

**Diversity is (not) good enough:  
Unsettling White Settler Colonialism within Toronto's Queer  
Service Sector**

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Social Justice Education

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**Abstract**

This dissertation explores the ways in which queer service provision and non-Indigenous lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, and trans (LGBTQ)-identified service providers in downtown Toronto can contribute to and become complicit in white settler colonial projects. During this study based on in-depth interviews, forty-three research participants were asked about their experiences working within their respective queer service organizations, and, more specifically, about their understandings of how diversity, anti-racism, and anti-colonialism are practiced. Findings highlight how queer service provision, particularly its perpetual crisis and capacity to care for queerness, can obscure the ways the organizations themselves contribute to the naturalization of a hierarchy of oppression that centralizes the needs of white queers. Additionally, I consider the narratives of white service providers' goodness as easily relocating Indigenous peoples as "problems" and "pathology" who then become unworthy of care. Moreover, this inquiry theorizes how the narratives offered by white service providers fit Indigenous peoples and people of colour into stories of Canadian multiculturalism. I show how non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers' evocations of diversity and inclusion easily deflect their implicatedness in white settler colonialism. Although queer service provision is a rich site of queer politics, it

continues to be a site that is tied to state-sanctioned funding regimes and neoliberal models of care used to naturalize Indigenous peoples' elimination, erasure, and assimilation. Thus, this research contends that queer communities in downtown Toronto operate to sustain white supremacy and settler colonialism. I conclude with a set of questions that asks non-Indigenous service providers to engage with how they participate (often unknowingly) in white settler colonial projects, and move beyond queer service provision as a site of emancipation in order to meaningfully support Indigenous resurgence and decolonization.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1. Introduction

Indigenous peoples<sup>1</sup> in what is now known as Canada continue to experience the violent effects of colonialism in their everyday lives. While much has been written on the historical role white settlers have played in the on-going genocide of Indigenous peoples, contemporary evocations of settler colonialism, particularly within queer<sup>2</sup> and trans<sup>3</sup> communities in Toronto, Canada, continue to receive little scrutiny. The scholarship theorizing settler colonialism explores how processes of elimination naturalize the erasure, assimilation, and dispossession of Indigenous peoples (Cannon, 2014a; Smith, 2010, 2012; Tuck & Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2013; Tuck & Yang, 2012; Wolfe 1999, 2006, 2013). I consider how modern queer service provision—educational, social service, and health care organizations that primarily serve lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer (LGBTQ) identified service users—exists to sustain white supremacist and settler colonial politics that continue to deride and repudiate Indigenous life. White supremacy can be defined as a system of race-based preferences that remain deeply ingrained within contemporary North America (hooks, 2003; Razack, 1998, 2008; Thobani, 2007). Moreover, settler colonialism is “predicated upon discourses of [I]ndigenous displacement” (Byrd, 2011, p. xvii). White supremacy and settler colonialism are insidious and often taken-for-granted ways of organizing social life.

Compelling evidence contends that the eliminationist logics of settler colonialism, a concept proposed by Wolfe (1999, 2006, 2013), remain firmly intact within seemingly emancipatory queer politics and festivals in Canada (Greensmith & Giwa, 2013; Sykes & Lloyd, 2012). These projects of elimination evolved out of larger historical practices used to naturalize the settlement process (Wolfe, 1999). 2-Spirited<sup>4</sup> people continue to experience the adverse

effects of settler colonialism within Pride Toronto's queer politics and events in forms of symbolic inclusion, erasure, and assimilation (Greensmith & Giwa, 2013). For example, when 2-Spirited people attend larger Pride Toronto affiliated events, they experience tremendous racism and sexism, since their bodies are assumed to be outside of the white queer settler imaginary (Greensmith & Giwa, 2013). The routine normalization of settler colonialism within neoliberal queer formations in Canada typically prioritizes the wants and desires of white gay cismen<sup>5</sup>, whose emancipation becomes folded into the nation-state (e.g., same-sex marriage rights). Therefore, I extend the critique of white supremacy and settler colonialism to queer service provision to explore how white service providers come to perceive Indigenous peoples and their potentials, and how these narratives contribute to white supremacist and settler colonial projects and logics. The analytical referent of white settler colonialism—in particular, the imbrication of white supremacy and settler colonialism—will be used within this dissertation as a way to expose the conditions that make the erasure of Indigenous peoples from the contemporary queer landscape in Canada possible.

Settler colonialism is at once located within the institutions and the practices of service providers. As such, in my work, I follow Wolfe (2006), who argued that “settler colonizers come to stay [and thus] invasion is a structure not an event” (p. 388). For Wolfe (2006), settler colonialism resides within structures that foster and require Indigenous peoples' eradication. Veracini's (2012) work builds on Wolfe (2006) regarding the degree to which settler colonial institutions facilitate processes of Indigenous erasure, suggesting that settler colonialism is temporal, since it resides within events. I make use of Veracini (2012) and Wolfe's (2006) scholarship to theorize how and under what conditions settler colonialism resides within the practices used in service provision to illustrate the magnitude to which Indigenous erasure can

extend even beyond the institutional. I therefore look to everyday actions that are contained within events of the sort that Veracini (2012) described; specifically, I look at whether the practices of service providers operationalize white supremacy and settler colonialism within their everyday work life. The everydayness of settler colonialism, what Rifkin (2013) described as quotidian, structures the settlement process through “dispossession, effacement, and management” (p. 232)—used to naturalize Indigenous peoples’ erasure. I examine the extent to which queer service provision is a white supremacist and settler colonial institution that subjugates and inflicts routine violence upon Indigenous peoples and people of colour<sup>6</sup>. As such, a settler colonial analytic provides this research with the capacity to address how “the logic[s] of superiority, of primacy, [and] of genocide” (Mikdashi, 2013, p. 32) impact and are mobilized within the institution of queer service provision and the practices of service providers.

To accomplish this, I frame the analysis of this dissertation, particularly its focus on uncovering the everyday nature of white settler colonialism, within a qualitative in-depth interview study. Evolving out of the narratives and stories offered by the research participants, I explore how white settler colonial logics and projects can be maintained within queer service provision. In late 2012 and for the majority of 2013, I interviewed forty-three LGBTQ-identified research participants who all worked or had worked in some capacity within a queer organization in downtown Toronto, Canada, either as employees or volunteers.

In order to illuminate the multifaceted ways in which white supremacy and settler colonialism can easily percolate within queer service provision, I begin this chapter with the significance and focus of this dissertation research, as well as its associated research questions. I also provide the necessary context and background knowledge, as well as an overview of this dissertation in the form of chapter summaries. In its entirety, this dissertation research

conceptualizes how white supremacy and settler colonialism manifest on the ground and are made to be mundane within queer service provision and the practices of service providers.

### **1.1. Research Focus**

This dissertation research emerged out of my own experiences working as a service provider within queer service provision in downtown Toronto. My helping roles—as a HIV/AIDS support worker and bathhouse<sup>7</sup> outreach volunteer—required me to utilize the white logic of racial superiority by reinforcing my authoritative white gaze in order to determine the truth of racial difference and fold Indigeneity into race. In both of these roles, I was required to understand gender and sexuality as singular within queer service provision to routinely produce white service users as deserving of, and also desirable for, care and help. My helping role, in which I attempted to help “our” community, was steeped within unacknowledged white supremacist and settler colonial presumptions about and control over racial and national difference due to my location as a white settler descendent. Thus, I do not live outside of the systems of white supremacy and settler colonialism in Canada. I am complicit in sustaining white supremacy and settler colonialism by virtue of my simply being. However, I submit that this specificity of white settler complicity does not preclude my (nor anyone’s) ability to enact social change on an individual or interpersonal scale. As Applebaum (2011) argued, my complicity foregrounds responsibility to actively resist and subvert the oppressive systems (e.g., white supremacy) that I readily benefit from and contribute to. Through my subsequent re-thinking of queer service provision, I have come to understand my roles as a service provider as sustaining and contributing to the on-going displacement, marginalization, and erasure Indigenous peoples, as well as the surveillance and repudiation of people of colour. My involvement has led to my analytical uncovering of how deep-rooted white supremacist and

settler colonial violence continues to be embedded within the everyday machinery of queer service provision.

I have found it to be important to ground this work with the critical race and settler colonial perspectives Cohen (1997) and Morgensen (2010) bring to queer studies. Cohen (1997) asked white queer scholars to consider how white supremacy remains centralized within queer studies. She argued that queerness must be expanded to include black peoples' experiences of anti-blackness, as they too are routinely impacted by "white, middle-class, heterosexual norm[s]" (p. 458). Although, in response to such calls for expanding the analytical referent within queer studies, scholars have theorized different oppressive systems (e.g., white supremacy), the processes and effects of settler colonialism continue to receive little scrutiny. Morgensen's (2010) work attempts to fill this gap by asking queer scholars and "[q]ueer studies [to] examine settler colonialism as a condition of its own work" (p. 26). Taking Morgensen's call seriously, I consider how queer service provision in downtown Toronto sustains white settler colonialism by tracing the varied and distinct relationships to this process among white settler queer and trans people and queer and trans people of colour. White settler queer and trans people and queer and trans people of colour working within queer service provision may be complicit in settler colonialism, and yet, their complicities are vastly different due to their own investments in and attachments to projects of Canadian nation building. I consider how queer and trans people of colour are at once invited into normatively white organizations through diversity and inclusivity initiatives, whereby they are already actively challenging white supremacist and colonial oppression.

In order to consider how the historical, structural, and seemingly everyday manifestations of white supremacy and settler colonialism might impact the provision of queer services in

downtown Toronto, this dissertation asks:

- 1) How are Indigenous peoples excluded from queer service provision?
- 2) How does white settler colonialism operate within queer service provision?
- 3) How do the social locations of non-Indigenous LGBTQ-identified service providers impact their ability to serve and care for Indigenous service users?

To address these questions, I consider how white queer and trans service providers, in evoking and centralizing the routine trauma they and “others like them” experience, can potentially become complicit in everyday projects of white settler colonialism. The structure of queer service provision is already firmly rooted and engrained within white supremacist and settler colonial logics through its ties to the Canadian nation-state. With queer service provision’s increasing enfoldment into the machinery of neo-liberalism, the delivery and imagination of its services can easily become constrained. Queer service provision as a structure, as I will describe fully below, has ultimately been put in place to care for queer and trans service users since mainstream service provision is routinely disconnected from how it can easily perpetuate heterosexism<sup>8</sup> and cissexism.<sup>9</sup> I examine how white settler service providers and service providers of colour frame queer service delivery differently, and how such a framing can constrain whose bodies become imagined as belonging. As queer service provision aims to be inclusive of multicultural diversity and difference, I theorize how Indigenous peoples and people of colour are made to belong.

I will also expand upon the institution of queer service provision and the neo-liberal constraints placed upon white settler service providers and service providers of colour by examining their practices of diversity, anti-racism, and anti-colonialism. In doing so, I consider how white settler service providers’ and service providers of colour’s understandings of help can

contribute to and also potentially resist white supremacy and settler colonialism. I pay careful attention to such narratives of helping and goodness offered by the research participants, paying particular attention to who becomes deserving of help and care in their practice. In answering this, I look to how Indigenous peoples are constructed within queer service provision by looking specifically at how they are constructed as “social problems” (LaRocque, 1993) who ultimately become too difficult to care for.

Moreover, this dissertation research addresses how the site of queer service provision as an institution can provide opportunities to deflect white settler queer and trans people’s, as well as people of colour’s, potential complicities and responsibilities in on-going projects of white supremacy and settler colonialism. In order to address this question of complicity that Applebaum’s (2011) and Waldorf’s (2012) work has encouraged me to think about, I theorize the ways white settler colonialism and Indigeneity are included within the confines of queer service provision. I then go on to explore how such acts of inclusion can be fueled by a deep desire for multicultural diversity and difference within the confines of queer service provision. Additionally, I consider how the mechanisms of queer service provision are put in place to naturalize white settler colonialism. In being critical of queer service provision, I centre Indigenous and settler decolonization by asking how non-Indigenous service providers subvert and ultimately challenge the white supremacy and settler colonialism that impact all of our lives.

It is such understandings of the responsibility of non-Indigenous peoples and their complicities in white supremacist and settler colonial projects that this dissertation takes up in great detail, in order to theorize the anti-racist and decolonizing efforts of white settler service providers and service providers of colour within queer service provision. Some critical Indigenous studies scholars have noted that the responsibility for working toward Indigenous



decolonization must involve non-Indigenous peoples (Alfred, 2005, 2009; Cannon, 2012; Dion, 2009; Monture-Angus, 1995, 1999). As Cannon (2012) specifically asserted, “every non-Indigenous person has a stake in colonial dominance and reparations” (p. 33). In acknowledging the potentials in developing relationships with Indigenous peoples, non-Indigenous peoples can start to consider how their own narratives and daily practices can contribute to the sustainment of and/or resistance to white supremacy and settler colonialism. Additionally, Simon (2013) asked non-Indigenous peoples to consider their own responsibility in colonial domination through their on-going relationships with the land, suggesting that, “we are all treaty people and that treaty relationships are fundamentally abiding, living covenants” (p. 139). It is with these considerations in mind that I theorize how it is that non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers aim to stand in solidarity with Indigenous peoples and address decolonization within their respective queer organizations. My white settler criticism of white settler colonialism addresses and challenges the longstanding injustices imposed onto Indigenous life and forms of governance by being accountable to (queer and 2-Spirit) Indigenous peoples and communities.

While my use of non-Indigenous hails both white settlers and people of colour, I contend that their connections to settlement are vastly different, especially when considering the particular site of queer service provision. I discuss such differences between white settlers and people of colour by highlighting how queer and trans people of colour are already working against narratives of multicultural diversity, white racism, and colonialism by their simply being. Queer and trans people of colour are working against the theories and practices within queer service provision that normalize whiteness, and their practices illuminate how white supremacy and settler colonialism can be subverted and challenged through collective action.

In discussing the possibilities of collective action when settler colonialism is centralized,

Patel's (2012) discussion of her approach to Muslim feminism must be attentive to the various and contradictory ways in which violence is inflicted upon the bodies of Muslims and Indigenous peoples. Patel's (2012) "Muslim feminist politics [is] grounded in an understanding of ... land as occupied" where Muslim woman can be "marginalized and yet participate[s] in the ongoing dispossession of Indigenous peoples on whose lands [they are] living" (Patel, 2012, n.p.). Patel (2012) gestures toward the ways in which her approach to feminism must consider her own experiences of gendered, racial and colonial oppression, and her simultaneous complicities in the on-going eradication of Indigenous peoples. Patel's (2012) work provides an avenue to consider how people of colour are approaching complicities in settler colonialism and moving toward solidarity with Indigenous peoples' struggles. Similarly, Walia (2012) approached solidarity and decolonization with Indigenous peoples and contended that people of colour can "locate [themselves] within the context of colonization in complicated ways, often as simultaneously oppressed and complicit" (n.p.). Walia (2012) argued that migrant justice movements in Canada, such as No One Is Illegal, attempt to break down multicultural narratives of inclusion that invite people of colour and migrants to sustain the Canadian nation state and its regimes of citizenship. Scholars like Walia (2012) and movements like the No One Is Illegal network work alongside Indigenous communities to dismantle white supremacist and settler colonial logics imposed upon people of colour and Indigenous peoples in Canada.

Moreover, Krebs and Olwan (2012) have argued that this solidarity work amongst people of colour and Indigenous peoples can extend beyond the fictitious boundaries of what is now known as Canada by considering Palestinians' potential complicities in sustaining settler colonialism as well as the kinds of transnational<sup>10</sup> solidarities that already exist with Indigenous peoples. As they explained:

in many ways Palestinian solidarity in Canada has attempted to forge important and necessary alliances with local indigenous struggles, [but] it has done so unevenly and to varying degrees of success. These alliances need to be improved and deepened, because we believe that solidarity between indigenous and Palestinian struggles is paramount for challenging the settler colonial states of Canada and Israel. (p. 158).

Renewed alliances between Palestinians and Indigenous peoples can provide an avenue to consider how activism and actions against white supremacy and settler colonialism are intertwined.

An important example of how white settlers and people of colour might better support Indigenous social movements and decolonization, and also address the contemporary legacy of white settler colonialism in Canada, comes from the Idle No More movement, which was launched in December of 2012 by Sylvia McAdam, Jess Gordon, Nina Wilson, and Sheelah Mclean (The Kino-nda-niimi Collective, 2014). The Idle No More movement invites non-Indigenous peoples, within their differing investments in Canadian citizenship, to place themselves in relationships with Indigenous peoples and work toward challenging settler colonial domination in Canada. White settler descendants can contribute (sometimes unknowingly) to the expropriation and elimination of Indigenous peoples vis-à-vis their attachments to Canadian citizenship in that they are constructed to be proper, national subjects (Thobani, 2007; Razack, 2002). People of colour may not necessarily become settlers due to their differing relationships and attachments to Canadian citizenship as peoples who experience the brutality of white supremacist violence upon their daily lives (Jafri, 2012; Thobani, 2007). Non-Indigenous peoples are encouraged to act with Indigenous peoples, support decolonial resistance, and bring attention to the white supremacist and settler colonial conditions in place in contemporary Canada.

Thus, Idle No More emerged as a means to bring necessary attention to:

1. The repeal of significant sections of the Canadian federal government's omnibus legislation (Bills C-38 and C-45) and specifically parts relating to the exploitation of the environment, water, and First Nations territories.

2. The stabilization of emergency situations in First Nations communities, such as Attawapiskat, accompanied by an honest, collaborative approach to addressing issues relating to Indigenous communities and self-sustainability, land, education, housing, health care, among others.

3. A commitment to a mutually beneficial nation-to-nation relationship between Canada, First Nations (status and non-status), Inuit, and Metis communities based on the spirits and intent of treaties and a recognition of inherent and shared rights and responsibilities as equal and unique partners. A large part of this includes an end to the unilateral legislative and policy process Canadian governments have favoured to amend the Indian Act. (The Kino-nda-niimi Collective, 2014, p. 22)

The Idle No More movement addresses the on-going settler colonial violence Indigenous peoples experience, as well as the broken treaties and claims to their land. The movement also invites non-Indigenous peoples to consider their own relationships to land and the treaties in Canada in order to work together as allies in challenging the existing oppressions Indigenous peoples experience.

In conjunction with the Idle No More movement, from winter 2012 to summer 2013, a number of political projects by people of color in Canada emerged to support Indigenous decolonization and to bring awareness to the contemporary violence of settler colonialism, including *Palestinians in Solidarity with Idle No More and Indigenous Rights* (“Palestinians in”, 2012), *South Asians in Solidarity with Idle No More* (Zehra, 2013), and *Immigrants in Solidarity with Idle No More* (“Immigrants in”, 2013). Such support of the Idle No More movement provides a context to theorize how people of colour and Indigenous peoples are working together in dismantling white racism and settler colonialism. However, although collectives of people of colour publically support the Idle No More movement by naming and taking action against white supremacy and settler colonialism, there remains a limited critique coming from white settler activists and scholars.

On individual levels, white scholars such as Denis (2013) and Ritskes (2013) made public commentary on Idle No More and the necessary involvement of non-Indigenous peoples in the movement. More collective attempts of activists and scholars launched “Skills for Solidarity” (“About the”, 2014) in response to Idle No More to showcase the need for allies in the movement. The Skills for Solidarity network attempted to expand opportunities for non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples in Canada to build relationships by “provid[ing] an overview of what it looks like to renew the relationship between nations and continue to work together on a variety of campaigns and issues” (n.p.). As a first step, the Skills for Solidarity network provided an opportunity to develop dialogue between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada as a way to renew relationships and work collectively in support of Indigenous decolonization.

I look to the call for alliance with Idle No More as a contemporary example of how non-Indigenous peoples can challenge and unsettle white supremacist and settler colonial logics within Canada and support Indigenous decolonization. The Idle No More movement has provided an avenue for white settlers to question their benevolence in sustaining Canada’s colonial history, and to showcase how people of colour have worked collectively with Indigenous peoples to challenge the dominant narratives of multiculturalism that continue to erase Canada’s white supremacist and colonial history. Although this work has occurred as a response to the need for building relationships with Indigenous peoples, within Toronto’s queer and trans communities, there was no mention of a queer or trans collective that put together an official statement to support the Idle No More movement despite Wilson and McIvor’s call to queer communities to form relationships with Indigenous peoples (Zahody, 2013). The lack of visible white queer or trans participation in and support of Idle No More requires further

interrogation. Aligning their politics and practices with that of Idle No More would require white queer and trans peoples to disrupt the white supremacist and settler colonial conditions that routinely naturalize Canadian nationalism, and also, importantly, challenge specific legal benefits (some) white queer and trans people receive in relation to Indigenous peoples and the Indian Act.

The aforementioned lack of participation by white queer and trans people in the Idle No More movement in Toronto signals their potential complicity in white settler colonial projects since Indigenous decolonization remains disconnected from queer communities and is not considered a priority. With this criticism as the basis of this research, I theorize the extent to which white settler colonialism is naturalized in queer communities, and thus also within queer service provision, in Toronto. Although these queer organizations are being named as progressive on the continuums of gender identity, sexuality, and desire, little attention is paid to how they can potentially contribute to and easily sustain everyday evocations of settler colonialism. In particular, it is the site of queer service provision, with its dedication to social justice pursuits, and its fostering of critical consciousness-raising around all things queer and trans that is in question here. Within the context of queer service provision, Indigenous peoples are routinely produced to be outside of queer service provision insofar as they require special services. I pay particular attention to how Indigenous peoples and Indigenous decolonization is imagined by white settler service providers and service providers of colour within the confines of queer service provision and to which spaces they are made to belong. I show how solidarity around ending white racism and all forms of colonialism can unite Indigenous peoples and people of colour within a shared struggle.

In its entirety, this research study asks how the narratives of white settler service

providers and service providers of colour shape how they come to know, think about, and understand their own roles and responsibilities in addressing the complexities of white supremacy and settler colonialism within queer service provision in Toronto, Canada. In order to provide a full picture of how white settler colonialism can manifest within contemporary queer service provision, I briefly describe the settler colonial processes within and outside of service provision that have come to constrain and erase Indigenous life. I also connect the historical ramifications of such routine violence to the contemporary, as a way to contend that much needs to take place to support Indigenous and settler decolonization. Finally, I outline how contemporary queer formations continue to operate and sustain exclusionary characteristics that routinely naturalize white supremacy and settler colonialism. In effect, non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers are invited into the Canadian nation-state vis-à-vis state sanctioned articulations of queerness (e.g., same sex marriage rights), which can easily constrain the delivery of queer services. To conclude this dissertation, I provide a series of conclusions specific to queer service provision and its potential capacity in terms of normalizing the erasure of Indigenous peoples.

## **1.2. Research Significance and Context**

Below, I provide a brief history of settler colonialism in Canada, which will be expanded upon in my subsequent chapters, to situate this research within this contemporary moment. The history of white settler colonialism in this country, and especially its impact on Indigenous peoples, cannot be forgotten. Unfortunately, present day imaginations of Canadian national identity tend to write over longstanding historical injustices that continue to violently repudiate and subjugate Indigenous life. To address such erasures, Razack's (2002a) understanding of an unmapping becomes ever so useful insofar as the concept brings much needed attention to the

ways in which European settlement has been so naturalized. Razack (2002a) illustrated that an unmapping intentionally “undermine[s] the idea of white settler innocence (the notion that European settlers merely settled and developed the land) [in order] to uncover the ideologies and practices of conquest and domination” (p. 5). As I argue below, those who claim a Canadian identity must conceptualize the foundation their identity rests upon: the land, which has been produced to be *terra nullius*—vacant and uninhabited (Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009; Cannon and Sunseri, 2011; Pateman, 2007; Razack, 2002a). The historical, social, and legal processes that have made Canada into what it is today must be unmapped in order to make the invisible colonial violence visible and to connect such violent processes to the organization of contemporary social life.

To give an example of one violent, and invisible, historical process of colonization, when early settlers traveled to Mi’kmaq territory in the 1640s, they offered blankets to the Mi’kmaq people to unleash settler colonial consequences through biological warfare—smallpox disease. Lawrence (2002) mapped out the genocide that occurred in the early contact between settlers and Mi’kmaq peoples in Eastern Canada through the gifts of (smallpox) blankets, and wrote: “All of these processes were part and parcel of the colonial strategies to assert and formalize European presence and authority on the land” (p. 31). These gifts of illness acted as technologies of genocide that ultimately eliminated half of the Indigenous population—many of whom were Indigenous youth and elders (Lawrence, 2002). The genocide that Indigenous peoples experienced continued with the implementation of the settler colonial legal system: the Indian Act.

The Indian Act, created in 1876, is a paternalistic project used to place settler beliefs and mores onto Indigenous peoples and knowledge systems in order to control and contain



Indigenous life (Henry et al., 2010). As Francis (2011) argued, the Indian Act “provided a coercive and patriarchal set of cradle-to-grave directives governing Indigenous culture” (p. 10). The Indian Act placed settler colonial directives onto Indigenous communities, while also implementing heteropatriarchy in Indigenous communities (Cannon, 1998 Green, 2001). While the Indian Act created particular settler colonial and heteropatriarchal dynamics within Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities alike, it also legislated the complete and utter removal of Indigenous children from their families through the intrusive methods of residential schooling and the child welfare system’s “60s Scoop.” These settler colonial regimes sought to control, contain and erase Indigenous peoples by attacking the centre of the community: children (Anderson, 2000).

Within the context of residential schooling, white settler missionaries forcibly removed Indigenous children from their families and homes in order to provide them with “civilizing” education (Haig-Brown, 2006; Miller, 1996; Regan, 2010; Waterfall, 2002; Woolford, 2013; Wortherspoon, 2009). The violent consequences of residential schooling caused Indigenous children to experience horrific cultural genocide and trauma; this history continues to have long lasting multigenerational effects. The violence legislated within residential schooling was then shape shifted into the child welfare system in order to control, regulate, and repudiate Indigenous children, (grand-)mothers, and families. In particular, the infamous legislated “60s Scoop” gave white settler social workers the infinite capacity to remove Indigenous children from their families for their “best interests” (Strega & Esquao (Carriere), 2009; Pon, Gosine, & Phillips, 2011; Thobani, 2007; Waterfall, 2002). As a result of such historical wrongdoings, neither service provision nor service providers are innocent from their connections to reproducing, maintaining, and normalizing colonialism (Jeffery, 2009; Heron, 2007; Waterfall, 2002).

Moreover, the child welfare system continues to disproportionately impact Indigenous and black families due to the historical legacies of white supremacy and settler colonialism that continue to inform the present day (Pon, Gosine, & Phillips, 2011). Within contemporary service provision Indigenous peoples become constructed as “problems” cast to the realm of the individual: a problem of their own doing. Yet, as Million (2013) argued, constructing Indigenous peoples’ trauma as individual erases the historical, multigenerational effects of colonialism.

As such, contemporary Indigenous life remains saturated within and constrained by the historical legacies of colonialism. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which rests upon a similar helping ethos to that of contemporary service provision, came into fruition in 2006 as a way for numerous non-Indigenous and Indigenous stakeholders to address the long lasting violence and impacts that residential schools have had on Indigenous communities (Millon, 2013; Regan, 2010). Most of this recognition operated through the law, in particular, the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement of 2007, where Indigenous peoples were asked to voice their concerns in the form of “truth telling,” and share how the violence they experienced in residential schooling remained present in their everyday life in order for reparations to take place (Millon, 2013; Regan, 2010). Indigenous peoples were then provided with monetary compensation, specifically those who had experienced sexual or physical violence when attending residential school (Millon, 2013; Regan, 2010; Simon, 2013). Although this was a step in the right direction in acknowledging the historical violence Indigenous peoples have experienced in Canada, the process further required Indigenous people to name and otherwise reveal the violence they have experienced. As Millon (2013) and Simon (2013) have asked: when Indigenous peoples share their stories of brutality and colonial violence, what is being heard? And, moreover, what do the acts of “story telling” or “truth telling” do for non-

Indigenous peoples?

