages are you fluent in? Check all that apply

- A) English
- B) French
- C) Arabic

- D) Somali
- E) Spanish
- F) Cantonese
- G) Mandarin
- H) Persian (Farsi)
- I) Other:

6. Are you a practicing member of a religious faith?

- A) Yes
- B) No

If Yes: With which of the following groups do you identify?

- A) Judaism
- B) Islam
- C) Hinduism
- D) Buddhism
- E) Catholicism
- F) Protestantism
- G) Other (Please specify)

7. Are you currently employed?

- A) Yes - Part time
- B) Yes - Full time
- B) No

8. How would you describe your friend group?

- A) Few close friends (1-3) and a few acquaintances (1-3)
- B) Few close friends (1-3) and some acquaintances (4-9)
- C) Few close friends (1-3) and many acquaintances (10+)
- D) Some close friends (4-9) and few acquaintances (1-3)
- E) Some close friends (4-9) and some acquaintances (4-9)
- F) Some close friends (4-5) and many acquaintances (10+)
- G) Many close friends (10+) and a few acquaintances (1-3)
- H) Many close friends (10+) and some acquaintances (4-9)
- I) Many close friends (10+) and many acquaintances (10+)

9. How would you rank your social media presence?

- A) Not active - I don't have any social media accounts.
- B) Somewhat active - I like to keep up with friends and family, but don't think about it too much.
- C) Regularly active - I use social media daily to stay up-to-date on current events, friends, and family.
- D) Very active - Social media is a big part of my life and I am very active.

10. How would you rank your academic performance?

- A) Top 10% of the class
- B) Higher than average

- C) Average
- D) Below average
- E) Lower 10% of the class

11. Which area of Ottawa do you live in?

- A) Central
- B) Orleans
- C) Nepean
- D) Kanata / West Ottawa
- E) South Ottawa
- F) Vanier
- G) Manotick
- H) Other (please specify)

Please answer the following questions considering the following scale:

1: Strongly disagree, 2: Disagree, 3: Neutral, 4: Agree, 5: Strongly Agree

Perceptions of Police

1. In general, I trust the police.

1 2 3 4 5

2. In general, I am satisfied with the police in my neighborhood.

1 2 3 4 5

3. In general, police officers do a good job.

1 2 3 4 5

4. In general, I like the police.

1 2 3 4 5

Engagement with the OPS

5. To what degree did you feel you had a role in shaping your experience with the YAC?

1 2 3 4 5

6. To what degree did you think that your opinion was taken seriously in your experience with the YAC?

1 2 3 4 5

7. To what degree do you think the Ottawa Police Service fully takes into account the work or feedback that you provide as a member of the YAC?

1 2 3 4 5

8. To what degree do you think the Ottawa Police Service as an organization respects youth?

1 2 3 4 5

9. To what degree do you think the YAC has made a difference in Ottawa?

1 2 3 4 5

10. To what degree do you think the YAC has the potential to change young people's perception of police in Ottawa?

1 2 3 4 5

11. To what degree do you think the YAC has changed or will change your perception of the OPS?

1 2 3 4 5

Community Advocacy

12. To what degree do you think that the YAC is an effective way for youth to get involved in their community?

1 2 3 4 5

13. To what degree do you think that your experience in the YAC has made a difference in your community?

1 2 3 4 5

14. To what degree do you think that your experience in the YAC has made a difference in Ottawa Police Service practices and behaviors with youth?

1 2 3 4 5

15. To what degree do you think that the YAC contributes to changing the Ottawa Police Service's perceptions of youth in Ottawa?

1 2 3 4 5

16. Has your involvement in the YAC made you more confident to discuss community issues with others?

1 2 3 4 5

17. To what degree is teamwork an important aspect for the success of the YAC?

1 2 3 4 5

Intentions of Becoming and Staying Involved

18. To what degree did you initially get involved in the YAC to learn more about policing as a career?

1 2 3 4 5

19. To what degree did you initially get involved in the YAC to learn more about policing in general?

1 2 3 4 5

20. To what degree did you initially get involved in the YAC to have a say in issues that matter to you?

1 2 3 4 5

21. To what degree did you initially get involved in the YAC to voice concerns of your specific community?

1 2 3 4 5

22. To what degree did you initially get involved in the YAC to build your resume or get volunteer experience?

1 2 3 4 5

23. To what degree did you initially get involved in the YAC to build relationships with other youth?

1 2 3 4 5

23. To what degree did you initially get involved in the YAC to build relationships with OPS staff and network other community organizations?

1 2 3 4 5

Are you a returning member of the YAC?

A) Yes

B) No - but I was involved in the YAC over some time

C) No - this is my first year

If Answer No: Will skip questions 23-28.

NOTE: For those who are no longer involved in the YAC, please answer the following questions as indicating why you stayed for the time that you did.

23. If you are a returning YAC member, have your reasons changed for continuing with the program from your initial reason(s) to get involved?

1 2 3 4 5

24. To what degree do you continue to be involved in the YAC to learn more about policing as a career?

1 2 3 4 5

25. To what degree do you continue to be involved in the YAC to learn more about policing in general?

1 2 3 4 5

26. To what degree do you continue to be involved in the YAC to have a say in issues that matter to you?

1 2 3 4 5

27. To what degree do you continue to be in the YAC to voice concerns of your specific community?

1 2 3 4 5

28. To what degree do you continue to be involved in the YAC to build your resume or get volunteer experience?

1 2 3 4 5

29. To what degree do you continue to be involved with the YAC because of the relationships built with other YAC members?

