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Contemporary studies that track the new racialization of poverty in Canada require an historical account. The history we invoke in North America is often borrowed from the British poor laws, a literature that is severed from its counterpart: the histories of racial slavery, racial thinking, White bourgeois power and the making of White settler societies. The effects of severing the history of poor relief from racial classifications and racism(s) are far reaching. Systems of oppression come to be seen as separate structures in which the New Poor Law appears as a domestic policy in Britain unrelated to racial thinking and racial slavery. This paper argues that attempts at managing and civilizing the poor in Britain and Upper Canada were racial projects suited to colonial ambitions and enterprises. Our histories of social welfare are deeply tied to the creation of White bourgeois subjects enlisted into the management and extension of empire. This history continues to organize contemporary social policy debates, and views on globalization and the racialization of poverty.

Key words: Canada, racism, racialization of poverty, policy, globalization

The currency of race as a critical dynamic in policy analysis needs to be situated in a history of social welfare that addresses racial slavery and debates about emancipation. Anticolonial scholars and imperial historians have demonstrated how domestic policies in Britain are intimately tied to events

in the colonies. Social policy historians have yet to take up this literature and examine how the reform of the poor laws was debated alongside views about slavery, racial thinking and a politics of race in both metropolitan and colonial sites. When situated in the larger context of reform that gripped political economists, evangelists and parliamentarians, we see how racial thinking helped organize changes to poor relief and notions of the deserving and non-deserving poor, so endemic to industrialization.

These observations are all the more relevant given the foundational policy of social welfare history—the New Poor Law, was enacted in the same year as the Total Abolition of Colonial Slavery—the Emancipation Act (Barclay, 2001). These historic pieces of legislation deeply influenced one another in spite of a sustained history that casts the New Poor Law as a policy shift that arose out of the internal workings of English state formation (Englander, 1998; Lees, 1998). As one of the markers of industrialization, the reform assisted in the organization of a capitalist labor market and relations between a middle and working class in Britain. In the last thirty years, feminist historians have argued that this was a profoundly gendered moment which marked women and children as dependents, within an imposed male breadwinner model (Clark, 2000).

By engaging with the literature on colonial slavery the analytic gaze shifts beyond the domestic and class politics of the poor law debate. While political economists sought to discredit the types of dependency poor relief produced, their discussions also had an effect on debates about the slave trade and emancipation. Although they viewed slavery as a barrier to the natural motive to labor, economists were less convinced about the economic benefits of emancipation. Abolitionists who fought to end the slave trade and slavery adopted these domestic anxieties about dependency and sought to prove slaves could be "free" independent economic agents. Slave-servants and the Black resistance movement in England were caught struggling for both wages and their eligibility for poor relief.

Pro-slavery forces also entered into the fray. Apparently, slaves in the colonies were much better off compared to the dispassionate system of poor relief and the scandalous labor practices in Britain. Instead, planters made poor relief available

in the colonies—to poor Whites—in order to reinforce White solidarity and retain control over the slave population. These discursive battles were steeped in racial thinking and beliefs about the pauper race, African versus Creole slaves, and laborers who might be beneficially imported from China and India. In this paper, the author maps out the entwined relationship between poor relief, slavery and racial thinking in our historiography of social welfare. By exploring these historical ties, the author shows how contemporary debates about the retraction of the welfare state and the "discovery" of the racialization of poverty are necessarily altered.

Poor Law Reform—The Great Transformation(s)

The history of social welfare in North America draws from the British literature on the poor laws and notions of the deserving and non-deserving poor. In addition, scholars have noted how welfare reform in Canada and the United States mirrors the type of policymaking and social disruption that ushered in the New Poor Law in Britain (1834). The retraction of social assistance and the increased surveillance of recipients are often traced to this time period. In Britain, "the principle of a legal, compulsory, secular national system of poor relief was established in a series of enactments that were consolidated in the celebrated statute known as the 43rd Elizabeth of 1601" (Englander, 1998, p. 2). Specified types of relief existed for various classes of the needy—"alms and almshouses for the aged and infirm, apprenticeship for children, work for the able-bodied and punishment for the work-shy" (Englander, 1998, p. 2). The three basic features that developed in the fifteen and a half thousand parishes in England and Wales consisted of the workhouse, outdoor relief and settlement regulations (Englander, 1998, p. 2). Outdoor relief was administered outside of the workhouse and embraced all those employed and unemployed whose income fell below a minimum subsistence level. Those who were unable or unwilling to work were sent to workhouses.

