1 Introduction

On May 23, 2007, 15 year old Jordan Manners was shot and killed in a hallway inside the C. W. Jeffreys high school in the Jane-Finch neighbourhood of Toronto. Four days later, two 17-year-old male suspects, who lived in the same neighbourhood, were arrested and charged with first-degree murder. In the aftermath of this shooting, Jane-Finch appeared in virtually every Canadian news outlet. Despite a lack of insight into the motives of the accused males whose identities were protected due to the Youth Criminal Justice Act, the media heavily framed the shooting as having roots in the very nature of Toronto's racialized poor inner-suburbs (O'Grady, Parnaby, and Schikschneit, 2010). The neighbourhood of Jane-Finch in north-west Toronto has since gained considerable publicity for its high crime rate and concentrated poverty. Today Jane-Finch is considered one of the most stigmatised neighbourhoods in Canada, heavily associated with guns, gangs and racial divide (Richardson, 2008).

A post-war modernist estate accommodating a predominantly poor racialized population, Jane-Finch is by no means the first of its kind to receive such negative and mixed coverage by the media. A 2010 study of deprived communities in Glasgow documented a high recognition of the existence of negative external reputations among residents in peripheral housing estates (GoWell, 2010). In 1999, a study of 500 Danish estates, contended that the concentration of ethnic minorities in an area was among the most important factors in explaining poor external reputation (Skifter-Andersen, 1999). Similarly, in a study focusing on housing estates in Utrecht, Permentier et al. (2011) found that ethnic composition and average income strongly influenced the perceived neighbourhood reputation. The same study concluded that distance to the city centre was negatively associated with neighbouthood reputation, i.e. the farther the neighbourhood from the centre, the worse its external 'image'.

The framing of Jordan Manners' death by the media is llustrative of essentialised and stereotypical representations of poor, ethnic-minority communities. As stressed by O'Grady et al. (2010) "*the 'cause' of the shooting was framed in a fashion that was suggestive of social and/or cultural inferiority (single-parent families, unwed mothers, welfare dependency, a high concentration of subsidized housing, etc.) [...] A dysfunctional local community was seen as ostensibly the root cause of Jordan Manners' death*". The negative reputation of Jane-Finch is established and sustained along not only the axis of race and class, but also gender, since single mothers are the ones commonly blamed for the stigmatisation and criminalisation of the area since they are seen as "*the producers of unruly youth.*" (Narain, 2012: 80).

Narain (2012) underscores that Toronto's lower-income neighbourhoods are often 'racialized', a categorization which is attributed not just to the concentration of visible minority households, but also the lack of social, economic and political resources in these areas (Teelucksingh, 2007). However, while Toronto's racialised poor communities have become social locations of fear and othering (Narain, 2012), celebration of *diversity* has become a popular theme in Toronto's policy and image making, such that many policy documents have proclaimed diversity as the city's biggest strength. But why is it that some communities are celebrated for their diversity, while others are criminalised and stigmatised?

Like many other countries across Western Europe and North America, Canada has experienced considerable economic restructuring in the past decades, which has rendered the market a more prominent actor in social regulation of Canadian cities. Various studies over the years have shown that economic restructuring has intensified the processes of racialization and feminization in the labour market, leading to increased economic, social and political inequality. Racialized groups, immigrants, refugees and women have particularly suffered the consequences of restructuring. As well, many Canadian urban centres have experienced considerable polarisation along the lines of income and race (Galabuzi, 2005; Galabuzi, 2001; Jackson, 2001; Yalnyzian, 1998). Ethnic minority residents and aboriginal peoples are, as stressed by Galabuzi (2005), *"twice as likely to be poor as other Canadians because of the intensified economic and social and economic exploitation of these communities whose members have to endure historical racial and gender inequalities accentuated by the restructuring of the Canadian economy and more recently racial profiling. (17)"*

Galabuzi (2005) has used the term 'racialisation of poverty' to refer to the process by which poverty has become more concentrated and reproduced inter-generationally among racialized group members in cities such as Toronto. This process is manifest through *"a double digit racialized income gap, higher than average unemployment, differential labour market participation, deepening and disproportionate exposure to low income, differential access to housing leading to racial segregation, disproportionate contact with the criminal Justice system, particularly for racialized youth leading to the criminalization of youth and higher health risks. (38)"* The racialisation of poverty in Canadian cities further seems to follow a specific geographic pattern since increasingly, racialized people are settling in peripheral areas which are characterized by high poverty and unemployment rates, welfare dependency, and high school dropout rates, all of which are condition that reproduce poverty. Often they find themselves surrounded by others in similar circumstances in neighbourhoods that are heavily populated and segregated from the rest of society (Ibid).

