Derailed: Creating a Space and a Voice for Youth At-Risk in Halifax, Canada

Master of Arts Thesis

By

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Acknowledgements:

Acronyms:

CJS – Community Justice Society

HRM – Halifax Regional Municipality

HYAC – Halifax Youth Attendance Centre

iMOVe – In My Own Voice

YAP – Youth Advocate Program

YCJA – Youth Criminal Justice Act

YOR – Youth On the Radar

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 General Introduction

When I graduate this fall, with a MA in cultural anthropology, I do not know what life will have in store for me. I am not guaranteed a job and I am not guaranteed any luxuries in life that come with having a sustainable income. I, like many young people, face a future of uncertainty as the developing or western world is moving deeper into an economic recession. Yet I am one of the lucky ones. I had a family who had the means to take interest in me, I had opportunities growing up, access to after school activities, a stay at home mother, and, access to a higher education. Despite facing uncertainties when I graduate, I know that I have certain skills that make me more likely to be employed, I am a good citizen, without a criminal record, I will have two higher degrees, I have social skills that have been developed over years of various interactions. Many young people today face the same challenges I am about to face once I graduate, but without having had the opportunities I have had. These people spend their youth years not in after school activities or with adults who have a lot of time for them, in a safe, clean environment, but instead often find themselves left to fend for themselves in situations that are less than ideal. This delicate time, when one is trying to discover one´s identity as an individual, as a person, and as a citizen, can be challenging for anyone, but perhaps especially for youth who lack adequate guidance and support. Some youth in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada are among this group.

Halifax is the capital of the province and currently has a population of approximately four hundred thousand people (Statistics Canada 2012b). Just like any other city, Halifax is not free of crime[2] and faces challenges of young people who have either turned to, or who are about to turn to, crime. In response to this, there are various organizations in the city who are working towards addressing these challenges. The initial purpose of my research was to explore the perspectives of youth at-risk who are participants of programs that are trying to improve the lives of the youth. However, my focus changed to exploring how organizations and programs working with youth are shaped, put into action, and what challenges or limitations they have. Furthermore, I looked into how organizations perceive youth at-risk, how they work with them, and what tools of control they utilize.

The youth generation of today are the leaders of tomorrow, and as such any study into the behaviours of youth and those working towards having a positive influence on youth is of great societal importance.

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[2] Data on crime rates and statistics are presented in section *1.3.4 Crime Statistics and Youth.*

Youth who are involved in crime is not a geographically confined topic, but rather it is prevalent all over the world and thus how to control youth at-risk is part of a global discussion between, and among, various academic, political, and social fields. One can find an extensive amount of literature on youth, crime, and the control or governing of youth at-risk, especially within the fields of criminology, social policy, psychology, and public health. However, there is not as much literature on the topic coming from the anthropological field. As such, the topic of youth at-risk, crime, and the dimensions of control, is of academic relevance as research on it can contribute to the debates and discussions on the topic and add to the perceptions of looking at this through the lens of anthropology

I developed a personal interest in the topic after taking classes[3] on youth and crime. I also lived in Halifax for nearly five years, and watched the daily news report on crimes involving young people, and as such became increasingly interested in the factors that play into youth crimes and rehabilitation options. I furthered this interest by interning in the Department of Youth and Children Affairs within the Ugandan government, where I was able to visit the national rehabilitation centre for youth and children, peaking my interest for the topic even more. I became intrigued by how governments, organizations and communities are approaching youth and crime, if, and how, different agents are collaborating in working towards reducing crime rates or reducing the risk factors leading to criminal behaviour, what opportunities exist for youth at-risk, why agencies have chosen certain programs, the content of youth programs, the perceptions of organization's approach, and the organization's own perspectives on youth and crime as a complement or challenge to that of the government. As such, I decided to return to Halifax to conduct my research. I made this decision based on a few different factors. First, because of my knowledge of the city in regards to physical space and setting. Second, because of the contacts and network I already had in place there. Third, because of its size; most research conducted on this topic usually takes place in larger cities such as Vancouver and Toronto. However, I think it is important and interesting to take a look at a smaller city because smaller cities are often associated with having less crime than larger cities, but on the flipside also fewer opportunities for people. Do fewer opportunities in a smaller city then reflect the crime rate? Smaller cities, compared to larger ones, also tend to have a reputation that there is a tighter relationship between its people and a stronger sense of community. However, this may not necessarily be the case. What if there is a high crime rate in a small city? Perhaps this may impact people's relationships and feeling of community belonging. This could signify that a

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[3] These classes were taken at Dalhousie University in Halifax. All of the following classes were offered by the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology; *Sociology of Criminal Justice*, *Exploring Crime and Criminal Behaviour*, *Sociology of Hate Crimes*, *Youth Crime*, *the Sociology of Youth.*

smaller city might deal with crime rates, and offenders, differently. Furthermore, exploring a smaller city can also be used for future comparison studies and research; looking at how different authorities and communities approach youth crime, how these approaches are developed, shaped and implemented, what outcomes and impacts they might have, and what some of the challenges and limitations organizations working with youth at-risk are facing. Lastly, but equally important to why Halifax was chosen for this research was because of the particular situation of crime and youth in Halifax; its demographics and crime statistics, both of which will be explored later in this chapter.

First I will turn to identifying and classifying 'youth at-risk' before moving into presenting and discussing debates on, and perceptions of, youth and crime, which will then be linked to the concept of governmentality. I will then go more into the context by presenting Canada's approach towards youth and crime, the region of Halifax, demographics of the province and city, and crime statistics. The research methods used and an overall outline of the thesis are the final components of this chapter.

1.2 Framing the Research: Youth, Crime, and Governmentality

1.2.1 Classifications of Youth and Youth 'At-Risk'

Many cultures and religions have a rite of passage for their children, a symbolic event to show that they are moving from children to adults. The time before, during and after this event is often very challenging for a person, new identities are discovered, with these new freedoms, challenges and responsibilities. Adolescence, or youth are terms often used to describe this time, and although it varies from person to person, many governments officially identify this period to be within a certain age range. In Canada the government refers to the population within this period as 'youth', and classifies those from the age of fifteen to twenty-four as the youth population (Nova Scotia Youth Secretariat 1993). This classification of youth is in line with the definition that the United Nations uses for youth (United Nations n.d.)[4]. Nevertheless, "the operational definition and nuances of the term 'youth' often vary from country to country, depending on the specific socio-cultural, institutional, economic and political factors" (Ibid). However, in regards to young people and crime the age of criminal responsibility in Canada and whether to be sentenced in youth or adult court, is different than that of the age defined youth. The age of criminal responsibility starts at twelve years old, with any criminal charges of people between the ages of twelve and seventeen processed through the youth court system. This means that starting at

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[4] http://social.un.org/index/Youth/FAQs.aspx

eighteen years old one goes through the adult court system if criminal charges are pressed. The criminal responsibility age indicates that one is still considered a child when under the age of twelve and an adult once one turns eighteen. At the same time, however, with the youth population age range one can go through the adult court system and at the same time still be considered a 'youth'. In addition, organizations working with youth also often have their own perception of youth, and set their own age range for whom to work with. As such, there are numerous classifications surrounding whether one is a child, a youth, or an adult. For the purpose of this thesis, as I am looking at different organizations each working with young people across various ages, I will therefore combine the two age range classifications of youth ('youth population' and 'criminal responsibility') and refer to youth as anyone between the ages of twelve and twenty-four. Furthermore, there are several classifications regarding defining who is 'at-risk' and each organization often establishes their own criteria or definition of how to identify youth who are at-risk. As different organizations are explored in this thesis, I will use a rather broad definition of the term, coined by the United Nations; "young people whose background places them 'at risk' of future offending or victimization due to environmental, social and family conditions that hinder their personal development and successful integration into the economy and society" (United Nations Human Settlement Program 2003)[5]. I will, however, add any youth who has already offended, i.e. already been involved in criminal activities, to this definition as I consider them to still be at-risk. As such, throughout this thesis the term at-risk will refer to youth who already have been in conflict with the law (regardless of being convicted or not) *and* to youth who are on the path towards criminal behaviours.

In general, for anyone, whether at-risk or not, being a youth is a rather difficult transition in one's life as one is developing both physically and mentally and at the same time trying to figure out where one is headed. As such, this period can pose times of challenges and uncertainty. Therefore, it is important that youth have sufficient support systems around them. The Nova Scotia Coalition for Children and Youth[6], for example, consider children and youth as "everyone's responsibility. They are our most precious resource. They both need and deserve the very best that we – as individuals and as a society – can do for them" (Blouin and Currie 1994:preface). Furthermore, today's youth are the ones who will step into the shoes of adults and become the ones who will take over the roles and responsibilities of

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[5] http://ww2.unhabitat.org/programmes/safercities/uyr.asp
[6] This is a coalition consisting of organizations and individuals who advocate for the rights of children and youth. It is an affiliate of the national *Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children.*

adults as they grow older. As such, the Nova Scotia Coalition for Children and Youth also puts emphasis on the importance of investing in young people; "cutting back on children's services is borrowing from the future" (Ibid:3). Also, in 1991 the province of Nova Scotia accepted the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* and the government of Canada has ratified it (Ibid). As such, Nova Scotia's attempts in assisting children and youth "are part of a global evolution of consciousness of the needs of young people, and of the intrinsic connection between healthy young people and healthy communities" (Ibid:6). Some of these attempts being made are through the establishment of organizations working with youth at-risk. This implies that various actors are attempting to bring society to a 'stable' situation to deter a portion of the population from falling towards or being involved in what is considered 'immoral' behaviour or criminal behaviour. As such, there is a form of control happening, but to various degrees. Incarcerating youth, for instance, can be seen as a form of total control as the youth are held in a confined space and watched every hour of every day. Organizations that establish programs for youth, on the other hand, have much less control as the youth is simply a participant of the program, meaning that they are not being watched when they are not physically at the program. Hence, "the situation can be 'governed', but it cannot be completely or coercively controlled" (Garland 1997:187). In other words, control can only be exercised to a certain extent by the organizations; there are limitations of control. How these organizations work with youth at-risk, what their approach is, what perspectives they have, and what challenges they face, is the focus of this thesis.

1.2.2 Debates on and Perceptions of Youth and Crime

In 2002 the World Health Organization's *World Report on Violence and Health* described youth crime as "a global problem" (Neighbours, Reznik, Rivera, and Williams 2007:196). Academic literature and public opinion polls show what the general perceptions of youth and crime is in Canada; one survey concluded that Canadians perceive crime as being on the rise and that youth crime in particular is increasing even more (Vallee 2010). As such, there is a growing global and public concern surrounding youth and crime and thus it continues to be a topic that is researched as well as debated among several scholars from various academic and political fields (Armstrong, 2004; Memmo and Small 2004; Belenko and Murray 2005; Muncie 2006; Ackbar, Girard, Mann, and Senn 2007; Ashcroft 2008; Kemshall 2008; Gray 2009; Vallee 2010).

Some studies of youth and crime are suggesting that some type of criminal behaviour is a general and probable element of 'growing up' for a lot of young people (Fried, Reppucci, and Woolard 1999; Steinberg 2009). This is because youth are commonly considered as careless and unreasonable and as such vulnerable to making irrational decisions (Kemshall 2008). Thus, youth have become problematized and in turn there is an increased focus on controlling and regulating them; "the 'problematizing of youth' has resulted in a blurring of social policy and crime policy in which social problems are reframed as crime problems and crime control strategies are increasingly deployed to manage intractable social ills" (Ibid:22). This puts a lot of emphasis on the individual youth and their struggles of behaving rationally. As such, there is an "increasing tendency to responsibilize" (Muncie 2006:771) youth. This trend of individual responsibility stems from the current dominant neo-liberal political atmosphere. Neo-liberal governance de-emphasizes one's social conditions and state protection, and puts more focus on individual choice and decision-making (Ibid). Furthermore, it puts emphasis on the individual to seek out opportunities and become an 'active citizen' (Kemshall 2008), and if one does not succeed in becoming a positive active citizen – by making wrong choices – one will encounter blame and potentially face punishment (Ibid). However, if there are not enough opportunities, financial or otherwise, to seek out in one's society should one still be held as responsible for not being 'active' in a lawful manner, but rather becoming active in criminal activities as an alternative? In order to be an active citizen, in a positive way, there not only has to be opportunities for it, but these opportunities have to be accessible and affordable. This thesis will argue that in the case of Halifax and its youth population, there is a need for such opportunities. This thesis will also explore the importance of including the voice and interests of youth themselves in efforts made where youth are to take responsibility to become positive active citizens. In Neo-liberal times where putting more responsibility on individuals seems to dominate, it would only make sense that youth at-risk take part in their own governance or in their own "presumed struggle toward citizenship" (Ackbar et. al 2007:43).

To take responsibility or to be an active citizen one also has to participate. Thus, the term 'participation' has become widely used in relation to working with youth. The term, however, is also receiving critique for implying social control (Ashcroft 2008); authorities deciding what, when and how youth at-risk are to participate, i.e. being placed to participate in programs. Thus, through participation, organizations play a role in the social control of youth, or in other words, in the governing of youth. As my findings will demonstrate, it is important for youth to participate, but it is equally important for them to express in *what* and *how* they would like to participate; "participation without…relevance to people's lives is

unlikely to dispel apathy or cynicism" (Ibid:13). Hence, by forcing youth at-risk to participate in certain programs can also have negative effects; thus it is important to let youth express their interests and to assist them in trying to find a passion that they can participate in (as a means of deterring criminal behaviours) rather than choosing for them. If we are putting individual responsibility at the forefront of people we should also let them have a voice in their own participation. Giving youth a say in their own development can assist in empowering them and in turn this empowerment can foster greater positive participation by them in society. They can, through participation that fosters empowerment, become exactly what is argued for in the neo-liberal atmosphere, namely active citizens. Again, however, there has to be actual opportunities for youth *to* participate.

Furthermore, the youth years are a "formative period of development" (Steinberg 2009:480). Steinberg points out that the way one develops during these years relies on one's social context and identifies that "the presence of an authoritative parent or guardian, association with pro-social peers, and participation in educational, extracurricular, or employment activities" (Ibid:480) are central aspects of moving towards adulthood in a positive manner. Youth who are in conflict with the law might be missing these aspects in their life, and youth who become incarcerated will have limited access to these aspects. Furthermore, "broader structural needs arising from poverty and socio-economic disadvantage are seen as less important targets of intervention" (Muncie 2002, 2006; Pitts 2003; Kemshall 2008, cited in Gray 2009:450). By trying to create responsible citizens out of youth at-risk through programs and organizations rather than to acknowledge and act upon broader structural barriers (Gray 2009), governments are only assisting in the persistence of larger social issues which can have a direct impact on how a youth develops and their likelihood of becoming involved in criminal activities. Steinberg's (2009) emphasis on one's social context in relation to a youth's development is interesting because it does not reflect the neo-liberal trend of putting *less* emphasis on one's social condition. Rather, it points out social conditions that are crucial for individuals to develop positively, and therefore how one's social context can reflect in how one develops. As such, youth who are missing positive social aspects, outside of their control, such as sufficient parenting and access to positive activities, should not be completely responsibilized for their actions; it is still important to look beyond one's individual choice and into one's broader social structures in order to understand as well as to try and change someone's behaviour.

The idea of struggle towards citizenship, previously mentioned, can be linked to the youth development framework which is a model "for supporting the healthy development of young people that focuses on

their potential, as well as their problems" (Belenko and Murray 2005:918). I make this link on the basis that youth development models underline giving youth opportunities to gain various abilities, experiences, and knowledge, to interact with compassionate adults, and to have access to safe environments (Ibid), which I argue are all aspects of becoming a citizen and being able to make a positive contribution within society. Youth development models have also gradually become more comprehensive, entailing communities, professionals, and families (Memmo and Small 2004). The ideas of the youth development framework are sometimes reflected in the programming of organizations working with youth at-risk. Therefore, there is a 'circulation of ideas' or a "movement of information" (Tsing 2000:346); the ideas behind a global framework are being used and implemented as designs for approaching youth crime in local situations. Furthermore, the youth development framework is based on the 'risk and protective factors' theories. These theories argue that positive youth development and minimal criminal behaviour relies on successful enforcement of 'protection' in interventions while at the same time reducing the impact of possible 'risks' (Belenko and Murray 2005). Risk factors are characterized as "individual or environmental markers that are related to an increased likelihood that a negative outcome will occur" (Memmo and Small 2004:3), and protective factors are described as "individual or environmental safeguards that enhance a person's ability to resist stressful life events, risks, or hazards and promote adaption and competence" (Ibid:3). Protective factors often focus on the positive engagement and empowerment of youth within society in order to reduce their risk of becoming involved in criminal activities. However, approaches that focus on youth development, youth engagement, and thus have more of a preventative approach, have often not been given as much funding and support from the political spheres (Kemshall 2008). This is also the case of some of the organizations presented in this thesis; several of them incorporate ideas from the youth development framework, but struggle with sustainable funding.

Regardless of how governments, professionals, and individuals perceive youth, once a youth becomes involved in criminal activities a debate of punishment versus reintegration and how to 'best deal with' or approach youth at-risk emerges. When looking at adult justice systems they consider that those found guilty of a crime are liable for the way that they behaved (criminally), and should therefore be held responsible and punished appropriately (Steinberg 2009). However, should youth be held just as responsible when coming in conflict with the law? Steinberg highlights that due to the immaturity of young people, and their lack of "abilities needed to exercise mature judgment…it may not be justified to hold them as accountable as one might hold adults" (Ibid:471). He goes on to explain that if young

people below a particular age cannot regulate their impulses and cannot comprehend the potential lasting repercussions of their behaviour, one can also not hold them completely responsible and accountable for their behaviour in the same way as adults (Ibid). Much research on the effect of punitive methods, such as incarceration, has shown that this type of approach can in fact result in further criminal behaviours by offenders, as well as threaten the development of youth (Fagan 2008, cited in Steinberg 2009). As such, more and more social scientists are coming to the conclusion that utilizing incarceration as the main tool for approaching crime probably does "more harm than good" (Greenwood 2006, cited in Steinberg 2009:478). Furthermore, youth programs within community have proven to have a significant positive effect on reducing crime (Steinberg 2009). Nevertheless, a lot of reactions from justice systems regarding youth and crime have focused on punishment (Fried et al. 1999) rather than on reintegration or rehabilitation; several governments appear to be taking punitive measures – which has come to be known as the 'get tough on crime' tactic – as a way of trying to deter people from becoming involved in criminal activities. Junger-Tas, for instance, states that repressive features are currently leading the climate of youth justice systems within several countries (2006, cited in Muncie 2008).

Reintegration is something that is often very costly, requiring both human and capital resources and a lot of follow up. The public, whose tax money goes into paying for this, may not always agree with letting young offenders go through a youth program instead of prison. Most of the money allocated towards youth crime, therefore, has commonly been used on incarceration (Carmichael 2008). However, "there is no consensus among experts on how to reduce youth crime [but] there is little evidence that punitive sanctions such as incarceration…have been effective at reducing juvenile crime" (Ibid:1). As such, reintegration has become to be considered an alternative for traditional correctional methods, such as prison, as a way to move away from over-incarceration, and as a way to improve the young offender's life. The idea behind reintegration is most commonly related to a person's "transition back to his or her community [and] assisting the person not to re-offend" (Department of Justice Canada 2011a)[7]. As such, reintegration emphasizes the involvement of youth "in community programs that build character, increase self-esteem and develop life skills" (Carmichael 2008:2). In turn, this is aimed at assisting youth to "become productive citizens rather than deviants who must be treated harshly" (Boxer, Guerra. and Hoge 2008:99). Furthermore, reintegration is considered to also promote non-criminal behaviour for offenders and within a community (Shoemaker 2009).

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[7] http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/pi/yj-jj/ycja-lsjpa/back-hist.html

1.2.3 Governmentality and the Governing of Youth

As my research consisted of looking at various organizations working with youth at-risk, some of which are governmental and others which are non-governmental, it is important to look "beyond the state" (Li 2005:384) when exploring these organizations and their activities. Ackbar et al. uses the "governmentality discourses on advanced liberal governance" (2007:38) which emphasizes that various competing actors, interests, and stakeholders exist who form the operations and strategies of government (Ibid). Hence, governmentality can relate to any efforts made of guiding people's behaviour in the direction of specific ends (Dean 1999, cited in McKee 2009). This demonstrates how it is not simply the state who operates, controls and governs, but that other agents are also taking part in governmentality; the "distinctive mode of power focused on populations and their improvements" (Li 2005:388). Boundaries between the state and the community are blurred as "control mechanisms are dispersed from custody into community" (Muncie 2009:238). This means that organizations, whether governmental, non-governmental, or in partnership with the government, are all taking part in the governing of people.