As Millon (2013) has argued, when Indigenous peoples have to re-tell their stories within such TRC proceedings, they have to speak of the perpetual colonial trauma they and their communities have and continue to experience. However, their stories of historical and contemporary colonial violence are either reduced to an individual experience or are not heard altogether. As a result of the individualization of the colonial trauma Indigenous peoples experienced as a result of residential schooling, and moreover, through other settler colonial regimes, I, alongside Indigenous scholars and scholars of colour, invite non-Indigenous peoples to remember and be accountable to such historical wrong-doings that continue to constrain Indigenous life. Here, I connect Simon's (2005) pedagogy of remembrance to the TRC proceedings and contemporary forms of settler colonialism as a way to account for the divergent historical memories we all have, each with "a distinct pedagogical and political character" (p. 16). As Simon (2005) contended, a pedagogy of remembrance allows for a re-reading of history, in order to destabilize how specific knowledge claims, which are often Eurocentric, have come to be known as and produced to be legitimate. As Simon (2005) quite rightly claimed, "knowledge of the past is important because it can make a difference in the present" (p. 16). Thus, in evoking a pedagogy of remembrance within this dissertation, I ask that my readers fully engage with the stories shared here by the non-Indigenous queer and trans research participants that challenge and/or reify white settler colonialism within queer service provision. As a white critic of white settler colonialism, I am accountable to both people of colour and Indigenous peoples within and outside of queer service provision. Thus, I must consider how Indigenous peoples and people of colour are already working together to challenge white supremacy and settler colonialism. In order to be accountable to the process and practices of white settler colonialism in which we all

(as white settlers) participate, we should not erase Canada's genocidal and colonial history in the form of historical amnesia (Dion, 2009; Razack, 2002a), but instead enact what Simon (2005) calls a pedagogy of remembrance.

For instance, Prime Minister Stephen Harper officially apologized on June 11, 2008, "Canada's Day of Apology," to residential school survivors for the horrific colonial violence that they experienced. Yet, in 2009, Harper announced during the G-20 summit in Toronto that Canada has no history of colonialism. Although Harper apologized, his erasure of the effects of colonialism percolate into the Canadian national imaginary due to his unspoken contention that an apology is enough to rid oneself (and one's nation) of the guilt attached to the cultural genocide and sexual exploitation Indigenous peoples experienced in residential schools. Mackey (2013) theorized how an apology is used within the Canadian national imaginary and suggested that "the apology minimizes the depth and extent of the wrongdoing by delinking it from material processes and placing it in the past, failing to implicate the state or settler subjects as beneficiaries of the policies, and constructs a blank slate of innocence for Canada's future" (p. 54). Following Thobani (2007), I argue that Canada's national mythology, as a country made up of "law-abiding . . . responsible citizens, [and as being] compassionate, caring, and committed to the values of diversity and multiculturalism" (p. 4), must be ruptured as it is deeply steeped in white settler goodness and civility. I contend that white peoples in Canada must listen to and acknowledge how their everyday existence manifests to offset, evict, and displace Indigenous peoples from their lands, and to add to their everyday experiences of routine and relentless white supremacist and settler colonial violence.

As such, I utilize Gordon's (1997) work surrounding haunting as a way to illuminate how the effects of white settler colonialism remain embedded in the present. If the goal of white

settler colonialism is to replace and erase, what Morgensen (2012b) calls emplacement, then a haunting brings these violent, abusive, and deadly systems of power into the present day. For Morgensen (2012b), settler emplacement refers to ways in which belongings to place (e.g., the land) evolve out of social processes. If settler emplacement ensures that Indigenous erasure remains so naturalized, the land and constructions of belonging to the land will remain within the non-Indigenous consciousness. Francis (2011) took up the ramifications of a collective forgetting within the non-Indigenous consciousness and argued that it cannot simply be understood as a “loss of memory”; rather, the fissure present within contemporary national imaginaries of non-Indigenous Canadians “functions as [a] haunting” and as an “affective process through which the ghosts of memory adhere within . . . popular consciousness” (p. 11). The strategic deployment of historical amnesia impacts contemporary life and places Indigenous peoples as specters of the past, as “people of a make-believe world” (Dion, 2009, p. 5) and/or as represented to be “noble savage[s]” (Francis, 2011, p. 11). As white settlers, we are each haunted by the legacy of white settler colonialism within our everyday life, and thus need to enact a pedagogy of remembrance that works within “memory and forgetfulness to address the continuing traumas of nation building” (Francis, 2011, p. 21). Moreover, we need to effectively challenge and ultimately decolonize deployments of Canadian nationalism and multiculturalism as they contribute to the relentless dispossession of Indigenous peoples and their lands. Otherwise, our strategic deployment of a white settler imaginary will continue to further naturalize and secure the future for white settlers at the expense of Indigenous peoples, since “emplacement on occupied indigenous lands [makes] their [white settlers’] presence seem inevitable and incontestable” (Morgensen, 2012b, p. 127).

In disrupting the naturalization of settler colonialism and the emplacement of white settlers, Indigenous peoples' understandings, articulations, and evocations of decolonization become ever so important in challenging and subverting white supremacy and settler colonialism. Kovach (2009) suggested that, in North America, decolonization is built upon

critical theory, [and that it is] particularly effective in analyzing power differences between groups; that it provides hope for transformation; that there is a role for both structural change and personal agency in resistance; and that Habermas' notions of finding victories in small struggles resists a purist tendency towards an all-or-nothing approach to social transformation. (p. 80)

Here, Kovach's (2009) approach to decolonization allows for non-Indigenous peoples and Indigenous peoples alike to resist colonialism within their everyday lives and develop the capacity for a systemic transformation that ruptures colonial institutions. Notably, Tuck and Yang (2012) have critiqued the use of decolonization within social justice endeavours, arguing that decolonization can no longer be solely used as a metaphor: "when metaphor invades decolonization, it kills the very possibility of decolonization; it recenters whiteness, it resettles theory, it extends innocence to the settler, it entertains a settler future" (p. 3). As a metaphor, decolonization has the potential to lose its critical bent and continue the project of settler colonialism within our every day. As a result, my use of decolonization does not translate into the metaphorical, but instead clearly contends that the violent white supremacist and settler colonial structures that invade the lives and hearts of Indigenous peoples must be ruptured so that Indigenous self-determination and sovereignty can ultimately prevail. As such, service provision, with its deep-rooted connections to white supremacy and settler colonialism, must be interrogated and ultimately decolonized.

Jeffery (2009) has traced the historical connection between helping work and the violent impositions of colonialism onto the lives of Indigenous peoples within normatively white social

work contexts. Although social work as a whole has been highly criticized for its deep ties to white supremacy and settler colonialism, both within historical and contemporary contexts (see Pon, Gosine, & Phillips, 2011), queer service provision has still received little scrutiny in the realm of how it may sustain white settler colonialism. It is important then to consider how contemporary queerness collides with settler colonialism. Although the inception of queer service provisions occurred in conjunction with the civil rights movement, queerness as a modern project is deeply rooted in white supremacy and settler colonialism. As Morgensen (2011a) argued, “queers within a white settler state ... become modern through homonationalist participation in colonial and imperial rule that awards citizenship for defending the state and educating subject peoples in civilizational values, including sexual modernity” (p. 226). As a result, the foundation of gay villages, and more specifically queer service provision, rests upon white settlers having invested in the Canadian nation-state and the settlement process, and then—to justify their pretense of global “community,” and to appeal to state multiculturalism—folding people of colour into projects that still reproduce white settler privilege and settler colonial power relations to Indigenous peoples and their lands. Building upon Canada’s white settler colonial foundation, the queer service sector came into fruition and evolved to fill a critical gap and support gays, lesbians, and trans people who were experiencing violence and oppression due to their sexual minority status and gender identity.

In the 1970s, Toronto’s “gay village” emerged at the intersection of Church and Wellesley streets (Nash, 2006). As Casey (2005) contended, the “gay village” typically “belongs to the non-heterosexual population of the city, sharing similar social and leisure spaces, shared friends, experience, values and so on” (p. 449). However, Hanhardt (2013) theorized the Greenwich Village in New York City and argued that the very project of the “gay village” and of

“community” rests upon gendered, raced, and classed inequality. Therefore, whereas at first glance, the village might be representative of a collective community, in actuality, it is white gay cismen with financial capital who ultimately have decision-making power surrounding the direction of the community in the village. Although the “gay village” has become a site where predominantly gays and lesbians can gather together in leisure spaces such as bars, coffee shops and bathhouses, we must also be cognizant of how the operation of the “gay village” simultaneously functions on masculinist, gentrifying, racially-exclusionary, ableist, citizenship-policing, and settler colonial landscapes (McNeil-Seymour, forthcoming). In addition to the leisure spaces made available to gays and lesbians in the “gay village,” in the mid 1970s, the largest queer organization in Toronto, *The 519 Church Street Community Centre (519)*, was established in order to provide a central place for gays and lesbians to access services, create community, and engage in political activism.

While the “gay village” offered spaces for social cohesion and activism, gays and lesbians continued to be highly surveilled by the police (Nash, 2005, 2006). In 1981, bathhouse raids occurred whereby the police infiltrated four of Toronto’s bathhouses and charged “204 men as ‘found-ins’ and 20 others as ‘bawdy house keepers’” (Nash & Bain, 2007, p. 163). The bathhouse raids provide a context to illustrate how the “gay male community” gathered together in response to the police brutality inflicted upon them. Gay activist Tim McCaskell organized a meeting at the *519* that hundreds of people attended to spontaneously protest the police and illustrate that public sex and queer affection could no longer be understood as illegal and abnormal (Nash & Bain, 2007). In addition to activist endeavours addressing police brutality in the early 1980s, HIV/AIDS activism occurred due to the HIV virus impacting and affecting gay men, injection drug users, and sex workers (Cain, 2002; Rayside & Lundquist, 1992).



In the early 1980s, people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS gathered together in response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Canada and formed ASOs. Toronto's first ASO, *The AIDS Committee of Toronto*, formed to provide support to those impacted and affected by HIV/AIDS, provide support for those who had lost a friend, relative, or lover to the virus, and to educate one another on the virus and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) (Rayside & Lundquist, 1992). In the late 1990s, more organizations started to emerge in order to meet the different needs of LGBTQ community members. For example, queer organizations started to specialize in providing more focused care: addictions support, one-on-one psychotherapy, and youth-focused drop-in programming. In addition to the increase in queer service provision, the *Pussy Palace* came into fruition in 1998 to offer a sexual liberatory space, similar to male-centric bathhouses, in order to provide lesbians and queer women with a means to gather together for their pleasure seeking needs (Nash & Bain, 2007). As a result, queer service provision in Toronto emerged to unite LGBTQ community members despite their many differences and to defy common stereotypes placed upon them.

However, as Catungal (2013) illustrated, particularly in honing in on HIV/AIDS organizations in Toronto, ASOs continued to normalize and sustain a white-normed articulation of gay identity politics that did not reflect queer people of colour living with or affected by the virus. As Catungal (2013) explained:

It is in the face of this refusal and neglect that organizations such as the Asian Community AIDS Services (ACAS), the Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention (ASAAP) and the Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention (Black CAP) all emerged out of community-based struggles to respond in culturally and linguistically appropriate ways to the mounting crisis of HIV in 1980s and early 1990s Toronto. (p. 260)

Similarly, *2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations (2-Spirits)* was founded in the early 1990s as a way to provide programming and services to queer, trans or 2-Spirited Indigenous peoples, and

Indigenous peoples who are living with or affected by HIV/AIDS. Many queer organizations in the city exist that support people of colour and Indigenous peoples with the goal of being autonomous, community-centred “safe houses” that exist to challenge white supremacy and colonialism within and beyond queer communities in Toronto (Catungal, 2013). These organizations have also impacted how white-centric queer service provision operates, particularly in providing opportunities for white queer and trans service providers to distance their identities and work life away from race, racialization, and settler colonialism insofar as Indigenous peoples and people of colour can access “specialized services.”

Twenty years later, in 2014, queer services delivery continues to expand to meet the needs of queer and trans communities in downtown Toronto. Although race, ethnicity, and culture are on organizations’ agenda in their mission statements and practice approaches (e.g., anti-oppressive practice), such inclusion typically rests within frameworks of equality and inclusivity (see Smith, 2005). Queer service provision often pursues social justice by achieving and fostering diversity. But, as Ahmed (2012) noted, the use of diversity can easily direct much needed attention away from the white supremacist structure of an organization and toward needing, desiring, and having diversity. Moreover, within a Canadian context, Bannerji (2000) and Thobani (2007) have invited us to think about how multicultural diversity is used within deployments of Canadian nationalism in order to mark the bodies of people of colour as outside of the white nation.

Additionally, Lawrence and Dua (2005) and St. Denis (2011a) have contended that evocations of multicultural diversity are used to downplay the stark differences between Indigenous peoples and people of colour, which, in effect, creates Indigenous peoples to be one cultural group among many. Moreover, Indigenous peoples have different relationships to the

state, insofar as their nationhood remains divested by articulations of settler citizenship. As a result, representing Indigenous peoples as a cultural group among many can easily erase claims for Indigenous sovereignty as being politically and legally separate from the Canadian nation-state (Cannon & Sunseri, 2011; Porter, 1999).

In looking at how multicultural diversity is deployed within the Canadian nation-state and by its citizen-subjects, I ask, what becomes of diversity within queer service provision? In particular, I ask: how does the embrace of diversity actually perform the power of state multiculturalism, which is both white supremacist and settler colonial? And, how, as a result, does a quest for diversity in this mode further exclude dialogue and action that meaningfully engages with Indigenous decolonization? More specifically, the desire for diversity can take much needed attention away from the ways in which queerness itself as a political and ideological referent can remake and perpetuate (settler) colonial and white supremacist exploitation.

As a result, this dissertation looks at how historical and colonial processes that could potentially be embedded within queer service provision might be maintained, particularly with this site's hyper focus on, and centralization of, contemporary queer politics in Canada. It is important to engage with the potential of settler colonialism, as it can continue to be unacknowledged within queer service provision insofar as white service providers can easily deflect their responsibility in on-going settler colonial projects as innocent and/or pained subjects. Although I cannot deny the routine and everyday violence non-Indigenous queer and trans people experience, I theorize how it is that the lives of Indigenous peoples seem to remain unworthy of adequate support and care within and outside of queer service provision. Regardless of their experience, in evoking innocence or trauma, white queer and trans people can easily

deny how, as non-Indigenous people, they too are implicated in Canada's white supremacist and settler colonial projects.

It is necessary to intervene in queer service provision precisely because it is still tied to historical processes that continue to intervene in and ultimately constrain the lives of Indigenous peoples through on-going acts of assimilation and erasure. Moreover, it is the helping discourses posed by non-Indigenous service providers that must be interrogated for mobilizing a power-over relationship over those who are not deemed worthy of help and care. The analytical gaze must be placed upon queer service provision and its non-Indigenous service providers for potentially contributing to the sustainment of white supremacy and settler colonialism. I theorize how non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers' deflections of responsibility can easily reinscribe white supremacy and settler colonialism in these service providers' attempts to appear and be read as good. The above critiques and questions will be examined in the following chapters with the purpose of addressing how white settler futurity is made to be mundane within queer service provision. What follows first is a summary of my dissertation chapters, followed by an illustration of what this dissertation is not.

### **1.3. Organization of Research Study**

The remainder of this dissertation is divided into seven parts. In Chapter 2, "Addressing White Settler Colonial Logics Within Queer Modernities," I situate my dissertation research within the ever-growing interdisciplinary field of settler colonial studies. I illuminate how settler colonialism cannot be studied in isolation, and how scholars must consider the imbricated logics of white supremacy and its ties to Canadian nation building. I conclude by asking how investments in contemporary queer politics and festivals, of which queer service provision is a part, continue to deride, marginalize, and repudiate Indigenous life.

In Chapter 3, “Theorizing Race, Colonialism, and Indigeneity in the Service Provisional Literatures,” I extend the analytical referent of white settler colonialism to the context of service provision to show how it remains haunted by the violent, assimilative, and genocidal history of Canada. I trace how history has repeated itself by examining residential schooling and the child welfare system’s “60s Scoop” to show how contemporary service provision continues to sustain and normalize white supremacy and settler colonialism. I then suggest that a settler decolonial analytic is useful in exposing such logics within queer service provision and indeed the key to subverting, challenging, and ultimately rupturing white settler colonial logics and projects.

In Chapter 4, “Methodological Framework,” I situate the larger analysis of white settler colonialism within an in-depth interview study. I contend that a qualitative analysis is the most useful entry point to expose the ways in which white settler colonialism percolates into queer service provision, since the approach centralizes its analysis within the stories and narratives offered by the research participants. I also illustrate how I instilled the proper ethical protocols during this research so that the research participants and their workplaces would remain confidential. Finally, I walk the readers through the steps taken to ensure that this research maintained utmost trustworthiness, and the limitations to undertaking this research.

In Chapter 5, “The Crisis and Care of Queer Service Delivery,” I theorize what exactly goes on within the structure of queer service provision in downtown Toronto. I show how most queer organizations within contemporary neo-liberal times are placed into a perpetual crisis that diverts much needed attention away from the structural confines of this site of service provision, and toward maintaining and acquiring more funding. Moreover, I discuss how the desire to care for queerness is fostered within queer service provision to centralize the needs of white queer and trans service users. I show how the structure of queer service provision fosters a normalized

queer cluster that attempts to include Indigenous peoples among the spectrum of multicultural diversity. Simultaneously, with so many ethno-racial queer service organizations (e.g., Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention), it is assumed that Indigenous peoples require more specialized services, and thus that they must access those services elsewhere.

In Chapter 6, “Being Good, Positioning Difference: Towards a Politics of Care,” I extend the analysis of care offered in Chapter 5 by examining the motivations of non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers in getting involved with their respective queer organizations. I show how the helping being done by non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers centralizes their own experiences of trauma, and I also illustrate how white queer and trans youth are seen to be the most deserving of care. Non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers continue to see themselves and their actions as good, which means they are ultimately disconnected from being implicated in the white settler colonial violence they too produce. As a result of the constructing of “queer and trans people like me” as the most deserving of care, Indigenous peoples continue to fall outside of the appropriate and normal service user identity assumed to be accessing queer service provision. Thus, I argue that Indigenous peoples’ care is deemed only worthy if they are able to assimilate into queer service provision and become modern civil subjects. If not, Indigenous peoples remain “problems” and “pathology” within queer service provision, and such constructions are used to disavow their care.

In Chapter 7, “Innocence and Complicity: Non-Indigenous Queer and Trans Peoples’ Deflections of Responsibility,” I look to how queer service provision can easily maintain the logics of white settler colonialism by theorizing how non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers mobilize discourses of trauma and innocence. I argue that non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers centralize the needs of white queer and trans people within their

respective queer organizations through a hyper focus on the effects of heteronormative and cissexist trauma. I next turn to the ways in which Indigenous inclusion manifests within queer service provision, as a way to expose the routine white settler colonial violence that non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers (knowingly or unknowingly) participate in producing. In evoking symbolically inclusive representations of Indigenous peoples, and, indeed, in deflecting their responsibility in white settler colonial projects, non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers can continue to see themselves as good. However, I argue that such inclusionary tactics within queer service provision rest upon Indigenous peoples' culture, which is subsumed within queer service provision, thereby evading much needed structural critique. I conclude the chapter by suggesting that these inclusionary measures do nothing more than reproduce white settler colonialism through the routine degradation of Indigenous life, knowledge systems, and decolonization.

I conclude this dissertation in Chapter 8, "Toward a Practice of Settler Decolonization in Queer Service Provision," by illustrating why the study of queer service provision is ever important within this contemporary (queer) moment. I illustrate key findings that make this dissertation research a unique contribution to the interdisciplinary fields of critical sociology, settler colonial studies, queer studies, and service provision. Additionally, I voice my cause for concern around offering recommendations in the form of prescriptive steps in order to show how such endeavours typically script non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers into sustaining white settler colonialism, which can further locate the voices, experiences, and bodies of Indigenous peoples to positions of marginality. I conclude by offering further questions for non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers and offer some in/conclusions that once again

centre the need for a dialogue around white settler colonialism within and beyond queer service provision in Canada.

#### **1.4. In/Conclusions**

To close this introductory chapter, I offer a brief word on what this dissertation is not, in an attempt to expose how white settler colonialism is made to be routine. Queer service provision must be scrutinized. In light of this, I address how the everyday, seemingly mundane nature of queer service provision propels non-Indigenous service providers and their understandings of help and goodness into sustaining white settler colonialism of which they too are part. As a result, I engage with how this particular analytic can potentially support Indigenous decolonization by gesturing toward how specific practices and deflections of responsibility script non-Indigenous service providers into sustaining white settler colonialism.

It is not my intention to provide recommendations per se about how to better support Indigenous service users and service providers in their quests for Indigenous decolonization. Instead, I provide an avenue for non-Indigenous peoples to question their every day within queer communities and queer service provision in Toronto. These questions attempt to shed light on ways in which white settler colonialism is naturalized and made to be invisible within the context of queer service provision. I distance myself from offering authoritative recommendations and/or prescriptions precisely because I too am a white settler descendent who is invited into perpetuating and sustaining white settler colonialism. Offering recommendations, in my estimation, furthers white settler colonial projects since they can easily be construed to be deflections of responsibility. Such deflections of responsibility position non-Indigenous peoples as unimplicated in projects of white settler colonialism, which in effect, naturalizes settler emplacement (Morgensen, 2012). After all, whether non-Indigenous peoples like it or not, each



of us, with our divergent investments in and connections to citizenship, can easily become complicit in sustaining white settler colonialism. Thus, I use the analytical referent of white settler colonialism within this dissertation as a way to centralize how the erasure and the routine violence Indigenous peoples experience within service provision can no longer go unnoticed by service providers, including those who are queer and trans.

## Chapter 2

### Theoretical Framework

### Addressing White Settler Colonial Logics Within Queer Modernities

*When I say, “Give it back,” I am talking about settlers demonstrating respect for what we share—the land and its resources—and making things right by offering us the dignity and freedom we are due and returning enough of our power and land for us to be self-sufficient.* Taiaiake Alfred (2005, p. 182).

*For all peoples forced to live on other peoples’ lands, a crucial question becomes what relationships they will establish with the Indigenous peoples of that land whose survival is under siege. Ultimately, to fail to negotiate a mutually supportive relationship is to risk truly becoming “settlers,” complicit in the extermination of those whose lands they occupy.* Zainab Amadahy and Bonita Lawrence (2009, p. 119).

#### 2. Introduction

In the pages below, I conduct a form of white settler criticism of queer service provision in downtown Toronto as a site where Indigenous exclusion can be expressed and where white settler colonialism has the potential to be affirmed, reproduced, and normalized. In my examination of this site, I utilize the term white settler colonialism, which will be defined in the later section of this chapter, to fully describe how white supremacy is inseparably linked to settler colonialism through institutional, material, and discursive processes. I do so by first discussing how colonialism, settler colonialism, and settlerhood are known, defined and understood. Within these particular understandings, I integrate a critical race feminist analysis offered by Razack, Smith, and Thobani (2011) to show how settler colonialism in Canada is mediated through white supremacy and thus can no longer be studied in isolation. Moreover, I illuminate how modern queer formations must pay attention to and address the everyday effects of white settler colonialism within queer communities, by specifically theorizing the narratives of non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers along with their respective queer service organizations in Toronto, Canada.

In its entirety, this theoretical framework grounds this dissertation research and analysis by asking how the investments of white queer and trans service providers in white settler colonialism emerge within the context of queer service provision on structural, micro, and interpersonal levels. More specifically, I will look to the everyday practices of white queer and trans service providers as potentially contributing to the routine elimination of Indigenous peoples. To do so, I extend Rifkin's (2013) analysis of the quotidian nature of settler colonialism within the particular site of queer service provision. In order to begin to explore the complexity of white settler colonialism within the context of queer service provision in downtown Toronto, I outline below the differences between colonialism and settler colonialism.

### **2.1. Colonialism/Settler Colonialism**

Before theorizing the everyday effects of white settler colonialism within queer service provision, the analytical differences between colonialism and settler colonialism must be distinguished (Tuck & Yang, 2012; Veracini, 2011). Colonialism is a consequence of imperialism, where the former can be defined as the "conquest and control of people's lands and goods" (Loomba, 2005, p. 8), and the latter as "the practice, theory, and . . . attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory" (Said, 1994, p. 8). Colonialism is an insidious process that facilitates the complete annihilation of a people through the acquisition of their lands and through forced physical, spiritual, and psychic subordination (Fanon, 2004; Chrisjohn, Young, & Maraun, 1997). In fact, colonialism has allowed for white settlers to move to, inhabit, and indeed colonize all Indigenous lands and peoples around the world (Fanon, 2004; Farred, 2008; Said, 1997; Smith, 1999).

Moreover, in discussing colonialism as occupation, Mbembe (2003) argued that it requires "seizing, delimiting, and asserting control over a physical geographical area—of writing

on the ground a new set of social and spatial relations” (p. 25). Moreover, Said (1997) addressed how colonial discourses are used to imaginatively and materially separate the West from its Other. Orientalism thus is a powerful border-making practice that enables colonizers to exploit and violently subjugate racialized and colonized subjects by imagining and producing them to be backward and uncivilized. The West (and its people), in defining itself as modern and civilized, produces the East (and its people) as Other (the Orient). Said’s (1997) work provided critical avenues for scholars to consider how colonial discourses of power produce a national imaginary that demarcates boundaries and borders as a way to legitimize the worth of a nation and its people.

Within a Canadian context, Cannon and Sunseri (2011) have argued that colonialism is “a process of conquest whereby one nation establishes a colony on another nation’s territory with the intent of taking power, land, and resources” (p. 275). Colonialism in Canada evolved out of the European Empire’s projects of expansion. In order to expand and establish new colonies, white settlers travelled to supposed new land to develop modern industrialized societies (Sorenson, 2003b). This process contributed to the displacement and destruction of Indigenous peoples, communities, and lands (Cannon & Sunseri, 2011; Monture-Angus, 1995, 1999; Smith, 1999, 2012). Colonialism in Canada continues to manifest in the contemporary moment that has evolved out of a violent history that sought out to correct the “Indian problem” through forcible and genocidal means. As such, contemporary life remains haunted by the historical wrongdoings mobilized by the European colonial expansion projects to violently impact, contain, and erase Indigenous life.

Settler colonialism and the logics of elimination—one of the central tenets of settler colonialism proposed by Wolfe (1999, 2006, 2013)—are embedded within what Alfred (2009)

called the three basic options for Indigenous peoples: “destruction, dependence or assimilation” (p. 53). Although Alfred’s (2009) work does not name contemporary colonialism as settler colonial, he does address how Indigenous life in Canada is routinely constrained by the violent everyday nature of colonialism. Alfred’s (2009) work illustrates the potential theoretical limitations in theorizing settler colonialism alone. Critical Indigenous studies scholars who theorize the very real and deadly effects of colonialism—genocide, dispossession, assimilation, and erasure—on their people’s lives, contribute to the ever-growing study and field of (settler) colonial studies. It would be presumptuous of me (and this dissertation research) to only address the scholarship explicitly theorizing settler colonialism, since critical Indigenous studies scholars have and continue to name the effects of (settler) colonialism on Indigenous peoples, nations and life. Thus, the theorization of settler colonialism did not start with Wolfe’s (1999, 2006, 2013) work; rather, it has evolved out of naming the state apparatuses and settlement processes that continue to impede on, contain, and ultimately erase Indigenous peoples. As Smith (2010, 2012) contended, settler colonialism formally mandates erasure by requiring Indigenous peoples to be always disappearing. Contemporary social life remains deeply saturated and engrained within a settler colonial logic to foster the replaceability of Indigeneity in the form of white settler emplacement (Morgensen, 2011a). I therefore use settler colonialism versus colonialism, since the former is more useful in that it accounts for the ways in which settlement and settler citizenship are routinely naturalized, and, further, as it accounts for the everyday violence inflicted by white settlers onto the bodies and minds of Indigenous peoples and their land(s).