Population growth, deteriorating living conditions, new technologies and the end of the Napoleonic wars in 1815, brought about an increase in need and insecurity among the

laboring poor. By the 1820s, the cost of poor relief became a flashpoint for philosophers, scientists and politicians who hammered away at a supposedly dependency-creating system that, in their accounts, turned laborers into paupers. Providing outdoor relief was thought to make laborers less disposed to subject themselves to the discipline of the emerging wage economy, which adversely affected the labor market and reduced productivity. Instead, the morally superior approach of voluntary charity was promoted (Lees, 1998; Poynter, 1969; Rose, 1971).

The Reform Act of 1834 resulted in the abolition of outdoor poor relief to the able-bodied and those who were constituted as dependents for almost the whole of the next century (Dean, 1991). If they were without work, the able-bodied and their dependents would be forced to enter the workhouse. The principle of less eligibility was applied, through which the condition of the pauper in the workhouse was kept well below that of the poorest independent laborer. The logic was if brutal conditions were maintained in the workhouse, only the truly destitute would enter. Karl Polanyi dubbed the Poor Law Reform *The Great Transformation*, a social policy intervention that gave rise to a national capitalist labor market (Dean, 1991, p. 172). Abolishing outdoor relief would force the pauper to accept any employment, it would reduce taxes, improve wages, increase productivity, reduce crime rates and increase morality and frugality. The New Law included the famous Bastardy Clauses, in which unmarried mothers were forced to accept full responsibility for their children, relieving fathers from all liability. Clark (2000) describes how this official policy could not be put in practice due to local resistance and the complications of its implementation.

The Pauper and Slave Subject

If one looks at this time period with a lens attuned to race and the colonies, one sees how Britain was engaged in building the empire, in colonizing and enslaving peoples in distant lands, and in establishing itself as the leading slave-trading nation. The Haitian revolt, the Baptist War, slave resistance and colonial wars across empire were matched by concerns

about the disruption of traditional and paternal class relations at home. Eric Williams, an anti-colonial scholar, argued in *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944) that the industrialized economy cannot be understood without attending to the economic profits of the slave trade, enslaved labor, plantation crops, raw materials and the development of British manufacturers. In *The Black Jacobins* (1938), C. L. R. James presents the history of revolutionary Haiti (1791-1803) and its economy as one bound to Europe, Africa and the Americas.

Anti-colonial theorists and current studies on imperial histories direct us towards examining the ways in which the New Poor Law and the Total Abolition of Colonial Slavery deeply influenced one another. As local unrest in Britain and slave rebellions in the colonies grew, debates in parliament were focused on the conduct of the pauper and slave subject and their readiness for economic "freedom." Both populations could not simply inhabit this freedom. Each population had to be examined in order to set in place the various reforms and policies required for their improvement and amelioration. The supposed characteristics of the pauper and slave subjects were often contrasted in political battles over the elimination of poor relief, the slave trade and emancipation. A proliferation of writings, studies and parliamentary hearings were conducted for the forty years prior to the passing of both acts.

Social scientists, Christian evangelicals, political econo- mists, liberal reformers and parliamentarians attempted to document the daily lives of the pauper and slave population(s) and measure their ability to be improving economic sub- jects. Townsend's *A Dissertation on the Poor Laws* (1787) im- mediately made population a contested domain, tied to the economy. Applying the laws of determinism, he argued that the poor law system itself led to poverty and overpopulation. In the same year of Townsend's dissertation, Prime Minister William Pitt recommended to William Wilberforce that he lead a parliamentary campaign for the Abolition of the Slave Trade (1787). For twenty years the campaigns produced sta- tistics from an endless series of government publications on population, migration, capital, labor, production and trade, used by both abolitionists and the plantocracy. Both the abo- litionists and the planters had an interminable series of expert

witnesses who spoke before generations of official investigative committees, which resulted in a multi-volume series of Parliamentary Papers.