The organizations that I interacted with for my study have specific approaches and programs established in working with youth at-risk. It is important to mention that the participants of these organizations do not live in the organization's quarters, but rather take part in their activities and programs on a regular basis. As such, I am looking at organizations that are not entirely in control of the youth. Nevertheless, these organizations are still exercising governmentality as they are seeking to guide and control, to a certain extent, youth at-risk. Using the notion of governmentality can add to the debates on, and the value of, this theoretical route when looking at organizations, in general, through an anthropological lens. Furthermore, by using the concept of governmentality together with ethnographic data, by "analysing the interplay between discourse and its effects in the 'real', it overcomes a narrow focus on text-as-evidence (i.e. documents)" (Stenson 1998, cited in McKee 2009:479). In turn, this can point out "what is attempted and what is accomplished…and in doing so provides a more detailed picture of how rule operates" (Li 2007, cited in McKee 2009:479). The governmentality literature can also offer "a powerful framework for analysing how crime is problematized and controlled" (Garland 2007:174). As pointed out in the previous section, the current trend of controlling crime is through punitive measures. However, there is also a trend of individual responsibilization and promoting active citizens and

participation. When looking at youth and crime, and taking into consideration that youth need positive guidance in their life, then how will incarcerating youth give them any opportunities for developing into active citizens? Especially as imprisonment can potentially enforce stigmatization and foster isolation from society. In turn, this only poses a challenge for youth participation – which goes hand in hand with becoming an active citizen.

The idea of governmentality was established through the work of Michel Foucault who coined the concept in the 1970s from a series of lectures where he presented on the topic of "the historical shift in ways of thinking about and exercising power in certain societies" (Elden 2007, cited in McKee 2009:466). Since then several scholars have applied the concept in different ways and used it for theoretical frameworks across various fields. For instance, governmentality is used to consider *how* governing works and *how* we think about the essence and modes of government (McKee 2009). I will use this perspective in exploring how various organizations working with youth at-risk operate in their efforts to have a positive impact on youth. In this sense, the youth can be seen as the 'governable subject' who is "discursively constituted and produced through particular strategies, programmes and techniques" (Ibid:468). This will be explored in this thesis by looking at who the participants of the organizations are, what tools the organizations use and how. This also relates to the perspective of governmentality as a 'political project' meaning that one identifies a problem and makes efforts to respond to it (Ibid). In doing so one points out "both a territory (i.e. social space) and means of intervention" (Ibid:468). This aspect of governmentality is relevant for my thesis as various actors (government, scholars, professionals, community members etc.) identify the 'problem' of youth at-risk and in turn the establishment of organizations working with this population can be seen as the 'project'. The organization's programs then become the efforts to respond to the problem and the specific approach they choose to take becomes the means of intervention. The various approaches and routes taken by different actors in regards to people and their improvements have been classified by Foucault as 'the art of governing' (Foucault 2003, cited in McKee 2009). This applies to my study as I looked at six different organizations – each with their own approach or 'art of governing' of how to work with youth at-risk.

Furthermore, the 'art of governing' chosen by organizations might not reflect the preferred approach of government, and as such poses challenges for recognition and funding from government agencies. Ashcroft points out that "maintaining hegemonic discourse is a key function of government" (2008:4) and that "in Foucauldian analyses government is often defined as 'systematic ways of thinking and

acting that aim to shape, regulate or manage the comportment of others'" (Inda 2005, cited in Ashcroft 2008:4). An art-based approach, which is the focus of some of the organizations discussed in this thesis, is often struggling with receiving funding, for instance, which implies that the government might not acknowledge using art as an approach of working with youth at-risk. Rather, a lot of funding seems to be going towards programs that focus more on 'traditional' aspects of working with youth at-risk, such as education and life-skills – the hegemonic discourse. The way government gives out funding can be seen as a mode of governmentality itself as they are "governing at a distance through centres of calculation and action" (Rose 1996, cited in Gray 2009:448). In other words, although the current political landscape is influenced by neo-liberalism, i.e. less state interference, in deciding who to give funding to the government plays a role in how youth at-risk are governed as often it is only the organizations that receive funding that will sustain. As such, the state is in a sense interfering in *how* one should govern certain groups of people. This thesis will, in part, explore the significance of alternative approaches, such as various forms of art, in working with youth at-risk. Again, as will be demonstrated, it is important to let youth have a say in what they are interested in and give them an opportunity to voice their opinion in what skills *they* would like to develop. Thus, governmentality should extend to the individual, especially in times of where a focus on individual responsibility prevails.

Although, as pointed out above by Li (2005), governmentality is about power, McKee highlights how "power is exercised only over free subjects" (2009:471). Also, Foucault pointed out how power is "neither given, nor exchanged, nor recovered, but rather exercised…in action" (1980, cited in Ashcroft 2008:3). In turn, this means that governmentality can also extend to the individual human being as they too can be "active in their own government" (McKee 2009:469). Hence, individuals also hold power and agency over themselves as they have the capacity to respond to and oppose governmental initiatives to direct and control their behaviour (Ibid). This means one cannot necessarily force a youth to take part in a particular program. In relation to power then, both the organizations and their participants can exercise power. Organizations utilize power in the sense that they are trying to guide participant's behaviours, and the youth utilize power in the way that they follow or resist this guidance.

McKee (2009) reminds us that several scholars who have further developed Foucault's theory of governmentality have also deemphasized the role of the state. However, McKee herself highlights "the importance of reinserting the state into an analysis informed by governmentality, for it remains a significant and powerful actor in neo-liberal welfare regimes" (Ibid:481). With that in mind, this thesis

will link governmentality to the state, the organizations, and the youth to demonstrate that it exists within all of these spheres. In sum, as all of the organizations have their own method and approach of working with youth at-risk, I am using the notion of governmentality to explore the ways "in which projects of rule are applied differently in different places" (Ibid:480). I will present and discuss the way organizations regarding youth at-risk are designed, framed and put into practice, what approach they use, the ideals, frustrations and tensions that might come out of the work that the organizations do, and important aspects with working within the field of youth at-risk. The dimensions of the debates and perceptions of youth presented above (responsibilization, participation, active citizen) linked with the theoretical framework of governmentality will be considered in relation to my findings from the field and as such will be the driving force of this thesis. Thus, the thesis is theoretically important because it discusses, problematizes, and applies the concept of governmentality.

1.3 Context: Canada and Halifax

1.3.1 Canada's Approach towards Crime and The Youth Criminal Justice Act

Canada's approach towards crime is shaped, to some extent, by global influences, such as neo-liberalism (Muncie 2005). This impacts how federal, as well as provincial, governments, approach national and local problems in regards to crime as well as influencing their proposed solutions. In several countries, especially wealthier democracies, neo-liberalism has been dominant in guiding debates of law and order (Ibid). Vallee has pointed out that these global influences have resulted in several "'get tough' measures, harsher punishments, and higher incarceration rates" (2010:3). This outlook on crime and corrections has had a direct impact on Canada as they have "an incarceration rate that is among the highest in the world" (Ibid:3). However, despite this fact, their "crime and victimization rates continue to remain high" (Ibid:3). As mentioned, between various researchers, professionals, and policy-makers there is an increase in acknowledging that several of the current 'traditional' (i.e. incarceration) reactions and approaches to crime are not effective.

Essentially, several countries, such as Canada, are realizing that "there needs to be a balanced approach to dealing with young offenders" (Carmichael 2008:2), and are therefore moving towards the use of reintegration. However, statistics in Canada have shown that "77% [of Canadians] believe that the sentencing of young offenders is too lenient" (Ibid:1). Nevertheless, in 2003 Canada put a new legislative framework for youth justice into effect that highlights reintegration, community involvement

(Department of Justice Canada 2011a), and dealing "as much as possible, with youthful offenders outside the formal legal system" (Boxer et al. 2008:3). The new act, named the Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA), points out in its preamble that;

> "society has a responsibility to address the developmental challenges and needs of young persons. Communities and families should work in partnership with others to prevent youth crime by addressing its underlying causes, responding to the needs of young persons and providing guidance and support. The youth justice system should take account of the interests of victims and ensure accountability through meaningful consequences and rehabilitation and reintegration. The youth justice system should reserve its most serious interventions for the most serious crimes and reduce the over-reliance on incarceration" (Department of Justice Canada 2011a)[8].

One of the reasons for this new act was that the old one did not emphasize rehabilitation enough and did not provide effective reintegration of young offenders once released from custody (Ibid). As more literature and research highlighted the importance of reintegration, Canada also felt the importance of taking the path towards reintegration. Taking this path was also influenced by the overwhelming fact that "incarceration is overused - Canada has the highest youth incarceration rate in the Western world, including the United States" (Ibid). Another aspect that is being emphasized more in the new act is the involvement of the community. It highlights that the broader community should have the chance to take part in the development of community-based approaches to youth crime. Statistics in Canada have shown that most cases going through youth court are non-violent, and "more than forty per cent of the cases in youth court fall into four categories of less serious offences" (Ibid). As such, is it really necessary for youth to go through court and potentially end up in prison when they have only committed a minor offence that can be dealt with in another way? A "national survey of youth court judges found that 54% of judges believed that half or more of the cases coming before them could have been dealt with as adequately or more adequately outside of the youth court" (Ibid). Therefore, a focus on community involvement also assists in courts being able to work more on the actual serious violent cases and leaving less serious cases to be addressed outside the court. Before the YCJA, there was room for some alternative approaches to youth crime, but this did not give sufficient direction on how to use other approaches and what alternatives there are. This became one of the most important reasons for implementing the new act (Ibid).

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[8] http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/pi/yj-jj/ycja-lsjpa/back-hist.html

1.3.2 The Region of Halifax

The region of Halifax used to have several separate municipalities, but as of 1996 the provincial government united all the municipalities into one regional government known as the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM). Nevertheless, areas within HRM are commonly still referred to as their specific name rather than simply Halifax. The city has a big harbour with what is commonly referred to as the downtown area of Halifax on one side and the downtown area of the community of Dartmouth on the other side. They are connected by land on the outskirts of downtown, but there are also two bridges in the downtown areas connecting them directly.

As previously mentioned, I used to live in Halifax for almost five years, both as a student and as an employee of the University of Dalhousie. Throughout those years I established a lot of relationships with both locals and with foreigners. Through these social interactions, I started to hear people's perceptions on the various areas within HRM. I discovered that Dartmouth was commonly referred to as the 'Darkside'. I instantly thought the nickname had negative connotations as I associated 'dark' with something undesirable or bad. As time went on I came to realize that my initial thoughts were correct, and this was in fact the reason behind the nickname; Dartmouth has a reputation for being an area where a lot of crime takes place, and that a lot of the crimes in HRM are committed by people who come from Dartmouth. In Dartmouth there are also certain areas that are more known for having a criminal reputation than other areas; most typically, areas where there is public housing have a poorer reputation than the other areas.

Just surrounding the downtown part of Halifax there are two main areas referred to the South End and the North End. The South End consists of two of the city's main universities, as well as several neighbourhoods consisting of expensive and exclusive housing. The North End, on the other hand, consists of several public housing areas and is often referred to as the 'ghetto'. I became aware of this when I first moved to Halifax and several people informed me that I should not walk alone at night in the North End, and that basically it was not 'a good area'. More specifically, there was one area within the North End known as Gottingen Street and Uniacke Square which had quite a bad reputation for high crime rates.

There was one last area within Halifax that, over time, I came to understand also had a reputation for being 'unsafe' and 'violent', namely the community of Spryfield, which is located about a ten minute

drive from downtown Halifax. Nevertheless, this is the area I ended up living in my last year in Halifax while I was working. I came to the understanding that the reputation that it has stems mainly from having a few high-risk criminals and repeat offenders residing in the area. It is also the base for two of the main drug-gang families in Halifax, and as such a lot of the crime happening in Spryfield is directly related to that.

The three areas within Halifax identified above are commonly where most crime either takes place or where many of the offenders come from. As a study from Statistics Canada identified; "the distribution of incidents reveals that police-reported crime is not evenly distributed across the city but rather clustered in certain areas" (Savoie 2008:31). Hence, there are certain 'hot spots' where a lot of crime takes place. For instance, the study identified the downtown area of Halifax near the harbour, as well as the eastern part of Dartmouth as two main 'hot spots' for violent crime. Other studies on crime and neighbourhoods within the Canadian context in general (Fitzgerald 2004; Savoie 2006; Wallace 2006; Kitchen 2006; Andresen 2007, cited in Savoie 2008), have also identified that criminal activities are not dispersed equally in cities, but rather that crime commonly takes place within specific areas or neighbourhoods (Savoie 2008).

1.3.3 Demographics

Halifax's population is quite ethnically diverse. The most recent consensus on minority populations in Halifax was published by Statistics Canada in 2006. The consensus showed that from the total population of about three hundred and seventy thousand, approximately twenty eight thousand people were identified as part of a minority population. Within the various minority groups, black was identified as being the largest visible minority group, consisting of about thirteen thousand people (3.5%) (Statistics Canada 2009)[9]. In addition, the 2001 Statistics Canada Census identified that almost seven per cent of Halifax's population were immigrants (Canadian Council on Social Development n.d.)[10].

The 2006 Census of Population[11] showed that there are approximately two hundred and sixty two thousand children in the province of Nova Scotia who live in a family structure[12]. Out of this it was

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[9] http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/l01/cst01/demo53a-eng.htm
[10] http://www.ccsd.ca/factsheets/demographics/index.htm
[11] Most recent census published on this topic.
[12] Family structure refers to children living with one or both parent(s), including common-law and married couples.

identified that there are about fifty-six thousand children living in a female single-parent household, and eleven thousand children living in a male single-parent household (Statistics Canada 2007)[13]. Overall in Canada, female single-parent households were also identified as having the highest rate of poverty in 2004 (Canadian Council on Social Development n.d.)[14], and about one third of the country's single-parent households are living in insufficient housing (Blouin and Currie 1994). The 2006 Consensus also showed that single-parent families in Halifax, specifically, had increased by about seventeen per cent since the previous consensus in 2001 (Statistics Canada 2007). In addition, in Nova Scotia there are approximately eight per cent of children under the age of eighteen who are classified as living in poverty (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives 2011)[15]. Lastly, the province of Nova Scotia also has lower incomes than the national income average. For example, in 2006 approximately ten per cent of families had a low-income status in the province (Province of Nova Scotia 2012b)[16]. This could be an indicator for the high crime rates in Halifax, as several scholars have argued there is a correlation between one's socio-economic status and criminal behaviour (Muncie 2009).

1.3.4 Crime Statistics and Youth

The crime statistics report from 2011 show that for both adult and youth offending there was a decrease in the crime rate[17] and in the overall crime severity index (CSI)[18] for Halifax from the previous year (Statistics Canada 2012a)[19]. However, Halifax's violent CSI had increased by six per cent in 2011, and in the same year the city experienced a record in homicide numbers; with nineteen people being murdered (Arsenault and Lightstone 2012). This was an increase of eight homicides from 2010 (Taplin 2011). These numbers made Halifax the second city in all of Canada with the highest homicide rate in 2011, which was also the highest rate that the city has had since 1981 (Statistics Canada 2012a)[20]. In addition, Halifax has already had seven homicides just within the first five and a half months of 2012 (Global Maritimes 2012). At this rate, it could suggest that 2012 will set another homicide record for the city.

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[13] http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/l01/cst01/famil50d-eng.htm
[14] http://www.ccsd.ca/factsheets/economic_security/poverty/index.htm
[15] http://www.policyalternatives.ca/newsroom/news-releases/reduction-child-poverty-stalled-nova-scotia
[16] http://www.gov.ns.ca/finance/communitycounts/profiles/community/
[17] Measures the volume of police reported crimes.
[18] Measures the severity of crime.
[19] http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2012001/article/11692-eng.htm
[20] Winnipeg had the highest homicide rate in 2011.
http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2012001/article/11692-eng.htm#a5

Also, compared to the rest of Canada, Halifax and the province of Nova Scotia stand out in regards to crime rates. Nova Scotia was the only province out of the six eastern provinces whose overall CSI in 2010 (Brennan and Dauvergne 2011) and in 2011 was above the national index (Arsenault and Lightstone 2012). In addition, Nova Scotia was rated number three out of all of the provinces[21] in Canada as having the highest youth CSI in 2011 (Statistics Canada 2012a)[22]. Within the last ten years Halifax has also seen an increase in youth crime rates; between 1999 and 2003 there was "a 21% increase in rates of violent crime committed by young men and a 24% increase among young women" (Nova Scotia Department of Justice 2006:5). The numbers above are reflected in the fact that Halifax is the only city in eastern Canada that is in the top ten for crime rates (this includes the larger cities of Toronto and Montreal) (Macqueen 2009).

In addition, "Halifax has the largest number of young adults [per capita] of any metropolitan area in the country. And the history of the world has been, where you have a lot of young adults, you typically have a lot of crime" (Lunau 2008). The city appeals to many youth from both surrounding urban and rural areas because it is the capital of the province and considered to be the "central hub" (Karabanow n.d.:228) of the east coast. The Rural Communities Impacting Policy Project (2003) identified that there is a trend of young people moving from rural Nova Scotia, and many of them end up residing in Halifax. Additionally, most halfway houses of Nova Scotia are located in Halifax; and many people who are released from prisons in the Nova Scotia province end up in Halifax (Lunau 2008). As such, several youth organizations and programs with a focus on social development and the reintegration of young offenders, through educational, professional and creative programs, have been established in Halifax. Carmichael argues that "social development programs that provide youth with positive peer interactions, opportunities to develop problem-solving skills and a supportive adult help reduce the risk factors associated with youth crime (2008:2). Hence, the focus of several organizations working with youth at-risk reflect the concept of reintegration.

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[21] There are ten provinces and three territories in Canada. Only the provinces of Saskatchewan and Manitoba preceded Nova Scotia.
[22] http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2012001/article/11692-eng.htm#a17

1.4 Methodology

1.4.1 Positioning in the Field and Research Methods

As already mentioned I used to live in Halifax and as such already knew the city rather well, both in regards to context and physical space. However, I had not been in Halifax as a researcher before. I entered the field as a twenty-seven year old, foreign woman interested in exploring organizations working with youth at-risk. My intention was not, and still is not, to judge whether these organizations are successful or not, but rather, my interest laid in looking at *how* organizations in a small city approach youth at-risk, what challenges they might be facing, and uncovering some of the perspectives of youth participants of programs offered by organizations. I informed all my respondents that I was coming from Leiden University in the Netherlands and that I was conducting research for the completion of a Master of Arts program in Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology. My status as a student and being relatively close in age to the youth that I interacted with might have influenced how they responded to me and what information they revealed. Perhaps their responses would have been differently if I was an older professional because that is the population group that many youth at-risk are facing daily (e.g. employees from the programs they are in, police and probation officers, social workers, psychologists etc.)

The main research method for this thesis was conducting interviews. Interviews are an important aspect of ethnographic fieldwork because they are a good avenue for getting people's views and perspectives, reasoning and explanations. Also, through interviews one can get access to information which one might not necessarily see or receive through participant observation. This includes background information, information about one's past and one's expectations and desires for the future. Interviews were carried out with employees from six various organizations working with youth at-risk. Two youth who participated in one of the organization's programs were also interviewed, as well as one other youth from a different organization. The interviews were between forty minutes and two hours long and were all being recorded with the permission of the interviewees. All of the interviews, with the exception of one[23], took place within the facilities of the organizations. The interviews were scheduled to a specific time and location and were conducted through a semi-structured and open-ended manner. This meant that beforehand I had identified certain themes and questions for the interviewee; these were to be

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[23] This interview was with two people who run a program for youth at-risk outside of their regular job. Thus, this interview took place at the office of one of them and not at the location of the program for youth at-risk. One of the youth participants of their program was also present at this interview.

used as a guideline throughout the interview. The questions and themes entailed unpacking the organizations approach, what tools and methods they use, the outcome of their programs, how they perceive youth at-risk and how they work with their participants, what they believe is important when working with this population, and what challenges and tensions they experience. Thus, both professional and personal opinions of employees were explored in the interviews. This method of semi-structured interviewing leaves a lot of room for the interviewee to talk freely as they might "not have quick and ready answers" (DiLuzio and Hiller 2004:3). Bringing in themes is also an avenue for the interviewee to potentially make new discoveries (DiLuzio and Hiller 2004), to see how people perceive the themes themselves, and how they add meaning to things that was relevant for the research. Also, "instead of foisting the standardized interview on respondents, the interviewer allows respondents to tell their own story, to offer their own 'narrative'" (Burawoy 1998:13) based on the themes that are being brought up. Furthermore, conducting interviews in this context opens up for receiving information on several elements of the research simultaneously and can provide insight into other aspects that might not have been considered otherwise.

In addition to the interviews, twelve participant observations with one of the organization's program and two participant observations with another organization's program were conducted. For the purpose of the confidentiality of the youth, pseudo names are used when referring to any of the youth that I interviewed and interacted with. Participant observation is also a significant feature of ethnographic fieldwork as it seeks out the research subject's society and "by means of this natural intercourse" (Malinowski 1985:48) one gets to know one's research subjects and their views (Malinowski 1984). It is also beneficial to try and *experience* what one is trying to understand as it can give the researcher an informal context, which one is not able to simply get through literature. Throughout the participant observations, 'informal conversations' (Hannerz 2003) were also utilized which were not scheduled for a certain time and place, but rather conducted as opportunities for conversations emerged. Field notes of these conversations as well as from the participant observations were not written during, but after they occurred. Informal conversations benefit the researcher by being able to have conversations rather than interviews, which leaves more "room for spontaneous flow and unexpected turns…it is a matter of establishing personal credentials" (Ibid:364). Also, having informal conversations with participants can reveal information that they might not think is important enough to mention in an interview. All of the information presented in the chapters is from the interviews and the informal conversations, unless referenced otherwise.