Land is critically central to settler colonial projects as it must be imagined and produced to be *terra nullius*—uninhabited, vacant, and empty (Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009; Pateman, 2007; Razack, 2002a; Wolfe, 2006). The process of settler colonialism acts to erase Indigenous

presence through the mobilization of overt and covert forms of violence—legislated by the nation-state. As Lawrence (2003) argued, in Canada, the land was “acquired” through “the forcible and relentless dispossession of Indigenous peoples, the theft of their territories, and the implementation of [colonial] legislation and policies designed to effect their total disappearance as peoples” (p. 23). The logics of settler colonialism were and continue to be used to erase Indigenous peoples from the land, either through their placement onto reserves, their move to the city, or through their complete and utter extinction as a people (Cannon and Sunseri, 2011). As Cannon and Sunseri (2011) asserted: “Indigeneity and urbanity are by no means incompatible to one another, nor do they stand in a dichotomous, either/or relation[ship]. The assumption is that we [Indigenous peoples] do not belong in cities” (p. 58). This commonsensical understanding of Indigenous peoples’ connections to the land has allowed for white settlers to perceive the land as a commodity—property to be bought and sold (Cannon & Sunseri, 2011; Harris, 1993; Razack, 2002a; Morgensen, 2011a). Producing the land as property naturalizes the settlement process altogether (Blomley, 2004), by displacing Indigenous peoples from their lands, and indeed, from their spiritual connections to the land. As Razack (2014) contended, “the colonial city belongs to the settler, and Aboriginal presence in the city inevitably contests settler occupation” (p. 53). Therefore, in order for a settler futurity to be produced and maintained, Indigenous peoples must be relocated to spaces of rurality.

Settler colonial logics produced land as property in order to allow for white settlers to expand upon and acquire all Indigenous lands across the world to signal their progress and the development of the European Empire. Settler colonialism has thus required the theft of lands and the forcible relegation of Indigenous peoples onto reserves (Dempsey, Gould, & Sundberg, 2011; LeRat & Ungar, 2005). Reserves are pockets of land that were “given” to Indigenous peoples to

live on; however, some of these reserved spaces are not rich in resources and have been left to decay, which has resulted in less than satisfactory and even sometimes horrific living conditions (e.g., the lack of clean drinking water) (Dempsey, Gould, & Sundberg, 2011; LeRat & Ungar, 2005; Mascarenhas, 2007). Although Indigenous peoples have been relocated to reserves, and left to their own demise, Canada and its citizen-subjects continue to forcefully vanquish the remaining land for short-term economic gain. Whether on reserves or in rural spaces, the land, where it is rich with resources, continues to be violently exploited through major metal mining (Laduke & Molley, 2013), deforestation (Palecek, 2013), and oil pipelining (Sterritt, 2013). Importantly, settler colonial conquest requires the land to be obtained through the routine normalization of Indigenous erasure, and also through territorial and economic expansion.

### ***2.1.1. Biopolitics and Necropolitics: The Management and Removal of Indigeneity***

Along with settler colonialism's footing in Indigenous peoples' land dispossession, settler colonial logics also reside within and are maintained by institutions. As such, settler colonialism remains deeply structural in nature. For example, settler colonialism is built into institutions such as law (Cannon, 2014a; Razack, 1998, 2011a) and higher education (Monture, 2011). As Monture (2011) argued, colonialism remains saturated even within institutions such as those of higher education, and thus it continues to violently subjugate and erase Indigenous peoples and nations. Monture (2011) importantly wrote: "I speak to these issues because it is the only way to unmask and destabilize the power held over so many of us [Indigenous peoples]" (p. 56). Settler colonialism comes to constrain Indigenous peoples' daily life through the implementation of settler colonial institutions—residential schools, the child welfare system, and contemporary service provision. Biopolitics is useful in this research, and is used to make sense of public health and epidemiological interventions that are readily mobilized by service providers through the management of life. Biopolitics, as described by Foucault (1978), is "power over life" (p. 139),

where bodies are subjugated and populations are controlled. Biopolitics manages life: bodies and populations are disciplined through routine acts of control and regulation. Further, Nguyen (2010) wrote about an understanding of biopolitics as “interventions aimed at individuals that [seek] to discipline, regulate, and monitor bodily conduct” (p. 112). As such, it is through the mobilization of colonial biopolitics—intended to bring all subjects into modernity—that white settlers seek to produce Indigenous peoples as “deficits,” “problems,” or “pathology,” who require correction, assimilation, and/or extermination (Alfred, 2009; Greensmith, 2012; LaRocque, 1993; Razack, 2002a, 2002b, 2011a, 2011b, 2012, 2014; Tuck & Yang, 2012; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999).

Extending Foucault’s use of biopolitics, Mbembe (2003) theorized necropolitics—the production of a people as already dead—within the particular site of the plantation, which allowed white slave owners to understand black slaves and their existences as already dead. Moreover, Mbembe (2003) noted that, “in the eyes of the conqueror, *savage life* is just another form of *animal life*, a horrifying experience, something alien beyond imagination or comprehension” (p. 24; emphasis in original). The figure of the savage has also been placed onto Indigenous peoples to deny their complete existence as a people. As a result, Razack (2011a) and Thobani (2007) have extended the study of necropolitics when discussing the ways people of colour and Indigenous peoples experience white supremacist and colonial violence and are rendered disposable within projects of Canadian nation building. Looking into the inquest of Indigenous men dying in police custody in Canada, Razack (2011a) noted that the necropolitical construction of Indigenous peoples produces them as being unworthy of help or intervention. Razack (2011a) argued that Indigenous peoples are considered to be “bodies on whom a full measure of care would be wasted, bodies marked for death, more so than they are marked for



exploitation” (2011a, p. 358). Necropolitics also provides an avenue to theorize how Indigenous bodies are symbolically removed from spaces of belonging or worth. For example, I have shown how the media coverage in Caledonia has used disability tropes to relocate Indigenous peoples to “pathology”—as being in a perpetual state of abnormalcy (Greensmith, 2012). I exposed how the imbricated logics of settler colonialism and ableism position Indigenous peoples as “less-than-human” to rationalize their routine erasure and delegitimize their rightful claims to the land (Greensmith, 2012).

Theorizing necropolitics alongside settler colonialism provides an avenue to theorize how Indigenous peoples are deemed (un)worthy of life. The study of necropolitics is also a useful concept for considering how settler colonial logics position Indigenous peoples as “problems.” Theorizing necropolitics and biopolitics, particularly in their connection to Gordon’s (1997) “haunting” and Byrd’s (2011) “zombie imperialism” (p. 228), is important when discussing the “problem” and “pathological” statuses pinned onto the bodies and minds of Indigenous peoples. A haunting, such as Gordon (1997) described, relies on spectres or ghosts as social figures that are not necessarily, but that typically appear to be, dead, and that “lead to . . . dense site[s of investigation] where history and subjectivity make social life” (p. 8). The social life of white settlers remains haunted by the historical wrongdoings and contemporary effects of settler colonialism on the lives and lands of Indigenous peoples. Byrd (2011) extended such a notion of a haunting and argued for the use of “zombie imperialism,” which locates the “current manifestation of a liberal democratic colonialism” within biopower and necropolitics (p. 228). It is precisely a haunting, a zombie apocalypse, that produces what I am calling “a politics of care,” where some lives become livable, and worth caring for, while others become degenerate, and, indeed, worth letting die. As such, service providers and helping professionals are required to

mobilize a “politics of care” through their evocations of saving or helping discourses within their work life.

The study of settler colonialism offers theoretical precision for examining how processes of elimination facilitate Indigenous peoples’ dispossession from their lands. As such, connecting settler colonialism with biopolitics and necropolitics allows me to illustrate how Indigenous peoples remain constructed as “problems” or “pathology,” which produces them as unworthy of care, and thus as too difficult to care for. This has consequential effects within the context of service provision, insofar as service providers are placed into helping roles that have evolved out of a history of forced dispossession and erasure. While it is important to theorize how settler colonialism is practiced within contemporary life, studying settler colonialism alone risks erasing other interlocking systems of oppression used to erase Indigenous peoples and dispossess them from their lands. Thus, I utilize settler colonialism alongside of white supremacy to consider how they are imbricated and used to further exploit, subjugate, and inflict violence upon Indigenous peoples and people of colour.

## **2.2. White Settler Colonialism**

Before moving to my understanding and definition of white settler colonialism, particularly through the imbrication of settler colonialism and white supremacy, I outline my use of white settler colonialism by situating this research within critical race theory. Race can be defined as “the process by which social, economic and political forces determine the content and importance of racial categories, and by which they are in turn shaped by racial meanings” (Omi & Winant, 1986, p. 62). Racial differences are not located within individual bodies; rather, race and the meanings attached to racial difference are produced through “social relations and historical context[s]” (Omi & Winant, 1994, p. 11). It is precisely the social, cultural, and

historical contexts that must be illuminated to highlight how racial differences are produced within contemporary social life. In a productive attempt to make race matter, Goldberg (1993) argued, “race is irrelevant, but all is race” (p. 6). Goldberg (1993) contended that race is a socially constructed category, and yet the symbolic, discursive, and material violence of racism continues to organize our social world. In other words, the symbols and meanings attached to race remain deeply central in everyday social relations and projects of nation building (Goldberg, 1993).

My deployment of critical race theory is used as a way to ensure that my white settler criticism of white settler colonialism does not reproduce white supremacy by only theorizing relationships between white settlers and Indigenous peoples. Indeed, white supremacy continues to normalize the violence inflicted upon people of colour. In theorizing the “war on terror” within a post-9/11 context, Razack (2008) discussed the effects of white supremacy and colonialism on Muslims in Canada. The white supremacy embedded within Canada’s legal system has legislated the unequal and horrific mistreatment of Muslims due to a perception that they are “backward” and have an “uncivilized” culture (Razack, 2008). Producing racialized and colonized people as inferior due to their culture contributes to their routine stigmatization, surveillance, denial of full citizenship rights, and detainment (Razack, 2008; Razack, Smith, & Thobani, 2011; Schick & McNinch, 2009). Thus, Razack’s (2008) discussion of the treatment of Muslims in Canada is useful in theorizing the impact of white supremacy as a structure that is typically utilized to legitimize abusive and deadly systems of power. It is precisely the violent effects of white supremacy that become so naturalized within contemporary life.

In order to theorize white settler colonialism, the work of critical race feminists Razack, Smith, and Thobani (2011) exposed the ways in which whiteness, race, and colonialism connect

to produce a normative Canadian identity and understanding of the nation. As the authors have stated, “white citizens [are] exalted as the rightful owners of the land [and] draw on their entitlement as colonizers of Indigenous peoples to manage all racial Others” (Razack, Smith, and Thobani, 2011, p. 4). Here, Razack, Smith, and Thobani (2011) addressed how the difference-making processes are attached to and produced through race, by theorizing how white citizen-subjects come to know they belong to/in the nation through their infliction of violence upon Indigenous peoples and people of colour. As Byrd (2011) contended, “racialization and colonization have worked simultaneously to other and abject entire peoples so they can be enslaved, excluded, removed, and killed in the name of progress and capitalism” (p. xxiii). I follow the works of Byrd (2001) and Razack, Smith, and Thobani (2011), who all base their discussions of white supremacy and colonialism in North America within the study of settler colonialism. The theorizing of white settler colonialism is used to illustrate how white supremacy is inseparably linked to settler colonialism, and how they work together to erase Indigenous peoples from their lands, inflict violence upon people of colour, and evoke white settlers as proper, national subjects.

Projects of Canadian nation building are positioned through deployments of multiculturalism (Razack, 2002a; Thobani, 2007; St. Denis, 2011a) that remain exclusionary. As Thobani (2007) argued, the master narrative in Canada produces its citizen-subjects as “law-abiding ... responsible citizens, [who are] compassionate, caring, and committed to the values of diversity and multiculturalism” (p. 4). National narratives in Canada suggest that the nation-state is progressive and tolerant of cultural difference (Bannerji, 2000; Henry, et al., 2000; Simpson, James, & Mack, 2011; Thobani, 2007). Following Canadian critical race feminists, I contend that multiculturalism is a project of white racism and settler colonialism insofar as it provides an

avenue for Canada's national imaginary to be refashioned as tolerant of difference and inviting of cultural diversity. As a result, multiculturalism does not discriminate, and thus, anyone (white or of colour) can participate in the refashioning of the national imaginary. Thus, the difference and diversity of the Canadian nation holds whiteness at its centre by creating an Other who is at once celebrated and marginalized due to their culture. The ideological and discursive use of multiculturalism, inclusivity, and diversity erases how Canada was and remains founded upon the expectation of the death and disappearance of Indigenous peoples, as well as the violent exploitation of the labour of people of colour. Thus, these national narratives of multicultural diversity and inclusion routinely erase the white settler colonial state-led violence that is inflicted onto people of colour and Indigenous peoples. Multiculturalism is used to obscure the white settler colonial realities that continue to deride Indigenous life and suggest that Indigenous peoples are one cultural group among many (Cannon and Sunseri, 2011; Lawrence & Dua, 2005; Porter, 1999; St. Denis, 2011a; Thobani, 2007).

This section has firmly rooted the analysis of white settler colonialism within Razack, Smith, and Thobani's (2011) critical race feminist analysis, used to remind us that settler colonialism is indeed white supremacist. The concept of white settler colonialism assists in accounting for the violent interlocking histories of colonial and white supremacist oppression that continue to displace and erase Indigenous peoples, while simultaneously surveilling and inflicting violence upon people of colour in Canada. As such, I mobilize white settler colonialism as a way to signal the routine violence white settlers and their descendants partake in—knowingly or unknowingly. I include this theory within the context of service provision, where I suggest that queer service provision and white service providers are not immune from such processes. Service provisional institutions are built on a white settler colonial foundation that

requires queer service providers to invest in the nation-state and evoke neo-liberal helping discourses. In order to fully understand the complexities of white settler colonialism, I theorize the settler, and in particular, how I utilize the category settler within this dissertation research.

### **2.3. Theorizing The Settler**

Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) discussed European settlers' relationship to colonial power, stating: they "left a permanent wound on the societies and communities who occupied the land named and claimed under imperialism" (p. 21). White settlers, as subjects of the nation-state, are required to subsume a powerful role of complete and supreme authority over Indigenous peoples and their lands. This powerful role is connected to such investments in white settler sovereignty and the nation-state, which they are implicated in sustaining as settler descendants. Settlers, as Alfred and Cornthassel (2005) contended, "follow the mandate provided for them by their imperial forefathers' colonial legacy" (p. 598). In other words, settlers remain idle (or complicit) in their own implicatedness in reproducing and sustaining white settler colonialism.

Theorizations of settlerhood must also encapsulate notions of sovereignty. Indigenous sovereignty—*tewatatha:wi*—translated from Iroquoian to English can be understood as "we carry ourselves" or "we take care of ourselves" (Fagan, 2004, p. 19). Fagan (2004) argued that Indigenous sovereignty must be engrained within Indigenous community, collectivity, and responsibility to their particular nation(s). Discussing the impact of colonialism on Indigenous nations, Barker (2005) illustrated that "the erasure of the sovereign is the racialization of the 'Indian'" (p. 17). Ensuring Indigenous peoples comply with white settler understandings of sovereignty and such evocations of nationhood can easily delegitimize their connections to land and their on-going claims for self-determination (Coulthard, 2007). Thus, settler sovereignty acts to further colonize Indigenous peoples and nations.

As a result, settler sovereignty is “founded [on] the basis of colonial settlement” that was itself founded on an “origin-obscuring process of transformation in circulation that retroactively constitutes its beginning and center” (Povinelli, 2006, p. 18). Povinelli (2006) posited that the construction and sustainment of settler sovereignty relies on the assumption that progress starts with the making of the nation-state—a process that obscures the violent realities of white settlement. Moreover, as Tuck and Yang (2012) have argued, “settlers come with the intention of making a new home on [Indigenous] lands, a homemaking that insists on settler sovereignty over all things in their new domain” (p. 2). White settlers, with their investments in the sovereign and the nation-state, bring with them their own logics of superiority and dominance. These settler colonial logics that are engrained within law, service provision, and the nation-state are used to routinely demarcate racial difference onto Indigenous peoples. Through these logics, settlers repudiate Indigenous knowledge systems and modalities of governance that may very well seem foreign to them.

This hierarchization of white settler colonial citizenship regimes and sovereignty provides an avenue for white settlers to assert their dominance over Indigenous peoples and their forms of governance. White settler colonialism is legislated within the Canadian nation-state to authorize settler sovereignty, technologies of citizenship, and the on-going dispossession of Indigenous nations. Within this contemporary moment, white settlers in Canada—those marked through and who have gained privilege from their ancestral connections to European Empire—are invited into sustaining and maintaining particular versions of citizenship since they remain complicit in white settler colonialism as benefactors of their ancestors’ settlement. It is through this mechanism that descendants of white settlers become settlers even if they have not made the active decision to settle. Thus, to become a white settler is to invest in and maintain the

legitimacy of settler sovereignty, and indeed the nation-state.

Although white settlers have been named as benefiting from and being complicit in white settler colonialism through their displacement and erasure of Indigenous nations by making the Indigenous peoples' lands their home, more recently, Indigenous scholars and scholars of colour alike have also implicated people of colour in their potential complicity in settler colonial projects (Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009; Byrd, 2011; Cannon, 2012; Fujikane & Okamura, 2008; Jafri, 2012, 2013; Lawrence & Dua, 2005; Smith, 2012). Lawrence and Dua (2005) sparked the "settlers of colour" conversation by critiquing the absent presence of Indigeneity in canonical anti-racist and post-colonial scholarship. Lawrence and Dua (2005) suggested that people of colour are indeed settlers since they "live on land that is appropriated and contested, where Aboriginal peoples are denied nationhood and access to their own lands" (p. 134). Lawrence and Dua (2005) contended that people of colour can become settlers, while noting that "broad differences exist between those brought as slaves, [those who] currently work as migrant laborers, [those who] are refugees without legal documentation, or [those] émigrés who have obtained citizenship" (p. 134). Although Lawrence and Dua (2005) are critical of people of colour's capacity to be complicit in white settler colonialism, they suggest that such complicity is contingent on their access to citizenship regimes and processes of migration that involve coming to Canada because of exile and/or violence. Nonetheless, I bring up Lawrence and Dua's (2005) writings as a way to usher in the complexities around who can become a settler and how such becomings are produced through regimes of and attachments to citizenship.

Sharma and Wright (2008) responded to Lawrence and Dua (2005) regarding people of colour's complicity in settler colonialism as promoting and perpetuating neo-racism.<sup>11</sup> They argued that Lawrence and Dua's (2005) understanding of nationhood is ethnicized, which



exceptionalizes the wants, desires, and decolonization of Native peoples over non-Natives (e.g., migrants). In arguing this, Sharma and Wright (2008) could easily erase the ways in which taking action against global capitalism and colonialism may not necessarily work at dismantling settler colonialism. As they argued: “by understanding *colonialism* as the theft of the commons, the agents of decolonization as the commoners, and decolonization as the gaining of a global commons, we will gain a clearer sense of *when* we were colonized, who colonized us, and *how to* decolonize ourselves and our relationships” (Sharma & Wright, 2008, p. 133; emphasis in original). While calling for collective action, Sharma and Wright (2008) did not consider how people of colour can benefit from and be complicit in the oppression and dispossession of Indigenous peoples and their lands, nor did they consider how Indigenous nationhood and decolonization operate outside of the confines of white settler sovereignty.

Discussing people of colour’s potential complicity in settler colonialism, Jafri (2012) contended that people of colour can be complicit in settler colonialism, while also simultaneously experiencing white supremacist violence and exclusion from white settler citizenship. Moreover, Andrea Smith (2012) argued that people of colour “are set up to take part in a politics of genocide regardless of their intentions or historical circumstances, because their displacement onto indigenous lands simultaneously erases the indigenous people who previously occupied those lands” (p. 80–81; see also Thobani, 2007). Both Jafri (2012) and Smith (2012) have noted that people of colour are placed into violent relationships with Indigenous peoples by being asked to invest in the white settler nation that they themselves are shamed by. This violence is white supremacist and settler colonialist whereby people of colour are forcibly inserted by their experiences of diaspora, migration, and anti-blackness.

Although people of colour may be complicit in settler colonialism and the extermination of Indigenous peoples, they may not necessarily become settlers in ways that reify white settler sovereignty and citizenship. As Cannon (2014b) has argued, “Empire may create settlers but ... [not all] settlers are ... shaped [by Empire] universally” (n.p.). In particular, Fujikane (2008) argued that the universal usage of settler is not representative of the varying degrees of displacement and violence that descendants from Asia experience. As Fujikane (2008) contended, “for Asians who settle in Hawai’i because of histories of colonization in their own homelands, the violence of their own political displacement, in some cases as a result of American military intervention and occupation, only reinforces more strongly our critique of colonialism and its global effects” (p. 9). Fujikane’s (2008) use of the term “Asian settlers” is a way to signify the descendants from Asia’s own relationships to Indigenous peoples in Hawai’i and to acknowledge that they are in another people’s homeland. Similarly, Amadahy and Lawrence (2009) discussed the term settler among African people in the Americas and contended that their forcible and violent removal from Africa due to transatlantic slavery “does not make the enslaved peoples true ‘settlers.’ Even in situations in Canada where Black people, after slavery, attempted settlement as free peoples, the process has been fraught with dispossession and denial of access to land” (p. 6). Amadahy and Lawrence (2009), and Fujikane (2008) provide an opportunity to (re)think about the complexities of transnational white supremacist and colonial exploitation of African people and Asian descendants within their complex relationships with Indigenous peoples and their lands. Thus, the category settler may not be easily transferrable to people of colour who experience forced dispossession from their own lands.

Moreover, Walia (2013) and Sharma and Wright (2008) have argued that migrants and undocumented workers in Canada cannot simply be construed as settlers, since it is their bodies and labour that become necessary for settler capitalistic projects to function. Moving away from the category settler to describe people of colour, Byrd (2011) used the term arrivants as a way “to signify those people forced into the Americas through the violence of European and Anglo-American colonialism and imperialism around the globe” (p. xix). From their differing locations as settlers, arrivants, and Indigenous, Byrd (2011) contended that they all “acknowledge their own positions within empire and then reconceptualize space and history to make visible what imperialism and its resultant settler colonialisms and diasporas have sought to obscure” (xxx).

Forming my white settler criticism from the aforementioned critiques of the universality of settlerhood, I pay particular attention to the ways in which white supremacy and settler colonialism collide to erase Indigenous life and sustain violence and marginalization among people of colour by exalting white settlers as naturally belonging to the land and by naturalizing the violent white supremacist projects of nation building in Canada. As a result, I pay particular attention to the ways in which white queer and trans service providers might invest in white settler colonialism and move toward white settler innocence within their respective queer organizations. Moreover, when theorizing the narratives of queer and trans people of colour, I consider how their experiences with queer service provision already entangle them within critiques of the nation-state, white supremacy, and (settler) colonialism. I look to the work being done in queer service provision as contributing to white settler colonial projects in Canada of which service providers are a part.

## **2.4. Queer Settler Colonialism**

In a recent article, I argued along with Giwa (2013) that queer and trans politics in Canada operate to sustain Indigenous erasure through the eroticization of 2-Spirit subjectivities, the naturalization of queer settler violence, and the production of an inclusive queer belonging that repudiates Indigenous decolonization. Yet, before moving toward the ways in which modern evocations of sexual minority statuses and queerness operate to sustain white settler colonialism, I address the notion that it is imbricated with heteropatriarchy. Heteropatriarchy, which was first coined by Lynda Hart (1994), can be defined as “the social systems in which heterosexuality and patriarchy are perceived as normal and natural” (Arvin, Tuck, & Morrill, 2013, p. 13). I connect the scholarship implicating queer settler colonialism with that of heteropatriarchy, to show how they are inseparably linked to produce a normalized white settler constituency that routinely inflicts gendered and sexual violence upon Indigenous women and their lands.

#### ***2.4.1. Theorizing the Effects of Heteropatriarchy***

Cannon and Sunseri (2011) argued that the effects of racism, colonialism and sexism are inseparably linked and continue to impact Indigenous peoples’ everyday life. The effects of white supremacy and settler colonialism operate to sustain (hetero)sexism and heteropatriarchy, which have implanted themselves into Indigenous nations and have had devastating gendered consequences (Arvin, Tuck, & Morrill, 2013; Cannon, 1998; Francis, 2011; Razack, 2002b). As Cannon (1998) argued, the Indian Act legislates the compulsory nature of heteronormativity within Indigenous communities, “by making marriage the only possible avenue through which to convey ‘Indian’ status and rights” (p. 10). As such, heteronormativity has permeated into Indigenous communities to naturalize European heterosexual relations, and indeed, repudiate any deviation from that norm.

As white settlers settled onto Indigenous lands, they brought with them the notion that

heterosexuality and the nuclear family were normal and natural (Emberley, 2007). As such, it was assumed that the heterosexual white settler family was the epitome of true civility, and this tactic of white settler capitalism was used to produce Indigenous familial relations as uncivil and unnatural (Morgensen, 2011a; Rifkin, 2011). Thus, moving into the present day, the heteronormative logics of white settler colonialism continue to legitimize heteropatriarchy by providing Indigenous men more decision making power as “chiefs, Indian agents, and priests” (Millon, 2013, p. 41). While heteropatriarchy continues to legitimize and normalize male dominance and heterosexual unions within Indigenous communities, white settlers also use it in their attempts to violently replace and erase Indigenous peoples from their lands, by inflicting sexual violence upon Indigenous women. As Smith (2005) asserted, heteropatriarchy is a central pillar within settler colonial projects, thus,

it has been through sexual violence and through the imposition of European gender relationships on Native communities that Europeans were able to colonize Native peoples in the first place. If we maintain these patriarchal gender systems, we will be unable to decolonize and fully assert our sovereignty. (p. 139)

Further, the sexual exploitation of Indigenous women—in understanding them as inherently rapeable—has enabled white settlers to engage in continual acts of conquest (Razack, 2002b). Sexual violence is thus genocide and is maintained through interlocking systems of oppression that come to naturalize heterosexism and patriarchy: heteropatriarchy. As such, white settler colonialism is mobilized through white settlers exertion of control over Indigenous women and their nations (Millon, 2013; Smith, 2005).

Andrea Smith’s (2005) coupling of sexual violence with Indigenous women’s genocide is useful in exposing the white settler colonial logics at play. Indigenous women continue to experience sexual violence, which Monture-Angus (1995, 1999) linked to the on-going effects of colonialism in Canada. Monture-Angus (1995, 1999) further suggested that the colonial violence

Indigenous women routinely experience cannot be relocated to the physical, and indeed, that it must be extended to the psychic and emotional. Indigenous feminists asserted that Indigenous women experience intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and rape within their own communities (Arvin, Tuck, & Morrill, 2013; Monture-Angus, 1995; 1999; Smith, 2005).

Although violence persists within Indigenous communities, the colonial violence embedded within contemporary Indigenous life must be taken seriously as it continues to have adverse, multigenerational effects (D’Arcangelis & Huntly, 2012). Thus, the effects of heteropatriarchy cannot be studied in isolation, since colonialism and racism continue to impact Indigenous women’s everyday life. In speaking of her own experience of everyday life as an Indigenous woman, Monture-Angus (1995) explained:

I am a Mohawk woman. It is not solely my gender through which I first experience the world, it is my culture (and/or race) that precedes my gender. Actually if I am the object of some form of discrimination, it is very difficult for me to separate what happens to me because of my gender and what happens to me because of my race and culture. My world is not experienced in a linear and compartmentalized way. (p. 177–178)

It is clear that Indigenous women continue to experience the wrath of heteropatriarchy and white settler colonialism on a structural and everyday level.

Moreover, the imbricated logics of heteropatriarchy and white settler colonialism are present within Razack (2002b) and McNinch’s (2008) work, which theorizes how white heterosexual men utilize their white settler masculinity to violate, dominate, and colonize Indigenous women. Razack (2002b) articulated Pamela George’s experiences of sexual violence and eventual death in Regina, Saskatchewan, whereby white settler masculinity was violently predisposed to heteropatriarchal and white settler colonial logics. Steven Kummerfield and Alex Ternowetsky—two young white settler men—travelled to downtown Regina to traverse their whiteness by picking up Pamela George, an Indigenous prostitute,<sup>12</sup> to sexually exploit and

conquer her (Razack, 2002b). As Razack (2002b) suggested, Kummerfield and Ternowetsky were able to utilize their white settler masculinity and move from “respectable space to degenerate space and back again [as] *an adventure* that confirms that they are indeed white men in control who can survive a dangerous encounter with the racial Other and who have an unquestioned right to go anywhere and do anything” (p. 127; my emphasis). Kummerfield and Ternowetsky were able to travel to a space of degeneracy, where Pamela George was expected to reside, and obtain sexual services as a way to assert their white settler masculinity. As Razack (2002b) noted, Kummerfield and Ternowetsky’s sexual exploitation of Pamela George evoked a violent heteropatriarchal rhetoric—boys being boys—as a justification for an Indigenous woman’s death. The subsequent violent sexual exploitation and murder occurred in order for Kummerfield and Ternowetsky to solidify their status as white settlers through their normalization of sexual conquest and control over Pamela George, an Indigenous woman (Razack, 2002b).