Wilberforce's first abolition bill (1792) was struck down in parliament and replaced by an amendment introduced by Henry Dundas (Pitt's Home Secretary) that would call for gradual abolition. Amelioration policies were introduced during the slave trade and emancipation debates in order to improve and civilize the slave. In this racist configuration, the African slave was debased and targeted as a separate race, compared to the improved creole slaves who were "generally believed to be more submissive, more efficient, and less of a security threat to plantation enterprises" (Fergus, 2000, p. 176). The amelioration policies mollified parliamentarians distressed about the influence of the French Revolution and the slave revolt in St. Domingue (Haiti). If abolitionists were keen to lament the horrors of the slave trade, support for Black emancipation and an independent Black modern state was another story. During the first bill, plans to import Chinese labor to Trinidad were drafted and later initiated. Extending the racial taxonomy further, the Chinese were described as a "free race of cultivators ... distinct from the Negroes." Chinese laborers were expected to identify with White proprietors, acting as a "buffer population" that would protect the British colonies from further insurrection (Fergus, 2000, p. 189).

At the Second Reading of the Abolition Bill in the House of Commons (1806–1807), there emerged a new publication that had burst on the scene of social science–public policy: *An Essay on the Principle of Population, As it Affects the Future Improvement of Society* (1798). Thomas Robert Malthus' thesis blamed the poor laws for encouraging improvident marriages and the proliferation of children, which in turn led to lower living standards and high relief levels. Designed to target the political problem of the teeming poor in London, Malthus' population principle—that populations grow at a geometrical rate versus subsistence that only grows at an arithmetical rate—became a central technology in the battle about the future of the poor laws and the abolition of the slave trade.

Depicted as anti-social, degenerate and insinuating themselves into the natural order of political economy, paupers

were not considered as rational subjects or granted fully human status. Viewed as a separate and contaminated race, this representation drew on imagery from Africa or often turned to the Irish, whose history of colonization positioned them in the nineteenth century as non-White (Loomba, 1998). Malthus pointed to the Irish as an uncivilized group capable of contaminating the "general" population. The containment of this problem was concerned with maintaining White bourgeois power at home and throughout the Empire—a racial purity that was threatened by destitute White women breeding without restriction.

In relation to the slave trade, the planters utilized the population principle for their own purposes. The planters argued that if the population principle was natural and inevitable then slavery itself did not determine the population dynamics of any country. In this view, the plantocracy—hoping amelioration would assuage political pressure—argued that the slave trade and the loss of African life was a normal illustration of Malthus' scientific principle (Drescher, 2002). Nonetheless, the *Slave Trade Bill of 1807* originated in the House of Lords and the king himself was credited for the achievement in celebration of the jubilee year of his reign. Although influenced by war, resistance, revolt, petitions, public clamor and threatened boycotts, the Bill heightened the belief that in England "a righteous question needs only to be fully revealed and understood to be carried" (Davis, 1975, p. 446). As the drive for emancipation moved along and poor relief concerns grew, various studies and the writings of political economists remained central. Each population was considered for their levels of dependency, degeneracy and their willingness to labor and participate in a free labor market. Were the pauper and slave subject ready for economic "freedom?" What was required in order to assist these subjects into economic freedom?

Political economists who advanced notions of free labor were faced with numerous contradictions at home and in the colonies. As the category of free and enslaved labor began to impinge on one another as political problems, the demand for clearer distinctions escalated. Adam Smith weighed in on the debate, casting his well-worn phrase that a *free laborer doubled the output of a slave*. Although sceptical of his pronouncement,

political economists capitalized on his distinction between free and unfree labor to attack poor relief, even though Smith never spoke against the poor laws (Drescher, 2002). For Burke and Townsend, slavery was an impediment to the free market and an artificial restriction on enterprise, just like the poor laws. Townsend argued that slavery and poor relief were a threat to the natural motive to labor. In this way, slavery entered the poor law debate as a discursive strategy to help split the re- spectable laborer from the less desirable pauper. Poor law offi- cials and administrators mobilized the apparent characteristics of the slave to help explain the behaviour of relief recipients. Reformers argued that poor relief took away responsibility and fostered a *slave mentality* in which support from the state was seen as a right (Clark, 2000). Nassau Senior, author of the Poor Law Report, concluded that the poor laws entitled men to "all a slave's security for subsistence without his liabilities to punishment" (Kern, 1998, p. 428).