Participants for this research were recruited through contacting various organizations in Halifax by sending them an e-mail requesting to meet with them. This was done prior to going to the field. Nevertheless, some organizations replied to me before I entered the field, some replied when I was already in the field, while some never replied to me at all. In addition, I became aware of other organizations through word of mouth during my fieldwork, I then contacted these to inquire about possibly scheduling an interview. As such, the particular organizations discussed here are represented because they replied to my request and granted me permission to conduct interviews and/or participant observations.

I have also used texts as a method of data collection. Before, during, and after the fieldwork I went through scientific and non-scientific literature that relates to the research topic and questions (Favret-Saada 1980). Texts from sources such as books, journal articles, newspapers, statistics, and the Internet have been used. Texts are an important method for collecting background information about something, and to reinforce and demonstrate the arguments and ideas that are being presented.

When going to the field I had expected to conduct more participant observations and interviews, especially with youth, than I actually ended up doing. There are a few main reasons for why this expectation was not fulfilled. Firstly, as briefly mentioned above, several organizations and professionals that I tried to contact simply did not reply to me[24]. Secondly, some of the organizations were hesitant to let me interview their participants, which I assume had to do with either legal boundaries or rules of the organization. Lastly, during my fieldwork there was an unexpected public transport strike which lasted for six out of my eleven weeks of research. This directly affected the conduct of my research in a number of ways. It posed a challenge for me to get around to the various organizations as I had planned on using public transport. Luckily, I had friends in Halifax who were kind enough to drive me whenever possible. Nevertheless, scheduling and planning interviews relied heavily on when I was able to find a way to get to the respective interview location. Also, the organization in which I carried out most of my participant observations had rather few participants, who also rely on public transportation, coming to the program during the course of the strike, and as such my interactions with youth became limited. In turn, my research has not given me a sufficient picture if what the organizations are actually saying is

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[24] Some organizations replied to my initial e-mail, but not to my follow-up e-mails, while others never replied to my initial e-mail or my follow-up e-mails.

consistent with the opinions of the youth participants themselves. Thus, this thesis will not give as many insights into youth's own perspectives as I would have liked, but rather be based on the views, opinions, and perspectives of the organizations working with youth at-risk. This means that the actual youth who are participants within these organizations are not fully represented. Ethically this means that although the focus is on the organizations, an important aspect of them – the youth participants – are not given an equal voice within the discussions of this thesis.

1.5 Outline of the Thesis

In addition to the introduction and conclusion, this thesis is divided into three main chapters. The introduction has framed the research by presenting some background information on the topic, the concepts that will be used within the discussions of this thesis, and on the specific location of where my research took place. It has also highlighted my personal motivation for the research topic as well as how the research was conducted. The next chapter will introduce and discuss the six organizations that I interacted with during my fieldwork. The chapter is divided into three main parts; the first part will look at how control is utilized through art-based organizations, and thus use the concept of governmentality and discuss how using the tools of art can be seen as a way of disguising the governing of others. The second part will explore organizations that are using other tools of control and discuss how their approach can be seen in relation to governmentality. The last and third part will explore some of frustrations of the organizations and how those frustrations can be seen as challenges and limitations of governmentality. Chapter three will move into presenting and discussing some of the organization's perspectives on youth as well as some perspectives from youth themselves. This chapter is divided into five parts which will look at program exposure, establishing personal relations when working with youth at-risk, some of the program effects, family and peer influence, and lastly how perspectives of the future can influence some youth turning to criminal activities. The fourth and last chapter is divided into three main parts. Each part focuses on an aspect that was pointed out throughout my fieldwork as being important when working with youth at-risk. The first part will discuss the significance of art-based approaches and what the specific activity is intended to accomplish. The second part will look at giving voice to youth in their own governance and thus empowering them. The third part will explore community involvement, and end with a discussion on perceptions of the current social and political atmosphere in Halifax and how that atmosphere might have an impact on youth and crime. The thesis will end with a brief concluding chapter that will highlight my main findings and arguments, as well as point out suggestions for further research.

Chapter 2. The Governance of Youth At-Risk: Common Goals, Different Tools

As mentioned in the previous chapter, there have been several initiatives taken in Halifax towards working with youth at-risk. Governmental as well as non-governmental organizations have been established which offer various services and programs. The overall common goal for these organizations, regardless of what approach they have chosen to take, is to better the lives of young people who are in need of additional support as they go through a rough path in their lives. These attempts to try and improve the lives of youth at-risk can be seen as a way of regulating and governing them. The specific style of the organizations approach in how to govern and control is not chosen at random, but rather more selectively and relates to the way that they view youth at-risk and their needs, and what they believe is attractive to, or important for, youth at-risk. Several have incorporated the use of different art forms, while others are using more of a 'traditional' approach such as educational and professional workshops. Regardless, a mutual focus is giving youth the chance to develop positive life-skills and as such creating opportunities for them to take steps towards a path of becoming active citizens. Below, the six organizations that I interviewed and interacted with will first be introduced, problematized, and discussed in relation to their tools of governmentality and control, and this will be followed by exploring some of the challenges of governmentality. This will illustrate how the organizations can be seen as instruments of governmentality, how different tools of control are used in the governing of youth and how some approaches can be seen as a way of disguising governmentality, but nevertheless, how limitations of governmentality also exists within the organizations and the work that they do. Furthermore, it will demonstrate that the state, through distributing money and responsibility, plays a role in the governing and control of youth, and in turn how the competing for money and responsibility reflects in a lack of collaborations between organizations.

2.1 Control through the Tools of Art

2.1.1 Circus Circle

Circus Circle is a non-profit social program that focuses on teaching life-skills through various forms of circus arts such as unicycling, juggling, and tightrope walking. It is a free, voluntary, public drop-in

program aiming to reach out to 'youth in difficulty'[25]. The program was inspired by Cirque du Soleil's social outreach program, Cirque du Monde[26] which works with youth at-risk between the ages of eight and twenty-five years old. The idea behind Cirque du Monde is to use circus art combined with educational components to assist young people in building self-confidence, discovering their strengths and talents, and to serve as "a springboard toward a new stage in their lives" (Cirque du Soleil n.d.)[27]. These ideas have been translated to Halifax through the establishment of Circus Circle in 2005. Circus Circle's director, Mike Hirscbach, who is also a former Cirque du Soleil performer and a Cirque du Monde trainer, initiated the program. Hence, the specific approach of Circus Circle was not chosen at random, but rather selectively by the director who has had first-hand experience of using circus arts as a way to reach out to youth at-risk and who has seen how circus work is attractive to young people and how it has the potential for having a positive effect on them. This indicates that the philosophy behind Circus Circle derived through the circulation of ideas (Tsing 2000). The ideas from the world-wide Cirque du Monde program are being implemented in a local context through the establishment of the Circus Circle program. Information – the idea, philosophy and approach of Cirque du Monde – has circulated from a broad global organization to a local program, and been slightly re-formatted based on Mike's perspective on what programming Halifax could need in relation to youth.

Circus Circle's age group is from sixteen to thirty-two. Thus, their program is targeting a somewhat older group compared to Cirque du Monde. The reason for this could be because Circus Circle wants to specifically reach out to youth who are currently not attending school. Whether these youth have been kicked out of school, are homeless, or already graduated, Circus Circle aims to offer them a safe and fun environment. Circus Circle also points out that their program can be a 'springboard', specifically as "a springboard for reintegration into family, school and community" (Circus Circle 2009)[28]. This reflects the program's focus on youth who are currently not in school, and that Circus Circle is targeting youth who might have fallen out of being engaged with their family and community.

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[25] The program currently runs for three hours twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays between one and four o'clock in the afternoon in a downtown Halifax location.
[26] Cirque de Monde was started in 1995 and is currently running in eighty different communities across the world. http://www.cirquedusoleil.com/en/about/global-citizenship/social-circus/cirque-du-monde.aspx
[27] Ibid.
[28] http://circuscircle.ca/about/

2.1.2 In My Own Voice

In My Own Voice (iMOVe) is a non-profit program, which focuses on using various forms of popular culture to reach out to, and engage, youth at-risk between the ages of twelve and nineteen. The concept of iMOVe first started in 2007 when founder and program director, Sobaz Benjamin, who has a background in filmmaking, was approached by a cultural esteem committee in regards to making a short video on African Nova Scotians. The reason for this initiative by the committee was that they believed there was a lack of young African Nova Scotians who knew their history, background, and values. The film was to be shown to, among others, young males in detention centres. However, Sobaz did not think that just "one dip"[29] would do it; he felt that by simply making one short film would not completely address or solve some of the issues young people, and specifically young African-Canadians, in Halifax face. This is how the idea of iMOVe was born; using popular culture "to unpack some of the issues and to use stories to problem solve"[30]. iMOVe's focus is giving youth at-risk an opportunity to express themselves through personal storytelling in the form of a popular culture medium. Participants work on various projects in addition to a weekly radio show and a music studio. Although there is a focus on popular culture, the program highlights how it can assist the youth to "pursue whatever goals" (Department of Justice Canada 2011b)[31] they may have, such as finishing an education, through the skills attained by participating in the program. Acquiring leadership, social connection skills, and building self-awareness, are some of the main aims of iMOVe. These aims point out what iMOVe considers are important factors in achieving one's goals, and as such suggest that certain skills are crucial for the pursuing of whatever goals the youth might have.

The program is currently sponsored through the Community Justice Society (CJS) who received funding for a three-year period from the Department of Justice Canada to launch iMOVe in September of 2010. This does not mean that iMOVe is a CJS owned program; they simply manage the funding. Sobaz is the creator and the operator of the program. However, because funding is received through CJS, which uses a restorative justice approach[32], means that iMOVe also uses the restorative justice philosophy in their work. Consequently, the way iMOVe operates and approaches its participants is influenced by a specific philosophy. The restorative justice philosophy focuses on offenders, victims, and the community in restoring the harm that was caused by a criminal act, and thus seeks to move away from simply

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[29] Meeting with Sobaz Benjamin, January 23rd 2012, iMOVe office.
[30] Ibid.
[31] http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/pi/yj-jj/video/trans9.html
[32] Further explanations of the restorative justice approach is discussed in section *2.2.3 Community Justice Society*.

punishing the offender. As such, although iMOVe's focus is on using popular culture, *how* they use it, *how* they are governing their participants, and what the outcomes are that they are seeking reflect a broader, universal philosophy. Thus, popular culture is the tool used to try to incorporate restorative justice among iMOVe's participants.

iMOVe works with a variety of youth at-risk; from highly violent offenders who are currently incarcerated to those that have been released and those who have not yet been through the criminal justice system. Most of the participants come into the program through referrals from and between other organizations and agencies also working with youth at-risk. Who is being referred to iMOVe by others demonstrates not only who the referral source thinks would benefit from participating in iMOVe, but also who they believe needs to be governed in some sense. However, it also implies who they believe needs to be governed in a more indirect way. Participants might not realize that they are not only producing popular culture, but they are also simultaneously learning various skills aimed towards becoming lawful productive citizens. Thus, perhaps participants who are being referred to the program have been chosen because they might not have had successful outcomes with other programs which practice more of a visible type of control. However, Sobaz said that iMOVe has exceeded their estimated participant numbers, something that suggests that their approach has become popular and influential. It also demonstrates a passion and commitment that iMOVe has in trying to improve the lives of youth at-risk. On the other hand, it also implies that it creates a higher workload for iMOVe and in turn perhaps this affects the way the program operates.

The importance of youth engagement, especially for youth at-risk, is also being emphasized by iMOVe; "they are sort of disengaged from a lot of mainstream or conventional avenues of expression so school is problematic. A lot of doors have been either closed or been slammed shut on them" (Department of Justice Canada 2011b)[33]. This implies that youth at-risk are not just facing the challenges of their own situation, but also the challenges of hitting certain walls. These walls might be exclusion from certain avenues, e.g. education, due to their non-acceptable behaviour. By excluding youth who are already facing a difficult time does that not simply reinforce their difficult situation? In turn, exclusion will also only pose for further challenges of governance. For instance, if a youth is kicked out of school because of their behaviour, and thus not attending school anymore, then the youth is simply being controlled less. Therefore, governmentality can become problematic as exclusion might actually work against the

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[33] http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/pi/yj-jj/video/trans9.html

attempts of control and governance. However, exclusion demonstrates the work of the neo-liberal atmosphere and the concept of responsibilization; if one fails to engage positively in society one will also have to face the repercussions of this (Kemshall 2008). In other words, there is an emphasis on putting all responsibility of people's actions on the individual, punishing them if they act unacceptable, and thus ignoring outside influences that might have had an impact on the individual's action.

In order to engage youth, iMOVe has chosen to run the program as a peer mentorship program where mentors are usually people who have previously been involved in criminal activities and who have been through the criminal justice system. Participants get to see and learn how mentors are engaging and participating in society in a positive way and in turn its aim is to assist in positive youth engagement. Thus, the mentors are considered to be role models and are there to offer "community reintegration peer support" (Department of Justice Canada 2012)[34]. However, several of the mentors have faced, and some are still facing, the trials of being accepted by their community once released from incarceration. If some of the mentors are still experiencing challenges of acceptance and are facing stigmatization, then what message does that send to the youth participants? Perhaps some develop feelings of not being able to be accepted by their community again, and thus simply keep interacting with and engaging in criminal circles where they most likely are accepted. This demonstrates some of the challenges involved in attempts to bridge the divide between youth at-risk and their communities. One cannot force community members to act or feel a certain way, however, for youth at-risk to become reintegrated, both the youth themselves and the community has to believe in reintegration. Again, this suggests that exclusion might only foster further criminal behaviours and thus also pose for further challenges of governing.

2.1.3 Youth on the Radar

Youth on the Radar (YOR) is a non-profit organization which is part of, and receives funding from, the Nova Scotia Department of Justice's Lighthouses Program (Province of Nova Scotia 2012a)[35]. As such, YOR is a non-governmental program, partly funded by the government. Through establishing

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[34] http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/pi/yj-jj/fund-fond/sum-som/1011.html
[35] This program is a "community crime prevention and reduction investment intended to support community crime prevention programs". The Department of Justice has partnered with twenty organizations that aim to inhibit youth from getting involved or re-involved in criminal activities through offering educational, recreational, life-skill, cultural and/or after-school programs for youth in Nova Scotia. Each organization receives a yearly grant of twelve thousand dollars from the Department of Justice. http://www.gov.ns.ca/just/prevention/lighthouse_grants.asp

partnerships with community organizations the government acknowledges that they cannot deal with the issues of crime and prevention alone, but rather that collaborative efforts are needed. This demonstrates that the governing of people and control mechanisms are distributed from the government to community organizations (Muncie 2009). As such, governmentality is being exercised both by the government – through funding organizations that aim to improve a certain population (Li 2005) – and by the actual organizations – through their attempts in improving the lives of youth at-risk.

YOR focuses on youth leadership and engagement (ANeonVillage 2011) through using various forms of arts. It is an after school extracurricular program offered to students at J.L. Ilsey High School which is located in Spryfield[36]. The program emphasizes that by establishing safe and enjoyable settings within schools and communities where youth can learn through art, and by communicating and collaborating with other local organizations, provides youth an opportunity for self-expression, having fun and gaining skills. They believe that offering opportunities for youth after school facilitates in directing them away from criminal activities. Through their program they aim on building youths' self-esteem and in turn improving the youths' possibilities for integration into the workforce (Taking It Global n.d.).

2.1.4 Governmentality Disguised?

The emphasis by these art-based organizations on learning various skills and engaging youth through the tools of art demonstrates that an approach is chosen partly on the basis of what the organizations believe is appealing to youth. The way one would try to govern or improve the life of a child or an adult might differ from that of a youth. Thus, governing indicates "systematic ways of thinking and acting" (Inda 2005, cited in Ashcroft 2008:4) and is exercised through different tools and various measures depending on *who* one is trying to govern. In turn, this suggests that governmentality can also be disguised – depending on what tool one chooses to use to achieve certain outcomes.

The approach of the programs intentionally using a specific tool to try and assist its participants in improving or attaining skills outside the avenue of the actual tool used seemed to be a conscious and planned decision in all the three arts-based programs discussed. They all highlight how various forms of

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[36] As mentioned in section *1.3.2 The Region of Halifax* in the previous chapter, Spryfield has a reputation of being a violent, as well as a disadvantaged and marginalized community, and as such, YOR is targeted towards youth at-risk within that community.

art are attractive to youth and how there is a certain 'cool' factor to it. This suggests that the way these organizations are attempting to improve their participant's lives is in some sense camouflaged. The youth might not realize themselves what skills, outside of the tool used, that they are actually acquiring while in the program. In turn, the participants are, to some extent, being governed and controlled through measures which are somewhat disguised. This illustrates how governmentality is being exercised by the organizations, but that the participants might not be fully aware of that they, through their skills acquired in the programs, are actually being controlled and guided in directions which have specific ends; moving away from criminal activities or deterring the onset of criminal behaviours and thus, moving towards becoming positive active citizens. This also indicates that power might be more "tolerable…if it masks a substantial part of itself" (Foucault 1979, cited in Ashcroft 2008:13). In other words, youth at-risk might feel more inclined to engage in programs if the program does not present itself as trying to control or govern them. The fact that they are already at-risk implies that some of these youth most likely already have had several people trying to interfere in their lives and telling them what they should and should not do. Nevertheless, exactly *how* the skills acquired in a program are then utilized by the youth is not fully in the hands of, or in control of, the organizations. The control of the actual result of these activities and skills becomes limited. Will a violent offender use their newly acquired skill of leadership as a way to become a leader within criminal activities? The organizations, then, become problems of governmentality or in other words there is a limitation of governmentality within the organizations as they cannot control what their participants will do outside of the program.

2.2 Control through Multiple Tools

2.2.1 Youth Advocate Program

The Youth Advocate Program (YAP) is a governmental program defined as a "community-based intervention program for youth between the ages of nine and fourteen years old who are at-risk of or who are engaging in gang related activities, anti-social and criminal behaviours" (YAP Power Point Presentation 2012:slide 6). It is a voluntary program that both the parent(s) and youth must agree to participate in. Their goal is to "increase a youth and parents ability to make better choices by building their self-reliance, resiliency, life, coping and pro-social skills and engaging them in constructive behaviours with family, school and community" (Ibid:slide 6). However, YAP also recognizes that someone's choices might actually be limited, due to, for instance, their socio-economic status, and that the negative path that someone is on might have been influenced by circumstances which were not

under their control. Youth at-risk who are involved in criminal behaviour have typically had unfortunate encounters with adults, the education system, social services, and the justice system (Ibid). Nevertheless, their focus on assisting youth and their family to make 'better choices' indicates that the youth and/or their family have made some wrong choices in their lives and in turn, mirrors, to some extent, the "increasing tendency to responsibilize" (Muncie 2006:771) people for their choices. This is not to say that YAP specifically puts responsibility on the youth and their family per se, but rather that their wrong choices, whether influenced by other circumstances or not, are being acknowledged by YAP and as such they aim to assist them in making better choices. Their approach of emphasizing the importance of including the family in working with youth at-risk suggests that their idea of improvement is closely related not only to assisting the youth, but also to assist the family of the youth. Thus, it implies that for youth at-risk to make positive changes in their lives, their family might have to make changes as well. In turn, this could suggest that the family of the youth might have had an impact on the youth turning to criminal behaviours in the first place, and thus the family of the youth needs be governed and improved as well.

YAP's approach of working closely with the youth's family, as well as community, and guiding them to other services that they might need, is referred to as the 'wraparound' model (YAP Power Point Presentation 2012). They point out that "vulnerable youth require a multi-disciplinary service approach to improving their resiliency and for changing behaviours. A single department or service cannot reduce delinquency on its own" (Ibid:slide 10). This demonstrates that YAP focuses on a collaborative effort and that they are involving several actors in their work with, or their governing of, youth at-risk. This is an example of how it is not just the state who takes part in the governing of people, but rather that boundaries between the state and the community have become blurred (Muncie 2009). Here, both YAP and other actors are taking part in governmentality – governing people by focusing on their improvements (Li 2005) – by trying to direct their participants away from criminal behaviours, and thus improving their lives. Also, YAP's focus on involving the family as well as collaborating with various actors implies that in order to control youth one needs to utilize and incorporate others in that control.