Additionally, McNinch (2008) documented the ways in which white settlers, and indeed their masculinity, remained normalized within the sexual assault case of “12-year-old ‘Melissa Caslain’ a Saulteaux girl from the Yellow Quill First Nation” (p. 89). McNinch’s (2009) reading of colonial heteropatriarchy encapsulates an inque(e)ry that accounts for the subtleties of the homosociality engrained within white settlers’ masculinity and their mastery of sexual and colonial violence. McNinch (2009) theorized the normative gendered assumptions attached to white settler masculinity and argued within popular discourse that the three white men in this case were represented as “ordinary youth; their profile was a presumed strong, and hence ‘healthy,’ heterosexuality” (p. 153). Through colonial logics embedded within the court system and discursive realities of white settler masculinity, sexual violence was used in both

aforementioned cases to conquer Indigenous women through the mobilization of victim blaming narratives (e.g., “she asked for it”) (McNinch, 2008). McNinch (2008) argued that the colonality of white settler was enacted through homosociality to que(e)rly expose the fragile investments in white settler heterosexual masculinity.

I utilize the work of McNinch (2008, 2009), Monture-Angus (1995), and Razack (2002b) to expose heteropatriarchy, and indeed, the routine violence white settler men inflict upon Indigenous women, by making apparent the relentless imposition and mundane nature of (settler) colonization. Heteropatriarchy is imbricated with white settler colonialism to normalize the routine violence Indigenous women experience within their own communities and in white settler society. When studying the effects and impacts of settler colonialism, Driskill (2010) contended that heteropatriarchy must be dismantled insofar as the system has come to transplant a two-sex binary into Indigenous communities. As such, the effects of heteropatriarchy remain firmly in place within contemporary life, impacting both non-Indigenous peoples and Indigenous peoples alike. Heteropatriarchy becomes imbricated with settler colonialism so that the constraints made to contemporary gendered and sexual lexicons can be exposed and critiqued.

#### ***2.4.2. Toward A Queer Settler Colonial Critique***

Studying the effects of heteropatriarchy alone fails to consider how modern queer formations continue to sustain white settler colonial projects within seemingly emancipatory and liberatory queer politics and projects (Greensmith & Giwa, 2013). Thus, I move to a critical discussion of queer studies as operating within and sustaining white settler colonialism. Queer studies, and more specifically queer theory, has evolved out of post-structuralist thinkers like Judith Butler, Michael Foucault, and Julia Kristeva, who have theorized the effects of multiple discourses used to normalize everyday life. While queer theory aims to disrupt the normal,



routine, and taken-for-granted within the everyday (Browne & Nash, 2010; Leung, 2008), the perspective alone can also potentially centre the white queers and produce queerness as naturally white (Alexander, 2005; Cohen, 1997; Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; Gopinath, 2005; Fung, 1996; Leung, 2008; Muñoz, 1999; Puar, 2007, 2013).

In addressing queer theory's attachments to and deployments of whiteness, Cohen (1997) exposed the unilateral focus on disrupting heteronormativity and its effects on queer subjects as stigmatizing and oppressing "the most vulnerable in our communities" (p. 443). Cohen (1997) suggested that the analytical category queer be broadened to consider black peoples' experiences of anti-blackness, whose lives are continually impacted by "white, middle-class, heterosexual norm[s]" (p. 458). Thus, Cohen (1997) illustrated that all black people get queered outside of heteronormativity by the normativity of whiteness. I make use of Cohen's (1997) work by acknowledging such limitations of studying queerness in isolation, and centralize white settler colonialism as the object of study within this dissertation. In Eng, Halberstam, and Munoz's (2005) introduction to "What's Queer about Queer Studies Now," they suggested that queer studies scholars are expanding upon the subject by directing the queer gaze back onto queerness, by paying attention to the "meaning of democracy and freedom, citizenship and immigration, family and community, and the alien and the human in all their national and their global manifestations" (p. 2). There is productive possibility within Eng, Halberstam, and Munoz's (2005) introduction, since they postulate how queer studies could incorporate a subjectless critique by destabilizing and questioning how certain (queer) political referents and subjects remain normalized. However, within Eng, Halberstam, and Munoz's (2005) critique, they do not consider how white settler colonialism is already occurring in the procedures they have named. Thus, the absence of white settler colonialism within their critique is a sign of the relative

marginalization of Indigenous critical voices and the lack of attention placed on Indigenous studies within not only queer studies, but also within the broader study of race, class, gender, and sexuality in the US academy.

In an attempt to address the absent critique of settler colonialism within queer studies, editors Justice, Rifkin, and Schneider (2010), in the special issue “Sexuality, Nationality, and Indigeneity,” addressed how gender and sexuality are policed within Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities alike to normalize white settler colonialism. In this special issue, the scholarship and writings divergently approached the heteronormalization of nationalism and the ways in which settler colonialism creeps into the imaginations of what is queer through the continual erasure of Indigenous peoples and nations. The scholarships of Smith (2010), Driskill (2010), and Morgensen (2010) provide critical insight into how queer studies can be in conversation with Native studies when the effects of settler colonialism are centralized. Smith’s (2010) “Queer Theory and Native Studies” interrogated how the political referent (e.g., the Native body) is ethnographically entrapped within Native studies and argued that Native studies can positively contribute to queer studies by “unsettling settler colonialism” (p. 42). Here Smith (2010) is contending that queerness is about abjection, which would pin queerness onto the Native subject. However, within queer studies, legibility as a queer citizen in the white settler society pins queerness onto white settlers. Thus, common articulations of settler queerness produce a queer settler futurity that rests upon the elimination of Indigenous peoples, whereby queerness is associated with and attached to white settlers (Smith, 2010). This understanding of settler queerness creates a binary where Indigenous peoples within a white settler society can only ever be imagined as straight. I extend Smith’s (2010) discussion of Indigenous disappearance within queer studies to ask how it is that white settler queerness is produced

within queer service provision so that Indigenous peoples are imagined to be outside of the purview of such services. Moreover, I investigate how non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers are imagining Indigenous peoples within their work life and to what extent they are part of their gendered and sexual lexicons. I ask these important questions by way of connecting the work done by non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers to on-going projects of white settler colonialism that are used as a mechanism to normalize settler queer formations, politics, and practices.

Addressing the ways contemporary settler colonialism is embedded within queer studies, Driskill's (2010) "Doubleweaving Two-Spirit Critiques" called for a 2-Spirit critique that would expose "how radical queer politics replicate colonial taxonomies and realities even as they attempt to disrupt" (p. 83). Driskill (2010) argued that a 2-Spirit critique engages with "queer studies' responsibility to examine ongoing colonialism, genocide, survival, and resistance of Native nations and peoples" (p. 86). In particular, Driskill (2010) employed a 2-Spirit critique by utilizing queerness as a strategy of resistance to "heteronormalizing nationalist discourses" (p. 75). As such, a 2-Spirit critique pushes "queer studies to a more complex analysis of nation while also incorporating the critiques of heteropatriarchal nationalisms that queer studies offers in order to fight against heterosexism, homophobia, and rigid gender binaries in decolonial theories and activism" (p. 77). Driskill (2010) called upon queer studies to take Indigenous decolonization seriously to include Indigeneity in such theorizing, address settler colonialism as it is imbricated with queerness, and engage in on-going relationships with Indigenous peoples. I mobilize a 2-Spirit critique within this research to expose the settler colonial violence embedded within queer theorizing, which asks us all to "pay attention to the current colonial occupation of Native lands and nations and the way [2-Spirit] bodies and identities work to disrupt colonial

projects” (Driskill, 2010, p. 87). Thus, a 2-Spirit critique is firmly situated within a decolonial analysis that is meant to expose the imbricated logics of white supremacy, settler colonialism, and heteropatriarchy that continue to impact divergent Indigenous articulations of nationhood and sovereignty, and simultaneously define white settler understandings of queerness.

Moreover, Morgensen’s (2010) “Settler Homonationalism” addressed how settler colonialism conditions queer modernities, and argued: “[m]odern sexuality came into being in the United States as a method to *produce* settler colonialism, and settler subjects, by facilitating ongoing conquest and naturalizing its effects” (p. 117; emphasis in original). Contemporary manifestations of sexuality, and indeed sexual politics, require the nation-state (and its citizen-subjects) to routinely invest in settler sovereignty and citizenship, and by doing so, inflict routine violence upon Indigenous peoples and their lands. Morgensen (2010) extended the theorization of homonationalism, which can be defined as a framework to address the “‘acceptance’ and ‘tolerance’ for gay and lesbian subjects as the barometer by which the legitimacy of, and capacity for national sovereignty is evaluated” (Puar, 2013, p. 24). Puar (2007) explored how racialized and colonized peoples are produced to be monstrous, feminized, and queer, through their routine eviction from or assimilation within the contemporary imperial nation. Thus, the theorization of settler homonationalism centres the analysis of settler colonialism within already well-formed anti-racist and anti-colonial queer critiques. Following this, I mobilize settler homonationalism to connect white queer subjects’ modern evocations of modern sexuality to their complicity in sustaining white settler citizenship as normal and natural (Greensmith & Giwa, 2013). I utilize the critiques offered by Driskill (2010), Morgensen (2010), and Smith (2010) to expose the ways in which settler colonial constructions of gender and sexuality infiltrate queer service provision to refashion white-normed queerness as desirable.

As Morgensen (2011a) argued, in “Spaces Between Us: Queer Settler Colonialism and Indigenous Decolonization,” queer non-Natives must engage with and examine the settler colonial conditions that exist to legitimize and normalize the erasure of Indigenous peoples. Morgensen (2011a) suggested “non-Native queers can evaluate their work by the degree to which it troubles settler colonialism while being held accountable to Native queer and Two-Spirit activists and allied critics” (p. 227). Morgensen’s (2011a) work provides an avenue to consider how non-Native queer studies scholars and activists can ensure that their scholarship and activism addresses the white supremacist and settler colonial processes and practices within which they or their work are situated. Thus, Morgensen’s (2011a) work becomes useful insofar as it provides an avenue to consider how the pursuit for decolonization must involve a radical rethinking of queer non-Natives’ investments in queerness, which have the potential to contribute to the erasure and colonization of Native queer, trans, and 2-Spirit peoples. I extend Morgensen’s (2011a) work by paying particular attention to how non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers reinscribe and/or challenge white supremacy and settler colonialism within their respective queer service organizations. I look to queer service provision as another site that can easily contribute to the violence Indigenous peoples and nations experience.

One example of the entrenchment of settler colonialism within queer modernities can be found in annual Pride Toronto events, which continue to erase 2-Spirited presence and eroticize their Indigeneity (Greensmith & Giwa, 2013). 2-Spirit peoples’ everyday life is impacted by settler homonationalism, since they continue to “experience a degree of racism that is reminiscent of heteropatriarchal society” (Wolfe, 2013, p. 16). The persistence of settler homonationalism within Pride Toronto is exemplified in Raven’s story of an underwear contest, whereby the sexy presence of Indigeneity is relocated to a headdress, thereby perpetuating

stereotypical representations that work to enable Indigenous dispossession (Greensmith & Giwa, 2013). As I, along with Giwa (2013) wrote:

regardless of the intent behind the underwear contest, then—whether it was an attempt to emulate the campy nature of the Village People by representing the different characters, or whether the intent was to make [I]ndigeneity sexy—the outcome was a perpetual reenactment of racism, cultural appropriation, and settler colonialism. (p. 142)

In this case, settler homonationalism was produced within a seemingly innocent underwear contest when white queers put on Indigeneity to reify stereotypical representations, without requiring the presence of 2-Spirited peoples. In order to firmly understand the settler colonial logics used within queer communities, of which queer service provision is a part, I contend that non-Indigenous queers' evoking of a universalizing, normatively white evocation of gender and sexuality, might result in their complicity in the oppression of Indigenous peoples.

#### ***2.4.3. Theorizing Queer Settler Complicity***

In an attempt to expose the potential complicity of white queers in white settler colonialism, I return to McNinch (2008), who honed in on the very real effects of homophobic violence and trauma that gay men experience in rural Saskatchewan. As McNinch (2008) described, the everyday experience of marginalization “connects ‘(us) fags’ and ‘(them) Indian[s],’ as well as any group with markings of difference” (p. 90). Here, McNinch (2008) draws attention toward the potential connections between non-Indigenous queers and Indigenous peoples as a helpful point; however, in doing so, McNinch can easily erase their differences and experiences of oppression. In particular, McNinch's (2008) analogy easily obscures 2-Spirit, queer, and trans Indigenous people, as well as queer and trans people of colour, as subjects who already bridge the single imaginary of (white) queerness and (straight) Indigenous nations or people of colour. Within this particular reading, perhaps there is something to be said surrounding the ways in which interlocking theories of race and homophobia might work

together to create alliances that may not have ever before been imagined or formulated between “‘us (fags)’ and ‘(them) Indians’” (p. 90). However, Trask (1991) quite rightly contended, “any coalition-building strategy that presumes sameness cannot support Natives” (p. 1211). Anti-homophobia activism that presumes a singular logic, as Trask (1991) and Smith (2013) argued, cannot address the complexities of Indigenous sovereignty.

With this in mind, I am left with these questions: are white gay cismen actually able to deflect their responsibility in white settler colonialism as they attempt to form alliances with Indigenous peoples across their differences? And, to what extent do alliances afford white gay cismen a way to absolve themselves of the ways in which they are implicated in white settler colonialism? It is precisely this issue—white settler complicity—that this dissertation research is concerned with. By no means am I suggesting that McNinch (2008) is absolving himself of his own complicities; however, upon reflecting on these questions I am left asking, is it ever possible to create alliances across differences where subjects will not remain innocent of their implications in routine white settler colonial violence? Thus, I look to queer service provision as a site that provides avenues for such white settler deflections that can easily reify the seemingly mundane nature of Indigenous erasure. I look to the absent interrogation of white queer settlerhood within McNinch’s (2008) work as a missed opportunity—to gaze toward queerness as an assemblage where difference is made and where white settler complicity can be enacted.

While McNinch’s (2008, 2009) theorizing seems to deflect gay cismen’s complicity in white settler colonialism, Francis’ (2011) work imbricates whiteness with lesbians subject-making within their subversive performances. Francis’ (2011) work addressed the ways in which whiteness is mobilized within the queer subversions and performative politics of Shawna Dempsey and Lorri Millan’s “Lesbian National Parks and Services” (LNPS). The LNPS

performance intends on destabilizing the heteromascularity attached to wilderness spaces, like national parks, and queering these spaces through the performers' own articulations and understandings of being lesbians (Francis, 2011). Yet, as Francis (2011) argued, within these queer subversions, the LNPS performance artists rely "on taken-for-granted ideas about the innocent character of the landscape they inhabit to serve as the backdrop for a performative challenge to masculinist and heteronormative assumptions" (p. 113). Moreover, in their on-going attempts to expose the workings of heteromascularity, the LNPS performers rely on the construction of land as *terra nullius*. As such, Francis (2011) argued that the LNPS performers reify whiteness as a "necessary and stable background" (p. 118) within their critiques of heteromascularity. In the case of the LNPS, Francis (2011) connected the articulations of queerness to whiteness as the performance "*stage[ed]* an opportunity to observe the supposedly 'benign' and banal whiteness associated with the image of Park Rangers" (p. 124; emphasis in original).

Within these disruptions of white heteromascularity, the LNPS performers do not address the contradictions that exist within their own processes and practices of white settler colonialism. As Francis (2011) suggested, the LNPS performers' move toward white innocence is a way to remain unimplicated in projects of white supremacy. However, such a move toward white innocence can easily deflect white lesbians' complicity in upholding white settler colonialism. Thus, Francis' (2011) discussion of white innocence does not address how the LNPS performers mobilize their lesbianness as firmly connected to white settler colonialism—as they become settlers through their complicity in naturalizing the blank landscape they perform on. The LNPS performers mobilize their queerness through this absent interrogation of white settler colonialism that disconnects how they are implicated in routine acts of violence. Sustaining the project that is



white settler colonialism has allowed for the LNPS performers to evoke their “natural” ties to the land, as well as gaze outward onto white heteromascularity. However, in this outward gaze, the LNPS performers are unable to account for how their performance and their politics sustain and contribute to white settler colonialism.

Thus, the works of Francis (2011) and McNinch (2008, 2009) provide theoretical avenues to address how non-Indigenous queers, in divergent ways, can easily deflect their responsibility in sustaining white settler colonialism. As McNinch (2008, 2009) illustrated, sometimes the building of alliances can erase the divergent histories that make marginalization possible. However, conflating marginalization among white gay cismen and Indigenous peoples can easily cause one to become complicit. Moreover, Francis (2011) described how even well intentioned cislesbians, in their attempts to subvert white heteromascularity, can easily reinscribe their settlerhood as they queer. Francis’ (2011) work provides possible avenues to challenge existing activism and performance art done by white queers to consider how their work can embark on normalizing white settler colonialism. Utilizing Morgensen’s (2011a) work as an analytic and methodological intervention can provide an opportunity to consider how McNinch’s (2008, 2009) and Francis’ (2011) articulations of modern queer politics and performances derive from European colonial modernity, and how queerness inherits this as its premise and function.

The resulting discussion of the potentials of white queer settler complicity provides an avenue to consider how (queer) resistance might be re-conceptualized. In particular, I use the work of Francis (2011), McNinch (2008, 2009), and Morgensen (2011a) to gesture toward the ways in which white queers routinely centre their queerness, and its resulting political attachments, as a way to distance queerness (and the self) away from much needed settler decolonial activism. As Trask (1991) argued, (anti-homophobia) activism mobilized by non-

Indigenous peoples can typically be a disservice to and ultimately decentre the necessity for settler decolonial activism alongside Indigenous peoples. A rethinking of resistance would invite coalitions among non-Indigenous queers and Indigenous (2-Spirit) peoples so they could work together to dismantle the global oppression that heteropatriarchy and white settler colonialism brought to inflict violence upon them all. However, this re-envisioning of queer resistance would require white queers in particular to divest attention from their understanding of oppression as singular—a concept proposed by Smith (2013)—and direct that attention toward how the land beneath our feet or wheels connects us all. The Idle No More movement provides an avenue for non-Indigenous peoples, regardless of their queerness, to understand themselves as being in relationship with Indigenous peoples. It is this connection that provides an avenue to re-think white settler complicity and responsibility within queer communities and activism and position Indigenous decolonization and the effects of white settler colonialism as centralized.

## **2.5. Conclusion**

I extend the aforementioned scholarship to examine the narratives of white queer and trans service providers working and volunteering within queer service provision and ask them to interrogate the foundation upon which their subjectivity rests—their potential investments in white settler colonialism. I ask how seemingly normal groups of queer helpers helping queers like them might rely on upholding white settler colonial gendered and sexual lexicons. I ask how such investments in white settler colonialism are used to undermine Indigenous “struggles for decolonization and sovereignty and buo[y] the powers of [settler] colonial governance” (Driskill, Finley, Gilley, & Morgensen, 2011, p. 19). I attempt to answer these questions by queerly gazing back upon queerness as it has become institutionalized within queer service provision. I also look to queer service provision as a site that is haunted by the effects of white settler colonialism. I

interrogate queer service provision through analyzing my interviews with forty-three LGBTQ-identified service providers, where I discussed with them their experiences working within queer service provision in downtown Toronto and their perceptions of working with Indigenous peoples. In exploring this site, I investigate how it is that LGBTQ-identified service providers are invited into white settler colonial projects as they attempt to help and care for divergent service users.

This research study utilizes the aforementioned multidisciplinary literatures theorizing white settler colonialism within queer modernities, to address how the scholarly pursuit of exposing the hauntings of settler colonialism in Canada cannot be studied in isolation. The scholarship imbricating white supremacy and settler colonialism is used to illustrate how settlerhood is mediated through whiteness. The literatures theorizing white settler colonialism are incomplete, since they do not adequately address how queer subjects routinely participate in sustaining settler homonationalism. Queer service provision in urban Toronto can be considered another site that is firmly saturated within a white settler colonial logic that erases Indigeneity and Indigenous nations, as well as inflicts violence upon and surveils people of colour. Thus, the literature review below addresses how non-Indigenous queer and trans peoples, particularly within the realm of queer service provision, are (dis)engaged with Canada's history of helping work. By situating this research study within the service provisional literatures theorizing race, colonialism, and Indigeneity, I will show contemporary queer service provision to be deeply rooted in settler colonialism and white supremacist logics.

# Chapter 3

## Literature Review

### Theorizing Race, Colonialism, and Indigeneity in Service Provisional Literatures

*When we feel compelled to “help” by rushing to the rescue of a situation or persons, especially—but not only—Others elsewhere, we need to ask ourselves to what extent colonial legacies of racialized relations of comparison, planetary consciousness, obligation, and entitlement are at play, compounded by our internalized socialization as good.*

Barbara Heron (2007, p. 155)

*We are always acting in and through a history in which the contradictions of history are lived out in our practices, and no person—even ones who do it perfectly[—]can be extracted from history.*

Amy Rossister (2001, n.p.)

*Hegemonic cultures that reside in professional practices . . . are steeped in dominant cultural norms and unequal power relations that go largely unacknowledged as the constructed cultural productions that they are. Practices of domination embedded in normative systems render it easy to overlook or ignore inequality and to explain differences as individual group preferences and idiosyncrasies.*

Carol Schick and James McNinch (2009, p. xiv)

### 3. Introduction

Service provision—particularly education, social services, and health care—is situated within “multicultural narratives of modernity and citizenship” and is tightly bound within projects of Canadian nation building (Schick & McNinch, 2009, p. xiv). My work extends the scholarship theorizing race, colonialism, and Indigeneity by asking how queer service provision and non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers embark on reproducing white settler colonialism. This research therefore moves beyond the centralization of sexuality or queerness within white-normed service provision, specifically in terms of: developing shelters for LGBTQ-identified youth (Abramovich, 2013); centralizing HIV/AIDS within service provision (Cain, 2002; Kinsman, 1996, 1997); providing queer services for LGBTQ-identified people (Drable & Ellason, 2012; Fish, 2007; Hamilton & Mahalik, 2009; Huges, 2005; Peterson & Bricker-

Jenkins, 1996; Ristock, 2001); troubling gender binaries in social work (McPhail, 2004; Morrow, 2004; Mulé, 2006); addressing sexual orientation within social work policy (Mulé, 2007); and queering social work practice (Willis, 2007). Instead, this research addresses how queer service provision can be considered another site that is deeply rooted within white settler colonialism. I address how non-Indigenous queer and trans identity politics become institutionalized within queer service provision to normalize the everyday effects of white settler colonialism.

Some scholars have theorized how normative whiteness is sustained within queer service provision (Catungal, 2013; Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; Poon, 2011). However, despite the important and necessary contributions of critical race scholars in the area of queer service provision and whiteness, there still remains a dearth of scholarship that meaningfully addresses Indigeneity and/or settler colonialism. Within the context of queer service provision, queerness is conflated with whiteness to presuppose normativity onto white queer and trans bodies, while ensuring the marginalization or erasure of queer and trans people of colour, as well as queer, trans, and 2-Spirit Indigenous peoples. Despite such erasures, queer service provision is premised on a helping ethos; thus, when it involves or is aimed at helping people of colour and Indigenous peoples it takes on the added connotation and effect of sustaining white settler colonial relations.

In the pages below, I situate service provision within a larger historical analysis of white settler colonialism by looking at residential schools and the child welfare system. I then address the contemporary ways in which service provision continues to reproduce white supremacy and settler colonialism through the subjugation of people of colour. Next, I look to manifestations of white settler colonialism within contemporary service provision by highlighting how service providers could utilize critical race feminist and decolonizing approaches. Finally, I outline how

contemporary service provision continues to mobilize a helping ethos that normalizes and naturalizes hierarchies of white supremacist and colonial power between those who provide and are assumed to require services. I look to the alternatives available for approaching service provision differently by highlighting the possibilities and pitfalls of cultural competency and anti-oppressive practice. In its entirety, this chapter situates the larger analysis of white settler colonialism within the literatures theorizing race, colonialism, and Indigeneity within service provision.

### **3.1. Historicizing White Settler Colonial Service Provision in Canada**

As a result of white supremacist and settler colonial constructions of people of colour and Indigenous peoples as inherently “uncivilized,” white settlers and their descendants have tried to correct such “misfortunes” and intervene through the implementation of white supremacist and settler colonial institutions put in place to manage and govern people of colour, as well as the bodies, communities, and nations of Indigenous peoples. From the outset, these institutions sought out a way to ensure the mastery over and control of people of colour and Indigenous peoples, which required their total domination (and extinction) as peoples. These institutions remain present today and have shape shifted into contemporary service provision to ensure that the culture, language, and life of people of colour and Indigenous peoples are effectively subjugated and erased.

In order to expose the workings of white settler colonialism within contemporary service provision, it is important to interrogate other structures that continue to deride the lives of people of colour and Indigenous peoples. Specifically, it is necessary to look at the historical ramifications of residential schooling and social work as white supremacist and settler colonial institutions that have had long-lasting effects in the past and into the present day. One important

example of the ways in which white settler colonialism infiltrated service provision is through the implementation of residential schooling in Canada. In 1884, the Indian Act legislated the forcible removal of Indigenous children from their families and their subsequent mandatory attendance at residential school (Haig-Brown, 2006; Miller, 1996; Waterfall, 2002). Residential school educators mobilized a helping ethos as one way to rid Indigenous children of their culture and assimilate them into the larger society for their “best interests.” The goal of residential schooling was to assimilate Indigenous children by “kill[ing] the Indian [and] sav[ing] the man” (Pratt, 1973, cited in Smith, 2005, p. 36).

It was through white settler missionaries’ desire to intervene into Indigenous peoples’ daily life that they learned that children are firmly centred within an Indigenous world-view and hold the ethos of community, since they are the “heart of our nation [and] represent the future” (Anderson, 2000, p. 158–159). As a result, Indigenous children were targeted through their forcible removal from their homes and communities, and were required to attend residential schools. Indigenous children were given an opportunity to achieve white civility through formal education that subsequently erased their culture, language, and traditions. Indigenous children attending residential schools were only able to visit their home and family twice a year (Waterfall, 2002). Residential school educators, under a Christian ethos, presumed that Indigenous children would need to be brought into modernity and receive an education fit for the “civilized” (Hart, 2003). As such, white settler colonial education inflicted cultural genocide onto Indigenous life, whereby the daily practices, teachings, and languages of Indigenous peoples were not permitted in residential schools and the children were regularly scrutinized, violently ridiculed, and severely punished (Haig-Brown, 2006; Miller, 1996; Regan, 2010; Waterfall, 2002; Woolford, 2013; Wortherspoon, 2009).

Along with the heteropatriarchal underpinnings of the Indian Act, residential schooling also acted to replace Indigenous understandings of gendered and sexual variance (Arvin, Tuck, & Morrill, 2013; Driskill, 2010, 2011). Settler perceptions of “aptitudes, roles and destinies of females and males profoundly influence[d] the operation of [residential schools]” (Miller, 1996, p. 218). Instilling heteropatriarchy into Indigenous life carried assumptions that Indigenous children would naturally desire the opposite sex and would require protection from their “perverse” sexual desires and temptations. There are many accounts that have been recorded that illustrate that the effects of heteropatriarchy devastatingly impacted Indigenous children, and here is one such example. In his narrative account about attending residential schooling, Fred, describing a story of getting into a fight as a child, said that throwing rocks to defend oneself was “the ultimate in being uncool [because] throwing rocks was considered sissy, we were expected to take our licks” (Haig-Brown, 2006, p. 19). Although Fred is documenting his horrific experience attending residential school, he evokes queerness (e.g., the sissy) in his story as pejorative.