As poor law reformers and political economists applied measurements and images of slavery in support of abolish- ing the poor laws, the plantocracy countered with the claim that the West Indian slave preferred his situation to that of the English peasant. The discursive and economic battle extend- ed far beyond the writings of political economists, providing abundant fodder for the prolonged parliamentary debates. According to the planters, at least the children of slaves did not fall victim to unfeeling parish-overseers who have no *private interest* in their preservation. Laborers in England were re- ferred to as "slaves of necessity," working in mines that killed them, unlike the idyllic rural and exotic picture they painted of West Indian slavery (Davis, 1975, p. 462). Walter Fawkes, the Member of Parliament for Yorkshire, was outraged by these claims and argued that the worker in Britain is "animated with the proud feeling of country which pervades every bosom, from the lowest to the highest class of our community" (Davis, 1975, p. 451).

Fawkes' nationalist cry of unity, however, was issued alongside great dissent in Yorkshire, where cropper organi- zations were strongly suppressed. As Fryer reminds us, the same capitalist class in Britain was using the labor of children in the Lancashire mills to produce the textiles exported to

Africa for the purchase of slaves. When destitute parents were "admitted to the parish workhouses, their children were taken from them and compulsorily bound apprentice to the cotton manufacturers" (Fryer, 1988, p. 15). These overlapping debates were further complicated by the demands injected by the Black resistance movement.

The Black Poor and Black Resistance Movement

Slaves, ex-slaves and Black loyalists living in London, Bristol, Liverpool and Glasgow (about 17,000 in the 1790s) brought practical links between the poor laws and emancipation to the fore (Killingray, 2003). African sailor Olaudah Equiano helped create an abolitionist movement in London by enlisting people like Granville Sharp to study law and represent those in London attempting to resist re-enslavement. The Black resistance movement forced Britain to face the system of racial slavery it had attempted to confine to the slave colonies. Fugitive slaves, such as Jonathan Strong, John and Mary Hylas, and Thomas Lewis, launched a number of legal cases including the famous Somerset Case, a case where Granville Sharp successfully argued that it was illegal for masters to compel their slaves to leave the country. This decision helped reposition slavery as an alien innovation from the colonies, which contrasted with and reaffirmed the long established law, custom, and constitution of England (Lorimer, 1992). This was beneficial to theorists conceptualizing and promoting notions of free labor and private property at the time.

These domestic cases were crucial for identifying the cause of anti-slavery with notions central to political economists: liberty, free labor and private property, all part of England's prized social order. In this way, Black resistance continued to threaten Empire, yet it also became folded into upholding British standards for White liberal reformers and philanthropists. Political economists objected to the personal proprietorship, which gave the master control over the body of a slave, thereby producing dependence. This deprived the slave of the freedom of selling of his labor and removed his self interest in a reasonably free market (Davis, 1975). However, this concern did not translate the notion of selling one's labor into the right

to wages in England. Entering into a contract with a slave, at this time, implied the slave was a free person and thereby was an act of manumission. As Lorimer argues, the courts never came to a clear decision on this issue, which plagued the slave-servants' fight for payment of wages and eligibility for poor relief (1992, pp. 68-69).

Since the poor law left paupers to rely on the support of their parish of origin, destitute Blacks were denied relief. For the few that managed to fulfill residency requirements, the slave's wage-less state could not prove a hiring had occurred, thereby again rendering them ineligible for relief (Lorimer, 1992). Instead, the concerns for this population came under the scrutiny of abolitionists, Christian reformers and philanthropists who ran private charities and started a movement to send London's destitute Blacks back to Africa. Depending on the literature, the Sierra Leone project was either an example of pan-Africanism lead by Olaudah Equiano, a project run by White philanthropists committed to ridding London of this degenerate population, or a paternalistic and racist experiment in cheap Black labor that might be a handy substitute for slavery (Drescher, 2002; Linebaugh & Rediker, 2000; Lorimer, 1992).