YAP was initially started in 2007, when according to Public Safety Canada (2011), Halifax was experiencing a high volume of criminal behaviour among youth. Essentially, the federal government called for the city to put in a funding proposal for a gang problem that was on the rise. The police department developed the proposal, however, once they were informed that they would receive the

funding, they concluded that they were not the ones who should actually run the program. The police department considered other governmental departments such as the Halifax Recreation Services Department within the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM), however, as they "said 'no' they went to the Community Development"[37] Department, which is also within HRM, who took on the task to develop this program. However, not without a challenge, as Sharon Martin, YAP's manager, articulated; "it takes a lot to set something like this up. There was nothing in place, just me and a blackberry and a big room. I didn't even have a desk, I sat in the corner over there by the window in my chair…my phone's ringing…oh my god how do I save this email!"[38] She explained how she basically was given some papers and told to "figure out how this works [and] put it together"[39]. This is interesting for many reasons, as YAP is a community-based intervention program, although operated through a governmental department, it demonstrates the trend of government responsibilizing communities "via publicly funded community-based agencies and services to address and prevent youth crime…" (Ackbar et al. 2007:62). However, as the proposal went through several hands before someone took on the task to implement a program, it suggests that within governmental departments there is not always a clear line of whose responsibility it should be to implement certain programs. Thus, it also indicates that within government itself there are inconsistencies and confusion about who is responsible for what or perhaps also how the different departments view certain issues, i.e. what they consider is important or a good approach. In other words, if a governmental department did not agree with the proposal for this program, then perhaps they simply did not want to implement it. In addition, even when the Community Development Department took on this task, they were simply given the responsibility to develop the program with no clear guidelines or directions. In turn, this demonstrates a side of governmentality in the sense that it reveals "how rule operates" (Li 2007, cited in McKee 2009:479) and how governing works (McKee 2009); within government itself responsibility is being passed around various departments, although not with clear procedures of *whose* responsibility it should be, but rather who is *willing* to take on the responsibility. In turn, this shows one of governments' weaker sides and thus blurs the view of government being the one power above everything. Rather, it demonstrates how power, in practice, can be quite disorganized. Furthermore, this example is interesting because although the police department developed the original proposal for a program, they also decided not to take on the responsibility to actually develop and implement a program. Perhaps this is directly related to what one of YAP's employee revealed; that the police department are brushing certain things under the carpet as they

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[37] Meeting with Sharon Martin, March 13th 2012, YAP office.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid.

"haven't admitted that we have a gang problem"[40]. Not admitting to a problem likely only lets that problem continue. In turn, perhaps it sends out a message to youth who are actually involved in gangs that they have not been 'discovered' by the police department and thus might only re-enforce their criminal behaviours.

2.2.2 Halifax Youth Attendance Centre

The Halifax Youth Attendance Centre (HYAC) is a governmental organization, which is operated and administered by the Correctional Services Division within the Department of Justice, and works with youth at-risk from age twelve to seventeen years old who are under court orders (Province of Nova Scotia 2010). Thus, HYAC is only dealing with youth who are already within the justice system. They also collaborate with several other governmental departments[41], and various community agencies and services (Province of Nova Scotia, Justice Correctional Services n.d.). HYAC is considered a "community based transition facility" (IWK Health Centre 2009)[42] that focuses on the individual needs of the youth and provides assistance to them through multiple services and programs (Province of Nova Scotia 2010) in order for them to "engage and be successful in their communities" (IWK Health Centre 2009)[43].

Any youth who is placed under court order can be referred to HYAC by their probation officer. However, "by the time they get here [HYAC] they would have had multiple serious offences"[44], and essentially HYAC's youth have often been involved in rather violent crimes, such as assault with a weapon or robbery. The probation officer's duty is to assist the youth in following through with their order, but they also work with HYAC and take part, together with HYAC's other collaborating agencies, in the weekly roundtable where they get to discuss, and decide together, what services and programs HYAC's youth need and then refer them to those. Depending on the need of the youth, they could be referred, among others, to educational services, psychologists, anger management programs, substance abuse services, cognitive life and social skills programs, and career development services. Thus, HYAC is focusing on a holistic approach; collaborating with a broad range of service providers in order to be able to offer the youth all the various support that they might need. However, if a youth does not follow

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[40] Meeting with YAP employees, March 13th 2012, YAP office.
[41] The Department of Health and Wellness, the Department of Education, and the Department of Community Services.
[42] http://www.iwk.nshealth.ca/index.cfm?objectID=5E36E9B9-0CFE-742F-8AE25BC11B55229B
[43] Ibid.
[44] Interview with Tracey Devereaux, February 3rd 2012, HYAC facility.

through with their court order, the probation officer has an obligation to report that to the court and the youth will have to face the consequences, which are decided, by the court. HYAC's approach of utilizing several different services in working with their participants, again demonstrates how the government is acknowledging that they cannot deal with the issues of youth crime, and the responses to these issues, alone. HYAC is incorporating various programs and services in their attempts to guide and govern youth, and thus suggests that control needs to be a collaborative effort; several actors need to take part in controlling youth.

2.2.3 Community Justice Society

The Community Justice Society (CJS) is a non-profit organization founded in 1999 and working in partnership with and administrated by the Correctional Services Division within the Department of Justice. It is considered a community-based organization working closely together with other community-based initiatives, as well as with volunteers and the public. Together these partners run programs for youth at-risk between the ages of twelve and seventeen years old with the overall aim to reduce the number of youth going through the criminal justice system. As such, CJS has taken a restorative justice based approach. This approach focuses on repairing the damage caused by the offender by establishing or restoring healthy relations between the offender, the victim(s), and the community (Community Justice Society n.d.). Restorative justice approaches are meant to hold the offender accountable for their crime; this is done through a 'talking circle'[45], which ends with those who took part in it establishing an agreement that identifies and delineates how the offender is going to restore the damage caused by the offence. Using this approach is meant to better the chances for reintegration of the youth as both victim and community go through the healing process of the wrongdoing together.

For youth to take part in the restorative justice process they must have been referred to the program by the police, crown attorneys, judges, correctional services or victims' services staff. In addition, the youth

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[45] The 'talking circle' incorporates the three pillars of restorative justice; the young offender, the victim, and the community. The community in this sense can be anyone from within the area that the crime took place that feels affected by the incident or someone who is a representative within that area. For example, if a crime happened within a school property they would invite the principle of that school to come to the circle, or, if there has been a robbery and someone within the community where the crime took place is now afraid of becoming robbed, they are welcome to join the talking circle. This is a voluntary process, and as such not all three pillars are necessarily always present at the talking circle.

must agree to take responsibility for their crime and voluntarily participate in the program (Community Justice Society n.d.), and if not the youth's file will be sent back to the referral source. Also, youth who do not follow through with the respective agreement established in the talking circle will have their offence "adjudicated through the Nova Scotia judicial process rather than the Restorative Justice program" (Community Justice Society n.d.). This means the youth would be referred back to the justice system, which consequently could result in incarceration or being charged of a criminal offence if no charges had previously been made. However, those youth who do already have charges against them will have the charges withdrawn if they complete their agreement successfully.

2.3 Challenges of Governmentality

2.3.1 Flows of Money and Responsibility

As pointed out in the introduction, several scholars on governmentality have deemphasized the role of the state (McKee 2009). Nevertheless, McKee argues that "the 'art of governing' has increasingly become encapsulated within the state apparatus (Ibid:470). This can be seen by the fact that a lot of funding for youth organizations comes from government, and thus the role of the state is still quite strong, however, in a rather decentralized way. In other words, the government is distributing responsibility to certain agencies and organizations working with youth at-risk, which implies that government is still taking part in the governing of these youth, just from a distance (Gray 2009). In deciding who to give funding to, how much, and for how long becomes the state's 'art of governing'. The way the government make these decisions can relate to several things; what issues government currently think are important, what solutions or approach they believe in, and what priorities currently dominate the political landscape. As such, government "to secure its objectives still remains a pivotal actor in shaping both the conceptualization of the 'problem' and the proposed solution (McKee 2008, cited in McKee 2009:470). In other words, the way government gives out funding can demonstrate what problems they recognize and what solutions they acknowledge. The Nova Scotia Coalition for Children and Youth has pointed out how important it is for organizations and agencies to receive adequate funding and resources in order for them to be sufficiently equipped and effective in the work that they are doing (Blouin and Currie 1994). Nevertheless, the way government money flows is not in control of the organizations and thus some of the organizations presented above are often facing challenges and experiencing frustrations when it comes to sufficient and sustainable funding. Therefore, the government is taking part in governmentality as certain initiatives to govern people might or might not

be up and running based on whether they receive funding to operate. Thus, government's decentralized role still has consequences for the degrees and tools of control within society.

For Circus Circle it has not been easy to receive funding, one of the guest instructors of the program highlighted how extremely difficult it is for a program like Circus Circle to receive support from the government. She highlighted how the current government[46] mostly only recognizes organized sport activities and does not acknowledge a lot of art-based programs, especially focusing on circus skills; "they don't understand circus"[47]. Perhaps the government is not recognizing circus art as a tool of control and therefore do not see how a program focusing on circus art will help to solve a 'problem'. The instructor also said it was difficult to get funding because the program does not have any significant statistics on their success rate; "the government seems to want to see numbers to give out funding…but how do you rate someone's happiness…?"[48] The focus on calculations and statistics when it comes to government funding, and the inevitable competition for resources, might incline organizations to emphasize "the dangers posed by unmonitored youth as well as the failings and inadequacies of young people" (Jeffs and Smith 1998, cited in Ashcroft 2008:5). This implies that it might be 'easier' to get funding once the youth has already 'posed danger' – has already been involved in criminal behaviours – than it is to receive funding for initiatives which are meant to deter 'the dangers'.

Sabine Fels, who initiated YOR, highlighted her frustrations with funding, pointing out how it is not sustainable; "there are too many processes, paper work, reports…which takes up valuable time of the people running the youth programs…I wish they could just give me the funding in one lump, it would be easier for us to plan then. There should be more focus on sustainability"[49]. This demonstrates how the role of the state is strong *and* decentralized; decentralized in the sense that they are giving funding to a program to deal with some of the issues of youth at-risk, but strong in the sense that they have established certain processes, criteria, and evaluations in order for programs to actually receive the funding. Consequently, this also influences the actual degree of control of the organization; by having to spend a lot of time on paperwork for the government, organizations are losing time that they could spend on controlling and engaging with their participants.

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[46] Led by the head of Government, Prime Minister Stephen Harper, Conservative Party.
[47] Meeting with guest instructor for Circus Circle, January 26th 2012, Circus Circle facility.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Meeting with Sabine Fels, March 9th 2012, Heartwood office.

Not having enough funding can also have an impact on the way organizations operate. For instance, CJS does not have any follow-up procedures basically because there are no resources for it. Matthew Thomas, CJS's caseworker coordinator, pointed out that not having enough resources put in place for follow-ups is related to restorative justice not being the mainstream within the justice system and as such it is more difficult to get enough resources. He also said that when restorative justice is "just utilized as an alternative or extension to the traditional justice system, then sometimes it's almost like you're just processing files that turn away from the traditional system rather than it being a legitimate alternative to the way we think about justice"[50]. Firstly, this indicates that perhaps the government is giving out funding to CJS to lessen their own workload, and thus also passing on responsibility, to some extent, to others. Secondly, it demonstrates how funding has an impact on to what degree CJS can exercise control; the fact that they do not have enough resources for follow-up procedures indicates a level of lack of control. In other words, once a participant is no longer with CJS, their file gets closed and CJS will have no control over or knowledge of what the past participant is doing. Understandably, it would therefore be difficult to know what type of effect the program had on the youth in the long run. Matthew also revealed that CJS is usually pushed to capacity in regards to caseload; "which isn't the best approach because not every file is generic…but government they just look at the numbers"[51]. As such, he explained that many of their employees are overworked and underpaid and that "they might feel like they are just producing cases [and] sometimes you forget that philosophy of repairing harm"[52]. Therefore, giving away responsibility should go hand in hand with also giving away enough resources to actually be able to take on that responsibility. For organizations to exercise governmentality, to govern youth, and to guide them towards becoming active citizens, the resources for doing this needs to be in place.

Due to the limitations iMOVe has because of funding, such as not having enough available mentors, also affects the number of participants and the work that they do with them. Nevertheless, their participation numbers have exceeded beyond what they had originally planned for, partly because of the program typically not turning anyone down if they want to participate. Thus, they have been able to accommodate a lot of youth by simply being there and being available. Sobaz gave an example of this from the music studio;

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[50] Interview with Matthew Thomas, March 14th 2012, CJS office.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid.

"twelve to fifteen people come to that program [and] out of them we'll be able to work a little bit more in depth with three or four. Everybody else is just enjoying the time, but I'll know the background of the people who are there and sort of select who needs the support. A lot of the young people have family support, they're on a healthy path and want to be able to be somewhere where they can do…something they find interesting. So for those young people they really don't need somebody to hold their hand and walk through with them, they just need a place where they can just be themselves and be comfortable"[53].

As such, iMOVe might have several youth involved in their activities, but not everyone will receive the same amount of guidance as the organization simply does not have the capacity and resources for it. What youth they work with more closely often relies on who iMOVe identifies as needing it the most, and thus who are considered subjects to control. In this case, Sobaz's approach suggests that those youth who do not have family support are the ones who need the support of iMOVe the most. This implies that a youth's family are considered the ones who are supposed to control and guide their children towards becoming positive active citizens. However, if a youth does not receive any guidance or support from their family there is a greater chance for them to walk an unhealthy path and thus they might need to be controlled and guided by others, i.e. organizations. For several organizations, however, actually being able to support, guide and control youth, or exercise governmentality, can be challenging when the resources for it are not sufficient. The government funding organizations indicate that they are distributing responsibility, and at the same time reducing their own workload. However, if they are giving away responsibility to others to deal with certain problems, should they not also give them enough resources to actually be able to take that responsibility on? Perhaps the trend of responsibilization (whether putting responsibility on organizations or on the individual youth) can only be reasonable if the opportunities and resources for taking responsibility are existent.

Also, in regards to funding, iMOVe would like to see more investment in and establishment of programs that take a pro-active rather than re-active approach; "I think that this approach of waiting for people to get into trouble and then throw money into the problem, I don't know if that's the most effective way to deal with it. Why do young people have to get in trouble before they get the support they need? That would be my criticism in how these funding agencies work"[54]. Matthew from CJS and Sabine from YOR, also think there should be more focus and attention on pro-active rather than re-active approaches. Sabine pointed out that dealing with the aftermath, through incarceration or restorative justice

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[53] Interview with Sobaz Benjamin, March 12th 2012, iMOVe office.
[54] Interview with Sobaz Benjamin, March 12th 2012, iMOVe office.

programs, is much more costly both financially and socially. These statements emphasis on a lack of funding going to pro-active approaches, i.e. establishing enough and accessible activities for youth to engage in, indicates that perhaps the government does not see the need of controlling youth unless they act unlawful and only then do they need someone to take control to guide them back to acting in a lawful manner. This assumption would go hand-in-hand with the current neo-liberal trend of less state interference and more focus on individual responsibility (Muncie 2006). In other words, perhaps this trend is reflected in less funding going to pro-active approaches because regardless of whether youth have opportunities to engage in activities or not, it is their responsibility to not go against the law. Then, by giving more funding to re-active programs indicates that if the youth does not take responsibility *then* they should have the opportunity to engage in programs and activities because *then* they need someone to bring them under control again and guide them away from criminal behaviours. Thus, in my conversations with organizations the lack of pro-active and free programs and activities for youth in Halifax came up.

2.3.1.1 Accessibility and Availability of Programs

Regardless of whether a youth is at-risk or not, establishing enough variety of activities and making them accessible for youth could perhaps assist in the actual governing of them; it gives youth opportunities to engage and participate in positive and safe environments, and in turn might keep them away from criminal engagements. Thus, again, for governmentality, as the "distinctive mode of power focused on populations and their improvements" (Li 2005:388), to be utilized, and for youth to become positive active citizens, the opportunities for this to be realized need to be in place.

Sobaz, as well as Lillian[55], iMOVe's office manager, emphasized that Halifax needs to offer its younger population more free programs. They pointed out that most programs and activities for youth in the city are quite expensive which means that many families simply cannot afford to enrol their kids in them; "for most young people if you have to pay, parents have to pay…a lot of the kids don't have that…"[56]. In turn, some youth never get the opportunity to engage in something that they are interested in. The consequence of this is potentially that youth look for other ways to be entertained and some unfortunately turn towards criminal activities. It is interesting because in my interview with one of

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[55] Last name not given.
[56] Interview with Sobaz Benjamin, March 12th 2012, iMOVe office.

HYAC's employees it was pointed out that the youth within their programs come from wide socio-economic spectrums as well as from various communities and neighbourhoods, but that there is one common factor in every youth participant; "they historically are not engaged in any kind of pro social activity. They are not involved in sports or music or any of those things. The one commonality of all of this variation, this mosaic of young people, is their lack of involvement in some sort of structured activity. It's blatant, that's the one thing you see all the time"[57]. This suggests that focusing on engaging youth in activities and making sure that there is enough variety in activities so each youth can engage in their interests, is an important factor in deterring the onset of some youth turning to criminal activities.

In my conversation with YAP it was mentioned that some families can apply for funding support in order for their children to enrol in programs. However, as this support is based on one's income, the many families who just make enough to not meet the funding criteria, but also just do not make enough to pay for all of their children's activities, are left with having to struggle if they would like their children to engage in after-school activities. In addition, YAP and iMOVe both pointed out that several of the funds are aimed for youth under twelve years old and as such there seems to be a gap in both activities and funds offered to youth between the ages of twelve and eighteen years old. The youth in this age-group are also often still too young to get a job, and hence their opportunities for engagement are limited. This demonstrates that without available and accessible opportunities for youth, whether this be activities, programs, jobs etc., creates challenges for them to actually take on responsibility and become active citizens.

Both HYAC and iMOVe also pointed out that in regards to accessibility, there is an issue of families and youth not actually knowing what is being offered and what services they might be able to use. Many parents do not know what to look for or even where to look for it; there is a lack of exposure. Sobaz explained how there is not a directory for the various programs and services for youth at-risk and that what one can find online about iMOVe is also limited due to funding. Sharon also pointed out challenges with having the public become more aware of services; "if you're a population at-risk or have problems with literacy…you're never going find out what's out there. You don't know how to use the internet [and] you don't know how to find information. So you're more isolated"[58]. This implies that there should be more efforts put in place to let the public know what services are available for them.

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[57] Interview with Tracey Devereaux, February 3rd 2012, HYAC office.
[58] Meeting with Sharon Martin, March 13th 2012, YAP office.

This aspect of youth not knowing what activities are out there for them as well as not being able to pay for the costs was a consistent statement from several of the organizations I interviewed. It is interesting that many people mentioned this because it implies that whatever activities and programs are available might not be advertised well enough or advertised in the right places using the right medium. Unless youth actually seek out opportunities themselves they might never get exposed to activities that could be of interest to, and benefit, them. Furthermore, with the often high costs of programs it is understandable that many youth, especially in the province of Nova Scotia, which has an overall lower income average than the national average (Province of Nova Scotia 2012b), simply cannot afford to engage in activities.

2.3.2 A Lack of Collaborations

Another challenge in relation to the governing of youth was pointed out by Sharon from YAP. She said there are problems of having the programs and organizations that already do exist working together and organizing themselves better. One YAP employee emphasized that the programs which are already running should focus more on coming together and streamlining as they are all working with youth at-risk and towards the same goals. iMOVe also reflected this view; collaborations and networking is important within this type of work. Sharon revealed that;

> "some of this is traditionally in Halifax, professionals don't work together and we meet with some resistance when we invite professionals to come together to share information and coordinate what they do with families. It's getting better, but it's not ingrained right now in professional culture"[59].

This implies that there is a lack of collaborative efforts in Halifax when it comes to working with youth at-risk. In turn, this lack might pose challenges for the actual governing of youth; a youth might be a participant of more than one of the organizations, and if the organizations are not communicating and collaborating they would not know how the other one is working with the youth. By sharing information they might learn more about the individual youth and their needs, and conceivably the more information one has about someone the better equipped they would be in their attempts to govern and guide them. However, if there is a lack of collaborations between organizations it might limit governmentality and thus limit the effect a program will have on the youth. In addition, Sharon also

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[59] Ibid.

pointed out that when professionals do come together to network it often times is "notoriously about everyone trying to prove they're more worthy than the next"[60], which in turn makes people not inclined to go. This implies that professionals have their own views and perceptions of youth and how to work with them. As such, there is a "tendency to define problems in ways that are consistent with one's expertise and professional roles" (Memmo and Small 2004:8). However, this means that other approaches and methods of working with youth at-risk, that are just as or perhaps more effective, might be disregarded (Ibid).

Sharon identified that one of the reasons for this lack of collaboration is that everyone is competing for money and hence not working very well together. She explained that "there's no plan in the city for what we're doing with youth. There are strategies, everybody has a strategy, but there's no kind of mother strategy. Everyone is accountable to their funder and that's it, and not accountable for coordinating or making the system more friendly to families who we're targeting"[61]. As such, this suggests that there might be a loss of focus within some organizations on what they truly are trying to accomplish, namely offering services to youth at-risk, because they are often putting a lot of attention and efforts into applying and competing for funding. If, as Sabine from YOR pointed out, funding would be more sustainable it would give these organizations a better chance to focus on working together and collaborating in the efforts of working with youth at-risk. Thus, this re-enforces how funding, or rather the lack of it, poses challenges for governmentality; without adequate funding the efforts of improving and controlling the lives of youth at-risk becomes limited.