Fred’s casual use of the word sissy illustrates how the violence of heterosexism was instilled onto Indigenous children as they were only ever imaginable as straight. Thus, Fred and other Indigenous children used the heterosexist trope sissy to disavow and ridicule any deviation from hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005). Pascoe (2005) illustrated that homophobia (e.g., iterations of sissy) is necessary in sustaining the fantasy of hegemonic masculinity among adolescent high school aged boys. Within residential schooling heteropatriarchy became normalized amongst Indigenous children, whereby they uttered homophobic slurs as a way to ridicule deviations from heterosexuality and the rigid gender binary Indigenous children were placed within. The implementation of heterosexism and heteropatriarchy in Indigenous



communities came from the white settler missionary ideology that presumed Indigenous peoples were inherently immoral and required help. The residential school system is one such service provisional institution that served the white settler colonial project in Canada through the assimilation and erasure of Indigenous children.

As such, residential school educators mobilized “helping” discourses and paternalism within a white settler colonial logic, since they perceived themselves as knowing what was best for Indigenous children (and for Indigenous nations as a whole). Mobilized under a helping ethos, residential school educators actively constructed a power-over subject position of dominance over Indigenous peoples—a position that remains embedded within contemporary service provision. Notions of “helping” Indigenous communities have had devastating, disastrous, and multigenerational consequences (Millon, 2013; Monture-Angus, 1999; Smith, 2005). Residential schools imposed white settler values onto Indigenous children and attempted to deride connections Indigenous parents had with their children. These lost connections remain absent into the present day. Such multigenerational trauma and cultural genocide has placed dysfunction onto Indigenous families, which has ultimately impacted their ability to trust and care for one another (Monture-Angus, 1999). As such, the lasting effects of residential schooling has allowed for service providers (e.g., educators) to imagine a future and shape it within the confines of a white settler imaginary that attempts to help Indigenous peoples. As Millon (2013) contended, the service provisional sector that has been set up to support and help Indigenous peoples is based on their injury, effectively making an industry out of their trauma. As a result of this, service provision at large continues to mobilize and naturalize a white settler futurity—maintained in institutions and put in place to correct the Indigenous “problem.”

Although mandatory residential school attendance for Indigenous children ended in the early 1970s (Waterfall, 2002), it was not until 1996 that the last residential school closed in Canada (Blackstock, 2007). As a prelude to the end of mandatory residential schooling, the system shape-shifted into a different form: the child welfare system's infamous "60s Scoop." Although Indigenous children were apprehended from their communities prior to the 1960s, the "60s Scoop" was a time when large numbers of child welfare workers swooped into Indigenous families and communities, and removed Indigenous children for their own "best interests." The child welfare system sought to formally mandate and legislate white settler colonialism by providing child welfare workers, as contemporary white settler missionaries, the opportunity to exert control over and govern Indigenous nations, particularly Indigenous mothers (Strega & Esquao (Carriere), 2009; Pon, Gosine, & Phillips, 2011; Thobani, 2007; Waterfall, 2002). As a result, Indigenous children removed from their families were placed into white settler households, and typically experienced tremendous brutality in the form of malnourishment, in addition to physical and/or sexual abuse. The child welfare system thus further facilitated cultural genocide: the total loss of Indigenous children's culture, language, and traditions (Strega & Esquao (Carriere), 2009; Pon, Gosine, & Phillips, 2011; Thobani, 2007; Waterfall, 2002).

A contemporary example of the saturation of white settler colonial logics within the child welfare systems in both Canada and the United States was recently exemplified in the Baby Veronica case in the Cherokee Nation in Oklahoma, USA. Baby Veronica's father, Dusten Brown, spent four years fighting for her custody, trying to prove he is an adequate parent and responsible citizen within the confines of the white settler colonial legal structure (Caulfield, 2013). In September 2013, Brown decided to end the custody battle, stating that Matt and Melanie Capobianco—a white settler heterosexual family—have Baby Veronica's best interests

at heart. Exemplified in the news reporting of the case, Baby Veronica's Indigeneity was stripped away from her since her birth mother was white (Caulfield, 2013). This example shows that as a result of the heteropatriarchy and white settler colonialism that resides within the legal system and the contemporary imagination of the family, the white settler family is produced as having the "natural" capacity to raise Indigenous peoples' children. As such, contemporary child welfare workers remain invested in assertions of a settler capitalistic nuclear family steeped within the logics of heteropatriarchy and white settler colonialism, which enables them to enact routine violence upon Indigenous nations and peoples (Pon, Gosine, & Phillips, 2011; Reid, 2005; Rifkin, 2011). The Baby Veronica case is just one example of how law continues to be used to erase Indigenous peoples' claims to Indigeneity, while evoking the rhetoric of the "child's best interests" in order to perpetuate and reinstate white settler colonialism within the contemporary moment.

Residential schooling and the child welfare system make observable the ways Indigenous and black families have been rendered desolate and unable to truly care for their own children. Moreover, the logics used by child welfare workers assumed that a good family, one who could adequately care for its children, was white-normed and heteropatriarchal. Thus, the racist and colonial perception of both Indigenous and black families as being inadequate and unable to meaningfully care for their children was used to authorize the removal of Indigenous and black children from their homes historically and contemporarily (Pon, Gosine, & Phillips, 2011). This perception of a good white family was and continues to be sanctioned by white women child welfare workers in Canada. As Pon, Gosine, and Phillips (2011) asserted, black children and youth remain disproportionately present within the child welfare system. Chand (2000) and Clarke (2010) theorized black children and families within child welfare system, indicating that

their interlocking experiences of racism and classism contribute to their overrepresentation.

Black families continue to experience further control, assimilation, and exploitation by the child welfare system due to white supremacist understandings of what represents a good family in the eyes of white women child welfare workers.

The scholarship addressing the white supremacist and settler colonial legacy of service provision historicizes the ways in which the lives of black peoples and Indigenous peoples become managed and institutionally regulated. As such, exposing the realities of white supremacy and settler colonialism within service provision can remind contemporary service providers of the violent imposition of helping discourses and their effects. Hart (2003) and Jeffery (2009) noted that contemporary helping work remains deeply tied to white settler missionary work. The historical resonances of white settler missionary work continue within contemporary service provision, which situates service providers as helpers, placed within a power-over relationship of dominance with those who are perceived to need and require help. As Jeffery (2009) asserted:

the mission and practices of the helping profession evolved out of a history of elites “helping” marginalized groups of people. Early social reform work served to shape social work’s precursory understandings of social difference, hierarchy, and systems of marginality and its legacy continues today. The profession has a profound investment in modern notions of knowing and managing people and their behavior, and such investments continue to shape contemporary definitions of service provision. (p. 46)

Jeffery (2009) addressed how service providers are routinely placed into authoritative roles that require them to know, manage, and ultimately contain the Other. As such, the historical legacy of service provision is deeply rooted within white settler missionary logics, and indeed white settler colonialism, insofar as service providers are required to manage and govern the lives of people of colour and Indigenous peoples due to the perceived and/or actual social differences. While the white settler colonial logics have been exposed within the historical sites of residential schooling

and the child welfare system, queer service provision has received little scrutiny for its deeply rooted ties to nation building and colonial projects in Canada.

Residential schooling and the child welfare system provide the context and background to consider how contemporary service provision produces service providers and their helping within larger projects of white racism and settler colonialism. As contemporary service providers continue to provide support to and assist people of colour and Indigenous peoples in Toronto, it is important for questioning to occur around the origins of such care as being based in white supremacist and settler colonial logics. The legacy of white settler colonial roots brings to service provision assumptions around who is accessing services and what those services should provide—namely, Indigenous peoples with “problems” who require rescuing and people of colour who require assistance. I next look to the ways in which white supremacy and settler colonialism remain embedded within contemporary service provision.

### **3.2. Addressing Race and Colonialism in Contemporary Service Provision**

The historical resonances of white supremacy and settler colonialism remain deeply rooted in contemporary service provision, which has evolved out of a helping ethos used to control, regulate, and assimilate Indigenous peoples and people of colour. deMontigny (1995) discussed everyday social relations that operate within contemporary social work as maintaining “accumulation, legitimization, control, and coercion” (p. 11). Hart (2003) and Waterfall (2002) noted that contemporary social work in Canada reproduces Eurocentric ideologies that control, contain, and manage Indigenous people’s lives. As such, intake processes, one-on-one assessments and treatments, and the recording of case notes, normalize Eurocentrism<sup>13</sup> within contemporary service provision (Waterfall, 2002). Waterfall (2002) theorizes social workers’ potential complicity in white settler colonial projects and urges non-Indigenous and Indigenous

social workers to actively challenge and resist the colonial dominance that remains embedded within contemporary service provision. I extend Waterfall's (2002) analysis of the Eurocentric nature of service provision and deMontigny's (1995) analysis of the dominance embedded within contemporary social work, by examining how the effects of white supremacy and settler colonialism can easily haunt queer service provision and the helping work done by service providers.

Contemporary service provision can easily reinscribe white supremacy and settler colonialism by turning workers' attention toward their everyday practices, rather than to the structural confines within service provision that maintain and sustain white settler colonialism. Smith (2007) noted that service provision is a byproduct of the not-for-profit industrial complex, and suggested that not-for-profit organizing remains deeply invested in, and monitored by, the nation-state. Samimi (2010) contended that the not-for-profit industrial complex is a "system [that] forces nonprofits to professionalize, wherein they must focus on maintaining their funding sources rather than fulfilling their mission" (p. 17). Within a Canadian context, Ng (1990) argued that state-sanctioned funding regimes routinely scrutinize not-for-profit organizing. Moreover, Ng (1990) argued that not-for-profits can no longer be conceptualized as being outside of the confines of the nation-state; rather, they remain invested in the nation-state even when they engage in resistance tactics. As Thunder Hawk (2007) and Ng (1996) have further argued, radical organizing that centres community and engages in social change can accomplish more outside of the confines of the not-for-profit industrial complex than within it. As a result, contemporary service provision remains deeply tied to projects of Canadian nation building.

Azzam (2011) addressed the white normativity of service provision, particularly educational practice, by theorizing the ways in which celebrations of multicultural diversity

operate through white civility in elementary schools. Azzam (2011) interviewed teachers of colour working within elementary schools and argued that the inclusion of multicultural “holidays and festivals in schools function to usher newcomer students towards multicultural civility, inculcating loyalty to the nation and appropriate forms of tolerance” (p. 75). However, Azzam (2011) found that although elementary teachers of colour attempt to disrupt the status quo embedded within their schools through the inclusion of multiculturalism, they simultaneously reify the white nation through the privileging and normalization of white civility.

Similarly, Ahmed (2012) interviewed diversity practitioners (most of whom were women of colour) who, as part of their job descriptions, were required to address and speak to diversity and multiculturalism within the context of higher education. Ahmed (2012) addressed how diversity is embedded within institutional life, requiring diversity practitioners to educate about and “do diversity” (p. 141). Ahmed (2012) found that diversity and multiculturalism were evoked as a means to promote “respectable difference” (p. 151) and look inclusive by painting over the blank canvas of universities’ whiteness. As Ahmed (2012) contended: “*diversity can be a method of protecting whiteness*” (p. 147; emphasis in original). However, diversity, particularly racial diversity, remains a façade within the university setting, since it is only represented within recruitment materials, policy documents, and diversity initiatives. One such example of whiteness masquerading as diversity is apparent in the active removal of racism from the diversity dialogue by diversity practitioners (Ahmed, 2012).

Narratives of multicultural diversity remain present within contemporary service provision and construct the bodies of people of colour and Indigenous peoples as compromising the white imaginary that is embedded within the nation (Thobani, 2007). Addressing the ways in which white normativity has engrained itself within the child welfare system, Gosine and Pon

(2011) have looked at the micro-practices and institutional policies that reify service providers of colour's experiences of racism within Canada. Service providers of colour experience racism through: their decreased opportunities for advancement, on-going experiences of disrespect, feelings of being silenced, and their colleagues' individualization of racism and white privilege. Gosine and Pon's (2011) scholarly contribution addressed how racism remains firmly intact within seemingly everyday tasks and micro-practices that happen within service provision, and their direct impacts on service providers of colour. Gosine and Pon's (2011) analysis is insightful and has clear synergies with Waterfall (2002), in that they have argued that working environments remain white supremacist and colonial, which readily controls, regulates, and assimilates service providers of colour and Indigenous service providers.

Although in my research with Giwa (2012), we did not address the effects of white settler colonialism, we did theorize the impact of race and processes of racialization within the gay and queer cismale communities in Toronto. We interviewed gay and queer cismale service providers of colour to ask them about their perceptions of and experiences working within and outside of queer service provision. We found that gay and queer identified cismale service providers of colour, as part of their job descriptions, are required to address the violent effects of racism, racialization, and colonialism within queer communities in Toronto. As a result of the deeply embedded racism and colonialism within queer service provision and queer cismale communities in Toronto, gay and queer cismale service providers of colour have started to develop interventions to: decentre the white-normed standards of beauty within the gay male community; address systems of power and privilege that are mobilized within interracial relationships; and, tackle how racialized queer community members experience discrimination and racism due to their language and/or citizenship status (Giwa & Greensmith, 2012).



Although these interventions expose the fragility of privileging whiteness within Toronto's queer cismale communities, there still remains an absence of real and/or meaningful discussions around how contemporary gendered and sexual lexicons continue to operationalize and naturalize white settler colonialism. Moreover, these interventions Giwa and I (2012) have presented might also erase the very real coalitions that might be possible and may already be happening between people of colour and Indigenous peoples within the queer communities in Toronto. Although these interventions continue to exist among queer cismen of colour, this work must be critiqued for its potential in erasing the white settler colonial foundation upon which queer communities in Toronto rest.

Although it is certainly important to consider service providers of colour and their interventions within the system to move away from white-normed expressions of service delivery within and outside of queer contexts, this dissertation specifically intends to explore how queer service provision remains deeply rooted in white supremacist and settler colonial logics. To do so, I have exposed how white supremacy is deeply rooted within service provisional contexts, thus naturalizing its effects. Service providers of colour continue to bear the brunt of white supremacy, as they directly experience racism and are required to take on the work of diversity and multiculturalism. This research illustrates how systems of white supremacy work to sustain settler colonialism within queer service provision. In addressing the differences and potential synergies between Indigenous peoples and people of colour, particularly within the context of queer service provision, below I discuss how service provision can start to transform by Indigenizing and decolonizing practice.

### **3.3. Indigenizing and Decolonizing Service Provision**

Contemporary service provision is firmly rooted in white supremacist and settler colonial

projects used to assimilate and inflict violence upon Indigenous peoples and people of colour. Srivastava and Francis (2005) contended that due to the pervasiveness of white supremacy within contemporary service provision, people of colour must be able to speak amongst each other without the presence of white people. When white people are present, people of colour and Indigenous peoples are placed into a storyteller role whereby their experiences of racism and oppression are used as a way to reinscribe white dominance (Jones, 1999). Typically, white participants in anti-racist workshops require the authentic stories of people of colour in order to meaningfully and truly understand how racism operates within contemporary society. As a result of being placed into positions of authenticity and subservience, people of colour continue to work to do away with the perception that they must educate white people on the realities of racism, and instead work together in their own communities to foster social change and challenge white supremacy. For example, Sista II Sista (SIIS), which is based in Brooklyn, New York, emerged in order to develop a “space for younger women of colour that would speak to their complex identities, nourish their holistic development, and be responsive to their needs” (Burrowes, Cousins, Rojas, & Ude, 2007, p. 228). SIIS provides an opportunity for young women of colour to “take leadership in transforming themselves and their communities” (p. 228). Within the context of HIV/AIDS service provision in Toronto, people of colour have formed their own organizations (e.g., Asian Community AIDS Service) that are autonomous, community-led organizations that challenge white racism within queer communities in Toronto (Catungal, 2013).

Although race and colonialism within service provision have been meaningfully addressed by people of colour for people of colour, the solutions and practices mobilized by service providers of colour may not target or even address the specific ways in which settler

colonialism impacts Indigenous service providers and service users differently. As a result, Indigenous-led service provision is being developed to decentre the colonizing imposition of Western bio-medical and psychiatric institutions, and the normative interpretations of Indigenous peoples as “problems,” by re-centring Indigenous knowledge and forms of healing (Baskin, 2011; Bruyere, Hart, & Sinclair, 2009; Kirmayer, Brass, & Valaskakis, 2009). Mainstream bio-medical and social service interventions typically locate the “problem” within the individual, while erasing the social, cultural and historical factors that contribute to Indigenous peoples’ on-going trauma (Millon, 2013).

An Indigenizing approach can be used within service provision as a way to respectfully include Indigenous knowledge and world-views in supporting their self-determination and sovereignty as distinct Indigenous nations. Moreover, Indigenizing can centre Indigeneity by compelling institutions to respond to and value Indigenous “issues, concerns, and communities” (Mihesuah & Wilson, 2004, p. 2). An Indigenizing approach can re-centre Indigenous world-views and knowledge systems, which are typically marginalized and not accessible, nor even possible, within mainstream white-normed service provision. However, Kirmayer, Brass, and Valaskakis (2009) caution the use of an Indigenizing approach, particularly the use of tradition within service provision, as traditionalism has the potential to be treated like a commodity and can be used to essentialize the vast differences among Indigenous peoples in Canada. Although an Indigenizing approach has the potential to essentialize Indigenous differences and nations, it can also empower Indigenous peoples and nations, connect Indigenous peoples to traditional knowledge systems that they may be disconnected from or not have access to, and challenge colonial and bio-medical approaches used to produce Indigenous peoples as “problems.”

Kirmayer, Brass, and Valaskakis (2009) and Thatcher (2004) have argued that an Indigenizing approach to mainstream service provision could be useful since it can reflect Indigenous experience. An Indigenizing approach can also be useful when Indigenous peoples actively resist the white supremacist and settler colonial structural apparatuses to form their own Indigenous-led organizations. Kelm (2004) looked at how, in British Columbia, for example, the Nisga have developed Indigenous-led health care that centres self-determination and Indigenous healing to decentre Western bio-medical and psychiatric discourses. Kelm (2004) argued that the decision-making and direction of Nisga-led service provision centres decolonization, since, as it is Indigenous-led, it operates outside of the confines of white settler colonialism. The Native Youth Sexual Health Network (NYSHN) is another example of how service provision can be Indigenized. NYSHN is “an organization by and for Indigenous youth that works across issues of sexual and reproductive health, rights, and justice” (The Kino-nda-niimi Collective, 2014, p. 411). Although an Indigenizing approach to service provision can be helpful in carving out a space for Indigenous traditions and world-views to be respected and practiced, the overall structure of contemporary service provision must be interrogated for its deep roots in maintaining white supremacy and settler colonialism.

Within contemporary service provision, which is heavily influenced by bio-medical and psychiatric regimes, the colonial trauma experienced by Indigenous peoples is typically relocated to individuality, as a “problem” of the mind, or as a consequence of one’s life circumstances (Greensmith, 2012). But, as Millon (2013) argued, trauma that Indigenous peoples experience must be connected to contemporary colonial life. Non-Indigenous service providers working with Indigenous peoples who have experienced trauma typically erase their colonial trauma and multigenerational loss by individualizing their experiences of trauma. As Millon (2013) argued,

Indigenous peoples can heal from historical and colonial trauma outside of bio-medical or psychiatric discourses. The modalities of healing within Indigenous communities can centre decolonization and self-determination, which do not necessarily need to be confined to neo-liberalism—since Indigenous healing requires community because the entire nation is impacted (Millon, 2013). Importantly, Millon (2013) has cautioned those who mobilize the discourse of healing to consider how Indigenous peoples are re-colonized by mainstream white-normed bio-medical and psychiatric regimes.

The “problem” status that is readily pinned onto Indigenous people’s bodies and minds also enters into substance use treatment programs. Thatcher (2004) argued that alcohol treatments in Canada continue to be abstinence based and cannot simply be transferred onto Indigenous peoples. Thatcher (2004) discussed the “firewater complex” as a set of cultural beliefs that assume Indigenous peoples are naturally “alcoholic,” which fuels the popular understanding that the only way to stop alcoholism within Indigenous communities is to invest in a “disease model” that frames the “problem” as alcohol abuse. As Thatcher (2004) suggested:

the firewater complex is not only a set of beliefs about the vulnerability to alcohol of First Nations people, it also includes a set of informal beliefs that guide the drinking pattern of socially disaffected band members, implicitly justify drunken episodes, and serve as an excuse for drunken comportment. (p. 130)

Thatcher (2004) further argued that, historically, alcohol treatment programs for Indigenous peoples largely grew out of paternalistic, federal responses to social problems in First Nations ... aimed at alcohol abuse” (p. 352). In other words, the sole focus on alcoholism does little to address the larger structural apparatuses that make alcohol use an appropriate coping mechanism—one can live through Indigenous experiences of loss, trauma, and cultural genocide. Thus, Thatcher (2004) argued that the colonial bio-medical discourses embedded within service provision today rely on the “deficit” construction of Indigenous peoples and relocate alcoholism

as an individual problem, rather than as a consequence of the effects of colonialism.

However, following Millon (2013) and Thatcher (2004), attention must be directed toward the white supremacist and settler colonial structure of contemporary service provision. A settler decolonial approach to service provision could be used by non-Indigenous service providers, since it is a creative resistance strategy that signifies a complex set of meanings that are fluid and ever changing, and that intend on overthrowing colonialism and centring Indigenous sovereignty (and self-determination). For Barndt (2010), decolonization is: “a process of *acknowledging* the history of colonialism; working to *undo* the effects of colonialism; striving to *unlearn* habits, attitudes, and behaviours that continue to perpetuate colonialism; and *challenging* and *transforming* institutional manifestations of colonialism” (p. 161; emphasis in original). At first glance, it seems like a useful endeavour to take on this approach; however, Barndt’s (2010) understanding of decolonization can, if utilized uncritically, erase Indigenous peoples, for whom settler colonialism violently impedes upon their everyday life. Moreover, as Walia (2013) argued, “decolonization is a generative and prefigurative process whereby we create the conditions in which we want to live and the social relations we wish to have—for ourselves *and* everyone else” (p. 274; emphasis in original). For Walia (2013), decolonization occurs both on imaginative and material levels, whereby we all, as non-Indigenous peoples, by virtue of our connections to the land, can challenge the hegemonic power structures as one way to work toward effectively ending the global oppression that centres Indigenous self-determination and sovereignty.

For Driskill (2010), decolonization addresses the “ongoing, radical resistance against colonialism that includes struggles for land, redress, self-determination, healing historical trauma, cultural continuance, and reconciliation” (p. 69). Driskill’s (2010) understanding of

decolonization moves beyond individual actions in order to address how we all can centre radical resistance of colonialism and its violent effects inflicted upon Indigenous peoples and communities. Thus, I foreground this dissertation with a decolonizing perspective and argue that an Indigenizing approach to mainstream white-normed service provision acts as an additive approach to service provision and requires service providers to reify “cultural competency” and “know the Other.” I thus move away from an Indigenizing approach within mainstream queer service provision, since it is steeped within white settler colonial logics. As a result, I suggest that non-Indigenous service providers can centre decolonization by calling attention to the everyday practices within and the overall structure of service provision, which sustain and normalize white settler colonialism.

While the concept of an Indigenizing approach is an appropriate intervention to Indigenous-led service provision, particularly when looking at the example of the Nisga and NYSHN and the changes made to Indigenous-led service provision, for non-Indigenous service providers, the approach may risk appropriating Indigenous knowledge and worldviews within already white settler colonial institutions (Cannon, 2011). Thus, while Indigenizing approaches exist to challenge white settler colonial bio-medical and psychiatric conditions used to construct Indigenous peoples as “problems,” it would be inappropriate for non-Indigenous peoples to adopt an Indigenizing approach to service provision. Instead, I suggest that non-Indigenous service providers could utilize a settler decolonizing approach as a way to dismantle settler colonial regimes, of which they and their work are a part. A settler decolonizing approach interrogates the taken-for-granted evocations of white settler colonialism within service provision, and can be used by non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers in queer service provision as a way to interrogate the institutionalization of queerness. Therefore, I look to the

everyday practices mobilized by service providers as sustaining white supremacy and settler colonialism in their attempts to appear good about their help. The use of a helping ethos can easily reinscribe white settler colonial logics by placing the helper into an authoritative role where they are required to know what is best for and indeed help the Other.

### **3.4. Helping Frameworks within Service Provision**

Within this contemporary moment, service providers, as part of their job descriptions, are required to manage, control, and regulate the life of their service users. By mobilizing a helping ethos, service providers are placed into power-over positions of dominance with those whom they are required to help (Heron, 2004, 2007; Pon, Gosine, & Phillips, 2011; Schick & McNinch, 2009). Contemporary service provision treads on the historical violence of white supremacy and settler colonialism used to make the differences of people of colour and Indigenous peoples seemingly correctable (Hart, 2003; Heron, 2007; Jeffery, 2009; Razack, 2008). In theorizing the colonial continuities within NGO development work in parts of Africa, Heron (2007) addressed the ways in which white female subjects mobilize the “helping paradigm” within their work. She argued that discourses of help are assembled through white women’s bourgeois status, as well as through their sense of entitlement, perceived obligation, and desire to bring African people into modernity. The “helping imperative” is utilized by development workers (often implicitly) through their own investments in an on-going white supremacist and colonial project that is veiled by the mission to bring the racialized Other into civility (Heron, 2007). White development workers utilize the helping imperative as they assume the responsibility to change and significantly increase the quality of life of racialized and colonized subjects. The helping imperative requires service providers to know themselves through their intimate encounter with the racialized Other. As a result, helping discourses are mobilized through an encounter with the



Other, and this encounter is perceived in the following way: as “romanticizing, identifying with (being ‘at one with’), caring for, saving, being seduced by, and being transformed through this relationship” with the Other (Heron, 2007, p. 34).

The helping ethos is mobilized within queer service provision as a tool to naturalize white supremacy and settler colonialism—white civility and white goodness. However, as Badwell (2013) theorized in her dissertation, “Can I Be a Good Social Worker?”, discourses of help mobilized by service providers of colour do not necessarily contribute to routine acts of re-colonization. Badwell (2013) interviewed social workers of colour about their decisions to work within the field of social work and contended that social workers of colour are caught in a double bind, whereby in their attempts to address and work towards social justice and anti-racism, they can reinscribe national projects of white goodness and civility. However, as Badwell (2013) described, social workers of colour routinely mobilize the helping imperative differently than their white colleagues, since their deployments of help also “address histories of racism, colonialism and resistance” (p. 185). Badwell’s (2013) insightful dissertation brought to light the gaps within social work literature around how social workers of colour embody goodness and naturalize (knowingly or unknowingly) the Canadian nation-state. Goodness, although as it is historically connected to the white settler missionary project, can also be mobilized by people of colour as a resistance tactic to address the white supremacy and colonialism embedded within Canadian society and service provision. Moreover, people of colour are scripted differently as they may only accrue partial benefits from obtaining citizenship. Thus, they employ their goodness in order to support other people of colour in navigating the white supremacist and settler colonial regimes put in place to further subjugate them. Pon, Gosine and Phillips (2011) and Badwell (2013) theorized how social workers of colour are invited into the white

supremacist imaginary, and are simultaneously made to exist outside of the Canadian nation-state. Moreover, Waterfall (2002) addressed how Indigenous-identified service providers mobilize discourses of help. She argued that helping discourses disguise Eurocentrism through the offering of assistance so that the colonial foundation of service provision remains unquestioned and normalized.

The helping paradigm remains an unquestioned norm that requires white service providers to embody white civility as they attempt to help. As I have argued, queer cismale bathhouse workers are required to provide bathhouse users with sexual health resources and information regarding HIV/AIDS and STI risk, and anonymously interpolate bathhouse users due to their phenotypical characteristics. Describing this phenomenon as a “bathhouse encounter,” I argued that these encounters reconstitute the historical by “invit[ing] non-Indigenous volunteers into reproducing settler colonialism in order to understand themselves as *helpful* Canadian subjects and their actions as inherently good” (Greensmith, forthcoming, n.p; emphasis in original). White settler colonialism remains firmly rooted within HIV/AIDS service provision, and such notions of help create a firm boundary around who can be imagined as queer, and indeed worthy of public health intervention. I look to the everyday practices of non-Indigenous service providers as reproducing multicultural narratives of diversity used to stifle Indigenous decolonization. Although the practices of non-Indigenous service providers are deeply rooted within white settler colonial logics, interventions have been made to account for the ways in which multiple systems of oppression impact service providers and service users. Thus, in an attempt to imagine diversity within service provisional contexts, service providers are encouraged to mobilize cultural competency and anti-oppression within their practice.