Abolitionists capitalized on this opportunity to prove that Blacks could become free laborers and reach a level of natural reproduction. Awash in debates about dependency that borrowed heavily from the poor law discourse, the pro-slavery opinion was eager to portray ex-slaves as incapable of self-reliance. London's destitute Blacks, whose loyalist attachment and military service to Great Britain was quickly forgotten, became tied into West African colonization. Distressed that so few were willing to go in 1787, one philanthropist requested that all forms of charity to Black paupers be stopped. In typical imperial-economist prose, he argued that charity would blind them to their own self-interest.

The Poor Whites and White Supremacy

While the *Black Poor* became central to colonization experiments in West Africa, in the slave colonies it was the poor Whites that were a growing problem. Viewed as a social problem in terms of class, gender and sexuality, poor Whites threatened to

destabilize the legitimacy of White supremacy—in the colonies and the metropole. While White elites had little sympathy for lower-class Whites, poor relief measures were instituted when anti-slavery activities increased and White colonial society was beginning to fracture. The main criterion for poor relief eligibility was not poverty per se, but the possession of *White skin*. Poor relief delineated the social and sexual boundaries between free Whites and unfree Blacks. Impoverished White women represented the largest group of poor relief claimants in Barbados and Jamaica. Poor relief programs were a way to regulate the conduct and sexuality of poor White women in an attempt to secure White solidarity, White supremacy and the legitimacy of the slavocracy. Any suspicions of sexual and conjugal unions with Black men meant that poor White women were immediately disqualified from assistance (Jones, 1998). Black men faced dismemberment, castration and execution for having sexual relations with White women, in order to limit the size of the free non-White group in colonized society while sustaining an enslaved labor force (Beckles, 1999). While wealthier White women were slaveholders, destitute White women became a symbol of the breakdown of White patriarchal family structures "critical to the formation and maintenance of a newly emerging White identity" (Jones, 1998, p. 26).

The practice of poor relief was connected to the extension of White supremacy, a policy used to facilitate clearer class, gender and race boundaries through notions of the deserving and non-deserving poor. Responsibility for the welfare of old, sick and infirm Blacks rested with planters. When it came to the presence of impoverished Blacks in the colonies, Beckles describes how the poor laws were used to deny their freedom. In order to prevent the freeing of slaves, an annuity was added to the manumission fee. Poor law officials insisted on this "as one way to prevent slave owners from freeing old and infirmed persons who could not reasonably be expected to earn their subsistence" (Beckles, 1999, p. 33). By the mid-1820s, increased efforts to alleviate poverty, strengthen ties with White paupers, and to police more strenuously the interactions between Whites and people of color were necessary to the unification of Whites and preservation of racial

segregation (Newton, 2003). Authorities refused to extend poor relief to non-Whites, a policy that remained in effect until well after emancipation. Further connections between poverty and racial supremacy occurred post-emancipation.

While the New Poor Law saw a more central role for the workhouse system in Britain, in the colonies, it took on an even larger role. Once the emancipation act was passed, workhouses sprung up in efforts by the plantocracy to sustain output levels and create a docile and obedient workforce. While paupers (racially coded as non-White) at home were a danger to domestic security, poor Whites in the colonies struck at the legitimacy of a regime of racial subjugation.

The Bill for the *Total Abolition of Colonial Slavery Throughout the British Dominions* was passed, taking effect on August 1, 1834. The bill enacted an eight-year apprenticeship system for former slaves, higher sugar duties, and a grant of twenty million pounds to appease the planters. Poor conditions remained in the colonies and apprentices were still liable to corporal punishment. Advocates continued to push until the apprenticeship program was cut short by two years before the fixed date. The twenty million pounds represented 40% of the government's annual average income at the time, and it was three times England's annual expenditure on the poor laws. Working-class radicals like William Cobbett were outraged that poor Britons would be paying for the freedom of "comfortable" West Indian slaves (Himmelfarb, 1983). While many viewed apprenticed labor as slavery under another name, the colonial secretary argued that it had merely been borrowed from the kind of contract labor and the metropolitan apprentices that existed in England (Drescher, 2002, p. 138).