Racialised groups living in these geographical areas further deal with social deficits such as inadequate access to counselling services, life skills training, child care, recreation, and health care (Galabuzi, 2005; Kazemipur and Halli 2000). The racialization of poverty has further had a major impact on neighbourhood selection and access to adequate housing for new immigrants in Toronto who are much more likely than nonimmigrants to live in racially segregated neighbourhoods with high rates of poverty (Ibid). Hulchanski (2010) similarly argues that the city is falling apart into 'three cities', i.e. three areas with distinct income and racial characteristics, underscoring that the low-income (mainly newcomer or ethnic) neighbourhoods, located in the inner-suburbs of the city, have been consistently facing decreasing income levels since the 1980s.

Despite evidence for segregation and stigmatization of racialized neighbourhoods in Toronto, diversity remains a popular catchphrase with an appealing ring both to policy makers and mainstream society. In fact, Toronto's long-standing immigration history coupled by the introduction of the Canadian Multiculturalism policy in the 1970s have rendered diversity a prominent value for Torontonians (Ahmadi and Tasan-Kok, 2014). Diversity is largely framed as a 'marketable asset' in Toronto's policy context (Boudreau et al., 2009). Kipfer and Keil (2002) underscore that diversity functions as the primary aesthetic backdrop to the city's beautification and development plans. They further argue that the promotion of Toronto as a diverse global city is connected to the social cleansing of inner city Toronto, through racialised segregation, racial profiling and repressive policing. Diversity management in Toronto, thus, may be more pre-occupied with promoting a more competitive city image than tending to the realities of racialised poverty and segregation in the city. It thus appears that while the celebration of diversity has attracted funds and services to inner city areas, stereotyping based on different categories of diversity (especially ethnicity and class) has resulted in the stigmatization and criminalization of poor peripheral neighbourhoods. Herein lies an important question: why is diversity sometimes regarded as an asset and sometimes a deficit? And is it possible to move beyond such dichotomous understanding of the notion? Answering these questions firstly requires understanding what the concept of diversity means and how it has come to be defined in theoretical and policy debates.

What is diversity?

Diversity in urban areas may derive from multiple factors such as behaviour, lifestyles, activities, ethnicity, age, gender and sexuality profiles, entitlements and restrictions of rights, labour market experiences, and patterns of spatial distribution. Traditionally, diversity has been defined adopting different unidimensional approaches which consider diversity across a single dimension at a time (e.g. ethnicity) (Gopalda

and DeRoy, 2015). A common critique of these approaches is that they fail to take account of the complexity of diversity, and the multiple and dynamic affiliations of an individual. Furthermore, unidimensional definitions of diversity may result in generalisations and stereotyping on the basis of categories such as ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic class. By contrast, there have been a number of recent theoretical efforts to capture the complexity of diversity, perhaps the most notable of which is the notion of Super-diversity developed by Steven Vertovec in 2007. Grounded in the critique of the 'ethnic lens' in diversity and migration studies, super-diversity is a multidimensional perspective on diversity which goes beyond the ethnic group as the only object of study and acknowledges the interplay of multiple factors that impact people's living conditions (Vertovec. 2007).

Despite its contribution to capturing the complexity of urban diversity, super-diversity has received criticism for matters ranging from its epistemological shortcomings (difficulties in operationalization and research conduction) to its potential for the promotion of individual liberty at the expense of collectivist notions of interest (see also chapter 2). Placing individual difference at the centre of understanding diversity promotes the individualization of policy whereby all differences are regarded as irreconcilable (Campbell 2006). While failing to address individual differences in interests and needs can result in the exclusion of vulnerable groups, individualization of policy can also create exclusionary and unjust outcomes. Likewise, addressing diversity, without paying attention to the intersection of various forms of oppression and privilege (e.g. on the basis of race, class, gender, ability, and sexuality) can exacerbate exclusion and injustice in urban areas. Theoretical and policy debates on diversity can thus benefit from critical research that takes account of the complex nature of diversity while grounding its understanding of the notion in the pre-existing and intersecting structures of power and privilege in society.