### ***3.4.1. Cultural Competency***

Cultural competency encourages service providers to “develop sensitivity towards, appreciation for, understanding of and knowledge about” diverse peoples accessing services (Schick & McNinch, 2009, p. xiii). However, cultural competency also has the tendency to enact what Kumashiro (2000) called “education about the Other,” which assumes the modernist goal of having full knowledge of and seeking truth about the Other. Thus, Schick and McNinch (2009) cautioned the use of cultural competency, particularly in their discussion of “culture talk,” as it delegitimizes the effects of racism experienced by people of colour and Indigenous peoples. As Murdocca (2009) explained: “Aboriginal peoples are locked into the inevitability of inclusion through a paradigm of culture” (p. 27). As a result, the use of culture alone can sustain white settler colonial projects that construct the bodies of people of colour and Indigenous peoples as outside of the nation. In fact, all service providers (white, of colour, and Indigenous) have the capacity to participate in, take on, and advocate for these discourses. Thus, this process of difference making is required of culturally competent service providers and practitioners, which, as Pon (2009) theorized, essentializes the experiences of racialized and colonized peoples. Pon (2009) called cultural competency a new form of racism, where the use of culture is used to mask the realities of white supremacy and colonialism embedded within service provision. Cultural competency creates a one size fits all, cookie cutter approach to service provision that creates the illusion that everyone will be treated the same (Yee & Dumbrill, 2009). However, as St. Denis (2007) theorized, cultural competency relies on the deficit construction of Indigenous peoples, and encourages “the [popular] belief that the cultural difference of the Aboriginal ‘Other’ is the problem” (p. 1086).

The popular use of cultural competency erases the ways in which service provision is already a culprit in reproducing white supremacist and settler colonial understandings of people of colour and Indigenous peoples. As Jeffery (2007) noted:

It is easier to include aboriginal peoples, immigrants, and people of colour into social work stories, practices and structures of finding new ways to help the disadvantaged and marginalized, than it is to reconfigure the story of social work itself as a *story of white supremacy, because that is an unappealing story of complicity*. (p. 445; emphasis added)

Jeffery (2007) argued that utilizing cultural competency requires service providers' understanding of culture to be static. Cultural competency can easily inhibit the possibility for decolonization, since it relies on naturalization of the structural and national violence embedded within service provision in Canada. Pon (2009) has urged service providers to let go of their desire for a cultural competency approach, since it will "help us [service providers] to not forget[,] but rather [...] remember[,] social work's own modern history" (p. 68). Although cultural competency provides service providers with the imaginative capacity to support diverse service users and to develop connections with them, it can have the tendency to reify cultural and racial stereotypes and inscribe white dominance within service provision. Thus, in an attempt to generate consciousness-raising endeavours and provide service providers with practical approaches to evaluate and address oppression, anti-oppressive practice has been mainstreamed and implemented into service provision.

### ***3.4.2. Anti-Oppression***

Anti-oppressive practice attempts to make observable the ways in which power, privilege, and oppression are sustained on a systemic level within service provisional institutions, and encourages service providers to challenge oppression on multiple and intersecting scales (Carniol, 2010). Yet, as McLaughlin (2005) noted, there is a mainstream move on the part of service provision as a whole to institutionalize anti-oppression as a way to meaningfully address

and challenge systemic oppression. As Pon, Gosine, and Phillips (2011) have argued, the mainstreaming effect of anti-oppression gives capacity to each service provider to address oppression through their own social location, which can evade analysis of the deep rooted anti-black and anti-Indigenous racism embedded within the child welfare system. For example, a service provider who has experienced the adverse effects of poverty might be more inclined to address and take action against socio-economic status and equity issues surrounding access to food, versus a service provider who has experienced marginalization due to their gender non-conformity or trans identity, who might be more inclined to address gender inequality and issues pertaining to trans women's access to women-only shelters.

The mainstreaming of anti-oppression can also result in the institutionalizing of its language, whereby service providers can use the language, but nothing is put in place to ensure that anti-oppression actually happens between service providers and service users. In other words, building upon Smith's (2013) discussion of "The Problem with Privilege," by adopting the language of anti-oppression, service providers can give lip service to the notion that anti-oppression exists, while still being complacent within the system and not acting against the oppression they routinely partake in. For example, reducing anti-oppression to a eight steps<sup>14</sup> type of approach, such as the one offered by Yee, Hackbusch, and Wong (2013), can easily do away with the complexities that exist amongst service providers and service users vis-à-vis their differing social locations and access to privilege. These prescriptive models can limit the imaginative capacity of service providers and can even reify systems of oppression (e.g., settler colonialism) that fall outside of such a formula. Although anti-oppression on a pedagogical level can be helpful in making observable the multiple systems of oppression embedded within service provision and the consciousness-raising endeavours of students, it also can erase the

complexities of oppression when institutionalized. Thus, anti-oppression is made to fit into the neo-liberalized organizations' mission and mandate.

### ***3.4.3. Towards Settler Decolonial Practice***

As Pon, Gosine, and Phillips (2011) have contended, the mainstreaming effect of cultural competency and anti-oppressive approaches within service provision are “ill-equipped to challenge, in a sustained and effective way, the entrenchment of racism and colonialism” (p. 402). Schick and McNinch (2009) called for the deployment of a critical race analysis within service provision as a way to adequately address the everyday, often mundane ways in which white superiority (and its taken-for-grantedness) derides the very real and often violent ways white supremacy manifests within service provision. As Schick and McNinch (2009) illustrated, “the field of critical race theory takes as its central concern the critical examination of daily racism” (p. xv). However, in taking Lawrence and Dua's (2005) critique of anti-racism and critical race theory seriously, particularly through the use of Pon, Gosine, and Phillips' (2011) work, I argue that the use of a critical race approach to service provision alone can easily erase Indigenous people's experiences of settler colonialism.

Pon, Gosine, and Phillips (2011) called for the use of critical race feminist and anti-colonial approaches to service provision as a more “critical, helpful, and effective” way to understand the “experiences and realities of Aboriginal and women of colour and their families in Canada, particularly vis-à-vis the child welfare system” (p. 402). Although Pon, Gosine, and Phillips (2011) posit anti-colonialism's productive possibility within service provision, as I have argued, I believe a critical race feminist analysis, as offered by Razack, Smith, and Thobani (2011), and a settler decolonial approach are most useful for addressing the workings of white supremacy alongside settler colonialism within service provision. Anti-colonialism, as defined

by Dei (2006), is “an approach to theorizing colonial and re-colonial relations and the implications of imperial structures on the processes of knowledge production and validation, the understanding of indigeneity, and the pursuit of agency, resistance and subjective politics” (p. 2). Here, anti-colonialism addresses the structural confines of colonialism and imperialism as they impact the lives of Indigenous peoples around the world, and the ways that resistance can be mobilized as a tactic.

Although decolonization addresses the structural apparatus that makes colonialism possible, it also moves beyond the disciplinary boundaries of structuralism where anti-colonialism resides. Thus, I mobilize a settler decolonization approach alongside critical race feminism, since the former attempts to “support and reinforce more acute, immediate processes of healing and renewal while also keeping justice in the foreground as a condition of ‘never again’ inflicting oppression and violence on [Indigenous peoples]” (Nagy, 2012, p. 72). Within the context of service provision, critical race feminism and settler decolonization, with their particular focus on challenging, subverting, and resisting the white supremacy and settler colonialism used to disavow and erase Indigenous peoples and people of colour, together become ever so important as a potential practice approach within service provision.

The frameworks of cultural competency and anti-oppression are useful in that they can expose the hegemonic structures and inequalities, as well as raise consciousness surrounding multiple systems of oppression within service provision. These approaches are also helpful in that they provide service providers with prescriptive steps when working with marginalized service users. However, I argue that in order to expose and work toward challenging the white supremacy and settler colonialism that are embedded within service provision, non-Indigenous service providers must move beyond these frameworks as neat solutions, and instead be able to

consider how critical race feminism and settler decolonization are useful practice approaches that name and work toward challenging white supremacy and settler colonialism. I look specifically to queer service provision as another site that can sustain white settler colonialism through service providers' mobilization of a helping ethos used to deride both Indigenous peoples and people of colour.

### **3.5. Conclusion**

This research is situated within the broader service provisional scholarship theorizing race, colonialism, and Indigeneity. Indigenous peoples and people of colour continue to be affected by the historical ramifications of white settler colonialism, and as such, contemporary service provision remains haunted by such historical and contemporary wrongdoings. Non-Indigenous service providers who mobilize discourses of help are invited into white settler colonialism in their attempts to appear and feel good about their helping. However, queer service provision (and its non-Indigenous service providers) are not innocent, since the institution continues to reap the benefits from a system that readily deploys the logics of white settler colonialism onto the lives of people of colour and Indigenous peoples (albeit differently). I look to queer service provision as a site that reifies white settler colonialism within the everyday practices mobilized by service providers. Mainstream service provision must start to engage in a practice of critical race feminism and settler decolonization by taking an active stance to resist, expose, subvert, and dismantle white settler colonialism, of which it is a part. In order to expose the ramifications of white settler colonialism within queer service provision, this dissertation employs a qualitative methodology. I held semi-structured interviews with a sample of forty-three LGBTQ-identified service providers to examine how white settler colonialism comes to impact queer service provision. What follows is an in-depth articulation of my chosen



methodology and the methods used within this dissertation.

## Chapter 4

### Methodological Framework

*‘Research’ is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world’s vocabulary.*  
Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999, p. 1)

#### 4. Introduction

The purpose of this research is to consider how Indigenous peoples are imagined, and by extension, how the effects of white supremacy and settler colonialism are reproduced within the context of queer service provision. I centralize this study within in-depth interviews. My chosen methodology is utilized to theorize the stories and lived experiences of non-Indigenous queer and trans research participants who live and work in the City of Toronto. Below, I discuss the chosen methodology and methods for this dissertation research. I also address my reasoning for how and why I chose to specifically study non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers working within queer service provision. Then, I outline the overall research design chosen and the steps taken to assure confidentiality. Next, I describe my collection and analysis of these data, and how this work resulted in three distinct findings chapters. Finally, I discuss ethical considerations, how I evaluated matters of reliability, and dilemmas that occurred during the fieldwork. The resulting discussion will outline my methodological justification for how and why these data were collected.

#### 4.1. A Qualitative In-Depth Interview Study

A qualitative research methodology proved most useful for this study, since it aims to centralize the voices of research participants and address how they have come to know what they know. Qualitative research aims to thoroughly explore and explain a particular phenomenon and its context, rather than having the capacity to be generalizable to the entire population. As Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) indicated, this type of research “involves focusing on the cultural,

everyday, and situated aspects of human thinking, learning, and acting, and ways of understanding ourselves as persons” (p. 12). Under the rubric of qualitative methodology, I have chosen to situate this in-depth interview study by asking: how is white supremacy and settler colonialism operationalized within queer service provision?

In order to elicit the subjective experiences of the research participants, who worked within queer service provision in downtown Toronto, I employed the method of semi-structured, in-depth interviews during this research. Qualitative interviews were important to the effectiveness of this study as they helped to emphasize the “depth, nuance, complexity, and roundedness [of these] data” (Mason, 2009, p. 65). Moreover, semi-structured in-depth interviews help us “move beyond our experiences and ideas and . . . really [try to] understand the other person’s point of view” (Esterberg, 2002, p. 87). Thus, I engaged with the lived experiences of the research participants to account for how they construct their everyday lives, work environments, practices, and understandings of both their non-Indigenous and LGBTQ subjectivities within the context of queer service provision. This process allowed me to explore the topic of white racism and settler colonialism more openly within the research participants’ discussions of how Indigenous peoples and people of colour fit within their own understandings and articulations of their queer work life. The process also allowed research participants to discuss their own opinions, perspectives, and beliefs on the topic, while bringing up other topics of interest.

In connecting my dissertation research to Tracy’s (2010) theorization of sincerity within a qualitative research paradigm, I bring my own experiences as white settlers and service provider to this research examining queer service provision. Sincerity, as Tracy (2010) described, means that “research is marked by honesty and transparency about the researcher’s biases, goals, and

foibles as well as about how these played a role in the methods, joys, and mistakes of the research” (p. 841). As noted in my prologue, specifically in outlining my own experiences as a service provider, I took the opportunity to re-think how Indigenous peoples and people of colour are imagined within queer service provision. In particular, I critically engaged with the narratives of white queer and trans service providers about their own understandings of, and investments in, normatively white queer service provision. These encounters gave me the opportunity to question everyday social relations and practice frameworks that currently exist within queer service provision and their possibility in limiting a critique of white settler colonialism.

#### **4.2. Research Study Sites and Sampling**

In order to theorize the white supremacy and settler colonial realities within queer service provision, I next provide an outline and justification for why my sites (queer service organizations in downtown Toronto) and sample group (non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers) have been chosen. There is a paucity of ethnographic scholarship addressing the ways in which non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to their service users—specifically, Indigenous service users. Although some scholars have noted settler colonial violence enacted within modern evocations of queerness, there is still insufficient ethnographic research from the standpoints of non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers, as opposed to service users, that addresses how white racism and settler colonialism, particularly within everyday practices of white queer service providers, can serve to exclude and/or assimilate Indigenous peoples and people of colour. Thus, this research fills this gap and deepens the theoretical purchase of critical sociology, queer studies, Indigenous studies, and the scholarship addressing service provision.

In conducting this research, I needed to recognize the violent imposition of research on

Indigenous peoples (Absolon & Willett, 2005; Kovach, 2006; Max, 2005; Smith, 1999, 2012). Qualitative and quantitative research has long been used as a tool of imperial and colonial domination, which continually produces Indigenous peoples as objects of inquiry (Smith, 1999, 2012). Smith (1999, 2012) calls upon qualitative and quantitative researchers alike to decolonize their methodologies. In other words, all Indigenous and non-Indigenous people are invited to break the cycle of colonial exploitation and oppression that research has taken in to Indigenous communities. Working alongside Giwa (2013) to examine the problematics of research within queer communities in Toronto, I have discussed the impact of colonialism within contemporary qualitative research paradigms, whereby some Indigenous peoples are typically asked to sign an informed consent document that devalues the ability to consent orally—problematic because Indigenous peoples continue to value orality over written forms of communication.

To reduce the white supremacist and imperial imposition of research and to avoid producing Indigenous peoples and people of colour as Other, this research centres the subject positions of non-Indigenous peoples—white settlers and people of colour. However, in doing so, I acknowledge that as a queer white settler critic of white settler colonialism, I can only think through the experiences of white queer and trans peoples, since I will never truly be able to understand the experiences of people of colour nor Indigenous peoples. Thus, within this research, I asked the research participants to speak from their dual positionalities as non-Indigenous service providers and as being LGBTQ-identified to address their perspectives of multiculturalism, diversity, and decolonization within queer service provision in Toronto. By speaking to predominantly non-Indigenous research participants, I aimed to reduce the white supremacist and colonial violence enacted onto Indigenous peoples and people of colour through this research project and through qualitative research more broadly. In particular, I chose to

speak to non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers in order to consider how white supremacy, settler colonialism, and queerness are imbricated on the ground to further erase and deride Indigenous life. More specifically, I wanted to consider how non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers come to perceive and understand the Indigenous peoples and people of colour accessing services, and also the larger projects of nation building of which they, and their work, are a part. Thus, in asking these questions, I am prompted to situate myself within the white settler colonial project that this research attempts to critique as a white settler descendent, and as a former service provider and now university-based educator and researcher. I am not immune from, innocent of, and nor can I escape how I routinely benefit from the project of white supremacy and settler colonialism in Canada.

This study theorizes the linkages between queerness, settler colonialism, and white supremacy. I chose to speak with and sample non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers who were working or volunteering at the time of the interviews, or had previously worked or volunteered, in queer service provision in downtown Toronto. I look to queer service provision as a site in which LGBTQ communities and activism can potentially normalize LGBTQ subjectivities. Typically, queer service organizations are understood as being safe, inclusive, and accessible spaces that provide services for all queer and trans service users (and at times their partners and families). However, there is a conceptual gap between non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers' investments in white-normed queerness and how these investments, surrounding the particularities of white settler colonialism in Canada, continue to displace and routinely marginalize perceived or actual service users.

Toronto was chosen as my site since it is a large multiracial and transnational space, where white people are more of a demographic minority vis-à-vis people of color and Indigenous

people than in any other Canadian city. According to Statistics Canada's 2011 National Household Survey (NHS), "49% of those living in Toronto [...] identified as a visible minority" and "0.8% of [the] total 2011 Toronto population" self-identified as First Nations, Metis and Inuit (City of Toronto, 2013, p. 2–3). Downtown Toronto is a unique site at which to conduct this qualitative research since there are numerous organizations all engaging with queer programming for their target populations. These ethno-specific ASOs are mandated in their mission statements to take on race, culture, and at times colonialism, since the staff members largely consist of Indigenous peoples and/or people of colour, and as they routinely interact with divergent service users of colour. Moreover, Catungal (2013) argued that ethno-specific ASOs "emerged in direct critique of mainstream organizations in order to insist on being active *subjects* of community-based, 'for us, by us' *ethno-specific* sexual health support and care" (p. 259–260; emphasis in original). Although the experiences of non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers of colour working in ethno-specific ASOs are invaluable since they name the white centrality of mainstream ASOs, I chose to speak to non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers working at mainstream white-normed queer service provisional institutions, in order to consider the extent to which white supremacy and settler colonialism impact service provision. As a white cismale settler it would be politically problematic for me to study queer of colour organizations in the city, since I would have limited knowledge of how racism and colonialism truly impact queer and trans people of colour. Thus, as an ethical intervention, to address how white racism and settler colonialism might manifest as a way to be accountable to both Indigenous peoples and people of colour. Thus, I have chosen to analyze normatively white queer organizations in downtown Toronto. I do so to illuminate how narratives of diversity and multiculturalism can easily reinscribe and normalize whiteness within queer communities, and in

doing so, reinscribe white racism and settler colonialism.

In order to be eligible for participation in the study, potential participants were required to: 1) be above the age of 18; 2) self-identify as LGBTQ; 3) have experience working at a queer social service organization in Toronto; and 4) self-identify as non-Indigenous. Overall, determining if participants met these eligibility criteria was relatively simple, as I followed up with each participant via email to ensure that they met the conditions. However, two of the white research participants later in our interview self-identified as having Indigenous ancestry—although neither of them wanted to speak about their ancestry, since they had both recently learned about this (new) part of their identity. Moreover, two more research participants self-identified as Indigenous and their particular inclusion in the research study will be discussed in the latter parts of this chapter.

I utilized purposive and snowball sampling methods to reach divergent research participants. A purposive sampling method samples research participants who have specific perspectives on the phenomena (Esterberg, 2002). After each interview, I utilized snowball sampling methods; I asked research participants to take my contact information, and encouraged them to contact anyone who might be interested in participating or who would like to know more about the study. Snowball sampling gathers additional research participants from original research participants (Atkinson & Flint, 2004). I utilized these sampling methods to connect with potential research participants who had a vested interest in the phenomena being studied.

Forty-five potential research participants responded to the research promotional materials. Of the initial respondents, I interviewed forty-three individuals (see Appendix A). Two respondents were denied the chance to participate due to saturation and were thanked for their willingness to take part in the research. Data saturation can be explained as the acquiring of



(new) data that is often superfluous and that may not add anything extensive to the data already collected (Grady, 1998). Tables 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 outline the respondents' demographic information in categories of sexuality, race, educational attainment, age, and interview location. Acquiring specific demographic self-identified information from the research participants resulted from the desire to connect service provider subjectivity to queer service provision—in arguing that their identities do indeed matter.

**Table 1: Sexuality Demographics**

<b>Sexuality</b>	<b>Response Rate</b>
Queer	16
Gay	12
Gay/Queer	5
Lesbian	2
Bisexual/Queer	2
Gay/2-Spirit	2
Genderqueer	1
Lesbian/Queer	1
Tri-Sexual	1
Dyke	1

**Table 2: Race Demographics**

<b>Race</b>	<b>Response Rate</b>
White	28
South Asian	4
Mixed-Race	2
Latino	2
Portuguese	2
Cree and Metis	1
Ojibwa	1
White Settler	1
Mestiza	1
Asian	1

**Table 3: Educational Attainment**

<b>Education</b>	<b>Response Rate</b>
Masters degree	8
Masters of social work	5
Bachelor degree	5
Working towards a masters degree	4
Working towards a bachelor degree	4
Unfinished undergraduate degree	3
Working towards a PhD	2
Working on masters of social work	2
Working on bachelor of social work	2
Unknown	2
University educated	2

**Table 4: Age Demographics**

<b>Mean</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>
37	33	20	68

Masters in counselling psychology	2
College counselling degree	1
High school	1

It is important to note that only nine research participants had been trained in the field of social work and three in counselling psychology, since within these fields service providers are typically trained in diverse approaches to service provisional practice (e.g., anti-oppressive practice). Thirty-one research participants came from other disciplines and backgrounds, and had not been formally trained in cultural competency or anti-oppressive practice. Thus, it was difficult to measure the level of exposure that the research participants not trained in social work or counselling psychology had to equitable approaches to service provision. My only way of determining such exposure was to ask research participants about the ways in which anti-oppressive and culturally competent practice have been institutionalized and utilized within their particular queer service provisional contexts, and to note the training service providers had received.

The educational background of the research participants is ever so important, since queer service provisional institutions are required to address and train their service providers around anti-oppressive practice. The responsibility to teach about and even institutionalize anti-oppression is placed onto individual queer organizations, demonstrating the overall lack of coherence that service providers trained in social work and counselling psychology might have. Often, mainstreamed anti-oppressive frameworks (Pon, Gosine, & Phillips, 2011) provide surface level critiques of systemic oppression and lack theoretical rigor in terms of the effects of white racism and settler colonialism within and outside of service provision. The themes of white

racism and settler colonialism will be centralized in my analysis of these data, but before I get there, I next outline my methods of inquiry used within this research study.

#### **4.2. Research Design**

Before collecting these data, I conducted selected literature reviews so that I could become familiar with and analyze the contributions of other researchers and writers who study race, colonialism, and Indigeneity within the context of service provision. Following the literature review, my proposal was approved and the research study received ethical review board (IRB) clearance. The IRB process reviewed all of the procedures and practices needed to ensure research participants' confidentiality and receive their informed consent. To provide a full picture of my methodology, I provide below a summary in the form of a list to show how the research was conducted. Following the list, a more comprehensive discussion of each step will be outlined.

1. Research study information was sent out to prospective agencies and research participants. Those who agreed to participate contacted me using email. A follow up email asked research participants to verify their eligibility. I made myself available to the research participants to meet and discuss the research in more detail. Once we met, research participants were told verbally about the research more specifically, and about how I would ensure confidentiality. They were then asked to physically sign informed consent documents.
2. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with forty-three LGBTQ-identified service providers and volunteers who worked, or who had worked previous to the study, at queer organizations in downtown Toronto.
3. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and all audio recordings were immediately destroyed. Member checking was utilized to ensure the utmost trustworthiness of the data gathered. Research participants were given an opportunity to review their interview transcript and the final dissertation draft.
4. An interview was conducted with two Indigenous-identified gay/2-Spirited staff members at an Indigenous-led queer organization to corroborate the research findings, and to ensure a respectful and responsible research paradigm would be used. Specifically, these Indigenous 2-Spirited/gay-identified research participants were interviewed to showcase their differing experiences working within and with other queer organizations in downtown Toronto.

### 4.3. Interviews

Upon starting my fieldwork, I began to interact with potential research participants and administrative bodies at organizations I wanted to work with. However, after my initial experiences in the field, I was required to rethink my chosen methodology and I amended the IRB three times to account for the unexpected. The amendments will be discussed further in the credibility section below. In order to obtain research participants, I employed purposive and snowball sampling methods. I contacted acquaintances and former co-workers who were working or had worked in queer social service organizations to send recruitment information (found in Appendix B and C) through list serves they were part of and to people they knew in the sector. Some of the organizations I was in contact with at the beginning of the research project sent the recruitment information through their internal email list serves. Others I got into contact with were happy to send the recruitment information through their contacts informally. Recruitment information was also sent through multiple list serves that I am part of through Brock University, Ryerson University, and the University of Toronto. I also contacted list serves that Toronto-based queer and trans service providers are readily tuned into: Rainbow Health Ontario and Rainbow Health Network. Once contacted by potential interviewees, I replied to their email to contact them and screen for eligibility.

Once individuals agreed to participate in the research study, I sent an email to inquire as to when they would be available to meet. A total of forty-three individuals agreed to be interviewed. Before each interview commenced, research participants were informed of their participation in the research, the explicit connections to queer service provision and Indigeneity, the length of the interview, the steps taken to ensure confidentiality, the choice to pick a pseudonym, and the possible risks involved in participating (see Appendix D). Each interviewee

signed a consent form, and was informed of their rights as a research participant under the approved IRB. Interviews lasted for approximately forty-five minutes to two and a half hours, and were conducted at my office at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, and at workplaces, private homes, restaurants, and coffee shops of the research participants' choosing (see Table 5). During their interview, each research participant identified which queer social service organizations in downtown Toronto they currently or had previously worked at and/or volunteered with.

**Table 5: Interview Location**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Response Rate</b>
Workplace	21
OISE office	11
Restaurant	4
Private home	4
Coffee shop	3

I selected semi-structured in-depth interviews as the primary method of data collection since they have the potential to provoke rich, thick and robust descriptions (Esterberg, 2002; Tracy, 2010). Moreover, the conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews theorized from the perspectives and lived experiences of the research participants within the context of queer activism and work. With guidance from my committee, I used the research study's three main research questions to develop the interview guide (see Appendix E). I piloted the interview guide with the first research participant with their permission. Although the interview guide did not need to be changed, the research participant did offer some suggestions for some of the questions and follow up questions I asked, and also spoke about how they appreciated the specificity of the questions addressing diversity, multiculturalism, and settler colonialism within the context of queer service provision. Upon piloting the interview guide, I engrained the feedback I had

received, and, being mindful of my research questions, interviewed other research participants from December 2012 to May 2013.

The interview guide enabled me to ask questions pertaining to the research participants' perspectives of the organization(s) they had each worked within and the relationships (formal or informal) they had had with other service providers and social service organizations in downtown Toronto. Moreover, research participants were asked about their specific roles and responsibilities as outlined within their job description and organizational mandate. Finally, so that I could get a sense of the organizations, research participants were asked to speak to the history of their organization and talk about any changes that had been made to their organizational structure, mission statement, or service user demographics during their time there.

Research participants were asked about their intentions while working in the queer service sector, their motivations for continuing the work they were doing in the present moment, the practice frameworks they used, and how Indigenous peoples and people of colour fit into their queer-focused work. Participants were also asked about their thoughts on the connections between queer communities and social services, their perceptions of the inclusion of people of colour and Indigenous peoples in queer communities, the LGBTQ populations who accessed their services, and the direction service provision would take if Indigenous peoples were centralized in their organizations. I also asked questions pertaining to research participants' demographic information. Each participant was asked to situate themselves—using their own categories—along the axes of sexual orientation, gender, social class, race, nationality, educational attainment, and years working within the queer service sector in Toronto.

Once the interview was completed, the research participants spoke with me informally. Some asked questions about whether or not I had Indigenous ancestry; others wanted to know

more about the research findings and why I had chosen this particular topic to study. As a white cismale settler, I respectfully responded to their questions and answered honestly. Upon my completion of the transcriptions, research participants were given the opportunity to read over their own transcript to add, delete, or modify anything that they had said in their interview. Six of the research participants took the opportunity to make changes to their transcript. Eleven research participants asked for a draft of the dissertation. One research participant read over their respective interview excerpts used within the dissertation and discussed with me particular changes they would like, to ensure that the stories remained anonymous. Each audio recording was transcribed verbatim, and once the transcription was complete the audio recording was destroyed.

Although I do not employ Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP), I mention the OCAP principles here as a means through which to usher this research study toward respectful research protocol, as a way to be accountable to Indigenous researchers, organizations, and community members (Schnarch, 2003). I do not apply OCAP principles, since my research participants for the most part are non-Indigenous. However, I include this mention here to show my knowledge of OCAP, to illustrate my ability to consider how these principles would apply if Indigenous peoples or organizations chose to implement any of my research findings and/or come up with some guidelines that are relevant to OCAP to guide my work and research with Indigenous peoples, organizations, and communities.