1 2 3 4 5

30. To what degree do you continue to be involved with the YAC because of the relationships built with OPS staff and connections with community organizations?

1 2 3 4 5

30. If given the opportunity, would you continue to participate in the future Youth Advisory Committee groups?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Yes, with the following considerations :_____

(Page 4: Contact for Follow Up)

Would you like to be interviewed on your involvement in the Ottawa Police Service's Youth Advisory Committee?

Yes
No

If Yes: Please include an email address here that the researcher may contact you at:

If Yes: Please include a phone number here that the researcher may contact you at:

* Interviews will be scheduled around the participant's availability to ensure minimum disruption to their schedule. The interview location will be on the University of Ottawa's main campus; however, the researcher is open to moving the interview space to accommodate the participant.

** Please note that not all participants who have volunteered to be interviewed will be selected for a follow up interview. This is due to time and resource constraints that the researcher faces.

*** Please note that the contact information provided here will not impact the results or be associated with your answers in this survey.

(Page 5: Conclusion)

The survey is now complete. Thank you again for your participation!
The researcher's contact information is below if you have any questions.
Renee, Master of Arts in Criminology Candidate, University of Ottawa

Appendix B: Recruitment Email (YAC Youth Survey)

Hello!

My name is Renee, I am a Master's student from the University of Ottawa's Department of Criminology. I am conducting a research study on youth engagement in Ottawa. What does this mean? I am interested in how young people, like yourself and myself, participate in their community to make it a better place.

Specifically, I would like to take a closer look at the Ottawa Police Service's Youth Advisory Committees and how its members are making Ottawa a better place. This is why I'm emailing you. As a recent member of the Ottawa Police Service's Youth Advisory Committee, you use your voice to advocate for your peers, make community issues known, and use your skills and abilities to make change!

In my research, I want to hear from youth like yourself first-hand and make your opinions and experiences the centre of my research: As an advocate for youth empowerment, I want to truly listen to your experiences in order to make change through my research.

Survey

Below you will find a link to a Survey Monkey survey about your experience in the YAC. It will not take long to complete. Please do not share this link with anyone. Please complete this survey by **Sunday, February 4th, at 11:59 pm**. This gives you two weeks to complete the survey and after this date it will be closed. This survey can be completed on a desktop, tablet, or mobile supported by Android or iOS.

LINK: <https://www.surveymonkey.ca/r/OPSYACSURVEY>

If there are any technical issues or confusion with the survey, please contact me (the researcher) directly.

Interview

In addition to this, you can volunteer to be interviewed by me about your experience in the YAC. You will be provided with all of the information you need to know about the interview then, and you will have all the power to change your mind about participating at any point.

Remember, all of this is completely voluntary. If you have any questions or would like to be interviewed, please indicate so at the end of the survey or contact me directly.

No monetary compensation will be provided for your participation in the interview. However, I would be happy to provide volunteer hours for your time spent speaking with me if you require them for high school graduation or scholarship application. This time would amount to approximately one (1) hour and will reflect the time spent on the interview.

Your participation would be infinitely appreciated!

Thank you!

Renee Komel

Vice-President, University of Ottawa Criminology Graduate Student Association

Appendix C: Recruitment Email (OPS Staff)

Hello!

My name is Renee, I am a Master's student from the University of Ottawa's Department of Criminology. I am conducting a research study on youth engagement in Ottawa. What does this mean? I am interested in how young people participate in their community to make it a better place.

Specifically, I am taking a closer look at the Ottawa Police Service's Youth Advisory Committees (YAC) and how its members are working to make Ottawa a better place. In addition to speaking with the youth, I am looking to speak with Ottawa Police Service staff who have been involved with the YAC program in the past or present. I'd like to hear about your perceptions of the program and of youth engagement in general as it relates to the Ottawa Police Service and community safety.

No monetary compensation will be provided for your participation in the interview. I will do my best to coordinate a time to talk that respects your work schedule. Interviews are planned to be held at the University of Ottawa main campus or OPS Elgin Street location, whichever is preferable. Interviews should last between 30-45 minutes.

Remember, all of this is completely voluntary. If you would like to be interviewed on your experience with the YAC, please email me directly to arrange an interview at:.

Your participation would be infinitely appreciated!

Thank you!

Renee Komel
Vice-President, University of Ottawa Criminology Graduate Student Association

Appendix D: Interview Guide for Youth

Interview Guide for YAC Members: Master's Thesis Dissertation Project

Title of the study: Ottawa Police Service's Youth Advisory Committee as an Opportunity for Youth Civic Engagement

Renee Komel (Master of Arts in Criminology candidate) and Michael Kempa, interim Director of the Department of Criminology (thesis supervisor), along with her Department of Criminology in the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Ottawa affiliation and coordinates:

D) Introduction

Hello, thank you for joining me today. I appreciate you taking the time to come speak with me today. As a reminder, my name is Renee, I am a Master's student at the University of Ottawa in the Department of Criminology. I have done a school placement at Ottawa Police Service and work at the RCMP in National Youth Services, so I am interested in the topic of youth and police programming. I reached out to OPS's Youth Section and they helped me get ideas for my project, which has lead us here. Please fill out the following Questionnaire to indicate your age and level of schooling. This will best help me use your information in the study and keep organized.