The *Poor Law Reform* of 1834 lead to the abolition of outdoor relief to the able-bodied, the confinement of violators in the workhouse and the creation of a centralized administration. While Bentham's plan to build workhouses was rejected, his idea did receive support from abolitionists such as Wilberforce. Hundreds of Houses of Industry, based on the panopticon principles of central surveillance and regimentation, could resolve the domestic labor problem. Connections between slavery and the poor laws did not end in 1834. In fact, the relevance of the poor law system in the slave colonies only increased as a way

to secure the labor market. Britain's 540,559 Black slaves in the Caribbean did not become "free" overnight as apprenticeship, along with the systematic export of Indian labor to the Caribbean, was used by planters to save the sugar economy and contribute to Britain's overseas wealth (Fryer, 1988; Bolaria & Li, 1988). A system of Trespass and Vagrancy Acts became key to the transformation to free labor. In this case, these policies remain strategies for prolonging slave labor and White patriarchal capitalism through the increased surveillance and criminalization of those in and outside of the labor market.

White Settler Societies and the Racialization of Poverty

Social policy theorists and social historians have embraced Britain's historical narrative—and its absences—as a framework from which relief policies in North America can be understood. We reproduce the argument about the deserving and non-deserving poor and the separation of the respectable laborer from the degenerate pauper. A rich scholarly literature debates whether the New Poor Law of 1834 was an epochal shift in which the old class compact of poor relief was broken, ushering in an unregulated market (Fox-Piven & Cloward, 1998; Kern, 1998; Wood, 1998). In addition, this analysis is extended by theories that debate the degrees to which pauper emigration to Upper Canada was central to relieving Britain of its superabundant poor. In this way, we replicate a class-based history that severs poor relief policies from Britain's colonial practices and our own racial colonial project of establishing a White settler society.

Poor relief and pauper emigration gathered its political coherence alongside ideas and studies about racial hierarchies that were not simply imposed upon the colonies. Upper Canadians participated in the debates about the poor laws, slavery and aboriginal populations at home and in Britain. They were particularly influential as experts and witnesses in Parliamentary Reports concerned with reforming and saving Aboriginal peoples. Upper Canadians were instrumental in how notions of Britishness would be constructed back home. As Stoler (1997) reminds us, Victorian settlers had well inscribed notions of class that were constructed on a racial

nomenclature whose primary reference was the colonial encounter. In this view, class formation and bourgeois sensibilities were organized by ideas about race, racial superiority, and Britain's relationship to its colonies.

Debates over the Past and its Interpretation are Never Limited to History

Historical arguments are resurrected in order to explain current phenomena. The history of social welfare we ascribe to is used to situate policy shifts today, including the retraction of the welfare state and the emergence of the racialization of poverty. For example, in Ontario, since 1995, the 21.6% cut to welfare benefits, administrative regulations that have disqualified thousands, the reintroduction of workfare programs and the Spouse in the House rule are policies that harkens back to the New Poor Law. Just as the Poor Law Reform was key to industrialization, welfare reforms today are considered instrumental to the entrenchment of a corporate transnational global economy. In the United States, for example, Kern has argued that Clinton's welfare bill was an integral part of what he calls the *Great Capitalist Restoration Project* (Kern, 1998). To retrieve this history to make sense of globalization blinds us to the relationship between racial thinking and poverty in our past and present social policies. This discussion views the New Poor Law outside of its colonial counterpart and ensures that globalization is similarly disconnected from its colonial roots. Contemporary studies that stress the racialization of poverty do not capture or productively theorize the colonial and racial underpinning of social welfare.

While connections between race and poverty have been debated in various ways in the United States, in the last few years researchers have tracked the rise of poverty among racialized groups in Toronto, Ontario and Canada more generally (Galabuzi, 2006; Halli, 1998; Ornstein, 2000; 2006). The racialization of poverty is a new term that scholars and policy analysts have introduced to reveal the material deprivations of people of color and how widespread everyday racism contributes to economic, social, legal and political exclusion. While studies that stress the quantitative matter of population breakdown are important, they tend to present race and

racism as new or newly problematic. Unlike the United States, where race has been featured in social welfare debates, it still positions class against race. This is evident in the White working class backlash against affirmative action programs.