In order to corroborate my findings and consider the experiences of Indigenous peoples working with queer organizations in downtown Toronto, I invited three 2-Spirit/queer Indigenous organizations to respond to the research participants' articulations of queer service provision in the City of Toronto. In staying true to the OCAP principles when working with

Indigenous-led peoples, I wanted to create a space for the Indigenous peoples and organizations who had been named by the research participants to speak about their own experiences working within the normatively white queer social service sector in downtown Toronto. I contacted these organizations to engage in respectful and responsible research, and also to start a dialogue surrounding their potential experiences of Indigenous exclusion within the sector they worked. One Indigenous-led organization contacted me to indicate that they were interested in meeting and that they would like for me to speak with two staff members together.

I conducted an in-depth semi-structured interview with both of the Indigenous service providers, who discussed their experiences working among other non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers and within queer service provision in downtown Toronto. The Indigenous service providers requested that they be interviewed together. I honored their request. I also gave them the opportunity to consent to the research protocol orally. Both research participants opted to physically sign the informed consent document. Before starting the interview, I gave a gift of tobacco to the Indigenous research participants as a respectful gesture that honours Indigenous research protocol (Kovach, 2009; Lavallée, 2009). As Lavallée (2009) explained:

these [tobacco] bundles are . . . given to a [Indigenous] person when requesting knowledge or help. This is done to ensure that things are done in a respectful or good way. Accepting a bundle carries a responsibility to do what is asked of you. (p. 27)

The interview lasted approximately one and a half hours and was transcribed verbatim. Once transcribed, the audio recording was deleted. After the interview, the two Indigenous-identified research participants each had a request of me. They asked that I meet with them again to follow up on my findings, and that if I were going to be present at any community conferences if I would co-present with one of their staff members on the matter of Indigenous exclusion within queer social services in Toronto. I agreed verbally to both of these requests.



#### 4.4. Data Analysis

After manually transcribing the interviews verbatim and utilizing member checking with the research participants, I chose to analyze these data manually. I opted not to use data analysis software (e.g., NVivo), since at the time of the data analysis the software was not compatible with a Macintosh computer. Keeping my research questions at the forefront of my analysis, and with guidance from my committee, I sought to examine how manifestations of white racism and settler colonialism might happen within queer service provision. Before coming up with codes, I read over each transcript to look for major themes and repetition (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Once the themes emerged from the transcripts, I began a formal process of concept driven coding by assigning letter codes to the emergent themes (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). First, I utilized primary coding (see Appendix F), where I read through each transcript to code significant connections to the three major themes—Institution, Climate, and Subjectivity—that had initially emerged. During the coding process, I used different coloured highlighters to distinguish between the three separate themes and added subcategories as I found new or contradictory subthemes. Once all forty-three transcripts were coded and colour coded, I manually moved all of the information into separate documents.

Once the significant interview content was extrapolated from the transcripts and placed into separate documents, I started to engage in secondary coding (see Appendix G). Secondary coding allowed for me to engage with the interview content in more explicit ways. As I coded for more specific connections, I inputted the findings into a mind map and numbered explicit responses to show repetition in a particular outlook on or response to the phenomenon in question. Once the second round of coding was completed and all of the mind maps were made, I was able to remove externalities and focus in on the connections that research participants had

made to the themes on Indigenous exclusion in queer service provision. During the coding process, I connected with my committee members and other colleagues to get perspective and guidance surrounding codes I had chosen and some of the decisions I had made to categorize the material. Upon finalizing what interview content would be used, I manually moved around the material so that connections could be made between the differing, contradictory, or expansive understandings of the three major themes. The resulting information collected from the research participants fit into three distinct findings chapters. These findings chapters provide an ethnographic basis from which to conceptually theorize the everyday effects of white supremacy and settler colonialism within the structural confines of queer service provision and within the everyday practices of non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers. An expansive discussion of ethical dilemmas of qualitative research and the choices made to respect research participant confidentiality is included below.

#### **4.5. Ethical Implications**

As a social researcher employing qualitative research in the form of a study based on semi-structured in-depth interviews, I have taken a number of steps (informed consent, ensuring confidentiality, and securing these data) to ensure that ethical research protocol is followed. I have thus ensured that the names and workplaces provided by the research participants will remain protected and private. Research participants were informed of the basic premise of the research study, and upon their agreement to participate they were notified that participation was strictly voluntary.

Research participants were first asked to sign an informed consent document agreeing to the conditions in the document and choosing to participate in the study. Participants were notified of their capacity to skip questions, not answer questions entirely, and, when their

interview was complete, their ability to revoke their participation at any point they might see fit. Research participants were also informed of the potential risks involved: both psychological and social. To minimize such risks, I assured them also that the information that they would share with me would remain anonymous and confidential. I also planned for research participants to potentially be triggered or upset by the topics discussed and had a exit sheet available to anyone requiring further support or counselling. However, no research participant indicated that they had experienced any discomfort with the direction of the interview. I also employed member checking, which gave participants the opportunity to review their transcript and add, delete, or modify anything that was not to their liking. Research participants were also given the opportunity to review my dissertation draft and provide me with critical feedback surrounding my analysis of the interview data and the conclusions made.

To ensure complete confidentiality, the workplaces and personal identities of the research participants remain confidential. Participants were given the opportunity to choose a pseudonym, and if they declined, a name was given to them to ensure confidentiality. Some research participants, with the intention of feeling more accountable for what they said in their interview, indicated that they would in fact like their first name used instead of a pseudonym. Regardless of the use of pseudonyms, no research participant's employment agency or role is named in any of the publications or presentations of this research. However, it is important to mention that even though the participants' identifiers are removed, they still are implicated in particular forms of violence as they stand in relation to Indigenous peoples and people of colour. Thus, the analysis I have employed may be particularly unpleasant and uncomfortable for white research participants in that it attempts to expose the routine violence we all—as non-Indigenous peoples—can participate in. The one participant who opted to read over their contributions within the

dissertation did not express any concern regarding the analysis, nor the use of the interview excerpts. Thus, as indicated, during this research, I have ensured the utmost respect for the rights and interests of the research participants, and I have also acknowledged the realities of the tightknit and very small queer service sector in downtown Toronto.

Important cautionary measures have also been taken in the storage of the interview data and research materials. All confidential transcripts and documents are only accessible on my password-locked personal computer. I chose to use File Vault (Macintosh encryption software) on my personal computer, accessible only through use of a private password. I also manually transcribed all of the interviews to ensure the utmost confidentiality of the material. Once interviews were transcribed, the audio recordings were permanently deleted. Moreover, all hard copies of informed consent documents, interview transcripts used for manual coding, mind maps, and research notes are left in my locked office at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education for which only I have a key. Thus, I have taken serious steps to ensure that the research participants are respected and that the IRB protocol is followed to ensure ethical research praxis.

#### **4.6. Issues of Trustworthiness**

Along with the ethical considerations carefully followed during this study, I have taken important steps to ensure trustworthiness: confirmability, credibility, dependability, and transferability (Guba & Lincoln, 1998; Shenton, 2004). Trustworthiness is an attempt of qualitative researchers to legitimize the subjectivity of their research within a heavily positivistic social science field (Guba & Lincoln, 1998; Shenton, 2004). Therefore, I next trace how this research addresses these tensions experienced in qualitative research.

##### ***4.6.1. Confirmability***

Confirmability within qualitative research denotes the steps taken to extend the research findings beyond the researcher's own beliefs and opinions (Shenton, 2004). In other words, in connecting to objectivity within quantitative research, confirmability extends the phenomena in question to come from the stories offered by the research participants (Shenton, 2004). I engage with confirmability by providing the reader with a prologue that situates and contextualizes my experiences alongside the research participants, as well as provides the reader with my particular entry points and theoretical basis for analyzing the research participants' lived experiences (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Shenton, 2004). Moreover, I provide the reader with an "audit trail," particularly of my coding (see Appendices F and G), which shows how the research participants approached and diverged in answering questions pertaining to the phenomena being theorized. However, I must admit, even while I attempt to achieve confirmability, my approach to analyzing the interview excerpts connects to my theoretical framework and to my own social location as a white queer cismale settler.

#### ***4.6.2. Credibility***

The concept of credibility within qualitative research refers to the congruency between what the research participants say and how research participants are represented in the findings of the dissertation (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012; Shenton, 2004). As indicated above, to ensure the credibility within this research project, I engaged in member checking; research participants were given the opportunity to review their own transcript and the final dissertation draft to ensure that their voices and experiences were adequately represented. While I did engage in member checking, there were research participants who did express that they did not want, nor have the time, to review the transcript and final dissertation draft. Thus, in hindsight, member checking alone may not guarantee that each research participant's voice and experiences are

represented to their own satisfaction. However, despite this, I did ensure that the research participants' shared stories and narratives were contextualized for the reader, and connected to larger theoretical processes that move the stories beyond the individual.

Moreover, this research does not triangulate the methodological approach used to collect these data. In order to ensure credibility, I planned for a diverse array of research participants to take part in this study, who would speak from a multitude of different and contradictory locations on the continuum of employment status, education, health status, social class, gender, and sexuality. These varying degrees of research participant positionality allowed for variation in the responses to the research questions and showcased a multitude of perspectives towards decolonization and white settler colonialism within queer service provision.

#### ***4.6.3. Dependability***

Dependable research refers to future researchers' ability to track the "processes and procedures used to collect and interpret the[se] data" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p. 113). As I have indicated in the data analysis sections, the coding schema was developed in consultation with my committee and other known scholars in the interdisciplinary fields of feminist studies, sociology, and service provision. Codes also emerged from the research participants' stories and helped tailor my critical analysis. A complete list of codes, themes, and response rates can be found in Appendices F and G. Although my perspective as the researcher is supposed to be reduced through dependability, as I have indicated, my perspective also informs this research to situate non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers working in queer service provision within a larger white supremacist and settler colonial structure, in particular, through their own understandings and interpretations of diversity and multiculturalism.

#### ***4.6.4. Transferability***

As I indicated at the onset of this chapter, the qualitative research method chosen to conduct this research precludes generalizability. Transferability refers to the capacity for other readers and research to connect the research findings from a specific site (e.g., service provision) to another site (e.g., higher education) (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012; Shenton, 2004). In order to contextualize the research findings and ensure transferability, I have outlined the steps taken to evaluate the research findings and make the conclusions found within this dissertation research. Thus, within this research, I use thick description (Denzin, 2001) as a way to provide the reader with a well rounded and representative scan of the research site and the research participants' understanding of it. Moreover, thick description also aims to depict the research participants' interview excerpts as closely to verbatim as possible so that the readers can evaluate the conclusions made against these data excerpts. I have aimed to present the reader with contextual information so that queer service provision can be specifically understood and potentially connected to other ethnographies. As the steps outlined above have been taken, this research ensures trustworthiness so that all parties involved in the research are appropriately represented.

#### **4.7. Delimitations and Limitations of the Research Study**

As already indicated, with the site and sample chosen for this study, I aimed to theorize from the subject positions of non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers working in queer service provision in downtown Toronto. Thus, sampling bias could impact the overall research outcomes, since I ended up interviewing approximately twenty-nine white queer and trans research participants. Sampling bias “occurs when one type of individual, group, or organization is overrepresented in the sample, resulting in a sample that does not represent the population as a whole” (Blankenship, 2010, p. 88). The overall representation of white research participants could have resulted from my sampling methods (purposive and snowball). However, the

resulting over representation of white research participants resulted from the fact that the majority of non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers and volunteers working in queer service provision are white. Of my research participant sample, 66% self-identified as white.

Moreover, I must acknowledge that while heterosexual-identified service providers do work in queer organizations, I chose to speak with non-Indigenous queer and trans research participants since my central aim in this research was to uncover the connections between the institutionalization of queerness and its connections to white supremacy and settler colonialism. I indicated in my IRB that I would consider speaking with heterosexual-identified allies if they came forward to participate. However, no heterosexual-identified respondents contacted me to participate. Notably, the lack of responses from heterosexual-identified service providers does not reflect their lack of interest in uncovering the connections between queerness, white supremacy, and settler colonialism within queer service provision.

I chose queer organizations and opted not to engage with any social service organization in downtown Toronto. Speaking with queer service providers who work in any social service organization would have opened up multiple critiques, including the institutionalization of heterosexism, which is not one of my central research foci. Although the workings of heterosexism and heteronormativity invade the livelihoods of queer and trans service providers (Willis, 2007), it is queerness itself, as it becomes and remains white-normed and contained within white settler colonial narratives of dominance and control, that must be interrogated in order to expose how certain forms of oppression (e.g., heterosexism) are privileged over others (e.g., white racism).

#### ***4.7.1. Limitations***

This study contained some limitations—some related to qualitative research



methodology, and some inherent in the research design. Careful thought has been given to ensuring that the limitations have been addressed and accounted for in hopes that the overall impact will be minimized. However, any research design can be impacted by unforeseen circumstances. At the onset of this research project, my qualitative methodological approach was informed by institutional ethnography (Smith, 2005). I initially planned to study three queer organizations in downtown Toronto. In my first IRB, I stated that I would contact these three organizations and set up initial meetings to discuss their participation. Two of the three organizations agreed to participate and were very excited about the research project. One of the three organizations declined participating in our first meeting and indicated that Indigenous peoples do not normally access their services and that they were unsure what productive input they could bring to my research. After meeting in person, the organization sent me an official email to explain that the reason they could not participate was due to the fact that their staff was overburdened by too many research projects. I thanked the organization for their time. Although the one organization did not participate within the research study, it was clear that the particular staff member who met with me easily concluded that the organization does not have many, if any, Indigenous-identified service users.

With this hurdle in mind, I was left with a predicament: I needed to rethink my project. I decided to switch my focus from an institutional ethnographic approach to an in-depth interview study. My IRB was approved the second time to interview non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers working in queer service provision. I made this particular change to open up the research participant pool and interview as many non-Indigenous people who would be willing to speak to me. When I had begun to conduct interviews, one of the original two organizations that had agreed to participate in the initial phase of the research emailed me to

meet to discuss the implications of my research project in more detail. Upon following up with them, I received notice from the executive director that the organization would no longer be able to support this research study. The organization did not provide reasoning as to why they could no longer support the study and I did not pressure them on the matter. This particular organization refused to allow any more people affiliated with the organization to be interviewed for this research study. Upon hearing this, I thanked the organization for their consideration and time.

After one more of the organizations had removed themselves from the research study, I connected with research participants seamlessly. Upon meeting with my supervisor to relay my initial findings, he encouraged me to connect with Indigenous-led organizations to corroborate my findings and give them the opportunity to speak to their experiences working in the queer service sector in Toronto. I contacted three organizations and only one replied. I changed my IRB for the third time to account for interviewing Indigenous peoples, whom I had initially thought I would not be interviewing. It is important to note here that although I was able to interview two Indigenous-identified research participants and include some of their experiences in this research study, I do not mean to imply that they are representative of the multitude of Indigenous experiences that can be found in queer service provision in downtown Toronto. Thus, one such limitation of this research is that the voices and experiences of Indigenous peoples are not present. Indigenous presence could potentially round out and diversify the perspectives of the potentiality of white settler colonialism, particularly around the notion of “being good” within queer service provision. Although the goal of this study has been to present the perspectives and experiences of non-Indigenous peoples, this research might be construed as being for, rather than as research with, Indigenous peoples. By not employing OCAP principles, this research study

has the potential to reify the white supremacist and imperial imposition of research. While some limitations have prevailed due to both my own subjectivity as a researcher and research design imperfections, the resulting research findings contribute to the dearth of scholarship addressing the lived experiences of non-Indigenous service providers working within and doing queer service provision in downtown Toronto.

#### **4.8. Conclusion**

This chapter has provided a detailed description of this study's methodology. This in-depth interview study considers non-Indigenous service providers' perceptions of queer service provision in downtown Toronto. The participant sample of forty-three research participants was collected using purposive and snowball sampling methods. The data collection method used was semi-structured in-depth interviews. These data were then reviewed against the literature (see Chapter 3) and evolved into emergent themes. Utilizing the themes, the analysis consisted of two variations of coding: primary and secondary coding. Steps were taken to ensure research trustworthiness, including member checking and thick descriptions.

The intent of this study is to engage with queer service provision on different scales to understand how non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers come to know white racism and settler colonialism within their work contexts and to recognize how their identities have the potential to impact service provision at large. Following my detailed methodological choices and justifications, I now move to a discussion of institutional forms of Indigenous exclusion that exist within queer service provision. I will argue that Indigenous peoples are excluded from queer organizations through the manifestation of an on-going crisis embedded within the work non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers are required to engage in, which ultimately constricts their gaze toward acquiring and maintaining funding. Moreover, due to their wanting

to be read as inclusive and diverse organizations, particular language is mobilized within the structure of these organizations, whereby Indigenous peoples and people of colour are invited to participate—but, if they require more specific services, they must leave and access services elsewhere.

## **Chapter 5**

### **The Crisis and Care of Queer Service Provision**

#### **5. Introduction**

Service provision is an important site to examine since it can be easily tied to projects of nation building by upholding dominant ideologies such as diversity and multiculturalism (Schick & McNinch, 2009; Smith, 2007; Thobani, 2007). These dominant ideologies contained within and maintained by service provision suggest that neo-liberalism is alive and well. This chapter takes into consideration how neo-liberalism produces queer service provision. I consider Duggan's (2003) understanding of neoliberalism to be important to the context of service provision, specifically in terms of the following: first, the making of liberal ideology and policy as neutral, which could involve "managerial precepts for good government and efficient business operations" that obscure the underlying capitalistic and colonial power of the nation-state and its institutions; second, the normalization of global exploitation to further economic and political expansion in North America; and third, the increasing consumption of activism within policy-making to shape shift the urgent concerns of social movements (p. xiii). Duggan's (2003) examination of neoliberalism, specifically its capacity to misappropriate notions of justice and equity, is important to consider as it shows how subjects under democratic rule are increasingly invited to participate in individualizing the ways in which the nation-state and processes of global capitalism continue to constrain our imagining of progress and emancipation.

Additionally, Giroux and Giroux (2006) contended that neo-liberal ideology pervades everyday life and suggested:

with its merciless emphasis on deregulation and privatization, [neo-liberalism] has found its material expression in an all-out attack on democratic values and social relations—particularly those spheres where such values are learned and take root. Public services such as health care, childcare, public assistance, education, and transportation are now subject to the rules of the market. Forsaking the public good for the private good and

representing the needs of the corporate and private sector as the only source of sound investment. (p. 24)

As the authors contended, neo-liberal ideology remains pervasive within public service, of which contemporary service provision is a part, and is used to invest in global capitalism and the sustainment of hegemonic power structures through their increasing reliance on particular funding regimes and operating as for-profit organizations (Giroux & Giroux, 2006). As such, social service organizations who want to be read as legitimate are invited into becoming more business driven and consequently can easily disengage with the overall mission and mandate of the organization.

Queer service provision's ties to neo-liberalism can be observed in the increasing decline of state sanctioned funds for public services (e.g., health care). One important example of the cutting of public service funding in Toronto, Canada, comes from 2011, when Toronto's Mayor Rob Ford was encouraged by a private auditor to deal with the city's \$50-million deficit and cut public services by 10% (Dale, 2011). In order to achieve this goal, Mayor Ford proposed cuts to the majority of public services, some of which included public libraries (Dale & Moloney, 2012), HIV/AIDS project funding (Huston, 2011), and homeless shelters (Dale, 2011). The funding cuts for these particular public services illuminates the extent to which marginalized people accessing those services are deemed at the municipal level as a drain on public spending, and thus, as disposable. Service providers are feeling an increased download of responsibility, which places them and the work that they do in an ever-increasing mode of crisis. Being in "crisis mode" requires service provision to deal with this funding crisis by seeking out private donors and state-led project funding, and by increasingly changing from not-for-profits into for-profit enterprises.

However, as Millon (2013) argued, "neoliberalism reaches beyond economics to become a way of life" and thus contains a normalizing claim "that individual pursuits of self-interest will

promote the public good” (p. 17). Neo-liberal logics permeate queer service provision in order to require non-Indigenous service providers to support, care for, and help marginalized service users who are typically marginalized by multiple axes of oppression (e.g., being under-housed or living in poverty, accessing Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support Programs). Although many marginalized service users access queer service provision, the service users accessing services are typically white. The overrepresentation of white service users comes to normalize whiteness within queer service provision by ensuring that the particular desires, wants, and needs of white queer and trans people are centralized. As a result, Indigenous service users and service users of colour are produced to be at once included within multicultural narratives of diversity and outside by virtue of their cultural differences.

While queer service provision is produced through neo-liberal logics, these organizations have been implemented to confront the routine heterosexism, homophobia, cissexism and transphobia that queer and trans people experience within their daily life. Their collective mandate is to care for, support, and meaningfully address the violence and trauma that queer and trans people experience. Thus, queer service provision is seen as, and is produced to be, inherently progressive insofar as service providers are taking action against oppression that is pervasive in the lives of queer and trans people, and helping to support them in relinquishing the trauma they routinely experience within their everyday life. However, this chapter looks to how a hyper focus on white queer and trans politics and peoples in downtown Toronto can easily obscure the white racism and settler colonialism embedded within queer communities in Toronto.

This chapter will discuss how queer service provision as a structure might sustain and normalize white racism and settler colonialism. More specifically, I inquire as to how queer

service provision's perpetual crisis can produce a normalized white queer citizenry, and in doing so, evade imagining Indigenous queer, 2-Spirit, and trans service users, as well as queer and trans service users of colour, differently. Given this, I argue that this crisis requires queer organizations and their workers to fill in the queer gaps that mainstream service provision and health care seemingly ignore. Focusing on and centralizing queerness can easily preclude non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers and their respective organizations from engaging with how their work can easily sustain white racism and settler colonialism by disconnecting service provision from that of Indigenous peoples' needs and sovereignty.

In order to look at how service provision can easily normalize the effects of white supremacy and settler colonialism, I first outline the varying degrees of services and programming offered within queer service provision. Next, I describe how this particular site mobilizes a "politics of care," in an attempt to help and support queer and trans service users in combatting their everyday experiences of cissexism, transphobia, heterosexism, and homophobia. Furthermore, I explore how neo-liberalism permeates into the structure of queer service provision to perpetuate and maintain a crisis mode situation. Finally, I investigate how service user demographics and representations within queer service provision produce certain queer and trans service users as belonging. I consider how the desires for (multicultural) diversity and queer inclusion operate within queer service provision—a site that can easily leave out, ignore, and even erase Indigenous peoples. It is precisely the structure of queer service provision that needs to be interrogated so that the illogical fantasies of inclusion and diversity can be exposed as contributing factors in maintaining white supremacy and settler colonialism.

### **5.1. Queer Service Provision in Toronto**



The queer service sector itself has evolved out of different stakeholders noticing that the experiences and identities of queer and trans peoples within mainstream service provision and health care become unaccounted for and even erased. As Cain (2002) argued, “strong dedication exists within these community-based organizations, often explicitly grounded in the belief that community mobilization, personal and collective empowerment, self-help, and helping each other are crucial elements in the fight against HIV” (p. 94). Many of the cismale research participants expressed that one of the main reasons why queer service provision exists is to combat and fight against the HIV/AIDS virus (see Rayside & Lundquist, 1992). As John, a 54-year-old gay white cisman indicated, “the first people that were contracting HIV in Toronto were largely gay men” (13/03/21, Transcript 30, p. 4, Toronto, ON). These stories from cismale research participants present narratives of queer service provision, which evolved out of a history of gay men contracting the HIV virus in the early 80s, as well as the notion that present contemporary gay cismen as the most impacted by HIV/AIDS. This perception that gay cismen are the group most “at risk” of acquiring HIV/AIDS can easily erase injection drug users (IDU) and sex workers, who are also impacted and affected by the virus.

Although gay cismen are constructed as the most deserving of care due to their inevitable risk of contracting HIV, they are also centralized through specific program deliverables within queer service provision. Many queer organizations are mandated by public health and epidemiological interventions that surround being healthy—of body and mind—and reducing risk. Public health initiatives, for example, using the term men who have sex with men (MSM), are used to account for one’s behaviour (e.g., not using a condom when having anal sex), rather than placing the focus on the social and cultural factors that impact one’s health (see Young & Meyer, 2005). Service providers are encouraged to implement public health interventions into

their practice. In doing so, these providers can easily individualize the experiences of service users, which require them to disengage with how white racism and colonialism become social determinants of health (Czyzewski, 2011; Giwa & Greensmith, 2012).

Although gay cismen become centralized within queer service provision due to their perceived risk, Brandon, a 53-year-old gay white cisman, provided a differing perspective. As he stated: “we need gay men services for gay men by gay men . . . it is really sad that there are none in the city” (13/03/09, Transcript 22, p. 7, Toronto, ON). Brandon’s narrative connects to Smith’s (2013) discussion of a “singular logic of oppression,” which propels subjects into individualizing their experiences of oppression—often disconnected from other interlocutors. In indicating that there needs to be more services “for gay men by gay men,” Brandon’s narrative illustrates that the oppression that gay men experience is singular, which, as Smith (2013) has argued, results in the privileging of their experiences and an understanding that they are worthy of more attention. Centralizing “gay” within queer service provision’s programming and services can easily erase many queer and trans people of colour, as well as Indigenous queer, 2-Spirit, and trans people who cannot be easily captured under the banner of gay (Driskill, Finley, Gilley, & Morgensen, 2011; Gopinath, 2005; Leung, 2008; Puar, 2007).

As a result, Brandon’s narrative conflates his own experiences of marginalization as a gay cisman with his own desire for more gay-specific services in downtown Toronto. It would seem that Brandon’s image of gay service provision requires “gay” to be in the name of the services offered. However, the desire for “gay” to be named does not account for the over saturation of gay cismen who work within queer service provision, nor the overwhelming number of queer services that primarily serve and support gay cismen. As such, Brandon’s narrative illuminates the ways in which gay cismen become produced as the most desirable for

care and services. For Brandon, the queer service sector as a whole should be taking a more active role in caring for gay cismen in general.

The centralization of gay cismen within queer service provision also manifests through the job descriptions of service providers. As Steve, a 38-year-old gay Latino cisman, explained, his job description requires him to “engage with gay men who are at risk of HIV and other STI infections and transmissions” (13/03/02, Transcript 20, p. 3, Toronto, ON). Within his role as a service provider, Steve’s job description requires him to hone in on and centralize gay cismen and their sexual health risk within the programming and education initiatives he (and the organization) develops. Despite the particular constraints placed upon Steve due to his job description, he spoke with me about how African women, Portuguese speaking people, and refugees in Toronto are impacted and affected by HIV/AIDS. Connecting Steve’s narrative to that of Indigenous peoples, his practice approach addresses, to some degree, how racism, mobility, and colonialism are social determinants of health. Thus, even though Steve has demonstrated knowledge of the varying degrees to which health is impacted by structural factors (e.g., racism), his narrative demonstrates the pervasiveness and power of settler colonialism in the context of queer service provision insofar as he does not name Indigenous people’s higher risk of acquiring HIV/AIDS. Later in our interview, Steve spoke to me about an awareness of Indigenous issues within his private practice as a therapist. However, as part of his discussion of his job description in a normatively white organization, Steve talked about how gay cismen remain centralized within HIV/AIDS prevention work despite people of colour (e.g., African women) and Indigenous peoples impacted and affected by HIV/AIDS and might not necessarily fit into the category “gay.”

Additionally, Rahim, a 27-year-old gay/queer South Asian cisman, discussed how although his job description does explicitly outline gay and bisexual men as the primary population he is required to work with, he challenges this perception:

I do a program ... it is about connecting guys who are taking high risks to community services and to provide a little bit of brief counseling ... usually creating a little bit of insight around what is going on for the person ... is it a informed choice ... what other things are impacting their decision making ... it could be substance use, relationship issues, or other structural things.” (13/01/22, Transcript 10, p. 3, Toronto, ON)

Rahim’s narrative illustrates how service providers can challenge the language around “risk” that is contained in their job description, indicating that one’s sexual practices may not necessarily make them a target for risk. Rahim pointed out that risk is dependent upon the individual, interpersonal, and structural constraints service users live within. Thus, Rahim’s narrative demonstrates how his job description can be subverted as a way to decentre gay and bisexual cismale identities within programming and the services he can offer. In doing so, Rahim tries to diversify the access to the program for guys who may not necessarily fall into the categories of, nor want to classify themselves as, gay or bisexual.