Before we start to discuss some of the questions I prepared, I want to remind you that if you do not want to answer a question or participate in the study any further, please tell me immediately and you will be excluded from the study. Even if the consent forms and affirmation forms are agreed upon and signed, you can always leave or decline to participate if you want to. I have six specific questions, but I may ask smaller ones to make sure that I fully understand what you mean. Do you have any questions before I start?

E) Interview questions

1. Why do you participate in the Ottawa Police Service's Youth Advisory Committee (YAC)? Have these reasons changed the more you've gotten involved?
2. What kinds of activities do you take part in as being a member of the YAC?
3. Do you think that the Ottawa Police Service takes the feedback and work that the YAC does seriously? Relatedly, what effects do you think this program has had within the OPS?
4. Do you think that your participation in the YAC has made a difference in your community or Ottawa in general?
5. Compared to other volunteer opportunities or programs for youth, is this YAC any different? How or how not?
6. If you could change anything about the YAC program, what would it be?
7. Is there anything else you'd like to add that I didn't specifically ask?

F) Conclusion

This concludes the interview. My contact information is listed in this card*. If you have any questions following this interview please give me a call or send me an email. I would like to assure your anonymity with me and this research. I will not tell anyone that you were interviewed and you will not be listed in the research paper. If I want to use a quote from you, I will use a pseudonym and ask you first if it is ok if I use it. Thank you for your time and I will keep you up to date on the project.

*

Renee Komel, MA thesis candidate
Department of Criminology, University of Ottawa

Appendix E: Interview Guide for OPS Staff

Interview Guide for OPS Staff: Masters Thesis Dissertation Project

Title of the study: Ottawa Police Service's Youth Advisory Committee as an Opportunity for Youth Civic Engagement

Renee Kommel (Master of Arts in Criminology candidate) and Michael Kempa, interim Director of the Department of Criminology (thesis supervisor), along with her Department of Criminology in the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Ottawa affiliation and coordinates:

- Introduction

Hello, thank you for joining me today. I appreciate you taking the time to come speak with me today. As a reminder, my name is Renee, I am a Master's student at the University of Ottawa in the Department of Criminology. I have done a school placement at Ottawa Police Service and work at the RCMP in National Youth Services, so I am interested in the topic of youth and police programming. I reached out to OPS's Youth Section and they helped me get ideas for my project, which has lead us here. Please fill out the following form to indicate your name and years of service in the Ottawa Police Service. This will best help me use your information in the study.

Before we start to discuss some of the questions I prepared, I want to remind you that if you do not want to answer a question or participate in the study any further, please tell me immediately and you will be excluded from the study. Even if the consent forms are agreed upon and signed, you can always leave or decline to participate if you want to. I have five specific questions, but I may ask smaller ones to make sure that I fully understand what you mean. Do you have any questions before I start?

- Interview questions

1. In what capacity have you worked with the YAC? For how long?
2. What are some of the functions of the YAC? Which are the most important, in your opinion?
3. Do you think that the YAC has made a difference in the police service or Ottawa in general? Relatedly, is it important for police services to consult youth?
4. Based off of your experience working with the YAC, please describe the composition of the group. Is it largely older or younger youth, university-track or not, etc. Do you think these compositional factors effect what the YAC produces?
5. There are an abundance of volunteer opportunities for youth in Ottawa. Why do you think this program with the Ottawa Police Service interests young people or is different to other volunteering?
6. If there was anything you could change about the program what would it be?
7. Is there anything else you'd like to add that I didn't specifically ask?

- Conclusion

This concludes the interview. My contact information is listed in this card*. If you have any questions following this interview please give me a call or send me an email. I would like to assure your anonymity with me and this research. I will not tell anyone that you were interviewed and you will not be listed in the research paper. If I want to use a quote from you, I will use a pseudonym and ask you first if it is ok if I use it. Thank you for your time and I will keep you up to date on the projec

Appendix F: Consent Form (Youth)**Consent Form: Master Thesis Dissertation Project****Title of the study: Ottawa Police Service's Youth Advisory Committee as an Opportunity for Youth Civic Engagement**

Renee Komel (Master of Arts in Criminology candidate) and Michael Kempa, interim Director of the Department of Criminology (thesis supervisor), along with her Department of Criminology in the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Ottawa affiliation and coordinates:

Email: mkempa@uottawa.ca

Phone: 613-562-5800 ext. 2572

Invitation to Participate: I am invited to participate in the above-mentioned research study conducted by Renee Komel in the context of a Master's thesis, under the supervision of Professor Michael Kempa.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of the study is to learn about the ways that young people aim to make their community better by participating in programs such as Youth Advisory Committees.

Participation: My participation will consist essentially of being interviewed by Renee during which she will ask me questions about how I try to better my community. The interview has been scheduled for (*place, date and time of each session*). I will also be asked to fill out a short questionnaire when I arrive (which will take about 5 minutes) and answer the interview questions that I feel comfortable discussing (which could take about 30 minutes). The interview will be audio-recorded so that the researcher can accurately analyze the content of the interview. In addition, I will be invited to review the transcript for accuracy once the researcher has transcribed them. If I want to review the transcript of the interview, the researcher will email me an encrypted document along with the password. If I have any comments or questions about the transcript, I may inform the researcher.