In Canada, a race-absent narrative deeply penetrates our national story. An increase in the number of racialized poor becomes tied to the increase of immigrants of color to Canada since World War II. This approach reproduces the idea that race is solely about non-White residents who are always considered recent members of the nation-state. The history of European immigration remains race-less and often disconnected from the forms of genocide and land theft policies experienced by aboriginal populations—all crucial to the making of a White settler society. As Razack (2002) argues, "European settlers thus *become* the original inhabitants and the group most entitled to the fruits of citizenship" (p. 2).

If we look closely, however, these historical dynamics can be revealed when contemporary studies on poverty attend to peoples' experience of racism and views on race. In a recent study of low-income families in Ontario, low-income White women who felt attacked by social assistance workers never invoked race as one of the instruments of their exclusion (Neysmith, Bezanson, & O'Connell, 2005). Either the invisibility of Whiteness or the partial membership into White bourgeois society ensures that these women (and others) aggressively reject racism as an important variable in understanding poverty. Racial thinking continues to be structured by and through views about poverty and social welfare. Indeed, poverty in White communities is often upheld as evidence of the lack of racism in society. For women of color the experience of welfare surveillance was inseparable from the racist construction and denigration of their communities.

In *Telling Tales* (2005), it was clear how White Euro-Canadians were naturalized as citizens, while participants of color, in spite of their county of birth or generations here, pointed to their always-questioned status as Canadians. When responding to demographic questions in our study, the term "purebred 100% Canadian" was invoked by a number of participants to signify Canadian-born, White and English speaking. Terms such as purity, breeding and the notion that

identity can be quantified echo earlier Victorian practices that attempted to define and measure populations at home and in the colonies, highlighted so starkly by the eugenics movement (McLaren, 1978). Current manifestations of making identity something knowable and measurable can be found in the new resident card and the variety of biometric schemes that attempt to capture exact eye color in place of previous preoccupations with skull size (Stepan, 1982).

Discussions about identity intensified when discussions turned to the allocation of state resources. One family that identified itself as purebred Canadian was distressed about being overrun by immigrants of color who are offered the best jobs and education opportunities, and are able to drain our welfare system. Ironically, the family's declaration that "White people are under attack" finally acknowledges its racial status of Whiteness. A woman in the study who described herself as African Canadian put a different spin on this. She remarked on the double humiliation of participating in mandatory training programs for those on social assistance, attended by many new immigrants. Not only did it elide her fifth generation presence as a Canadian citizen, but the new immigrants viewed her presence in the program as her failure to capitalize on the advantage of being English speaking and Canadian born.

In another situation, an Aboriginal man noted how Native peoples in northern Ontario were pitted against the Francophone community when attempting to access federal funding. His analysis was also formed in relation to what he perceived as the unwarranted claims of the Métis peoples, since in his mind you were either Native or not. Many of these characterizations are rooted in Britain's colonial history, the building of a White settler society and in contemporary policies that attempt to celebrate multiculturalism. The weight of historical and colonial practices is ever-present yet at the same time absent in contemporary studies that stress the racialization of poverty.

Conclusion

In order to understand the retraction of the welfare state we must attend to the colonial and racial antecedents of

social welfare. These show us how racial categories are politically active, constructed and calculated over time in relation to studies and policies about poverty. By viewing systems of oppression and notions of race and class as separate structures, disciplining the poor appears unrelated to racial subjugation, racial slavery and White supremacy. The extensive and connected terrains through which empire circulates, and how it works to define and secure White bourgeois power in metropolitan and colonial sites need to be scrutinized. Histories of social welfare that focus primarily on class formation or studies that view class and race as separate phenomena really miss how mutually constitutive these relations continue to be. Meanwhile, the contemporary application of the racialization of poverty adds to the elision of the racial history of social welfare. While the numbers of people living in poverty require urgent attention we must also interrogate how the making of racial subjects, including White bourgeois subjects enlisted into colonial and settler projects are part of our historical and contemporary analysis of poverty.

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