2.3.3 Encountering Restrictions

In the work that organizations do with youth at-risk they might encounter certain restrictions along the way that provide challenging in guiding their participants towards improvement, thus some of these restrictions can be seen as challenges of governmentality. Sabine from YOR pointed out that in the work that they do they try to give as much room as possible for their participants to work on projects that they themselves establish and have an interest for. However, she explained that when youth are completely allowed to do their own projects uncensored they might not understand the administrative barriers that could arise. Since YOR is a program based within a school they have to have the administrative support for projects. She gave an example of an art project that involved sexuality and

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[60] Meeting with Sharon Martin, March 13th 2012, YAP office.
[61] Ibid.

nudity, and the school administration said they were not allowed to publically display the art because it had "the look of nudity[62]". Sabine believes that Canada, in general, is rather conservative and this impacts what is considered acceptable and what is not. Thus, organizations might have to keep within certain boundaries. In turn, it demonstrates how other actors outside of the organization that the youth is a participant of, can play a part in the governing of those participants as well. In other words, organizations and their attempts of governmentality – efforts made of guiding people's behaviour in the direction of specific ends (Dean 1999, cited in McKee 2009) – might be restricted by others who are also utilizing governmentality on the organizations and thus also on the youth themselves.

Another challenge programs that are run within schools might encounter is in regards to restrictions on students who are allowed to participate in the programs. Sabine explained how their approach is offering an extracurricular program to get youth to actually come to school, which is different than typical extracurricular programs; "sport programs for example, require attendance, so you have to be in school in order to participate in sports, and that does not work with the population that we were looking at originally, because they're not in school all the time"[63]. The challenge is also that some youth who are interested in being part of YOR are actually suspended from the school and as such are not able to participate. In my meeting with Ryan Veltmeyer, who works with YOR, he gave an example of the restrictions that youth at-risk might come across who would like to engage in activities;

> "[a local musician] came to do the hip hop program at school. Some of the kids…were into it, related to him and knew him, were suspended from school. So when we were meeting inside the school grounds…one [youth] came to see him…but I didn't realize that he had a place order that he wasn't allowed on the ground. So he came to see him and then got…like a $20 dollar ticket. I don't know what he had done, like smoked pot or got in trouble or got kicked off or…So there's all these barriers around that stuff. It's the same wherever you go, community centres people get barred from there as well. So it's always a little on edge, being dynamic and flexible it's tough, and encouraging that adaptability as much as possible"[64].

This implies that if a youth goes against what is considered acceptable behaviour, i.e. goes against the law, they will also have to face the consequences of their actions, i.e. possibly being 'punished' in some sense. In the above example the youth was punished by being suspended by the school and then again by receiving a ticket for being on school property. Thus, this demonstrates how responsibilization is

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[62] Meeting with Sabine Fels, March 9th 2012, Heartwood office.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Meeting with Ryan Veltmeyer, March 9th 2012, Heartwood office.

executed through punishment. In turn, this punishment is aimed to deter the youth from going against the law again. However, this example also implies how certain forms of punishment or restrictions might actually work against what it is trying to accomplish. In other words, the youth from this example was trying to engage in something that he was interested in, but due to the restrictions he already had, his efforts of engagement meant he became punished again for breaking the law imposed on him. It is understandable that youth who become involved in criminal behaviours should be aware that their actions will have consequences of some shape, type, or form. However, perhaps those shapes, types, and forms should not foster certain restrictions or exclusions. How can one expect youth at-risk to engage, participate, and be active in positive ways when they encounter restrictions such as not being allowed to take part in activities that they have expressed an interest in?

All of the organizations presented and discussed in this chapter have their own tools of control and how to approach youth at-risk. They face challenges and limitations when it comes to their work and in utilizing governmentality. However, they are all working towards the same goals of improving the lives of youth and reducing youth crime. Yet how are their perspectives and approaches aligned with that of some of the youth participants? The next chapter will move into presenting and discussing some perspectives *from* youth as well as perspectives from the organizations working *with* youth.

Chapter 3. Perspectives On and From Youth At-Risk

The previous chapter gave some background information on the organizations, discussed their tools of control, and highlighted some of the organization's challenges and limitations of governmentality. This chapter will shift the focus onto the youth themselves. However, as explained in the methodology section of chapter one, the perspectives of youth are limited in this thesis. Thus, the perspectives of the organizations are still dominating this chapter. Nevertheless, I will identify the youth that I did interact with, discuss their perspectives on the programs and how it affected them, and relate their perspectives with those of the organizations. This will illustrate modes of program exposure and what it implies; that youth are perhaps not exposed well enough to what programs are available for them and the importance of youth being able to engage in programs that suit their interests. It will also illustrate the significance of establishing personal relations when working with youth, how family and peers may have an influence in a youth becoming at-risk, and discuss how there might be a feeling of hopelessness in Halifax.

3.1 Modes of Program Exposure

Daniel[65], a seventeen-year-old male participant of Circus Circle, has been coming to the program for about two years. The first time he came to the program was with a group from the Reigh Allen Centre, where he was a resident at that time. The Reigh Allen Centre is a "short-term stabilization and treatment centre" (Homebridge n.d.)[66] for youth under eighteen years old. After Daniel left the centre he started to attend the program regularly by himself. Another participant of Circus Circle, Lisa, is a twenty-three year old female who has been coming to the program for a year and a half. She shared that she has an addiction problem and thus found out about the program through the Addiction Services in Halifax. Lisa explained that the Addiction Services had a list of low cost activities and Circus Circle was on the list, so she stopped by one day to check it out. Since then she has been coming to the program regularly. The way these two participants first came to Circus Circle was quite different; Daniel's exposure to the program implies a form of governmentality as the "distinctive mode of power" (Li

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[65] Pseudo names are used for all youth participants referred to in this thesis.
[66] The Reigh Allen Centre is located in Dartmouth and was opened in 1999. It can take up to fourteen youth at a time and it is considered "an emergency-crisis-receiving centre with a maximum length of stay of 6 to 8 weeks…The primary goal for the Reigh Allen Centre youth care team is to stabilize the resident and assist with recommendations for treatment and placement options"
http://www.homebridgeyouth.ca/facilities_reighallen.html

2005:388) because he did not choose himself to go to Circus Circle, rather the Reigh Allen Centre decided to take him there. Thus, the centre exercised power and control over Daniel and guided him in a certain direction aiming to improve his life. The effect the program has had on Daniel, as this section will show, has been rather positive and as such the aim of improving his life – through control – can be interpreted as successful. This is an example of "how rule operates" (Li 2007, cited in McKee 2009:479) as it demonstrates "what is attempted and what is accomplished" (Ibid:479). However, Daniel said that he made the choice to return to Circus Circle and become a regular participant of the program. This suggests that "power…circulates" (Kothari 2001, cited in Ashcroft 2008:14) and "not only circulating on a governmental level but on more localised levels" (Ashcroft 2008:15); the Reigh Allen Centre exercised power over Daniel by taking him to Circus Circle, but then the power circulated to Daniel himself as he made the decision to attend the program again.

Lisa, on the other hand, went to the program the first time by herself and completely voluntarily. That said, as she found out about it through a list of activities that the Addiction Services had, to some extent then, she was also pointed in a certain direction. This demonstrates a level of governmentality, but also its limitations; governmentality in the sense that the Addiction Services have their own list of programs for youth, which implies that they are trying to guide people in a certain direction – the direction of the programs they choose to have on the list. The limitation in this case, however, is that they do not have control over which program the youth will choose, or if they will take advantage of any of the programs at all. Although Daniel and Lisa both were, to different extents, guided in a certain direction to improve their lives, the decision to act upon that guidance and start to regularly participate in Circus Circle was in their own hands. In turn, it reflects how organizations are trying to guide youth in certain directions, but also that the responsibility to act upon this guidance, seek out opportunities, and become an active citizen remains with the individual (Kemshall 2008), which is a trend of neo-liberalism. Youth at-risk who choose to participate in a program demonstrates how "responsibility from the state to an active citizenry represent a form of 'regulated freedom' in which the subject's [youth's] capacity for action is used as a political strategy to secure the ends of government" (Rose 1999, cited in McKee 2009:470). Thus, although Daniel and Lisa chose to participate themselves and as such took part in their own governance, they are at the same time fulfilling government goals, or the ends of government, such as dealing "with youthful offenders outside the formal legal system" (Boxer et al. 2008:3), by participating in a program, and moving towards becoming an active citizen. This also demonstrates that although

youth at-risk are often seen as in need of control and governing, they still have some agency by deciding whether to resist or follow other people's attempts of guiding their lives.

3.2 Establishing Personal Relations

Lisa expressed that at first she was not sure if she was going to go to Circus Circle, but that once she got there she thought that "it's not that bad…and then I decided I like it because it was fun and the people were nice…I never felt like an outsider. As soon as I came in I felt welcome"[67]. Daniel also agreed with Lisa's statement and they both pointed out that another reason for them deciding to come back to Circus Circle had a lot to do with Mike, the program director. In my conversations with Mike he explained how Circus Circle's instructors and participants are like a family and as such I became curious if that is how the participants feel as well. Lisa said that she thinks the Circus Circle family is better than her own family and pointed out how several of the instructors often give her a hug when she walks in to the program. Daniel also reinforced this feeling of family; "every time I show up here there's like five people waiting to give me a hug". This feeling of family between participants and instructors of the program was evident during my participant observations, however, to different extents. Although Daniel and Lisa usually were hugged, other participants were not, and although the director is emphasizing a family atmosphere, this does not necessarily mean that every participant will develop a feeling of family. It is important to point out that the ones who did indicate that family feeling were the ones who came more or less regularly to the program. Also, perhaps this emphasis on a family atmosphere is used as a way to control the participants as it might be easier for the instructors to give advice, support, and guidance to youth participants if they feel comfortable and feel like they are part of a 'family'.

Furthermore, I asked Daniel and Lisa what they like about Circus Circle and barely before finishing my question, Daniel exclaims "everything". Lisa agreed and also mentioned that she likes "the people, the involvement, the location [and] the encouragement from other people". I noticed this throughout my participant observations with the program; Mike and the other instructors were giving the youth pats on the back and cheering comments. Instructors and participants were also showing each other circus tricks and assisting each other, giving each other words of advice and applauding each other. Lisa enlightened me as to why the encouragement, as well as Mike and the instructors are important to her; "[they]

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[67] All of the coming statements from Lisa and Daniel in this thesis, unless specified otherwise, are from one interview with them which took place on March 6th 2012 within the Circus Circle facilities. The interview was conducted with both of them at the same time.

make you feel good and [they] are easy to talk to…When I'm having a bad or rough day I can always talk to them. They're not judgmental". Sobaz from iMOVe also pointed out how important it is to be non-judgmental when working with youth at-risk; "because a lot of youth at-risk already feel stigmatized and somewhat marginalized… [they] have to feel I'm not judging them"[68]. The fact that youth at-risk often are judged, stigmatized, and marginalized, imaginably only poses for another challenge for them to become a positive active citizen. Perhaps we cannot expect a youth at-risk to move towards being a positive contributor within society if the society itself does not recognize the youth's positive contributions, but only looks at them with judgmental eyes. At Circus Circle Daniel and Lisa feel comfortable, safe, and most importantly recognized for their positive contributions, rather than their negative ones, e.g. criminal behaviours.

Thomas, a youth participant of YOR, also highlighted the importance of making personal connections; "it's good to see consistency…then you can connect with them on a personal level and it makes you want to come back…you wouldn't want to disappoint them…it's like a friendship, it's a relationship"[69]. Furthermore, he explained how building a personal relationship makes one feel more inclined to attend and engage in the program rather than feeling obligated to go. These examples indicate how personal connections can act as a way of governing; by establishing close relationships with youth at-risk one might have a better chance of trying to guide them in a certain direction and have an impact on their lives; an impact which is meant to steer them away from criminal behaviours and towards becoming responsible active citizens. Thus, organizations working closely with their participants might be utilizing personal connections as a control mechanism. This can be seen as another way of governmentality being disguised; only here control is being disguised through the development of a personal relationship between the organization and the youth participants. In addition, through establishing close connections with youth at-risk the youth might develop a stronger sense of responsibility – responsibility to act in a lawful manner – as one typically does not want to disappoint people who you care about and who care about you. Yet one has to question what this implies for youth who might not necessarily connect with the organization on a personal level. Perhaps it would be more challenging for the organization to try and govern and guide them, and in turn the youth might not follow through with the program.

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[68] Interview with Sobaz Benjamin, March 12th 2012, iMOVe office.
[69] All of the coming statements from Thomas in this thesis, unless specified otherwise, are from a meeting with him and employees from YOR, March 9th 2012, Heartwood office.

These youth participant's emphasis on the importance of building close relationships with organizations mirrors what was a common theme in my conversations with employees from the organizations; establishing personal relationships with youth participants plays a crucial role in having an impact on them and making them feel comfortable so that they can start to, as Sobaz from iMOVe articulated, "move from a negative space into a more positive space"[70]. Furthermore, Mike from Circus Circle pointed out that when working with youth at-risk it is highly important to build up trust, be able to listen, and create mutual respect. In turn, one starts to build that relationship with youth, which can be key in detecting their issues and thus in helping them work through those issues. In the course of my participant observations with Circus Circle I could get a sense of this relationship building myself; participants started to gradually open up more and more to me as I came to the program. I went from being there the first time with none of the participants really acknowledging me, to having them come up to greet me when I walked in the door. I felt that the more I came to the program the more comfortable they became to talk to me. This gradually developed into several participants coming up to me and assisting me in my attempts to learn circus tricks while casually talking and thus allowing me to learn more about their lives.

One specific example of relationship building was with Daniel; due to the bus strike he was currently taking a taxi to get back and forth to Circus Circle. However, one day the taxi phone lines were so busy that he could not get through. As I knew a friend was coming to pick me up by car that day, I offered him a drive home, which he accepted happily. It was in the middle of rush hour so we had quite some time to chat during the drive. He said that when he was younger his parents were not fit to take care of him and as such he was placed in a foster home when he was eight years old. Daniel implied that when he was twelve years old he acted in unlawful manner as he said he did something "very stupid"[71], and thus was taken out of foster care. Since then he has been living in various group homes. He also shared with me that he has a little brother, but that due to the circumstances, they unfortunately never get to see each other. Daniel wishes he could spend more time with his little brother so that they could get to know each other[72]. This incident took place after I had conducted eight participant observations at Circus Circle and the next time I came to the program after this incident, Daniel came up to me right away to greet me[73]. This demonstrates the importance of relationship building when working with youth

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[70] Interview with Sobaz Benjamin, March 12th 2012, iMOVe office.
[71] Informal conversation with Daniel during car drive, March 8th 2012.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Participant observation, March 15th 2012, Circus Circle facility.

at-risk in order to unveil and understand some of their issues. In turn, identifying some of youth's underlying issues can assist in efforts trying to solve those issues and in attempts to guide youth in a direction that does not lead to criminal behaviours.

In order to progress within a youth program, Sobaz also emphasized the importance of this trust building and establishing a relationship with the youth. He explained that although iMOVe has "an agenda in a lot of ways, that can only play out if they [youth] are willing participants in the relationship, and at their pace, not mine"[74]. As such, not all participants follow through successfully with the program because they are not willingly engaging in it, and although Sobaz tries to connect with those participants does not mean that a relationship will be established as both parts have to want the relationship in order for it work. In other words, a relationship is a two-way street. For iMOVe this means that although some of the participants are ordered, either through court or another program, to take part in iMOVe, it does not actually mean that they *have* to participate. If those participants who are ordered to the program do not engage with it, they would be referred back to whoever referred or ordered them to iMOVe in the first place. iMOVe is intentionally set up like this as Sobaz pointed out that forcing someone to participate in a program never works;

> "a lot of the success stories in the program are based on young people who are ready, willing. It's not about changing over night, but I think people who find the program useful are looking to better themselves in some shape or form, and we facilitate that. For those, for whatever reason are not ready to make that shift, naturally fade away of the program. So it's not me saying you can be part of the program or cannot, they come and see what plays out and they decide if they want to stay or not"[75].

This is another example of youth's own agency in other people's attempts to govern them. As youth can either resist or follow those attempts means that the type of effect a program will have on the youth comes in various degrees; degrees that the organizations are not in complete control of.

3.3 Program Effects

During my interview with Daniel and Lisa they explained what effect Circus Circle has had on them. Lisa, for instance, mentioned dedication; she started practicing on the unicycle, which was the first trick she set out to learn when she first came to the program, and would keep on practicing at home as well, as

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[74] Interview with Sobaz Benjamin, March 12th 2012, iMOVe office.
[75] Ibid.

she has her own unicycle. Eventually she accomplished to ride and do tricks on the unicycle and realized that with dedication one can eventually achieve what one sets out to do. This is an example of governmentality being disguised, not through personal relations, but, as discussed in the previous chapter, through the specific tool that a program uses. In this case, the tool being circus art, Lisa learned tricks on the unicycle, but more importantly, and one of Circus Circle's aims, she discovered how to set goals and how to achieve them. In addition, Lisa said that her self-esteem has increased significantly since she started to come to the program. This field note excerpt demonstrates what a strong impact Circus Circle has had on Lisa's life;

"Circus means a lot to me, like before I came I wasn't in a good state of mind. I was into drugs really bad and like before I came here I had nothing going for me, like I wasn't going to school, I didn't have a job and I don't know, I was just in a really low spot, and I couldn't see any future for me and no question if I hadn't found the Circus I probably would have overdosed on drugs and died, and because of the Circus its kept me in check , it gave me something that I'm good at that I like have potential at and like I'm going to Quebec with the Circus like that's sick yeah, like I have something now to live for, that's what it is, like it's the thing that's keeping me alive pretty much, like without the Circus there's no question in my mind that I wouldn't be here. It came into my life at a perfect time".

The above implies how crucial developing self-esteem and finding something one is passionate about can be for youth at-risk, and what a tremendous effect it can have on some youth as Lisa put a lot of emphasis on how she felt like Circus Circle saved her life. This also implies that this specific program was a good fit for her, and in turn, again reflects the importance of having a variation of programs in place for youth. It also reveals how Lisa is moving towards becoming an active citizen by engaging in a pro-social activity. However, an activity which she chose herself and as such demonstrates the significant of giving youth at-risk a say in their own governance or in their own "presumed struggle toward citizenship" (Ackbar et al. 2007:43). Nevertheless, whether or not Lisa is still using drugs was not implied. Thus, although she explained that she is on a healthier path after starting participating at Circus Circle, it does not automatically suggest that she is completely free of using drugs. In turn, this demonstrates how governmentality can become problematic; organizations do not necessarily know what their participants are doing and how they are acting outside of the program, and thus limitations of control and governing arises.

Equally important, as highlighted in the previous chapter, is that programs also need to be affordable or for free, so that all youth, regardless of their background or socio-economic status, actually have the

opportunities to become engaged in programs. Lisa specifically found out about Circus Circle through the low-cost activity list that the Addiction Services presented to her. This suggests that had Circus Circle not been a free program, Lisa might have not become a participant in it, and the outcomes of that, according to her statement above, could have been severely negative. In addition, both Daniel and Lisa highlighted that more free art based programs should be offered in Halifax. This perspective was also reinforced by another participant, Jack, who has been coming to Circus Circle for about two years. He expressed how he would like to participate in other programs as well, but explained to me that the reason he is currently not is because they are too expensive[76]. This finding is also aligned with the opinions of several of the employees that I interacted with from the organizations; several youth simply do not have the opportunity to get engaged in programs and activities because of the high costs. Lisa's example demonstrates that the costs of not having opportunities for youth to engage in activities might be significantly higher (e.g. the cost of a human life, or the cost of crimes) than the costs of offering free programs for youth. She expressed that when she was growing up she could have needed a program like Circus Circle, which implies that had she found free programs to engage in when she was younger she might have not become involved with drugs. YOR's participant, Thomas, also emphasized the importance of receiving some guidance, through a program or activity, if one is "falling off track".

Although there is a lot of emphasis on individual responsibility, if there are not enough choices for youth to take individual responsibility towards becoming active citizens, such as having actual opportunities to become engaged, then perhaps we cannot put that responsibility on youth. If there was more investment from the government in establishing opportunities for youth then there might be a greater chance for positive youth engagement. Lisa also pointed out that there should be more advertisement on what programs are available for youth in general because she has found it rather challenging to try and find out what activities she can engage in. The lack of knowing what activities and programs are available was also pointed out by some of the organizations in the previous chapter. But whose responsibility should it be to make sure youth are being informed about what activities are offered? The organizations and programs themselves, the community, the government? Perhaps the climate of individual responsibility suggests that youth themselves are responsible for seeking out opportunities. However, youth who are at-risk are undoubtedly already facing challenges and thus putting the responsibility on them to search for avenues to try and overcome these challenges, might only foster an additional challenge.

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[76] Informal conversation with Jack during participant observation, February 21st 2012, Circus Circle facility.

Daniel also shared with me the effect that Circus Circle has had on his life; he told me how he used to get into a lot of trouble with the law, but that after he started going to Circus Circle his criminal activities have decreased because the program has kept him busy; "I mean I had so much time on my hands before I started coming here, so every day I was bored out of my mind, like I'd just go steal or cause shit and I don't do that no more...I haven't stolen in like a year". Daniel further explained how before he started coming to Circus Circle he had been convicted of criminal offences numerous times, but that after he started participating in the program it has not been "nearly as many". Mirroring this, is the perspectives of YAP employees who question why the education system is not investing in affordable every day after school care and that the limitations of opportunities reflect in the "idle hands"[77] of several youth. The manager of YAP explained that many "youngsters...are going home after school by themselves and then they are alone for two to four hours with no structure [and] no routine. I think that allows itself to kids getting bored"[78]. YAP as well as iMOVe also pointed out how easy it is for youth to simply go hang on the streets if they have nothing else to occupy themselves with, and that this is the reality for many youth in Halifax. Sobaz highlighted that there needs to be choices for youth to participate "in something that has a transferrable skill, so that they're off the streets, they're engaged and given a voice...something as an alternative to a negative life style"[79].