Risks: My participation in this study will entail that I discuss my involvement with the Ottawa Police Service's Youth Advisory Committee. This may cause me to take time out of my free time to speak with the researcher. I have received assurance from the researcher that every effort will be made to minimize these risks, such as being flexible and understanding with my schedule. Since I am a youth being interviewed about a youth volunteer program, there is also a possible power imbalance between the researcher and the participant. The researcher has assured me that the information I provide will be anonymous (see Anonymity below) and that my participation is completely voluntary (see Voluntary Participation).

Benefits: My participation in this study will contribute to research that reflects what really youth think and feel. My participation in this study will contribute to evidence of how youth programs

such as Youth Advisory Committees can help better the community around us and empower young people.

Confidentiality and anonymity: I have received assurance from the researcher that the information I will share will remain strictly confidential. I understand that the contents will be used only for the thesis project and that my confidentiality will be protected with the use of a pseudonym.

Anonymity will be protected with the use of a pseudonym and the guarantee that the researchers will not disclose who chose to participate in the study. If the participant discloses to friends or Ottawa Police Service staff that they participated in the study, the researcher can no longer guarantee confidentiality and anonymity outside of the research paper itself. When the thesis is published, participants will remain anonymous.

Conservation of data: The data collected, including interview questionnaires, consent forms, assent forms, hand-written notes, interview recordings, typed transcripts, and analysis notes will be kept in a secure manner on an external hard drive with a password on it and in a locked filing cabinet. The data must be kept for at least 5 years after collection, so it will be locked away until the researcher is allowed to destroy it. When that time comes, all electronic documents will be securely deleted and paper copies will be shredded.

Compensation: Compensation may be awarded in the form of volunteer hours for the time I took to be a part of this study. This includes the time it took to arrange a day and place to meet, travel time to and from the interview location, the duration of the interview, and any follow-up questions or review that is requested afterward. If I choose to withdraw from the study after I have been interviewed, I will still receive this compensation for the time I provided.

Voluntary Participation: I am under no obligation to participate and if I choose to participate, I can withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions, without suffering any negative consequences and none of my peers or past/present supervisors will be informed. If I choose to withdraw, all data gathered until the time of withdrawal will be disposed of and not used in the thesis.

Acceptance: I (*print*) _____ agree to participate in the above research study conducted by *Renee Komel* of the Department of Criminology, Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Ottawa who is under the supervision of Dr. Michael Kempa, interim Director of the Department of Criminology.

If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the researcher or her supervisor.

If I have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this study, I may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, Tabaret Hall, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5
Tel.: (613) 562-5387
Email: ethics@uottawa.ca

There are two signed copies of the consent form, one of which is mine to keep.

Participant's signature: _____ Date:

*(If under the age of 18)**

Participant's legal guardian's signature: _____ Date:

Researcher's signature: _____ Date:

**If you are under the age of 18, please also read carefully and sign the assent form. This form is just for you to make sure that you completely understand the purpose of the study.*

Appendix G: Consent form (OPS Staff)
Consent Form: Master Thesis Dissertation Project

Title of the study: **Ottawa Police Service's Youth Advisory Committee as an Opportunity for Youth Civic Engagement**

Renee Komel (Master of Arts in Criminology candidate) and Michael Kempa, interim Director of the Department of Criminology (thesis supervisor), along with her Department of Criminology in the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Ottawa affiliation and coordinates:

Email: mkempa@uottawa.ca

Phone: 613-562-5800 ext. 2572

Invitation to Participate: I am invited to participate in the above-mentioned research study conducted by Renee Komel in the context of a Master's thesis, under the supervision of Professor Michael Kempa.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of the study is to learn about the ways that young people aim to make their community better by participating in programs such as Youth Advisory Committees.

Participation: My participation will consist essentially of being interviewed by Renee during which she will ask me questions about how I try to better my community. The interview has been scheduled for (*place, date and time of each session*). I will also be asked to fill out a short questionnaire when I arrive (which will take about 5 minutes) and answer the interview questions that I feel comfortable discussing (which could take about 30 minutes). The interview will be audio-recorded so that the researcher can accurately analyze the content of the interview. In addition, I will be invited to review the transcript for accuracy once the researcher has transcribed them. If I want to review the transcript of the interview, the researcher will email me an encrypted document along with the password. If I have any comments or questions about the transcript, I may inform the researcher.

Risks: My participation in this study will entail that I discuss my involvement with the Ottawa Police Service's Youth Advisory Committee. This may cause me to take time out of my free time to speak with the researcher. I have received assurance from the researcher that every effort will be made to minimize these risks, such as being flexible and understanding with my schedule. Since some of my colleagues are involved in the recruitment and planning of the

research, so I may feel pressured to participate (see Voluntary Participation). The researcher has assured me that the information I provide will be anonymous (see Anonymity below) and that my participation is completely voluntary (see Voluntary Participation).

Benefits: My participation in this study will contribute to research that reflects what really youth think and feel. My participation in this study will contribute to evidence of how youth programs such as Youth Advisory Committees can help better the community around us and empower young people.

Confidentiality and anonymity: I have received assurance from the researcher that the information I will share will remain strictly confidential. I understand that the contents will be used only for the thesis project and that my confidentiality will be protected with the use of a pseudonym.