§ 1.1 Gaps in theory

Diversity research in the past decades has resulted in the creation of an extensive body of work on the notion. However, there appear to be a number of theoretical gaps which are not sufficiently addressed by the current state of the art literature:

1 Research on diversity often tends to overlook the complexity and dynamic nature of the emerging diversities in urban areas. Recent efforts to capture this complexity, most notably super diversity (Vertovec, 2007), have maintained an overemphasis on ethnicity.

To really address the complexity, research needs to go beyond the singular focus on ethnicity to address not only multiple categories of difference at once, but also the internal heterogeneity within these categories. It is further important to account for the interconnections between these categories.

2 Much of this research focuses primarily on inner-city areas, leaving out the more remote peripheral and rural areas outside of global cities (Humphris, 2014). This is despite plentiful evidence for both the diversification and the concentration of poverty in suburban outlying areas (see for example Puentes & Warren, 2006; Murphy, 2007; Holliday & Dwyer, 2009). The urban focus begs the question: what is 'outside' global metropolises? And are these areas relevant subjects of inquiry for diversity research?

3 Within the current body of scholarship, there is a tendency to present a 'flat' or 'horizontal' type of differentiation of diversity, which does not account for the various positions and hierarchies within and between different categories of difference (see Humphris, 2014; Meissner and Vertovec 2015). An emphasis on power and position will compliment diversity research both methodologically and analytically.

§ 1.2 Aims and Significance

In light of the issues previously outlined, this study adds to our understanding of urban diversity, as perceived and experienced by those who inhabit, frequent and govern urban areas. In so doing, it aims to contribute to the ongoing theoretical efforts to address complex forms of diversity beyond ethnicity, and more importantly to politicise the debate on diversity. Research on diversity is of particular relevance in this day and time when we are witnessing nationalist and anti-immigrant sentiments gain momentum in many countries across North-America and Europe, which has led to intensified xenophobia and fear of the 'other', leaving uncertain the future of the increasing number of asylum seekers who are fleeing war and violence at home to seek refuge in Western societies such as Britain, Canada and the United States. Recent examples of political developments backed by right-wing populist discourses include Brexit and the rise of politicians such as Donald Trump in the United States and Marine Le Pen in France. A common thread in all of these movements has been the blaming of immigrants and problematisation of Islam as the engine driving global terrorism, discourses which continue to fuel hate crimes against minority groups and threaten the growing diversity of our cities.

The present study further sets out to develop theoretical insights on diversity as a quintessential first step in understanding reality and steering policy change. Research on urban diversity can benefit from rigorous empirical work that improves our situated knowledge of diversity in urban areas. This study thus opts to create a thorough database and conduct a rigorous analysis of the data using qualitative frameworks to unravel how a range of actors including inhabitants, policy makers and community service providers experience and navigate diversity in the lower-income suburban neighbourhood of Jane-Finch in Toronto. The study of diversity in Jane-Finch is of particular relevance for other similar post-war modernist neighbourhoods where inhabitant diversity goes hand in hand with lack of resources and planed infrastructure. By unravelling the potentials and pitfalls of diversity policy and management in Jane-Finch in particular and Toronto in general, this work hopes to facilitate and direct policy change in the Greater Toronto Area and further stimulate the exchange of knowledge among policy makers in Canada and beyond.

The primary question this research seeks to answer based on the Jane-Finch context is the following:

How is diversity experienced at the neighbourhood level, as (a) discourse, (b) social reality, and (c) practice?

The study builds on a framework previously introduced by Berg and Sigona (2013) in which they outline three inter-related dimensions of diversity namely (a) diversity as *discourse*, referring to the public narratives around diversity; (b) diversity as *social reality*, which refers to the descriptive characteristics that render an area diverse; and (c) diversity as *practice*, which concern policies, programs and local practices that aim towards managing diversity. The scale of analysis in this study is further identified as the neighbourhood level. Diversity manifests itself differently in different contexts, at different scales, and in different places. This is due to the fact that there are histories, memories, and identities specific to each neighbourhood which underlie the conjunctures of diversity and difference in that particular context (Berg and Sigona, 2013). Understanding these local manifestations and dynamics is a fundamental step towards unpacking the concept of diversity.