These examples imply that boredom and hanging on the streets might lead some youth towards bending the law. However, there seems to be limitations in accessible opportunities (programs and activities) for youth in Halifax *before* they actually get to the point of criminal behaviours. This reinforces one of my findings; the importance of having accessible programs and activities in place for youth, focusing on a pro-active and preventative approach, as means for positive social engagements and deterrents for criminal behaviours. In turn, this can assist in youth becoming lawful active citizens. If Daniel would have been engaged in a program before the start of his criminal behaviours, rather than after, then he would not, as he put it, have had "so much time on [his] hands", which was a determining factor in him becoming involved in criminal activities. However, whose responsibility should it be to make sure there are enough accessible programs in place for youth? The YCJA points out that "communities and families should work in partnership with others to prevent youth crime" (Department

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[77] Meeting with YAP employees, March 13th 2012, YAP office.
[78] Meeting with Sharon Martin, March 13th 2012, YAP office.
[79] Interview with Lillian, March 12th 2012, iMOVe office.

of Justice Canada 2011a)[80]. However, if the government is putting more responsibility on communities and individuals to work towards preventing youth crime, then as previously discussed, they should also make sure communities actually have enough resources to fulfil the goals of government.

Circus Circle has also had an effect on Daniel's and Lisa's future plans. Lisa said that although she does not know what the future has in store for her she can now at least imagine a future; "before I came to Circus…I couldn't see a future. It was just black and now there's like a light". She elaborated that she would like to continue being able to do circus work, perform and get more involved in the industry. Daniel also shared with me that he might potentially want to do circus performance as a lifestyle and that he and Lisa sometimes do small street performances together[81]. Although the intention of Circus Circle is not to make professional circus performers out of their participants, this is nevertheless what might happen to some participants who develop a strong passion for circus arts. Regardless, whether participants go to the program because they have a personal passion for circus performing or because they simply think it is fun, they are engaging in a pro-social activity that they themselves have chosen and have an interest for. In turn, they are demonstrating agency and becoming active citizens on their own terms.

As already illustrated, Daniel and Lisa's participation in Circus Circle has had rather positive effects on them. Although this is only the experiences of two participants within one specific program, it is interesting because it is a program in which the youth voluntarily became regular participants of because of their interest in the activity of the program. This is aligned with what Thomas highlighted; that it is important for youth to find something that they can "connect to". Furthermore, the fact that there was a public transport strike during most of my participant observations with Circus Circle made me realize that that most of the youth who participate in this particular program live on the outskirts of the city and rely on public transport to get to the program. This also became clear to me by chatting to the youth who were there and to Mike who told me that many others were not able to make it to the program due to no transportation. It made me think of the participants who were actually there, and in particular, Daniel and Lisa who came to Circus Circle almost every time. Daniel usually took a taxi back and forth, while Lisa was able to sometimes borrow a car and drive there herself. This example illuminates one of my main findings; it is important for youth themselves to engage in a program in

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[80] http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/pi/yj-jj/ycja-lsjpa/back-hist.html
[81] Informal conversation with Daniel during participant observation, February 14th 2012, Circus Circle facility.

which they feel comfortable with and in which they can develop their interests in, and not simply putting youth at-risk in any program to solve their issues. I make this conclusion based on the fact that Daniel and Lisa, who regardless of the public transport strike, made efforts to try and still come to the program as often as possible as they both emphasized how important Circus Circle is for them. This also gave me some new, unexpected insights into my field; how on one hand some youth at-risk rely heavily on public transport, but on the other hand how youth who are involved in a program they are truly passionate about and interested in will try to find another way to get to the program. Again, this reinforces the importance of offering youth at-risk programs in which they are interested in. HYAC also pointed out how some youth were missing their appointments with them due to no transportation. This suggests that transportation can be a key factor in guaranteeing the possibilities for control; if youth have no transportation to make it to the programs then there are even further limitations of control. Perhaps offering programs where youth live would be more beneficial as distance seemed to be an added obstacle for youth to engage in programs. At the same time, if the issue of distance and transportation is minimized it would also ensure the possibilities of control by the organizations better.

Although both Daniel and Lisa expressed the positive influence Circus Circle has had on them, this is only the perspectives of two participants and as such one cannot assume that every youth who participates in the program will be a success story and that participants might not also have frustrations with the program. Daniel and Lisa pointed out some of their frustrations with Circus Circle; Lisa said that she would like to see more instructors[82] come to the program. She explained that there used to be several instructors who came, but that now Mike is often the only one there. This has two implications; firstly, not all participants might get the assistance they want or need in conducting the circus activities. If only one instructor is present and there are a high number of participants that day then they might not all receive equal support. Secondly, Lisa pointed out that if this is the case and she or another regular participant is present, they might be asked to act, to a certain extent, as instructors; "I don't like doing that...sometimes it bugs me because I'm not here to instruct, I want to practice my own stuff". It is understandable that Lisa feels like this because she is a participant herself, and although her circus skills are now advanced due to her continuous participation in the program, does not mean that she necessarily would like to teach other participants circus skills. This is important as it implies a sort of 'governing' the director of the program has over the participants; a level of control is being executed.

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[82] There are twelve Instructors within Circus Circle who work on a voluntary basis and there is no set schedule for them; they decide themselves if they want to come to the program or not.

Effects of programs comes in various degrees, and regardless of whether a youth is voluntary participating or non-voluntarily placed in a program, they exercise agency and power over themselves in regards to whether or not to attend the program. Sobaz gave an example of a youth participant who simply did not engage and participate in the program and as such was referred back to referral source. The young male had a contract through CJS to take part in iMOVe's radio show, but he did not follow through on his contract. Sobaz explained how he has a drug issue, comes from a dysfunctional family and that "his father has removed himself from his life. He is very much in a very difficult place. Having to do something where he has to be self-motivated is very difficult for him"[83]. This demonstrates how regardless of organizations attempts in trying to govern youth – guiding them away from criminal behaviours – if the youth themselves do not engage and accept that guidance then organizations might not be successful in their attempts. Thus, youth themselves, are also, to some extent, taking part in their own governance. Nevertheless, this example also implies that partly due to factors that were not in the youth's control, such as his family situation, impacted his lack of engagement and participation with iMOVe. Consequently, youth's social surroundings, such as family, can have a significant influence on shaping how youth develop into becoming (non-)active citizens.

3.4 Family and Peer Influence

Although Daniel pointed out that after he started participating in Circus Circle he has less free time on his hands, and as a result is less involved in criminal activities, he also shared with me that there was a period when another youth used to come to the program and that during that time he used to get more in trouble with the law. Lisa was also aware of this and elaborated that; "he was a bad influence on you [Daniel]". This implies that when youth at-risk are interacting with each other, although within the safe environment of a program, there is still a chance for them having negative influences on each other. It also demonstrates the strong influence one's peer group can have on somebody. Therefore youth programs are, as Sobaz put it, often "competing with the environment"[84] of the youth that put them at-risk in the first place. This environment can include, for instance, the youth's peer groups, their potential mental health issues and their family. This is also how organizations then become problems of governmentality as it shows how there is a limitation in how much control they actually have over not just the youth that they work with, but also over the youth's environment.

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[83] Interview with Sobaz Benjamin, March 12th 2012, iMOVe office.
[84] Ibid.

This limitation of control reflects in Sobaz's perspective; that although organizations working with youth at-risk try to support their participants as much as they can, some simply do not take advantage of that support. Ryan from YOR also expressed that some youth simply come to their program two or three times without it having any impact on their lives, and elaborated that those youth "basically have too much going on and they don't follow through"[85]. iMOVe gave me an example of one of their participants which demonstrates this limitation of governmentality and control within the organizations;

> "we saw that very clearly with a young participant…we invested so much in went back an committed murder…He's back inside [prison] now…It was heart-breaking for us, and everybody was scratching their head – what went wrong, what could we have done differently…He had support in place from the IWK Health Centre, probation, iMOVe, social worker. He had that team in place to support him, but at the end of the day we could not compete with his mental health issues, family dysfunction…and the peer group that he choose to engage with"[86].

This example implies that improving the environment of youth at-risk might be just as essential as working with the youth. As organizations only spend limited time with their participants, it is the youth's environment that the youth face on a daily basis. If that environment is unhealthy and potentially influencing the youth's participation in criminal activities, then it would only make sense to incorporate the environment in the attempts of guiding youth in a positive direction. Although some organizations do try to do this as much as possible, thus extending governmentality, it can pose for more challenges; perhaps the youth's family are not willing to change, does not want to accept help, or will not admit that they might be part of the problem. As Sobaz explained, many youth who do turn to crime have seen family members gone down the path of a criminal lifestyle; "it is a generational thing…and they have seen paths [of crime] play out again and again historically"[87]. This perception was also mirrored by YAP and HYAC who pointed out that several youth at-risk have parents who are criminals, and as such, youth who are being raised in a criminal environment often follow in their parent's footsteps – turning to criminal behaviours – because that is all that they know and have seen and learned growing up. Ryan, from YOR, shared an example with me which demonstrates how one's family can have a major impact on one's own involvement in criminal activities;

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[85] Meeting with Ryan Veltmeyer, March 9th 2012, Heartwood office.
[86] Interview with Sobaz Benjamin, March 12th 2012, iMOVe office.
[87] Ibid.

"if your whole family is involved in the local crime scene then it's kind of hard to not end up there yourself. Family business take advantage of kids who are protected by the law until they're eighteen…So you see uncles, moms and dads giving large amount of drugs to kids to hold, so the kids are taking possession of it so that way if they get busted the kids have it so they [the kids] get a criminal record… [that] will be wiped out when they're 18, because of the young offender laws. So if you're ten years old and that's happening how do you avoid that"[88].

Firstly, the above examples re-emphasizes that when working with youth at-risk it might be important to look beyond the youth's behaviours because what led them to that behaviour in the first place might have been directly influenced by the youth's environment. The youth's issues are often not, as Sobaz put it, "isolated problems"[89]. Thus, one should look at the broader issues that might exist within the youth's social context. Equally important is to raise questions of how one's social context came to be in the first place. For instance, YAP pointed out that there are situations where the youth's family support criminal activities because it has become "their livelihood"[90]. This suggests that some have turned to criminal activities for financial reasons and as such one's family might support this as they are doing it for reasons of making ends meet. Perhaps this also implies that the government has somewhat failed in supporting its citizens. In the province of Nova Scotia ten per cent of families have a low-income status (Province of Nova Scotia 2012b) and just over eight per cent of children under the age of eighteen are living in poverty (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives 2011). These numbers are quite high considering that Canada is ranked as number six in the Human Development Index[91] by the United Nations Development Programme (2011)[92]. Perhaps some youth who have seen their family turn to crime for financial reasons are also turning to criminal activities for the same reasons as there commonly is a correlation between one's socio-economic status and criminal behaviour (Muncie 2009).

3.5 Feeling of Hopelessness?

Youth's perspectives of the future might be shaped by seeing family members or others within the youth's society turning to criminal activities because of financial strains. Perhaps seeing this reflects in some youth developing feelings of hopelessness and in turn feel that they might also have to turn

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[88] Meeting with Ryan Veltmeyer, March 9th 2012, Heartwood office.
[89] Interview with Sobaz Benjamin, March 12th 2012, iMOVe office.
[90] Meeting with YAP employees, March 13th 2012, YAP office.
[91] The Human Development Index (HDI) is based on measurements of a country's living standards (e.g. income), education, and health. Its purpose is to establish a "reference for both social and economic development" of countries. http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/hdi/
[92] http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/CAN.html

towards a criminal lifestyle. One of the reasons identified by Sobaz of why some youth end up being at-risk in Halifax is that they have developed a feeling of not being able to achieve anything; "a lot of young people feel like they don't have a future here…don't have any prospect"[93]. They might have been kicked out of school, have feelings of hopelessness and thinking that they have no other choice but to turn to criminal behaviours to make ends meet; "to me that's the beginning of the end; when you feel you have no other choice"[94]. This implies that for populations that are on the low end of the socio-economic status feel like the city of Halifax does not have enough opportunities for them to overcome their financial situation. Sobaz shared with me that he has not seen the city trying to really engage "population of people being marginalized… [and] maybe there's not a whole lot of planning going on for the general youth population"[95]. This re-enforces that perhaps the government is failing in supporting some of its most vulnerable citizens. Thus, this is mirrored in criminal paths that some have taken as a means of survival.

Furthermore, both iMOVe and YAP highlighted that Halifax has a long history of racism and segregation, and as one YAP employee pointed out; "people have long memories and those memories have passed on from generation to generation"[96]. Thus, some of Halifax's population might feel like the government is not acknowledging this, and not recognizing that this is an issue which might be related to aspects of crime. As YAP's employee said; "there is a disproportionate number of African Nova Scotians involved in the justice system, and that's a fact"[97]. YAP also mentioned that this fact, and the issues of racism has only really been a topic of conversation within the government of Nova Scotia and among politicians and other professionals in the last fifteen or twenty years. However, "there are still a lot of people who want to brush it under the carpet, certainly our police department is one of them. You'll hear it sometimes, they're being pushed too right"[98]. Firstly, this suggests that racism is still quite a prevalent issue in Halifax, and that this is reflected in the prisons. Secondly, it implies that the government (including the police department) is not facing these issues adequately, and thus perhaps only perpetuating and re-enforcing the issues of racism.

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[93] Interview with Sobaz Benjamin, March 12th 2012, iMOVe office.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Meeting with YAP employees, March 13th 2012, YAP office.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Ibid.

However, one of the reasons behind this might be that the government does not know how to, or does not want to, approach or deal with marginalized and stigmatized populations, and thus puts that responsibility more onto the communities themselves. As Sobaz put it;

"the reason iMOVe exists is because we're offering something that the government is not able to provide, and they should be able to provide services for hard to reach youth, but...they have their psychologist, psychiatrists, social worker, they have that traditional frontline, but we have come into existence because government feels that they are not adequately servicing a certain population. Government is finding ways of servicing a population by funding organizations – that seems to be the model. I think it becomes challenging when...you...spend a lot of time writing the proposals and not getting any work done. There is that problem with organizations like iMOVe that are sort of dependent upon funding"[99].

Although, this suggests that the government is partly recognizing issues by giving out funding to organizations to deal with certain issues, it could also imply that they do not want to take full responsibility for those issues themselves. In turn, this might impact how people view the government and perhaps establishes further feelings of hopelessness; people feeling like the government *itself* is not really addressing certain issues and thus not really trying understanding some of the concerns of its citizens. Several people Sobaz has encountered through his work have mentioned that when they go to governmental offices they "don't feel like their needs are being meet because they don't feel understood"[100]. As such, he thinks that government should work more on improving connecting with its citizens. Simply by distributing funding to organizations to deal with certain issues might not actually solve the issues long-term given the uncertainties surrounding program support and funding. As pointed out in the previous chapter, people are competing for funding and often have to put in a lot of time and effort in writing proposals, conducting evaluations etc., and thus, the objectives of their work might become blurred. Therefore, if government is feeling like they are not adequately equipped to serve certain populations and to provide them with the services that they need, should they then not at least adequately support (fund) organizations that they give responsibility to so that they can provide those services instead? If the government itself is looking to communities and non-governmental organizations to address certain issues, then there should also be enough support in place for those communities and organizations to actually address those issues. In turn, the lack of funding might translate into people feeling like the government is not taking some issues seriously, not understanding

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[99] Interview with Sobaz Benjamin, March 12th 2012, iMOVe office.
[100] Ibid.

their issues, and thus perhaps reflects in the evolvement of feelings of hopelessness. Perhaps the organizations working with youth at-risk can assist in overcoming some of these feelings of hopelessness, and the next chapter will move towards discussing some important aspects, that were identified throughout my fieldwork, of approaching youth at-risk.

Chapter 4. Approaching Youth At-Risk: What's Important and What's Missing

The previous chapter presented and discussed some perspectives on and from youth at-risk. It pointed out the significance of establishing personal relations, which can also be seen as a form of control, it discussed some of the effects organizations have had on youth and the influence family and peers can have on youth's development of criminal behaviours. However, when working with youth there is no single method which is the most significant in undertaking all problems in regard to their development and crime prevention (Memmo and Small 2004). Rather, the individual person, the particular problems being dealt with, and the specific circumstances and environment of the individual, can assist in defining whether a certain approach is suitable (Ibid). As such, it is important to not simply look at an organization's approach, but to go beyond this and see how exactly these approaches came to be, how they are interpreted by the organization, and how the organizations applies a certain approach (Ibid). This last chapter will therefore discuss and analyse the approaches and activities of some of the organizations by focusing on how the approach is utilized and what the specific activity is intended to accomplish. It will also present and discuss some common perspectives, identified from the fieldwork, on what aspects the organizations believe are important when developing and implementing programs for youth at-risk. Looking at the different approaches and various organizations will illustrate the significance of offering art-based programs, that youth need programs that empower them and that they are interested in, that communities need to be involved, and that the state needs to take responsibility. The chapter will end on a discussion of the current social and political atmosphere in relation to crime; some of the organizations pointed out that they feel Halifax has somewhat lost their sense of community values and that this might be reflected in the crime trends. In turn, I will explore how perhaps it can also be linked to the trends of individual punishment.

4.1 Thinking Outside the Box: Arts-based Initiatives

A common theme throughout this thesis is that youth at-risk should have the opportunity to engage in a program that offers an activity that *they* themselves are interested in and where they can develop those interests, opposed to simply placing them in any program to try and solve their issues. This way of approaching youth at-risk can be linked to the youth development framework which emphasizes working with youth through concentrating on their abilities, i.e. their interests, and at the same time

working through their issues (Belenko and Murray 2005). An example of one of iMOVe's participants, James[101], who has a passion for rapping and dancing, demonstrates this;

> "he's from a war torn country, he had to run from the conflict, he's seen family been shot…He's been through the foster care system here…There's a lot of trauma there. We're working on a music video that will bring some of that out…He's a very talented young man…but I think he has a lot of hidden pain"[102].

This implies that by using an art-based activity that James has an interest for himself, iMOVe is assisting him in developing his potentials within that interest through producing and recording music videos, but at the same time trying to unveil and work through some of his problems. Thus, an art-based approach is being utilized as a way to govern youth at-risk; governing them in the direction of becoming active citizens and in turn attempting to steer them away from criminal behaviours. In other words, youth at-risk's own interests are being utilized as a way to control them. According to iMOVe, the idea behind their approach is that a;

> "story can be used as a way to problem solve, to help you figure out where you want to go…The engine is their personal stories, getting them to tell that in order to help them connect the dots – those internal dots within themselves…about where they have been, where they are at, and can then begin to ask where do I want to go. Have an on-going narrative that can help them, can be like a tool, a map to figure out where they want to go"[103].

This storytelling is done through iMOVe's various art-based activities; radio, music, film making and editing, television, performance art, and social media. The idea of story-telling through art to identify and unpack some of the youth's issues, and in turn being able to better assist them moving towards a positive path, is also incorporated within YOR; "the main thing is to try and get…the kids to use stuff to talk about their lives…I ask questions about why is this the song you're recording"[104]. This use of storytelling indicates that it aims to reveal aspects of youth's lives and in turn might also put more individual responsibility on the youth as they are meant to explain aspects within their own lives.

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[101] James is sixteen years old and originally from Liberia. He came to Canada about seven years ago and is currently participating with iMOVe as well as with YOR.
[102] Interview with Sobaz Benjamin, March 12th 2012, iMOVe office.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Meeting with Ryan Veltmeyer, March 9th 2012, Heartwood office.

The significance of offering art-based activities to youth at-risk was emphasized by Sobaz as he pointed out that for some of these youth 'traditional approaches' of learning and developing, such as through a formal education system, does not work. For some youth the classroom setting does not work because they feel it is an oppressive space and as such are alienated from the "self-empowerment and confidence building, and awareness and education that goes on in the classroom"[105]. This can be related to a level of governmentality that exists within the education system as there are specific rules and regulations set in place which students are to follow, and there is a sense of hierarchy between the teachers and administration and the students. The education system is in one sense governing, controlling and exerting power over the students by deciding what they are to learn and how to learn; setting rules and regulations. As such, this type of controlled setting does not work for many of the youth that Sobaz works with. Through arts, however, one can achieve similar type of developments as in a classroom. For example when Sobaz worked with one youth on a video project they "still went over the structure of narrative [and] over the elements of story… [which] is part of the grade twelve English class"[106]. Thus, art-based approaches can be used in a way that still targets some of the components of what one learns through traditional education, it is simply packaged differently; it is a different "tool of engagement"[107]. Lillian adds to this that "it's almost like you're masking it and they're getting it without realizing it because they are being entertained, having fun…being creative and learning…and their voices come out and it's not an 'us' and 'them'"[108]. This is also an example of governmentality being disguised in some sense; the participants are learning various educational skills through art forms.