Anonymity will be protected with the use of a pseudonym and the guarantee that the researchers will not disclose who chose to participate in the study. If the participant discloses to friends or Ottawa Police Service staff that they participated in the study, the researcher can no longer guarantee confidentiality and anonymity outside of the research paper itself. When the thesis is published, participants will remain anonymous.

Conservation of data: The data collected, including interview questionnaires, consent forms, assent forms, hand-written notes, interview recordings, typed transcripts, and analysis notes will be kept in a secure manner on an external hard drive with a password on it and in a locked filing cabinet. The data must be kept for at least 5 years after collection, so it will be locked away until the researcher is allowed to destroy it. When that time comes, all electronic documents will be securely deleted and paper copies will be shredded.

Compensation: No compensation may be awarded for the time I took to be a part of this study.

Voluntary Participation: I am under no obligation to participate and if I choose to participate, I can withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions, without suffering any negative consequences and none of my peers or past/present supervisors will be informed. If I choose to withdraw, all data gathered until the time of withdrawal will be disposed of and not used in the thesis.

Acceptance: I _____ agree to participate in the above research study conducted by *Renee Komel* of the Department of Criminology, Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Ottawa who is under the supervision of Dr. Michael Kempa, interim Director of the Department of Criminology.

If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the researcher or her supervisor.

If I have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this study, I may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, Tabaret Hall, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5
Tel.: (613) 562-5387
Email: ethics@uottawa.ca

There are two signed copies of the consent form, one of which is mine to keep.

Participant's signature: (*Signature*)_____Date: (*Date*) _____

Researcher's signature: (*Signature*)_____Date: (*Date*) _____

Appendix H: Assent form (Youth Under 18 Years of Age)

Department of Criminology, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ottawa

Study title: Ottawa Police Service's Youth Advisory Committee as an Opportunity for Youth Civic Engagement

Person leading this study: Renee Komel, Master of Arts in Criminology Thesis Candidate

If you want to, you can part of this research study. People do research to try to find answers to questions about the world around them. The following is some information about the study.

Why are we doing this research study?

The reason we are doing this research is to learn the ways that young people, such as yourself, participate in programs that try to make your community better. This project is a part of my Master of Arts in Criminology degree.

What is a Master's degree?

A Master's degree is a graduate school program from a university. My specific program requires me to write a thesis, which is a research project where I learn about a specific topic, interview people about it, and write a 120 page report about what I learned. I also have to take some classes about how to do research.

Why are you being asked to be in this research study?

You are invited to participate in this study because you have participated in the Ottawa Police Service's Youth Advisory Committee. Tom and Jessica in the Ottawa Police Service's Youth Section know about this study and sent this opportunity to you in case you were interested. Don't worry, your decision to participate or not will not be known to them or anyone other than me, my supervisor, and your parents.

What will happen during this study?

This study will take place at the University of Ottawa's Faculty of Social Science Building and will last about 30-40 minutes.

During this study you will be asked if I can interview you. I will ask questions about your perspective as a member of the Ottawa Police Service YAC. Questions will be about your experience in the program, what it meant to advocate for your community, and what more can be done to make sure that youth are heard. The steps will be:

- Arrange for an interview with me;
 - Travel to the location that we agree on;
 - Fill out a short questionnaire so that I can simply know your age and level of school (this will help me best incorporate your perspective into my study);
 - Answer the questions that you feel comfortable talking about;
 - If I have any follow up questions about your answer or to clarify any information, can I contact you up to 6 months later? **Check the line that matches your choice:**
- H) _____ It is OK to follow up with me up to 6 months after I am interviewed**
_____ It is not OK to follow up with me up to 6 months after I am interviewed
- G) Please note that I will want to audio record our interview. Here are some things to know:
- o I will use the recordings to transcribe and analyze our interview. Transcribing means that I will type out the interview into a Word document in order to read it clearly and research it. Analyzing the interview is what allows me to find patterns and write about what I've learnt.
 - o I will tell you when the recorder is on and off
 - o None of your personal or identifying information will be recorded
- A) **Check the line that best matches your choice:**
 _____ It is OK to make a recording of me during the study
 _____ It is not OK to make a recording of me during the study

What are the good things that might happen in this study?

People may have good things happen to them because they are in research studies. These good things are called "benefits."

The benefits of this study to you might be:

- The feeling that you were able to speak for youth in research on youth: similar to what you did while involved with the YAC
- Reflecting on your time in the YAC and your opinion about youth engagement might feel nice

What are the problems that might happen in this study?

Some problems that might happen during this study are:

- I may have to make time to meet with the researcher, which can conflict with my free time
- It may be intimidating to meet with someone you don't know to talk about my life

Not all of these problems will happen to you. Some problems might happen that the researchers don't know about. It is important to let the researchers and your parents know if there is anything that you don't like about the research study right away. Sometimes things that bother one person don't bother another person at all, so you need to let us know when something is bothering you. If you have any questions or are unsure about something, just ask.

Who will be told the things we learn about you in this study?

Your name will not be in any report of the results of this study. If I want to use a quote that you provided in the thesis, you will be notified and I'll give you a chance to take a look at it before I use it. I would not want to use any quotes or information you provide that would mis-represent what you meant. My supervisor, Dr. Michael Kempa, may also see the transcript of the interview to help me with writing my thesis. He is very professional and can be trusted with your information.