The research question is further investigated in four interconnected chapters. Each chapter engages with the three aforementioned dimensions to various degrees. The first empirical chapter (chapter 3) explores the relationship between the discourses of diversity in Toronto policy and those reproduced and perpetuated by Jane-Finch inhabitants who experience diversity on a daily basis. It does so through the juxtaposition of the primary policy discourses (derived from interviews with policy actors and by analysing policy documents) with inhabitants' everyday experiences

of diversity. The second empirical chapter (chapter 4) focuses on the inter-relation between the two concepts of 'diversity' and 'social cohesion'. Specifically, it analyses the perceptions of the residents of a diverse neighbourhood regarding multiple aspects of social cohesion, namely common values, formal and informal interactions and neighbourhood attachment. It further provides critical insights into socioeconomic and political structures underlying inhabitants' perceptions and interactions in Jane-Finch.

Chapter 5 studies the influence of diversity on inhabitants' perceptions and use of public space. It interrogates the perceptions of and interactions in the public spaces of Jane-Finch and the extent to which public space plays a role in facilitating encounters between diverse groups and catering for diversity in the area. While the first three empirical chapters are pre-occupied with critical explorations of perceptions, discourses, and everyday experiences with diversity, the final empirical chapter (chapter 6) is more practice-oriented and engages matters related to diversity management and service provision in Jane-Finch. It closely investigates a sample of 10 community initiatives in Jane-Finch so as to unravel whether they were successful in terms of achieving their goals and the factors which contributed to their effectiveness. It further discusses the relevance of the experience for other neighbourhood initiatives targeting diversity. A summary of findings in all four empirical chapters as well as how these findings connect to one another is presented in the final chapter.

§ 1.3 Methods, Fieldwork, and Case Study[1]

The research was conducted mainly within the framework of the EU FP7 project: DIVERCITIES - Governing Urban Diversity. Creating social cohesion, social mobility and economic performance in today's hyper-diversified cities. DIVERCITIES was a large-scaled comparative study which focused on case studies across thirteen European countries (Belgium, Denmark, France, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, The Netherlands, Poland, Switzerland, Turkey, the UK) and Canada. The project aimed to critically analyse policies, initiatives, and arrangements in a large number of cities that explicitly or implicitly aim at profiting from urban diversity.[2]

1 More elaborate information regarding methodology and analysis can be found in each chapter.

2 For more information on the DIVERCITIES project visit: https://www.urbandivercities.eu/

Fieldwork was conducted according to a 4-year plan and was carried out in three different stages. During each fieldwork stage, qualitative and participatory techniques (i.e. qualitative interviews, roundtable talks, participant observations, and focus groups) were used in order to gather the empirical data. The first phase of the fieldwork involved 23 semi-structured interviews, conducted during October-November 2013 in Toronto, with selected stakeholders from diverse layers of governance (see Appendix). The second stage of the fieldwork took place between 26 March and 5 April 2014 in Toronto with a set of activities including face to face interviews with 13 community service providers, observations, field trip to the Jane-Finch neighbourhood, and a round table with the participation of number of local scholars, experts and practitioners (see Appendix for the list of the interviewed persons and the list of the participants of the round table). Prior to the field work standard info sheets were prepared for each initiative which encompassed categorized information acquired through public and online sources.

The third and final stage of the fieldwork was carried out between September and November 2014 whereby one-to-one interviews were conducted with 50 residents of Jane-Finch neighbourhood (see Appendix). Informants were mobilized through various channels so as to ensure the diversity of the research sample. My initial plan was to approach the formerly studied community initiatives as entry points into the neighbourhood and then continue by snowballing. Once in the field, however, my research was received with a degree of scepticism at first, both by organization members and Jane-Finch residents. Their reluctance was understandable since Jane-Finch has suffered a so-called 'research fatigue' due having been the target of many research projects over the years, some of which have contributed to the further stigmatisation of the area. Therefore, I had to prove myself worthy of their trust, and ultimately their cooperation. During my time in Jane-Finch I attended multiple community meetings using my previous ties with the community initiatives and local experts. This provided me with the opportunity to establish ties with Jane-Finch residents, activist and community workers, who would later become my gatekeepers into the community. In order to avoid early saturation, I asked for no more than two referrals from any one source while using snowball sampling (see Ahmadi & Tasan-Kok, 2015).