Sobaz also highlighted that iMOVe has "an equal playing field for voice"[109] which is often non-existent within school settings. As he put it; "we don't view them as empty vessels, [where] the teacher has all of the knowledge, their knowledge is essential, in fact, if we're going to be successful in sort of producing"[110]. Giving youth a chance to feel needed and valued assists in confidence building, and in them opening up about their issues; identifying what placed them at-risk in the first place. As such, iMOVE's participants have an opportunity to speak up freely and decide for themselves what activities they would like to engage in. Sobaz explained how this is purposely done as it empowers the participants and assists in building leadership qualities. Furthermore, he highlighted the importance of

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[105] Interview with Sobaz Benjamin, March 12th 2012, iMOVe office.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Interview with Lillian, March 12th 2012, iMOVe office.
[109] Interview with Sobaz Benjamin and Lillian, March 12th 2012, iMOVe office.
[110] Ibid.

giving youth at-risk a place where they can freely express themselves because when "they don't feel comfortable or welcome in a space why would they be there. So that's what we do". In addition, he pointed out how the art mediums that iMOVe uses (popular culture; music, film etc.) appeals to youth because they are consumers of those mediums;

> "that's the hook…I think you couldn't achieve similar outcomes that the traditional kind of education system is trying to…To me it's sort of like there is a cool factor in the arts, especially with video, music, recording stuff. I think if you can somehow inject the life skills, communication skills, group dynamics, you can jet that into the arts based programming"[111].

Sobaz expressed that his task then is to make sure the participants are staying on track and developing within the activity or project that they are working on, but always focusing on giving the youth a voice throughout the whole process. Thus, youth still have the chance to exercise agency over themselves, but at the same time being guided in a certain direction by the program.

Mike from Circus Circle also highlighted how one can learn some of the important skills that one often gets through more traditional approaches through art. For instance, participants who gradually improve their circus skills can come to the understanding that through practice, patience, commitment, and learning one can gradually achieve one's goals. They also have the opportunity to develop their team-working skills through, for example, the activity of tight-line walking; to first learn this skill one has to walk the tight-line while another person holds their arm up for them to lean on. Being responsible is another quality Circus Circle aims to transfer onto their participants as Mike asks them to help him set-up the circus equipment and put in back in place once the program is over. These programs have chosen an art-based approach because they believe it appeals to youth, and in turn can assist in getting them engaged in the program, and ideally that they, through their participation, still are learning educational and life skills which are aimed to guide them towards becoming active citizens.

I saw this especially with one participant, Adam, who was at Circus Circle seven out of the thirteen times I was there. When I first met him he seemed quite shy and introverted, not just with me, but with the other participants as well. However, gradually it seemed like he became more comfortable and began to open up more to me. He shared that he has anxiety, and that he usually keeps to himself in a corner when there are bigger groups coming to the program. However, over the course of my time there I

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[111] Ibid.

noticed how he started to interact more with other participants; talked to them, showed them what circus tricks he was working on, and gave advice to me and other participants on certain tricks. This suggests that Adam, through his participation in Circus Circle, gradually improved his social skills. These social skills might then be utilized outside of the program which in turn would indicate that Adam is moving towards becoming more socially engaged. However, whether or not Adam will actually utilize the skills developed through Circus Circle outside of the program is under his own control. Thus, this shows again how although youth at-risk are guided in a certain direction by programs, they still have agency over themselves in terms of what they decide to do with the guidance received.

Another important aspect of offering art-based programs is to give youth who are not interested in organized sports a chance to get engaged in other activities. Sobaz highlighted that the city needs more "diverse programming"[112] to be able to reach out to a broader youth population. This suggests that some youth might not become engaged in an activity because they feel there is nothing out there that matches their interests. In turn, this lack of engagement and not taking part in an activity can lead some into turning to criminal activities, as Circus Circle's participant, Daniel, pointed out in the previous chapter. YOR said that art was consciously chosen in their programming to offer something outside sport activities and pointed out that art can also be used as a tool of engagement with youth. They also invite professional artists to teach the participants "art skills, but also to introduce them to professional artists working in the field so they have real role models and connections"[113]. If a youth is interested in hip-hop, instead of having Sabine or himself figuring out how to assist the youth in developing within the field of hip-hop (as they do not have the professional knowledge of that field), they rather bring in a professional local hip-hop artist to work with the youth. For example; they had a spoken word artist do a workshop with some of their participants and "within three weeks there were four spoken word artists"[114]. Two of these youth have been given an opportunity to perform spoken word at this year's Crime Symposium in Halifax. Sabine pointed out that performance opportunities like this give youth a chance to "learn how to conduct themselves in public"[115], how to interact with people, and engage in society.

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[112] Ibid.
[113] Meeting with Ryan Veltmeyer, March 9th 2012, Heartwood office.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Meeting with Sabine Fels, March 9th 2012, Heartwood office.

However, it is also important to point out that although some participants get opportunities for performances, others might not. Would this then create tensions between those participants who are given performance opportunities and those who are not? Also, perhaps those who are not, feel like they are failing within the program, and those feelings might re-enforce the fact that they are in a crime prevention program. Bringing in professional artists can also be challenging as Ryan explained that one artist who did a workshop with the youth did not write the report which he was supposed to for YOR. Thus, although the artist was willing to share his knowledge with the youth, he did not follow through on the logistics of it. Perhaps this means artists are simply agreeing to do workshops with the youth to promote themselves, and as such do not fully engage in the actual work that YOR is trying to do.

Using an art-based approach can have a positive influence on youth at-risk, but this does not mean it will solve all the problems and issues of youth and crime. Sabine shared with me that "where we work we have kids who are murderers, our work is in a high crime area, and I'm not going to say art is the be all end all that will stop gangs and criminal behaviour, I don't believe that"[116]. Nevertheless, offering art-based programs creates more diverse opportunities for youth engagement, and if youth are given the opportunity to explore their interests, the risks for them getting involved in criminal activities might diminish. As Ryan puts it; "if they could find a way to connect some of their talent into a useful kind of way where they have peers, it's fun, exciting, keeps them busy, something to do and you feel better about yourself"[117]. This is aligned with Daniel's perspective, mentioned in the previous chapter, that after he started participating at Circus Circle he simply did not have that much spare time anymore, and as such, he started to become less and less involved in criminal activities. Nevertheless, this could suggest that youth who do not have an interest for a specific activity have a stronger chance for becoming at-risk. However, they might not yet have developed an interest for an activity because they might not know what is available – e.g. lack of exposure – or because of certain structural barriers – e.g. not being able to afford the costs of activities. As such, more advertisement and information to what activities are actually offered, and again, more programs which are for free, would most likely benefit youth in becoming active citizens. However, whose responsibility should this be? Perhaps the government should interfere more when it comes to its younger population? It is this population that will eventually step into the roles of adults who become decision makers, and as such it would make sense to invest more in this population and make sure there are enough opportunities for them to

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[116] Ibid.
[117] Meeting with Ryan Veltmeyer, March 9th 2012, Heartwood office.

actually become responsible active citizens. In placing more responsibility on individuals and communities, who might already be facing economic challenges, perhaps only creates further challenges for them. This is not to suggest that individuals and communities should not have a say in their own governance, but rather that they should perhaps be given more resources to actually be able to govern, and thus become responsible active citizens.

YAP pointed out that although they are not an art-based program, they will try to connect the participants who are interested in art to various resources to give the youth opportunities to explore their interests further. For example, they have a day planned where they will take some of their youth participants to an art-program which uses art as therapy; "the kids get to use a canvas to kind of explore their feelings and their emotions [and] how they interact with others' lives through art"[118]. As such, even though one might not have a definite interest for art, for some it can still be used as a way to assist in discovering one's underlying issues, and in turn it can serve as a practical rehabilitative function.

The above examples have demonstrated some of the positive influences an art-based approach can have in working with youth at-risk. The programs presented promote a style of non-formal learning and suggests that the traditional education system can be too controlling and restrictive. Thus, they have selectively chosen certain approaches. This implies, however, that they have their own principles, assumptions, and ideas about how their participants should engage and develop. If their participants do not conform to this are they then seen as a 'failure' by the program or even by themselves? Furthermore, it is important to re-emphasize that not every youth at-risk will benefit positively from an art-based approach. Therefore, it is central to remind ourselves of the importance of having different types of programs across a diverse range of activities and methods so that there is a chance for each youth at-risk to engage in something that they have an interest for. No matter how much one tries to control youth at-risk, giving them an opportunity to engage in the governing of themselves, by expressing their interests, is beneficial in attempts of making positive changes in their life. One can try to guide youth towards a positive path, but one cannot force them. Thus, some organizations emphasize giving voice to youth and in turn empowering them as a way to guide them in the direction of the organization's aims.

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[118] Meeting with YAP employees, March 13th 2012, YAP office.

4.2 Empowerment: Giving Voice to Youth

Some youth at-risk might feel stigmatized due to the fact that they are placed in the category of being 'at-risk' and as such some members within society may consider them as "not entitled to justice" (Kemshall 2008:26). Youth who become stigmatized might therefore not have an equal voice within their society because often only "those who are accepted as conforming to the defining characteristics of the rational liberal subject, those who have suppressed the savage within can claim the privileges of citizenship" (Hudson 2003, cited in Kemshall 2008:26). In turn, this can make youth at-risk not only feel stigmatized, but also rather powerless. In order for them to be able to move forward, reintegrate, and start walking on the path of becoming responsible active citizens it may actually be crucial to give them the opportunity to let their voices be heard. Then, perhaps, by being able to express themselves and tell their story, there is a better chance for society to also try and understand their issues and the circumstances that made them at-risk in the first place. iMOVe highlighted that when youth are given an equal voice they are also given equal power and through that feeling of empowerment they can develop the confidence to speak, which in turn will assist in identifying their issues. Until their issues are actually identified how can someone try to support them in working through those issues?

In iMOVe participants are given a "voice to the things that mean something to them"[119]. Through the program's activities youth are given a chance to explore and discover what is important to them and then they can express those discoveries through the various art mediums. For example, iMOVe's music studio "is sort of like an incubator where people can talk about their ideas"[120] and what music they want to produce. Participants can then rehearse their song, record it, and if they want, introduce and present it to a greater audience by playing it on iMOVe's radio show. Sobaz explained how "you can see the look of real enthusiasm and amazement when people call in during the [radio] show and say they really like it [the song]"[121]. As I was invited by him to join the radio show one evening, I was able to see this myself; James was there to debut one of his latest songs. When it was his turn to introduce the song I noticed the engagement with which he explained what the song is about and I could see the enthusiasm on his face. James was smiling and singing along as his song was being played. He also received a lot of positive feedback from the other participants in the studio and I sensed a feeling of proudness in him. This indicates that giving youth at-risk a voice can assists in confidence building and in turn foster

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[119] Interview with Sobaz Benjamin, March 12th 2012, iMOVe office.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Ibid.

empowerment. Furthermore, Sobaz explained how gradually "they begin to take responsibility too for what they rap about because they know people are listening and responding to what they have to say"[122].That said, within all the activities of iMOVe there is no censoring when it comes to what words or expressions the youth would like to use; it is their voice and as such they are free to express themselves however they want. Nevertheless, although the participants are free to express themselves, and as such might use an offensive language, Lillian articulated that over time "it does change, it shifts. The language, body language and sometime lack of respect, but over time it changes and you can see them choosing different words, but no one says to them you can't say the F word"[123]. Sobaz pointed out how "that is part of the buy-in"[124]. As such, I came to the understanding that giving youth at-risk an opportunity to express and voice themselves in their own way, regardless of whether this is in an offensive way or not, works as an incentive to get them engaged in the program in which they are a participant of. This indicates that iMOVe is trying to fit into the youth's world and their forms of expression by letting youth use the language that they relate to, and through this the program aims to engage their participants.

However, as participants can express themselves freely also suggests that they could be expressing negative aspects such as, for instance, violence, bigotry, racism, sexism etc. Also as iMOVe is focusing on popular culture, which in itself often can entail negative messages, I assume this poses a challenge for iMOVe and thus challenges how to use popular culture positively. In turn, if a participant chooses to express rather negative aspects, then does it not also promote that negativity? On the other hand, however, by letting youth express their potentially negative thoughts and ideas, and having someone listening to them, might also help in identifying aspects of their lives and what type of issues they are facing. Also, perhaps releasing one's negativity can assist in getting to know oneself and in turn one can grow from that experience and move forward. As such, is it not better to let youth at-risk release their negativity through tools such as popular culture, rather than potentially releasing it through criminal activities? Although iMOVe does not encourage negative expression, this example also implies how the program, through consciously limiting their control over participants, is actually trying *to* control their participants or steer them in a certain direction. In other words, by limiting control over youth, makes them feel more empowered and gives them a voice, which might assist in them opening up about some

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[122] Ibid.
[123] Interview with Lillian, March 12th 2012, iMOVe office.
[124] Interview with Sobaz Benjamin, March 12th 2012, iMOVe office.

of their issues. In turn, by identifying their issues one is better equipped to steer them towards a healthy path.

Ryan from YOR also pointed out how their program facilitates empowering youth; participants are given an opportunity to take on leadership roles through presenting their own ideas for projects and assisting in writing grant applications. As such, the content of YOR "keeps changing because it depends on who's coming"[125]. Ryan highlighted that it is important to find out what the youth themselves are interested in and what they would like to get out of the program in relation to what type of art or skill they would like to work on. This outlook is in line with that of iMOVe and implies how through inclusion and voice one becomes empowered. Thus, organizations are exercising governmentality through discourses of empowerment that seek to improve and control youth at-risk.

Empowering the youth and giving them a voice is also prevalent in YAP as the program highlights how they include the youth participant, as well as their family, "in all decisions to make sure they are involved fully in the process, so they don't feel lost, and their perspectives are taken into consideration, and what they want changed we'll be working towards"[126]. As such, each participant makes their own 'action plan' in which they get to voice their opinion and together with their family identify what their goals are and what they would like to get out of the program in order for them to start moving away from at-risk behaviours. Listening to the participant and giving them a voice in the development of their own action plan can, for instance, aid them in working more vigorously; "the more they feel the more input they have, the harder they are going to work"[127]. In addition, the youth get to choose their own incentives, which they are granted if they follow through on the goals that they have set for themselves. For example, two participants wanted to go see a movie if they achieved their goals. They met all the criteria, and as such, the participants' youth advocate worker took them to the movie theatre. However, this could suggest that participants might only be following the criteria because of the fact that they then get an 'award'. Rather, should they not be following the criteria because they want to make a change in their life? Also, once they are no longer a participant of the program, the rewards from YAP would no longer be there either. In turn, without incentives of behaving lawfully, perhaps they would simply fall back into their old ways of behaving, ways which most likely placed them in the program in the first place.

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[125] Meeting with Ryan Veltmeyer, March 9th 2012, Heartwood office.
[126] Meeting with YAP employees, March 13th 2012, YAP office.
[127] Ibid.

Within YAP participants are also given a voice through establishing a 'youth support team' of people participants chose themselves. The team consists of people who the youth think will support them through their participation at YAP, and who they think will continue being supportive once they are no longer part of the program. However, the involvement of the support team during the youth's participation comes in various degrees, as pointed out by one of YAP's employees; "some people are involved heavily and some would only come every couple months"[128]. As such, although the youth's voice is being heard by YAP with regard to youth inclusion in decision making, their voice might not be heard by all of their support team members. In turn, this implies that team members who are not as engaged and involved in the process might also not be involved once the youth is no longer with YAP. Perhaps also, the team members themselves are facing their own issues. The implications of this could be that the youth, without enough support from the team, falls back into the same lifestyle that they had before. How can one expect a youth, who is still growing and developing, change and improve if they do not have the support of the people around them? As discussed in the previous chapter, some youth might have become at-risk because of their family situation; family member themselves either being involved in criminal behaviours or simply growing up in a dysfunctional family context. Therefore, for some youth a sense of community belonging and establishing healthy relationships might be essential in moving away from being at-risk.

4.3 Building Connections: The Importance of Community

When developing, implementing, and executing youth programs and their approaches, the importance of community came up throughout my fieldwork. It was pointed out by many that utilizing one's community and its services as well as involving the community in programs and activities are key factors in working with youth at-risk. In addition, it was emphasized that it is important for youth to feel that they are a member of their community, and as David McCrae, a youth advocate worker from YAP put it, that "they are a part of it [the community]"[129].

One of the reasons of why community is an important element in the work of iMOVe is to give the participants an opportunity to show to their community their positive contributions as many youth at-risk are often viewed as a negative contributor and as such might be looked down on from other

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[128] Ibid.
[129] Interview with David McCrae, March 16th 2012, David's office in East Dartmouth.

members of their community. Therefore, "the work being produced is to show the community that they can contribute something of value to the community… a social contribution, that's talking about some serious issue"[130]. YOR shared this perspective; their participants are, through various art forms, given the opportunity to create something of a "meaningful contribution"[131]. Sobaz gave me an example of a specific initiative to give their participants a chance to show their work with a wider community during Canada's National Youth Arts Week[132];

> "we're going to be exhibiting the work that was produced at Waterville[133]. It will be an opportunity for the young people to bring out their families and take a look and share…We're creating a venue where the work can be seen…We want to be able to share it to a broader community"[134].

However, Sobaz shared with me that they do not necessarily say to their participants that what they are producing might be shown to the community, "but that's ultimately the bottom line"[135]. This strikes me as the organization not being completely honest about what seems to be one of the main purposes of the program. However, perhaps the reason for this is that if participants know that they may have an opportunity to share their work with the public they might not be as honest with themselves in the work that they are producing – which is meant to tell their story, and unpack and work through some of their issues. They might not want to share their issues with a broader audience. On the other hand, for some, they may put more thought and effort into their work if they know that they are producing something that will ultimately be shared with others. If the participants simply think that what they are producing is to develop their skills within the activity the content of their production might be of a different kind than if they knew it is meant to show that they can produce something of significance.

For example, the song that James was debuting when I was at the radio show was about teen romance. The fact that he could share his skills within music with a broader community is beneficial in the sense that the community gets to experience a productive and creative side of James. However, a song about

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[130] Interview with Sobaz Benjamin, March 12th 2012, iMOVe office.
[131] Meeting with Ryan Veltmeyer, March 9th 2012, Heartwood office.
[132] Established by the *Arts Network for Children and Youth*. This is a yearly event that gives youth in Canada an opportunity to present their work within the arts. It takes place throughout various venues across the country. http://youthartsweek.ca/
[133] Waterville is where the Nova Scotia Youth Facility is located.
http://www.gov.ns.ca/just/Corrections/youth_facilities.asp
[134] Interview with Sobaz Benjamin, March 12th 2012, iMOVe office.
[135] Ibid.

teen romance might not be viewed by the community as a serious issue, but this does not mean it is not considered a serious issue for him. Whether youth are at-risk or not, romantic relationships are often in the minds of young people. Sobaz explained that it is important for youth participants to first feel comfortable in the program and then eventually he will introduce the broader expectations of the program; identifying, through storytelling, some of their issues that placed them at-risk and trying to work through those issues in order to move forward in a positive way. This might be especially relevant if participants have a lot of hidden pain and underlying issues as in the case of James. It suggests that giving participants a chance to first develop their skill within the activity and giving them a voice in terms of being able to choose what they want the content of their production to be, could work as a stepping-stone towards producing something that can contribute to unpacking their deeper issues. Identifying the issues of youth at-risk, at their own pace, and in turn being able to see their side of the story, rather than simply judging them based on their behaviour, is useful in efforts trying to improve their lives and assisting them in moving towards becoming responsible active citizens.

Sobaz linked the emphasis on showing the work of participants to the community to the concept of reintegration; "I think reintegration is…a community sort of shifting in its perspective on a…youth at-risk. Sort of supporting and encouraging a young person and to make healthy choices"[136]. This is in line with the Department of Justice Canada's idea of the concept as a; "transition back to his or her community [and] assisting the person not to re-offend" (2011a)[137]. As such, reintegration emphasizes the involvement of youth "in community programs that build character, increase self-esteem and develop life skills" (Carmichael 2008:2). This in turn is aimed at assisting youth in becoming responsible and active citizens and moving away from unlawful behaviours, and thus moving away from society having to react to those behaviours (Boxer et al. 2008). Furthermore, reintegration is considered to promote non-criminal behaviour among offenders and within communities (Shoemaker 2009). This implies that reintegration, and becoming active citizens, is a form of governmentality itself; by following the law, engaging with the market, and becoming employable, one is at the same time conforming to the way that the government wants its citizens to be. However, there are quite a number of challenges with reintegration because people within a youth's community might "shun them because of what they have done"[138]. This demonstrates the stigma that is often attached to offenders. Again, giving youth the chance to engage in an activity that they themselves are interested in can assist in them developing

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[136] Interview with Sobaz Benjamin, March 12th 2012, iMOVe office.
[137] http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/pi/yj-jj/ycja-lsjpa/back-hist.html
[138] Interview with Sobaz Benjamin, March 12th 2012, iMOVe office.

other skills. In turn, through the activity, youth at-risk get to demonstrate to their community that they *can* do something that is positive, that they can be responsible and move towards becoming a productive active citizen. In the long run, perhaps this will assist in slowly erasing some of that stigma that the youth have attached to them.