Will you get any money or gifts for being in this research study?

You will not receive any money or gifts for being in this research study.

However, if you would like, I will be happy to provide community service hours for school or a scholarship for the time you took to help me with my study.

Who should you ask if you have any questions?

If you have questions you should ask us. If you or your parents have other questions, worries, or complaints you should call the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, Tabaret Hall, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5

Tel.: (613) 562-5387

Email: ethics@uottawa.ca

What if you or your parents don't want you to be in this study?

Your parent needs to give us permission for you to be in this study. You do not have to be in this study if you don't want to, even if your parent has already given us permission.

What if you change your mind?

You may stop being in the study at any time. If you want to stop, just tell us so and we will stop right away. If you decide to stop, no one will be angry or upset with you. You can ask questions at any time. Even if you come to the interview and you do not want to answer some of the questions, you do not have to. If for any reason you would like to be excluded from the study, even after your interview, I will make sure that the information you gave me will not be used.

If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact the researcher or her supervisor.

Contact Information:

Renee Komel

Michael Kempa, PHD

613-562-5800 ext 2572

mkempa@uottawa.ca

Title of Study: Ottawa Police Service's Youth Advisory Committee as an Opportunity for

Youth Civic Engagement

Principal Investigator: Renee Komel

If you sign your name on this page, it means that you agree to take part in this research study. You may change your mind any time for any reason.

Sign your name here if you want to be in the study

Date

Print your name here if you want to be in the study

I have explained this study to and answered questions of the child whose name is at the top of this form. I informed the child that he or she could stop being in the study and can ask questions at any time. From my observations, the child seemed to agree to take part in the study.

Signature of Research Team Member Obtaining Assent

Date

Printed Name of Research Team Member Obtaining Assent

Appendix I: Interview Questionnaire (Youth)

Interview Questionnaire: Master's Thesis Dissertation Project

Title of the study: Ottawa Police Service's Youth Advisory Committee as an Opportunity for Youth Civic Engagement

Renee Komel (Master of Arts in Criminology candidate) and Michael Kempa, interim Director of the Department of Criminology (thesis supervisor), along with her Department of Criminology in the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Ottawa affiliation and coordinates:

Email: mkempa@uottawa.ca

Phone: 613-562-5800 ext. 2572

For the Researcher

Today's Date: _____

Participant ID: _____

Time of Interview: Start: _____

Finish: _____

Participant name (Print): _____

Age: _____

Participant Level of School: _____

Email address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Are you currently participating in the YAC?(circle) YES / NO

Do you want to review the typed-transcript from this interview?(circle) YES / NO

Appendix J: Interview Questionnaire (OPS Staff)

Interview Questionnaire OPS Staff: Master's Thesis Dissertation Project

Title of the study: Ottawa Police Service's Youth Advisory Committee as an Opportunity for Youth Civic Engagement

Renee Komel (Master of Arts in Criminology candidate) and Michael Kempa, interim Director of the Department of Criminology (thesis supervisor), along with her Department of Criminology in the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Ottawa affiliation and coordinates:

Email: mkempa@uottawa.ca

Phone: 613-562-5800 ext. 2572

For the Researcher

Today's Date: _____

Participant ID: _____

Time of Interview: Start: _____

Finish: _____

Participant name (Print): _____

Years of Service: _____

Participant Rank Classification/Section: _____

Email address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Are you currently participating in the YAC?(circle) YES / NO

Do you want to review the typed-transcript from this interview?(circle) YES / NO

Appendix K: Ethics Approval (University of Ottawa)

File Number: 08-17-13

Date (mm/dd/yyyy): 11/10/2017



Université d'Ottawa
Bureau d'éthique et d'intégrité de la recherche

University of Ottawa
Office of Research Ethics and Integrity

Ethics Approval Notice
Social Science and Humanities REB

Principal Investigator / Supervisor / Co-investigator(s) / Student(s)

<u>First Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>	<u>Role</u>
Michael	Kempa	Social Sciences / Criminology	Supervisor
Renee	Komel	Social Sciences / Criminology	Student Researcher

File Number: 08-17-13

Type of Project: Master's Thesis

Title: Ottawa Police Service's Youth Advisory Committee as an Opportunity for Youth Civic Engagement

<u>Approval Date (mm/dd/yyyy)</u>	<u>Expiry Date (mm/dd/yyyy)</u>	<u>Approval Type</u>
11/10/2017	11/09/2018	Approval

Special Conditions / Comments:

N/A

File Number: 08-17-13

Date (mm/dd/yyyy): 11/10/2017



Université d'Ottawa **University of Ottawa**
Bureau d'éthique et d'intégrité de la recherche Office of Research Ethics and Integrity

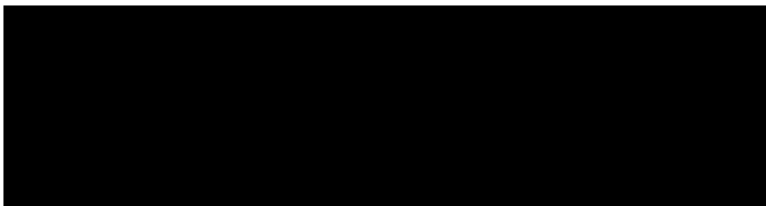
This is to confirm that the University of Ottawa Research Ethics Board identified above, which operates in accordance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement (2010) and other applicable laws and regulations in Ontario, has examined and approved the ethics application for the above named research project. Ethics approval is valid for the period indicated above and subject to the conditions listed in the section entitled "Special Conditions / Comments".