Prior to the interview, each informant was handed a short (one page) informed consent sheet, containing information regarding the aim of the project, the collection of data, its usage and storage. The informants were further ensured that (a) the information shared would be confidential and kept anonymous so as to ensure their privacy; and (b) participation was entirely voluntary and they could choose to discontinue participation at any time without penalty.

The research focuses on the city of Toronto, Canada. The city has 2.79 million inhabitants (5.5 million in the Greater Toronto Area). Half of Toronto residents are immigrants, of which nearly half are members of a racialized group (Ontario Trillium Foundation, 2007). The 2011 National Household Survey (NHS) demonstrated that 46% of the population of the Toronto census metropolitan area (CMA) were foreign-born (immigrants) and 52.4% were Canadian-born (non-immigrants), of which 0.7% had an Aboriginal identity. Meanwhile non-permanent residents constituted 1.7% of the population (Statistics-Canada, 2011). Toronto is considered an economic engine for Canada, generating 10% of Canada's GDP in 2010. Historically, it the second largest metropolitan city of Canada after Montreal since the early 1980s, it has become the largest since due to a combination of economic and demographic factors such as de-industrialisation, the shift to service economy, and changing migration dynamics (Hiller, 2010; Ahmadi & Tasan-Kok, 2015). Toronto was selected for this research due to its reputation as one of the most diverse cities in the world. As well, the longstanding immigration history and the premise of Multi-culturalism and a pluralist tradition in diversity management within Toronto, make this city a curious case for studying inhabitant and policy experiences with urban diversity.

Meanwhile, there have been a number of recent structural and symbolic changes happening in the City of Toronto. After the 1998 amalgamation, Toronto has shifted towards a more neoliberal, de-regulated municipality (Narain, 2012). Initiated by the conservative Harris government in 1998, amalgamation meant the merger of the six municipalities and the former city of Toronto as a cost-saving measure (Lafleur, 2010). Toronto has since seen considerable development in its downtown core and inner city neighbourhoods. Meanwhile, there has been a rapid decline in the formerly middle class suburbs of Toronto that are now amalgamated into the city (Lafleur, 2010). The level of poverty has subsequently increased during the last decade in Suburban Toronto, wherein Canada's 10 most ethnically diverse federal voting constituencies are located (Mustafa, 2013). Toronto's urban/suburban divide, therefor, seems to follow a spatial pattern of race, ethnicity, and poverty.

Within Toronto, the study focuses on the inner-suburban neighbourhood of Jane-Finch. Jane-Finch provides an excellent case study for understanding the complexity of diversity as well as the potentials and pitfalls of its political deployment given its demographic characteristics (showcasing high levels of both diversity and poverty), as well as its positioning within the current context diversity celebration on the one hand, and segregation along racial and income lines on the other. It further provides an opportunity to address the conditions leading to diversity's coupling with social inequalities in other similar peripheral neighbourhoods within and without Toronto.

§ 1.4 Organisation of the thesis

The following chapters of the study are structured as follows. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the policy context in Toronto, followed by a brief history of the case-study area, Jane-Finch. Chapter 3 presents the paper "Is diversity our strength? An analysis of the facts and fancies of diversity in Toronto", which was presented at the Contested Cities conference and is currently under peer-review. Chapter 4 includes the article "Diversity and social cohesion: the case of Jane-Finch, a highly diverse lower income Toronto neighbourhood" published in the journal of *Urban Research and Practice*. Chapter 5 presents the paper "Diversity, public space and places of encounter: unpacking perceptions of public space in a lower-income highly diverse neighbourhood" which is currently under review. Chapter 6 comprises of the paper "Serving diverse communities: the role of community initiatives in delivering services to poverty neighbourhoods" published in *Cities*. Finally, Chapter 7 summarises the research findings and presents the answer to the research question. It concludes with a discussion on the relevance of the findings for broader debates, and the lessons and implications they carry for future research and policy concerning urban diversity.

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