Nevertheless, if a youth's community and/or family are not able to look beyond the youth's negative past, then it can make it rather challenging for the youth to move forward in a positive way. Or can the youth still lead a positive lifestyle regardless of the stigma that might be attached to them? Is giving youth a chance to develop useful skills through a program enough to actually reintegrate them? No matter how hard these organizations try to help youth towards a positive path and to break down some of the stigma, they cannot control the opinions of others. As Lillian from iMOVe pointed out; "certain members of communities can't get past that"[139]; they cannot get past the fact that someone at one point in their life did something that went against the law. Thus, perhaps to move past stigmatization, we need to look at the system that created the stigma in the first place. This means looking at the government and the way that they operate as they are the force behind the law that defines what is right and wrong. This is not to suggest that we do not need laws, but rather that to break down stigmatization, perhaps there also needs to be broader political efforts in enforcing values of forgiveness. If certain individuals stigmatize others due to them breaking the law, i.e. going against the government, then would not also those individuals be more forgiving if the government itself is more forgiving? However, in recent years, the government has become more absent, and thus perhaps overcoming stigmatization becomes more challenging.

CJS is another example that tries to incorporate the community as much as possible through the talking circles outlined in chapter two. Engaging the community is done for two reasons; firstly, so that they can talk to the offender and explain to them how they feel effected by the crime. Secondly, for the community

> "to see who this young person is. Does he have underlying issues that affects him being involved in criminogenic behaviour? Get some insight in his life, where empathy can take place, and people can get an understanding of where one is coming from. It more so attacks the root of the incident rather than just punishing it, when it could be not the incident, but the underlying issues that are

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[139] Interview with Lillian, March 12th 2012, iMOVe office.

affecting the youth - that's leading them to criminal activity. The circle has the capacity to have that kind of dialogue and discussion"[140].

This is aligned with the view of Sobaz; the importance of trying to understand the contributing factors of how a young person became involved in criminal behaviours in the first place. By identifying some of the contributing factors of how youth became at-risk one can better try to work towards solving these issues, and in turn, also reduce youth becoming at-risk in the first place. A specific initiative established by CJS is meant to assist in this effort; they have 'community circles' where they mobilize several stakeholders within a community and meet with them to try and identify the needs of the community. As Matthew from CJS explained; "professionals step back and give this circle framework to the community to police themselves, develop themselves, build stronger communities"[141]. Involving community stakeholders and giving them room to work on the issues that exist within their own communities is an attempt to transfer that engagement to "the local community members themselves so they can be the leaders and figure out what their community needs"[142]. For this to be effective, the community actually has to want to make a change and have to willingly engage. However, throughout my fieldwork it was identified that community values, responsibility, and engagement is somewhat missing in Halifax. In turn, perhaps this fosters youth becoming at-risk.

4.3.1 The Loss of a Sense of Community and Family Values

A recent study, the Halifax Index, identified that "94 per cent of residents…do not feel a sense of community belonging" (Thomson 2012) and the report from the study pointed out one of Halifax's main challenges; "the community needs to nurture a culture of partnership when tackling every challenge and every opportunity. Halifax needs a community culture that deals with issues by engaging in vital business and community partnerships rather than blaming challenges on others and going it alone" (The Greater Halifax Partnership 2012:9). With this in mind, this last section of the chapter will present and discuss some of outlooks of community and the issues that might exist.

One important aspect pointed out by many of the organizations with regard to youth at-risk was that it is important that communities do not judge them right away and to not look at them with disdain.

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[140] Interview with Matthew Thomas, March 14th 2012, CJS office.
[141] Ibid.
[142] Ibid.

Rather, as David from YAP emphasized, communities should take some ownership and think about what "we [have] done to create this environment of negativity…did we help create this culture"[143]. As such, in order to move towards a more positive community environment, he emphasized the importance of actually including the communities in the efforts taken towards that path. Hence, the communities themselves have to be willing and engaged in addressing the issues within their community. This was also emphasized by Matthew from CJS, however, he explained how several people "feel they have no responsibility to the community…I think that was more prevalent in our parents' generation…there was more value in community and community took issues seriously"[144]. The loss of community responsibility can impact community values; when people feel less responsible for others they often feel less inclined to act on issues. As such, communities not collaborating in measures to reduce community issues and not taking responsibility for their neighbours, reflect in the loss of a sense of community. Perhaps the current trend of *individual* responsibility has had a direct impact on this; a high focus on putting responsibility on individuals might have made individuals feel less inclined to take responsibility together. Furthermore, Matthew emphasized that;

> "the moral fabric of our society has just changed. People don't have any respect, they just don't think about their actions, their implications and how they affect people...I don't know where it went but it went somewhere, we are losing it day by day. I don't know how you rectify that because having a lot of programs is good but I don't know how effective those will be, because it's even deeper than program I think, there's fundamental morals and values that aren't upheld as they used to be"[145].

One of the underlying reasons for this, as pointed out by Matthew, could be that there is a variety of families today, especially single-parent households, parents who simply work too much in an attempt to make ends meet, and as such they do not have as much spare time to spend with their children and to foster quality and family time. This is aligned with YOR participant, Thomas' perspective, who said that youth who get involved in criminal activities might "not receive enough attention from their family at home so then they stray off". David from YAP gave me an example of one of his youth participants;

> "she wants attention from her mother, but her mother is saying 'I don't have time, I have to work, I work three jobs'…We've sat down in the support meeting with her and [said] 'you might have to actually give up a couple of your jobs…because you're losing your daughter'…She [mother] said

[143] Interview with David McCrae, March 16th 2012, David's office in East Dartmouth.
[144] Interview with Matthew Thomas, March 14th 2012, CJS office.
[145] Ibid.

'but then I don't have any money'…But yet what is more important, the pay check…or the daughter…"[146].

This suggests that although the responsibility of the upkeep of values lays on individuals and communities, it might be difficult for some individuals and communities to maintain them because of the particular situations that they might be in, e.g. over-working and struggling financially. As such, perhaps the government should step in more; government taking some responsibility, and supporting their citizens who are struggling financially so that they actually have the time and resources to engage with their children and their community. However, the government has become more absent with the rise of neo-liberalism, but this should not mean that government cannot step back into taking more responsibility. Even if government still wants individuals and communities to play a larger role in their own governance through engaging in the workforce, being active citizens, and taking responsibility, government perhaps also need to make sure the opportunities for this actually exist and are accessible.

Matthew pointed out; "if you look at our climate right now in North America it's terrible - the middle class is just deteriorating…People are surviving. How can you worry about your neighbour when you are trying to survive? I think there needs to be more investment in the people"[147]. The aspect of survival for some families, especially single parent households, was also pointed out by one of YAP's employee;

> "cycles of families growing within poverty… [and] a lot of single parents mainly working and also having three kids. It's unfortunate, but they're trying to help mom because there is no other income coming so they may sell drugs or they may steal stuff to try to sell. It becomes a cycle of this is all they know. Until they're told or shown different how can they be different?"[148]

Again, this suggests that a loss of family and community values is directly impacted by people's financial situation and trying to make ends meet, which in turn means that they have less time for the family and community engagement and thus the upkeep of values becomes challenging. Another employee from YAP re-emphasized this;

> "we're working harder rather than smarter because we need to get this money to try to provide the things that society now says our kids should have, for example be on a hockey team or have nice sneakers. Did we create this [society] ourselves? And if so how do we get back to what's

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[146] Interview with David McCrae, March 16th 2012, David's office in East Dartmouth.
[147] Interview with Matthew Thomas, March 14th 2012, CJS office.
[148] Meeting with YAP employees, March 13th 2012, YAP office.

healthy, or do we? Have the values changed so much that we don't have to get back to that – that family doesn't have to be priority?"[149]

This also indicates that there are pressures within society of having to have certain things, e.g. nice clothing, in order to be 'accepted' by society. In turn, if one does not have these 'things' one might be judged, looked down on, or perhaps even considered an outcast. Inevitably this can pose challenges for youth and families, especially for those within the lower income bracket. Thus, these pressures within society and conforming to what is 'trendy', might reflect in those who turn to criminal activities such as stealing, whether stealing clothes or money to be able to buy certain things. It might also reflect in the families who are working multiple jobs in order to 'fit in' with the current materialistic trends of society, and therefore also having less time to nurture their family and engage with their communities. Sharon, manager of YAP, highlighted that;

> "we're not a very family focused society. We're more focused on making money and we're not as caring towards our children as we ought to be. We keep talking about family values and family is the foundation, but if you look at what we put in place it doesn't support what we say. There should be free programs for children, there should be support for parents, daycare shouldn't cost an arm and a leg, the idea of a subsidized space is absolutely insulting. It really is"[150].

Firstly, this indicates the loss of family values, and perhaps that it is directly linked to the way the provincial government of Nova Scotia operates. For example, YAP elaborated that Nova Scotia does not have a Family Day. This is a public holiday that several provinces[151] across Canada have in February. Thus, some provinces have set aside a day each year which specifically emphasizes the importance of family values, however, this holiday has not yet been implemented in Nova Scotia. This suggests that family values might not be as engrained in the provincial government of Nova Scotia. In turn, perhaps a lack of emphasis on the importance of family translates to the population of the province, and thus impacts how communities and citizens perceive family values. Secondly, Sharon points out how subsidies are insulting; offering subsidies to some families implies that the government recognizes them as 'poor' and as such gives them the subsidy. In turn, this might only insinuate the family's 'poor' circumstances and as such insults them at the same time, and consequently perhaps also foster stigmatization of the family. Also, as pointed out by another YAP employee in chapter two, one can only receive a subsidy if one fits a certain criteria of financial income. This means that one can make too

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[149] Meeting with YAP employees, March 13th 2012, YAP office.
[150] Meeting with Sharon Martin, March 13th 2012, YAP office.
[151] Six out of ten provinces.

much to fit the criteria, but still not be able to afford sending all of one's children to day care or pay for after school activities. Thus, regardless of a family's financial situation, all spaces should be subsidized equally; everyone should have access to free education and free activities.

4.3.2 A Punitive Society?

One of the reasons for why there is a sense of loss of community values, or as Matthew from CJS puts it; "community dynamic and cohesiveness in the community has somewhat lost its spark"[152], is perhaps because there is also a sense of a punitive society. Sharon stressed that "we punish people rather than try to support them…We're not very forgiving here of people who don't behave the way we expect them to behave"[153]. Mirroring this was the perspective of one of HYAC's employees, Tracey Devereaux, who believes that although someone has broken the law, society should not condemn them for the rest of their life. These outlooks are interesting because they could imply that the way government incorporates or use the idea of community and forgiveness, or not use it at all, is transmitted to the communities themselves; is focusing on punitive measures reflected in the loss of a sense of community? If the philosophy of community and forgiveness would be better ingrained within a government, then perhaps that philosophy would also transfer to people. If so, it could possibly contribute to foster a sense of community engagement, which has been pointed out is an important factor in working with youth at-risk.

Furthermore, Matthew underlined that simply leaving it up to the justice system to 'deal' with crime and offenders does not really solve any of the issues that led someone to turn to crime in the first place; "mostly it gets to us in the justice system…what we do is react, but we're not solving the problem. We are just going to keep reacting and it's going to keep coming"[154]. As such, he highlighted again the importance of looking at the communities, mobilizing them, and to take a collective approach to be able to identify the issues that exist, and in turn work towards improving them. In regards to criminal behaviours "we are all affected by it [and] rather than focusing on punishment"[155], if we looked at justice differently by incorporating the philosophy of community more and focusing more on identifying the issues within a community it could benefit in getting to the root of crime. As such, one can start to

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[152] Interview with Matthew Thomas, March 14th 2012, CJS office.
[153] Meeting with Sharon Martin, March 13th 2012, YAP office.
[154] Interview with Matthew Thomas, March 14th 2012, CJS office.
[155] Ibid.

untangle some of these roots which in turn can assist in determining what measures should be taken for prevention and to improve the community situation.

However, Matthew pointed out that moving away from punitive measures does not seem "very good politically at this point, and unfortunately that's what it boils down to – politics"[156]. The government has stated that they are re-introducing law-and-order measures, and on March 12th 2012, the Parliament passed the Conservative government's omnibus crime bill C-10, known as the *Safe Streets and Communities Act*. This is *"*the first in a series of anti-crime measures the majority government of Prime Minister Stephen Harper has vowed to introduce" (CBC News March 14th 2012). This crime bill has received a lot of criticism and concerns from professionals working within the field of justice and from opposition parties because of its strong punitive approach. The bill introduces "mandatory jail sentences for certain crimes…increases in the maximum sentences… [and] mandatory minimum sentences" (Ibid). Critics argue that focusing more on punitive measures has in other countries, such as the U.S., only generated "more problems than it has solved" (Ibid). More specifically, critics point out that this new crime bill will, for instance, only;

> "(1) increase the costs of prosecuting and incarcerating offenders and leave fewer funds for rehabilitation programs. (2) Remove judges' discretion to tailor sentences to the specifics of a particular case and offender and force them to apply blanket, one-size-fits-all sentences regardless of circumstances. (3) Have little rehabilitative effect on offenders and rather leave them more, not less, likely to re-offend. Critics point to numerous studies showing harsher incarceration laws do not have a deterrent effect on criminals or lower crime rates" (Ibid).

In relation to young offenders, Matthew explained that this new crime bill could mean that CJS might receive fewer referrals from the courts because the judges' discretion to refer a youth to CJS will now be more limited and restricted than before. Hence, "more youth might go to prison more often, some serving adult sentences"[157]. He underlined that this approach is quite regressive and that it is like taking a step backwards in the attempts that CJS and others working within the field of justice have made to improve the justice system. He believes the move is simply political, because "logically nothing supports"[158] this type of punitive approach. Thus, this new crime bill, in addition to giving away responsibility to non-governmental organizations, as has been pointed out before, suggests that the government's current focus is more on punitive measures rather than working towards solving some of

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[156] Ibid
[157] Ibid.
[158] Interview with Matthew Thomas, March 14th 2012, CJS office.

the issues that are actually leading the government to feel like they have to take this punitive approach. This implies that some of the existing broader structural issues that are influencing people in walking down a criminal path, such as racism, marginalization, and Halifax's low-income and poverty rates, might be neglected, and in turn that might only keep perpetuating those issues.

Chapter 5. Conclusions

Youth are often perceived as a population category that is in a transitional and formative phase; they are no longer children, but also not yet adults. Thus, they are considered to be in need of guidance in order to go through this transition phase in such a way that they can become responsible active citizens. Youth who become categorized as at-risk are viewed as being in need of some extra guidance, and thus several organizations are working to provide that guidance to youth at-risk. This thesis has focused on six such organizations located in Halifax, Canada. It should be re-emphasized that the data and findings presented in this thesis are mainly based on interactions with employees from the organizations, and as such the opinions and perspectives of the youth participants of these organizations were not equally represented. Due to the challenges I faced in trying to interact a lot with the youth, I had to re-direct my focus onto the organizations themselves. This led me to explore how organizations working with youth at-risk are shaped and put into action, what approaches and tools they use, and what their perspectives on youth at-risk and crime are. In turn, I have discovered limitations, challenges, and ideals that exist within the work of trying to guide youth away from criminal behaviour, and these discoveries have been discussed throughout the preceding chapters. This thesis started out with an introductory chapter framing the research and laying out the context of the field. It presented and discussed various perceptions of youth and crime, with a focus on responsibility, participation, and the active citizen, as well as it explored the concept of governmentality in relation to youth at-risk. In chapter two I explored the governing of youth by looking at how organizations can be seen as instruments of governmentality, how control is utilized through different tools, and what some of challenges organizations are facing in their attempts of governing youth at-risk. Chapter three shifted the focus more onto the youth themselves by looking at perceptions on and from youth at-risk, what some of the effects have been of youth involved with the organizations, and how family, peers, and perceptions of the future can influence youth and their involvement with crime. Thus, chapter four moved into uncovering and discussing some factors that were identified during my fieldwork as important when working with youth at-risk; offering art-based programming, giving youth a say in their own governance, and connecting and working with communities. The chapter ended with exploring perceptions of the current social and political atmosphere and how it might influence youth and crime.

I have used the concept of governmentality – the "distinctive mode of power focused on populations and their improvements" (Li 2005:388) – in unpacking and exploring the organizations working with

youth at-risk. This has led me to several conclusions. First, my research findings have demonstrated how the organizations can be seen as instruments of governmentality because they are working towards improving the lives of a certain population, namely youth at-risk. Thus, they are taking part in the governing of others through their own 'art of governing' (Foucault 2003, cited in McKee 2009); in choosing their own specific tools and approach. Nevertheless, the concept of governmentality is also a problematic one; as this thesis has shed light on, there are limitations and challenges of governmentality. Organizations working with youth at-risk can try to guide the youth in certain directions, but they can never be in complete control of what direction the youth will take. Thus, the youth have agency over themselves in the sense that they can either resist or follow the guidance given by the organizations. Regardless of whether a youth participates in a program voluntarily or non-voluntarily, it is up to them whether they will actually *engage* with the program.

The research has also shed light on how governmentality becomes disguised within some organizations. This disguising can be through the tools that the organizations uses; such as art, however, though the focus is on the art, the overall aim is not so much about becoming an actual artist. Rather, it is more about using art to uncover some of the underlying issues that youth at-risk have, and thus assisting them in working through these issues. It is also more about learning life-skills through art; skills that the organization identifies as being important for youth, such as communication or team-work. Another form of disguising governmentality is through the development of personal relations between the organization and the youth participant. As my findings suggest, establishing close relationships can be seen as a control mechanism; it is easier to try and govern and steer youth in a certain direction if one develops a personal connection with them.

During my fieldwork I gained the impression that it is important to include the voices of youth at-risk in other people's attempts of governing the youth. In other words, if youth can participate in a program in which they themselves have an interest in, the chances for engagement by the youth becomes much greater, which in turn also means that the chances for the organizations to give guidance to the youth also becomes greater. Furthermore, as youth at-risk are often stigmatized, listening to their voice might make them develop a sense of empowerment which can assist in them opening up about their underlying issues. Identifying the issues of youth will benefit the work of trying to improve the lives of the youth. However, it is not just the voices of the youth that should be considered when looking to guide them. As my research suggests, several factors are important in trying to steer youth towards

becoming responsible active citizens; first, there needs to be accessible and available programs and activities for youth to actually have the opportunities to engage in becoming active citizens. As such, there should be more focus on pro-active programs that offer a variety of different activities for free so that all youth regardless of their financial situation have the opportunity to become engaged. In turn, if these opportunities exist they can work as a deterrent for becoming at-risk in the first place. I have argued that the government should give more support because if they are looking to put responsibility on individuals they should also ensure that opportunities exist for individuals to actually become active citizens and take responsibility. My research suggests that there are not enough accessible opportunities for youth in Halifax, and this might be related to some youth becoming involved in criminal activities.

I have also argued that although the current neo-liberal trend emphasizes the retreat of the state, the state still plays a rather crucial role in the shaping of how, and to what extent, one should control youth. The role of the state has often been deemphasized by scholars looking at the concept of governmentality (McKee 2009), I have demonstrated how it might be useful to not disregard the state when applying the concept because regardless of how small or how big of a role the state plays, it stills remains a powerful actor in the shaping, guiding, and controlling of populations. As shown in this thesis, it does so in the way it distributes money and responsibility to other actors. Who the state decides to distribute this to, and what approach those actors are using, implies how the state perceives one should govern and control. Furthermore, this thesis has also suggested that providing funding to certain organizations and thus giving them responsibility to 'deal' with certain issues could be a way for the government to reduce their workload. In turn, this expands or increases governmentality as other actors outside of the government are taking part in the governing of people. Who government decides to give funding to also reflects what issues the government currently recognizes.

Furthermore, this thesis has argued that it is important to acknowledge that youth who become involved in criminal activities might have been influenced by other factors outside of the influential sphere of the youth. In other words, a youth's environment can have an impact on whether or not they turn to crime. One's family, peers, community, and/or socio-economic status might influence a youth's actions. This also demonstrates the limitations of governmentality and control within organizations as they cannot control the youth's environment. Thus, working with, and trying to improve the youth's social context, could be just as crucial as working with the youth in trying to guide them away from criminal behaviours. However, as the government currently seems to focus more on individual

responsibility and punishment, the more broader and underlying issues that are shaping the environment of the youth become more blurred; issues such as racism, marginalization, and Halifax's low-income and poverty rates. These are not individual problems, but rather broader issues within society and should thus be taken into consideration by the government.

Regardless of what attempts and tools are put in place to try and control and govern youth, it is highly unlikely that society will be completely free of young people who become involved in criminal activities. Thus, the topic of youth at-risk, crime, and the dimensions, limitations, and challenges of control and governmentality will continue to be debated and researched. However, for the purpose of exploring if some of the organization's perspectives and viewpoints discussed in this thesis relate to the perspectives of youth at-risk, further research focusing on youth who have been, or are involved with, organizations working to improve the lives of youth at-risk would be interesting. How do youth perceive the organization's tools of control? What role do the youth play in these control mechanisms and in the governing of themselves? What do they consider important in other's attempts of improving their lives? Exploring and identifying more of the perspectives of youth would be a valuable addition to the discussions on perceptions of youth, crime, and governmentality. It is they who face the challenges of being adolescent, of maybe not having the opportunities I had. It is they who are struggling with uncertain futures, as so many young people today. After all, it is their own lives that are most 'at-risk' and their lives everyone else tries to govern.

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