During the course of the project, the protocol may not be modified without prior written approval from the REB except when necessary to remove participants from immediate endangerment or when the modification(s) pertain to only administrative or logistical components of the project (e.g., change of telephone number). Investigators must also promptly alert the REB of any changes which increase the risk to participant(s), any changes which considerably affect the conduct of the project, all unanticipated and harmful events that occur, and new information that may negatively affect the conduct of the project and safety of the participant(s). Modifications to the project, including consent and recruitment documentation, should be submitted to the Ethics Office for approval using the "Modification to research project" form available at: <http://research.uottawa.ca/ethics/submissions-and-reviews>.

Please submit an annual report to the Ethics Office four weeks before the above-referenced expiry date to request a renewal of this ethics approval. To close the file, a final report must be submitted. These documents can be found at: <http://research.uottawa.ca/ethics/submissions-and-reviews>.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Office at extension 5387 or by e-mail at: ethics@uOttawa.ca.

Signature:



Appendix L: Ethics Approval (Ottawa Police Service)



OTTAWA POLICE SERVICE
SERVICE DE POLICE D'OTTAWA

*The Trusted Leader in Policing
Le chef de file de confiance dans la police*

P.O. Box 9634, Station T
Ottawa, Ontario K1G 6H5
Tel.: 613-236-1222
Fax: 613-236-9360

C.P. 9634, Succursale T
Ottawa (Ontario) K1G 6H5
Tél.: 613-236-1222
Télééc.: 613-236-9360

ottawapolice.ca
@OttawaPolice

Ottawa Police Service Letter of Permission: Renee Komel, MA thesis Research

October 13th, 2017

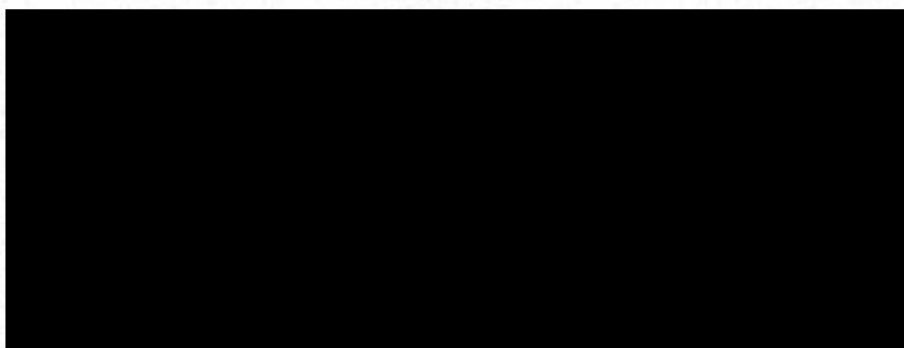
Dear University of Ottawa's Research Ethics Board,

Please accept this letter as proof of the Ottawa Police Service's permission for Renee Komel to conduct research with the Youth Advisory Committee as part of her Master's thesis project in the University of Ottawa's Department of Criminology under the supervision of Dr. Michael Kempa.

A research proposal was reviewed through Ottawa Police Service chain-of-command and by individuals part of the Research Board through August to October of 2017. All proposed aspects of the research, including the methods of surveys and interviews and sample of youth and Ottawa Police Service members, are hereby approved. Any concerns have been addressed by Renee.

Jessica Ripley will continue to be Renee's central point of contact with Ottawa Police Service for this research.

This permission is granted by the following Ottawa Police Service personnel:



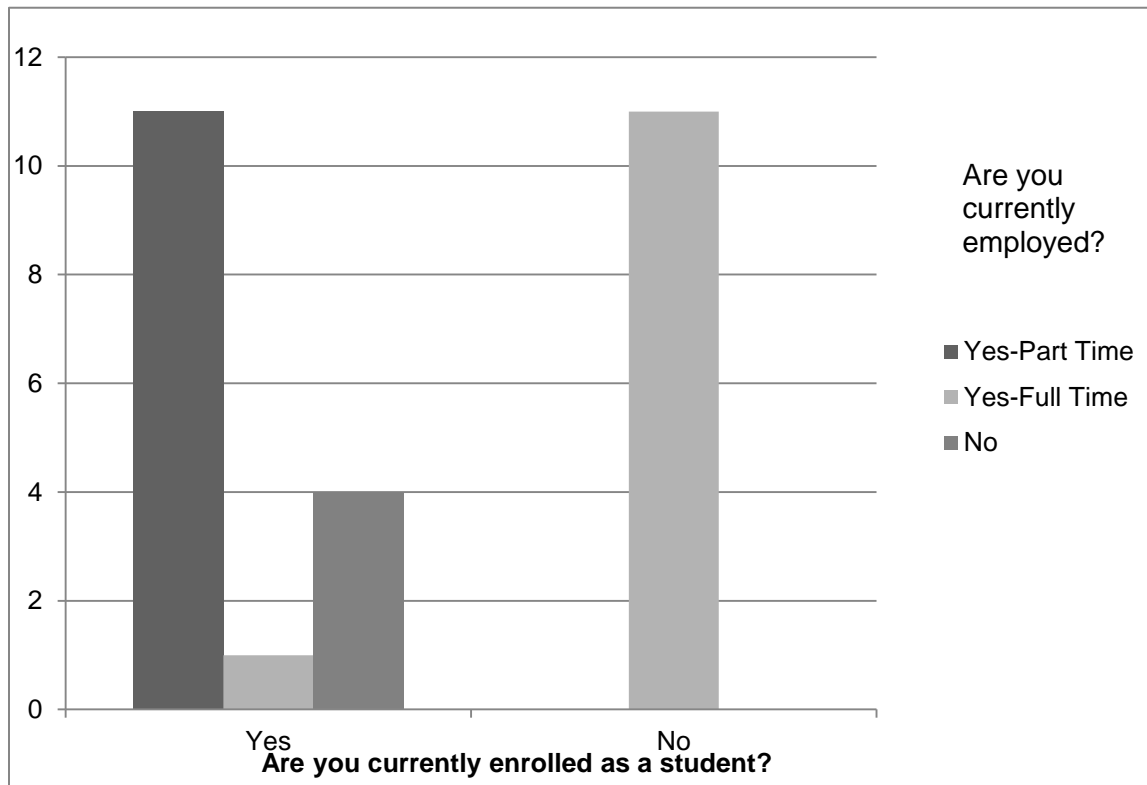
Ottawa

Appendix M: Describe Friend Group Frequencies

How would you describe your friend group?

Variable	Frequency	Percent of Total	Cumulative Percent
Few close friends (1-3) and a few acquaintances (1-3)	3	11.1	11.1
Few close friends (1-3) and some acquaintances (4-9)	4	14.8	25.9
Few close friends (1-3) and many acquaintances (10+)	4	14.8	40.7
Some close friends (4-9) and some acquaintances (4-9)	3	11.1	51.9
Some close friends (4-5) and many acquaintances (10+)	8	29.6	81.5
Many close friends (10+) and some acquaintances (4-9)	1	3.7	85.2
Many close friends (10+) and many acquaintances (10+)	4	14.8	100.0
Total	27	100.0	

Appendix N: Graph: Work and School



Appendix O: Youth Perception of Police

Survey Question: In general, I trust the police.

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	1	3.7	3.7
Disagree	1	3.7	7.4
Neutral	1	3.7	11.1
Agree	15	55.6	88.7
Strongly Agree	9	33.3	100.0
Total	27	100.0	

Survey Question: In general, I like the police.

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	1	3.7	3.7
Disagree	0	0	3.7
Neutral	3	11.1	14.8
Agree	12	44.4	59.3
Strongly Agree	11	40.7	100.0
Total	27	100.0	

Survey Question: In general, I am satisfied with police in my neighborhood.

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0
Disagree	1	3.7	3.7
Neutral	5	18.5	22.2
Agree	13	48.1	70.4
Strongly Agree	8	29.6	100.0
Total	27	100.0	

Survey Question: In general, police officers do a good job.

	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	1	3.7	3.7
Disagree	0	0	3.7
Neutral	2	7.4	11.1
Agree	18	66.7	77.8
Strongly Agree	6	22.2	100.0
Total	27	100.0	

Appendix P: Paired Sample T-Test

Paired Sample T-Test: Paired Differences Results

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval Lower	95% Confidence Interval Upper	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)
Pair 1: To what degree did you initially get involved in the YAC to learn more about policing as a career? – To what degree do you continue to be involved in the YAC to learn more about policing as a career?	.50000	1.33631	.28490	-.09248	1.09248	1.755	21	.094
Pair 2: To what degree did you initially get involved in the YAC to learn more about policing in general? – To what degree do you continue to be involved in the YAC to learn more about policing in general?	.59091	1.14056	.24317	.08522	2.430	2.430	21	0.24
Pair 3: To what degree did you initially get involved in the YAC to have a say in issues that matter to you? – To what degree	-.04545	.48573	.10356	-.26081	.16990	-.439	21	.665

do you continue to be involved in the YAC to have a say in issues that matter to you?								
Pair 4: To what degree did you initially get involved in the YAC to voice concerns of your specific community? – To what degree do you continue to be in the YAC to voice concerns of your specific community?	.00000	.75593	.161 16	-.33516	.33516	.000	21	1.00 0
Pair 5: To what degree did you initially get involved in the YAC to build your resume or get volunteer experience? – To what degree do you continue to be involved in the YAC to build your resume or get volunteer experience?	.45455	.73855	.157 46	.12709	.78200	2.887	21	.009
Pair 6: To what degree did you initially get involved in the YAC to build relationships with other youth? – To what degree do you continue to	-.31818	1.04135	.222 02	-.77989	-1.4353	-1.433	21	.167

be involved with the YAC because of the relationships built with other YAC members?								
Pair 7: To what degree did you initially get involved in the YAC to build relationships with Ottawa Police Service staff? – To what degree do you continue to be involved in the YAC to maintain relationships with Ottawa Police Service staff who are involved in the program?	-.31717	1.17053	.249 56	-.83716	.20080	-1.275	21	.216
Pair 8: To what degree did you initially get involved with the YAC to build relationships and network with community organizations? – To what degree do you continue to be involved with the YAC to build relationships and network with community organizations?	.04545	.99892	.212 97	-.39744	.48835	.213	21	.833