Moving beyond HIV/AIDS discourses that centralize gay and bisexual cismen, Emily, a 52-year-old white lesbian ciswoman, discussed how her organization tries “to serve the local community as well as the broader LGBTQ community” by doing and promoting “civic engagement, and involv[ing] the communities in the work that we do. We also provide programs and services to meet their needs” (12/12/23, Transcript 2, p. 3, Toronto, ON). The organization Emily works at has a plethora of programming and support services that are directed at serving diverse queer and trans community members. Additionally, Nicole, a 46-year-old queer white ciswoman, discussed how the overall mission and mandate of her organization attempts to invite diversity amongst the youth participants. As she stated: “[we] work with young queer, trans, and

questioning youth up to the age [of] twenty nine to help them find the tools and the resources to improve their lives, to advocate, to resist oppression, and to move forward in healthy ways” (13/03/13, Transcript 25, p. 3, Toronto, ON). Nicole’s narrative speaks to the ways in which her organization works with diverse youth, empowering them to resist oppression and encouraging them to “move forward in healthy ways.” Nicole’s narrative illustrates how the neo-liberalization of service provision provides opportunities for service providers to support queer, trans, and questioning youth individually. As a result, systemic forms of oppression and inequality become stifled in service users’ attempts to help and improve individual youth’s lives.

While attempts are made to foster relevant and meaningful programming and services within queer organizations, Josephine, a 33-year-old queer white ciswoman, and Candy, a 27-year-old South Asian genderqueer<sup>15</sup>, discussed the recent change their organization has made to their weekly drop-in. These two narratives illustrate how the name change of a program can have adverse, and sometimes even violent, consequences. As Josephine explained:

In the fall we switched the focus [of the drop-in] a little bit so then it was more specifically geared to LGBT communities and allies. It was always an open drop-in, but the intention with this switch was to hope to engage people more in creating safe space. We wanted people [coming to the drop-in] to commit to creating a safe space and to make it more inclusive for LGBTQ folks. I do not know if I am just noticing it more, or what is going on, but I feel like I am meeting so many more people [in the drop-in] who are LGBTQ and it is awesome. (13/01/09, Transcript 6, p. 3, Toronto, ON)

Josephine’s story illuminated how her organization wanted to explicitly name their weekly drop-in as being for “LGBTQ and allies.” Josephine spoke with me about how thrilled she was about the new change—it was an opportunity to make the space more accessible and safe for queer and trans service users, as well as their allies, who may not necessarily come or want to come to a more general weekly drop-in.

However, as Candy illustrated, the naming of the weekly drop-in as being for “LGBTQ and allies” has had violent repercussions for homeless service users—regardless of how they identify. As they<sup>16</sup> went on to explain:

You know, changing the [weekly] drop-in to LGBTQ and allies . . . they [the organization] do not understand homeless culture. It is rampedly homophobic. I get the intention that they want to create a safer space for LGBT people who are homeless or street involved. That totally makes sense if it was a shelter. Good idea, but it is not. [I am not sure if you know this], it was not published, but there was a gay bashing a month after we changed the program which has never happened before, ever . . . ever. (13/01/15, Transcript 8, p. 5, Toronto, ON)

Candy’s story outlined how queer service delivery, through the specific naming of the weekly drop-in as being for “LGBTQ and allies,” can have adverse consequences. As Candy indicated, queer and trans service providers, in deciding to make the drop-in even more queer, did not consider the homeless service users who were already accessing and taking advantage of the drop-in. The overt naming and normalizing of a program as being for “LGBTQ and allies,” as this particular event highlights, can have unfavourable effects in terms of how language used within queer service provision can easily produce who belongs and who is deemed out of place. LGBTQ peoples and their perceived allies (whoever they may be) are made to belong, further oppressing poor, economically disenfranchised, homeless people. What becomes remarkably clear within Candy’s narrative is how the organization, in changing the name of the weekly drop-in to include “LGBTQ and allies,” considered its attendees’ primary motivation to attend would be due to their gender and sexuality, rather than for shelter, access to food, community building, or the particular programming of that week.

Interestingly, Emily, a 52-year-old white lesbian ciswoman, indicated to me that she sees Indigenous peoples accessing the drop-in among other services at her queer organization. She went on to state:

They [Aboriginal people] come here. I think they go to other organizations too. I think that they go to all of the organizations that provide service that they might need. But I do not think that they are necessarily served well [here]. Or maybe there is something that we are missing, either in the kinds of services we offer or the ways that services are provided. Are we hiring Aboriginal staff? I know 2-Spirit people access some of our services, but I am unsure of the other services we offer. They are clearly accessing our programming that are serving very marginalized folks. (12/12/23, Transcript 2, p. 7, Toronto, ON)

Emily's narrative points to some of the structural limitations of queer service provision, in terms of organizations having the potential to be of disservice to, and possibly cause the erasure of, Indigenous service users. As a result of such limitations, the programming available to Indigenous peoples is operationalized around the perception that they require band-aid interventions like drop-ins and food programs (see Kawash, 1998; Rossister, 2001). As Emily indicated, there are specific services available to Indigenous service users in downtown Toronto. Yet, Emily had noticed a stark gap between the services available to Indigenous service users and the specific queer services offered by the organization she works for.

Although some organizations explicitly attempt to diversify their services, Jamie, a 24-year-old white queer ciswoman, discussed with me how working within the "gay community" can have limiting consequences. As she stated: "when I am living my everyday life, I am surrounded by so much queer stuff. Working in the gay community and all of my other work, sometimes I forget what reality is or what other lives are like and how impactful it is" (13/03/27, Transcript 32, p. 4, Toronto, ON). Jamie discussed with me how her queer life and the explicit gay focus of her work can sometimes inhibit her perception of reality and limit her capacity to truly understand other queer peoples' experiences of oppression. Although Jamie is working within the "gay community," she talked about how queer and trans people should not stop challenging heterosexism and homophobia even though gay marriage is now legalized. To further her point, Jamie brought up two examples of queer teen suicide and cases of international

homophobia as necessary causes to support. Here, Jamie's narrative makes it clear that local and global queer activisms need to be addressed despite larger homonational processes that are pervasive within queer service provision that place emphasis on same-sex marriage discourses and equality.

Although homonational processes are present within queer service provision, Tara, a 29-year-old white genderqueer, discussed with me how the counsellors within their organization work against such narratives. As they shared:

Every time a state passes a marriage bill that is the only thing that my manager will talk about. I think the counselors have been asked by the board of directors why it is still useful to have a queer counseling service when gay rights have gone so far so they are fighting, I think, against that narrative. (13/05/06, Transcript 39, p. 6, Toronto, ON)

With the increasing enfoldment of equality discourses and respectable queerness into the Canadian nation-state, Tara's co-workers are routinely required to justify why queer counselling remains necessary for queer and trans service users. Tara's narrative illuminates how, despite the pervasiveness of gay rights discourses embedded within Canadian society, service providers and the work that they do continues to challenge and speak back to such narratives. As a result, Tara's narrative contends that the queer service sector in Toronto, of which her organization is a part, is becoming subject to gay rights discourses, which are dictated through the Canadian nation state. Tara's narrative illustrates an opportunity to challenge existing frameworks and the ways in which gay rights discourses continue to infiltrate the entire operation of queer service provision.

Queer service provision in downtown Toronto attempts to meet the needs of divergent queer and trans service users who often experience marginalization and/or oppression due to their health status, gender expression, or sexual identity. As I have shown, the structure of queer service provision typically centres gay and bisexual cismen within notions of risk, programming



initiatives, and job descriptions. Despite this, service providers of colour are subverting the structural confines of queer service provision to ensure that service users of colour belong. Yet, in diversifying the service user population, more marginalized service users (e.g., homeless peoples) can easily become unimagined. To make matters worse, some service providers working within queer service provision are required to work against same-sex equality discourses that are pervasive within contemporary life. As a result of this, queer service providers are propelled into a “politics of care” that attempts to open up space for diversity amongst those who identify as queer or trans. In order to flesh out how queer service provision cares for queer and trans service users, I now move to a discussion of the predominant programs and services offered within queer service provision.

## **5.2. Toward Services that Care**

Each of the research participants discussed with me how queer service provision has been put in place to care for the broader queer and trans communities in the City of Toronto. A central theme that came up within the research participants’ narratives addressed this discourse of care, which is implemented within the overall structure of queer service provision. This section contextualizes how queer service provision mobilizes what I am calling a “politics of care.” Queer service provision typically provides caring services to queer and trans service users who routinely experience cissexism, heterosexism, homophobia, and transphobia within their daily lives and when accessing mainstream services. Below, I provide more specific contexts pertaining to the kinds of services that queer organizations, and indeed service providers, provide.

### ***5.2.1. Counselling***

The research participants spoke with me about formal and informal counselling as a necessary service for queer and trans service users. Typically, these two types of counselling are accessed in the many forms and possibilities available, due to queer and trans service users' experiences of pervasive loss or trauma and/or their want/need/desire to seek additional support in times of crisis (Hamilton & Mahalik, 2009; Ristock, 2001). Kate, a 25-year-old bi/queer white ciswoman, described an organization that she is involved with as providing phone- and text message-based peer support services for queer, trans, and questioning youth. Kate's discussion of her organization connects very well to the neo-liberalization of service provision, insofar as Kate's organization has a limited capacity in terms of paid staff members; however, the organization still thrives since it runs on the labour of volunteers. In Kate's organization, volunteers are trained to provide support over the phone and via text messaging to queer, trans, and questioning youth who call in to the organization. This organization thus makes available a more informal type of peer-based counselling for its service users.

In her interview, Tara, a 29-year-old white genderqueer, described the more formal LGBTQ-counselling program offered at the organization they work for: "within that program there are two smaller streams. One stream is for LGBTQ individuals, couples, and/or families. The second stream is for folks living with HIV or AIDS and people affected; so, people's partners, family members, friends" (13/05/06, Transcript 39, p. 3, Toronto, ON). Tara described the two types of counselling offered to queer and trans service users—one paid by the service user on a sliding scale, the other externally funded by the AIDS bureau. In our interview, Tara indicated that the majority of people accessing the HIV/AIDS services through their organization are white gay men, and that gay men and their partners are accessing the more general LGBTQ counselling. Thus, Tara's depiction of the services offered at their organization showcases how

queer service provision, along with evocations of inclusivity, is actually centralized around gay ciswomen by virtue of who is accessing the services. Tara also reported that their organization is quite small, and that, with limited resources, staff, and volunteers, the service providers often feel overburdened by the number of service users accessing counselling. As a result of the limited resources, staff, and volunteers, there is a wait list for service users wanting to access counselling services.

Another interviewee, Jett, a 49-year-old gay white cisman, discussed the organization he works for as offering a few different types of counselling that mainly focus on addictions, stating: “we offer addictions programs for the LGBTQ community. We offer outpatient counselling, sometimes on a one-to-one basis. However, we are more of a group treatment program” (13/03/19, Transcript 28, p. 3, Toronto, ON). Substance use is known to be rampant in the queer and trans communities in Toronto, and is often used as an avenue to cope with multiple experiences of loss and trauma (Drable & Ellason, 2012; Huges, 2005). The organization Jett works for specializes in supporting service users around struggling with being and/or identifying as queer or trans and experiencing challenges with substances. The organization also works to support queer and trans service users around substance use through either a harm reduction<sup>17</sup> outpatient program or an abstinence only inpatient program. Thus, queer organizations, such as the one Jett works for, are put in place to care for a diverse spectrum of queer and trans service users around reducing or eliminating substances of concern from their lives.

Lisa, a 46-year-old mixed-race cislesbian, discussed how her organization operates quite differently, in that she is required to work with queer and trans newcomers who have decided to settle in Canada. As she outlined: “I do one-on-one counselling with newcomers who are LGBTQ-identified and who have resided in Canada for less than five years” (13/01/15,

Transcript 9, p. 5, Toronto, ON). Lisa described these newcomers—who are predominantly “convention refugees<sup>18</sup> or permanent residents who are not yet citizens” (13/01/15, Transcript 9, p. 5, Toronto, ON)—as populations that she helps and supports in traversing the Canadian immigration system, and “Canadian culture” more generally. Lisa indicated to me that this particular service operates on a case management basis to try to support refugees who have come to Canada as a result of exile and/or violence. Lisa’s role as a service provider requires her to support newcomers as they navigate the white supremacist and colonial Canadian immigration system so that they can be read as legitimate, normative, gay and lesbian subjects. Thus, counselling in this particular organization involves meeting with newcomers on a one-on-one basis to discuss how the organization can help support them in times of crisis, help them attain supporting documentation pertaining to permanent residency or fully citizenship, and help integrate them into Canadian society. These research participants’ narratives illustrate that counselling—crisis counselling, formal counselling, addictions counselling, and case management—is widely used to support and take care of queer and trans service users. Below, I move to a discussion of some of the sexual and reproductive health services available within some queer organizations.

### ***5.2.2. Sexual Health Services***

Sexual health services are another avenue for service providers to mobilize a “politics of care.” Although counselling services may touch upon sexual and reproductive health care, the stories below indicate why queer-focussed sexual and reproductive health services are necessary for queer and trans service users, especially if they are women. As Brett, a 31-year-old white genderqueer, described, their roles and responsibilities as a service provider require them to provide:

services as fast, effectively, and as many as possible. I do HIV counseling and testing. This consists of pre-test counseling, the test itself and the post-counseling. I also do triaging: I get a person's sexual health history. I suggest the tests they should get done by the doctors, and then the doctor or clinician will come in, look at it, confirm everything or not, and then the person will do the actual tests. (13/04/30, Transcript 38, p. 4, Toronto, ON)

Brett's story illuminates how queer and trans service providers are put into authoritative positions whereby they are required to assess service users' sexual health and their potential risks. The goal of queer service delivery, in Brett's case, is to provide predominantly queer and trans men with the opportunity to access free, non-judgmental sexual health services that are efficient, supportive, and informative. Thus, Brett is required to provide queer and trans male service users with enough information around the impact of their sexual health practices, so that they can make more informed choices about their own bodies and the bodies they interact with.

Additionally, April, a 30-year-old white genderqueer, discussed a sexual health service that predominantly serves queer and trans women, who are, in their estimation, free from heterosexism and heteronormativity, and provides a safe, inclusive, and comfortable environment. As April stated: "I think those types of approaches are really unique, like that is not typically the experience when you get at your regular doctor or even a walk in clinic . . . [laughs]" (13/06/05, Transcript 40, p. 3, Toronto, ON). April discussed the need for queer service provision to exist—in that queer and trans women frequently experience sexual harassment and are explicitly asked intrusive heterosexist questions (e.g., do you have a boyfriend/husband) (Fish, 2007; Peterson & Bricker-Jenkins, 1996). Thus, this particular service that April is involved with attempts to provide another avenue for queer and trans women who may have had a bad experience with a doctor, or who want to avoid heterosexist health care altogether. April's organization attempts to fill some gaps within the larger health care sector by attending to the health needs of, and thus caring for, queer and trans women.

As a result of such intentions, sexual health services provide support and care for queer and trans service users due to their sexual health status, gender identity, or sexuality. Many mainstream health practitioners are ill equipped to address sexuality and gender identity, and as a result, routinely assume (often unknowingly, due to lack of training) that certain sex acts, or certain queer and trans subjects themselves, are inherently “risky.” Thus, queer service provision attempts to challenge the dominant health care paradigms by providing alternative and subversive spaces that value and care for queer and trans service users. While queer service provision is trying to subvert mainstream health care practices by centring queer and trans subjects, organizations are also travelling into schools and communities to educate queer and trans people as well as the general heterosexual public on issues of health, sexuality, and gender identity.

### ***5.2.3. Education***

Many research participants spoke about how education, if used effectively, can challenge common perceptions of gender identity and sexuality. Kate, a 25-year-old bi/queer white ciswoman, discussed one of her positions in a queer organization that honed in on the experiences of queer and trans women. Kate was tasked with connecting with queer and trans women who are typically marginalized within queer service provision and discussing with them the types of education or training they would like to have access to, then attempting to meet their needs by developing workshops, events, and other educational programming. Kate’s narrative points to some educational initiatives that centre queer and trans women within queer organizations.

Josh, a 53-year-old queer South Asian cisman, spoke about his own primary responsibility as an educator, stating: “I organize and create all the trainings. The education

consists of building LGBT capacity for health care providers and social service workers to improve cultural competency in serving LGBTQ clients” (13/02/25, Transcript 17, p. 2, Toronto, ON). Josh’s narrative suggests that there is a lack of awareness, and particularly within a culturally competent approach toward LGBTQ health, which can prevent queer and trans service users from accessing mainstream health care and services. Thus, Josh travels around the province of Ontario doing workshops and training for primarily heterosexual audiences around building knowledge and cultural capacity surrounding LGBTQ issues. Josh told me that within his workshops he does not shy away from the topic of race, and instead chooses to explicitly include images of queer and trans people of colour in his workshops. Josh also shared with me his skepticism around the inclusion of race in the workshops of his colleagues, being that he is the only queer of colour in the organization, and said that he often feels that it is his responsibility to take race on and educate his co-workers and workshop participants alike on the topic. Although Josh does not stray away from discussions of race within his workshops with primarily heterosexual health care practitioners and social service providers, he did indicate that when these types of LGBTQ capacity workshops are run, the topics of race and/or racism are typically removed in an attempt to hone in on and question gender and sexuality within health care settings. Josh’s intervention methods illustrate how whiteness is normatively produced within educational initiatives as a way to drive the inclusive agenda of queer service provision’s sole focus on gender and sexuality.

Additionally, Dylan, a 25-year-old queer white trans man, discussed with me his roles and responsibilities volunteering. As he stated: “I am considered a facilitator. I go into schools, sometimes it is classes for social workers, but they are mostly middle schools and high schools to facilitate anti-oppression and anti-homophobia workshops” (13/04/15, Transcript 34, p. 2,

Toronto, ON). Dylan's story suggests that it is the responsibility of service providers to teach the wider population about the realities of homophobia in schools and in social services. Dylan's narrative points to the ways in which anti-homophobia education, when institutionalized, fits into a safe, easily digestible politic. Thus, this particular branch of anti-homophobia education can easily fit into a cultural competency approach, similar to that of Josh's approach, that attempts to teach about the Other (Kumashiro, 2000; Schick, 2009). While these anti-homophobia educational initiatives are encouraging service providers to share their stories of marginalization, which can act as a tool of empowerment, the resulting implications of "teaching about the Other" continue to place queer and trans identities and peoples into positions to be known. Following Schick (2004), I argue that the resulting anti-homophobia educational initiatives should move away from "teaching about the Other," and move toward addressing how we all come to be constrained by, and are invited to participate in, naturalizing heterosexism and heteropatriarchy. These educational workshops continue to have tremendous impacts on attendees; they can easily drive queer organizations' agendas in centring a singular understanding of gender and sexuality, disconnected from other interlocutors. As a result, service providers of colour are invited to do away with an interlocking approach to queer service provision by centralizing gender and sexuality. Unless service providers themselves subvert the structural constraints placed upon them and their work, the resulting workshops can easily constrain what and who can be imagined as queer. The imaginations of queerness embedded within queer service provision can obscure the diverse and intersecting realities of queer and trans people, which indeed do not necessarily fit neatly into a one or two hour workshop.

It is clear that queer service provision is put in place to provide queer and trans service users with a sense of safety that they would not otherwise be experiencing in mainstream



organizations and health care. However, the “politics of care” mobilized within queer service provision typically isolates a gay, lesbian, and queer identity politic, and in doing so, reinscribes the white centrality of queer and trans identities by making the experiences and identities of queer and trans people of colour additive. Through the normalizing of whiteness within queer service provision, the white queer subject becomes deserving of care, programming, and support services. Although whiteness can easily constrain how queerness is imagined within queer service provision, it can also be constrained by funding within this neo-liberal era. Below, I discuss how queer service provision, particularly around its ability to take action against the state, is determined by its funding.

### **5.3. Constraining Services: Funding and Neo-Liberalism**

This section looks to the bureaucratic constraints placed onto organizations vis-à-vis their funding as limiting how settler decolonization, social justice, and indeed queerness can be imagined. Settler decolonization can be described as the capacity to which non-Indigenous peoples, as beneficiaries of their settlement, can act with and support Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination by looking at how they themselves routinely contribute to sustaining settler colonialism (Huygens, 2011). By engaging in a process of settler decolonization, non-Indigenous service providers can start to consider how their work can contribute to larger projects of nation building. In particular, state-sanctioned funding can easily place particular boundaries around what social justice initiatives can and cannot be achieved within an organization.

Many of the research participants discussed their overall challenges in serving marginalized queer and trans service users—specifically, people of colour and Indigenous peoples—when their organizations and job requirements are limited by where their funding comes from. However, it is not just funding alone that limits the capacity of queer service

providers; it is also each organization's particular ties to funding and the Canadian nation-state that can limit what can be achieved, and more specifically, what can be talked about. In other words, while funding can place particular constraints onto the types of services queer organizations can provide, we must also pay close attention to the funders themselves as investing in particular ideologies that remain firmly connected to the nation-state. As Smith (2007) argued in her discussion of the not-for-profit industrial complex, organizations and their workers invest in the state vis-à-vis their funding; as a result, such investments limit their capacity in engaging in critiques of the state and activism that challenges dominant social norms and the larger status quo.

### ***5.3.1. Crisis of Queer Service Provision***

Below, I discuss how funding and the desire for more funding ultimately place the majority of queer organizations in downtown Toronto in crisis. Being in financial crisis typically diverts much needed attention away from the structure of queer service provision and brings it toward managing, applying, and acquiring funding for the organization's survival. This cycle of always applying for more funding places queer service provision within a neo-liberal logic whereby it is tied to finance flow rather than accountability to communities. Many research participants spoke about the limitations placed upon them and their queer organization as a result of their lack of or desire for more funding. Not having enough funding ensures that queer service provision and its workers desire progress, specifically in terms of expanding the ability to develop programming and hire more staff. A common narrative that I heard from research participants surrounded the lack of funding and resources. Many of the queer service organizations operate as not-for-profits, and, as Filipe, a 46-year-old gay/queer Portuguese cisman, shared with me:

the field in general is completely under resourced and it has been proposed that nonprofits provide an excuse for governments not to put the proper resources in place that need to be put in place to address some of the most important issues in society in general. We are lucky in Ontario about the level of money that has been put into non-profit HIV work. On top of that, the legislation that frames not-for-profits ensure[s] that organizations try to make as little social change as possible. (13/03/15, Transcript 27, p. 3, Toronto, ON)

Filipe discussed the challenges posited to the not-for-profit he works for. Similarly to the above discussion of cismen being constructed as the most worthy of care due to their associated risk, not-for-profit HIV/AIDS work contains within it funding from provincial funders that specialize in HIV/AIDS (e.g., the AIDS bureau) to survive. Other queer organizations that do work outside of the realm of HIV/AIDS are left to sustain themselves through limited funding and resources. As a result, the queer service sector, especially when operating outside of the realm of HIV/AIDS, is left to take care of itself as well as the queer and trans populations in the City of Toronto at large. Moreover, Filipe's narrative discusses how funding, particularly the crisis of funding, ensures that not-for-profits "make as little social change as possible."

Similarly, Emily, a 52-year-old white lesbian ciswoman, talked about the limitations of not-for-profit work, and shared with me:

I think it is a really hard time working in not-for-profits. We are working in a larger political context that does not support the work that we do and wants us to run it like a business. So that is what is happening. Not-for-profit organizations are using business language, business models, business ... the bottom line is what drives the organization instead of the mission/mandate. In fact, we changed our mission/mandate to attract more money. (12/12/23, Transcript 2, p. 4, Toronto, ON)

Emily's narrative further points to the ways in which queer service provision is in constant crisis, since queer work is typically unsupported due to where it is situated—within a pervasive heterosexist society and culture. Emily discussed the decision that her organization made to become more like a business, which ultimately attracted more money from potential public and private funders. However, Emily also spoke about how being in crisis can have detrimental

impacts on services delivery, particularly the straying away from the overall mission and mandate of the organization, which aims to serve the broad queer and trans communities in Toronto. As a result, Emily's discussion highlights the neo-liberal constraints placed upon queer service provision, whereby the political context and the resulting connections organizations have to funders make it very difficult for organizations to maintain social justice as a priority (Samimi, 2010; Smith, 2007). Emily's narrative further points to the ways in which business models and bottom lines become the driving force sustaining queer service provision, rather than accountability toward queer and trans communities.

Interestingly, Rahim, a 27-year-old gay/queer South Asian cisman, discussed how business models can sometimes be beneficial for queer service provision. As he went on to explain:

Structure boundaries, hierarchies, and bureaucracy helps some of the bigger organizations just focus on one particular thing that helps us do one thing really well. I think it is almost a privilege that we have a strategic plan at [this organization]. I do not know that everyone has the capacity to sit down and think about a 3–5 year strategic plan. (13/01/22, Transcript 10, p. 14, Toronto, ON)

Although Rahim acknowledged the challenges posed to smaller, less financially stable organizations, he nonetheless described how bureaucracy could be helpful for such organizations' growth, development, and survival when focusing on "one thing." In doing so, Rahim illustrated how having the capacity to have a strategic plan can be, in his words, "a privilege" that can really benefit an organization and its ability to help and hone in on particular "strategic plans" around providing services. As a result, Rahim's story depicts how queer service is part of the neo-liberal machinery. Neo-liberalism and funding, although seen by Rahim as useful, can also place limits upon engaging with other interlocking systems of oppression,

whereby organizations are required to focus on “strategic plans” and stability, which can impede and potentially limit structural change.

Similarly, Nicole, a 46-year-old queer white ciswoman, discussed how her organization, since it is engulfed within a larger organization, no longer has to worry about being in crisis. However, in her interview, she did indicate to me that some structural limitations of being attached to a larger, well-funded institution are the bureaucracy, and the smaller organization’s limited capacity in engaging structural change. Nonetheless, Nicole discussed the material realities of being in crisis, and its impact on an organization and its workers’ emotional and psychic stability, but, as she explained: “we are not in crisis mode all the time trying to think where is our next pay cheque coming from” (13/03/13, Transcript 25, p. 3, Toronto, ON).

The alleviation of such crises for Nicole’s organization and others like it, particularly surrounding funding within queer service provision, script queer and trans service providers like Nicole into investing in and surrounding themselves with particular state-sanctioned initiatives and larger bureaucratic structures. These investments in stability allow for queer service provision to function. However, the functionality of such stability has its limits, since funders routinely constrain what queer service provision and its workers can do, engage in, and even speak about. These constraints placed onto queer service provision ultimately impact the material and imaginative possibilities of engaging in activist and social justice initiatives (e.g., settler decolonization) that would critique and/or challenge the Canadian nation-state.

### **5.3.2. *Funding***

Lisa, a 46-year-old mixed-race cislesbian, described how funding can often constrain what queer and trans service providers can do in their respective queer organizations. As Lisa shared with me:

We never have enough funding. The programs are bursting at the seams. [Our funder] is notorious about determining [the] number [of newcomers] that is what they want to see. They want to see you serve x amount of people per month. We are not a referral factory. If we are going to have more clients, [then] we are going to need more staff. (13/01/15, Transcript 9, p. 8, Toronto, ON)

In Lisa's experience, the funder wants the program to expand, and, simultaneously, seems to be unwilling to provide the organization and its team with more funding in order to do so.

Moreover, failure to meet the requirements of the funder places Lisa and her program in a perpetual state of crisis, where she is always waiting to hear if the funder has changed the particular population they can and should serve, and moreover, the number of newcomers they are required to interact with and help.

Rahim, a 27-year-old gay/queer South Asian cisman, also shared with me a common narrative regarding the funding constraints placed onto queer service provision:

When I worked at [an organization] for things that were city funded—so doing bathhouse outreach—I could not change that to bar outreach. There were a certain number of bathhouse outreaches and a certain number of bar outreaches that I was required to do. In order to get funding, I needed to do an application, an interim report, and final report, which had to report on those specific deliverables outlined by the funder. (13/01/22, Transcript 10, p. 12, Toronto, ON)

Rahim explicitly addressed how municipal funding easily constrains what organizations can and cannot do. Particular programs, such as bathhouse and bar outreach, are limited to a quota. The funding given to organizations is constrained to particular endeavours given service providers' particular expertise on what needs to be done and what populations require intervention. Rahim's narrative also illustrates how the neo-liberalization of applying for funding requires service providers to stipulate what can and cannot be done ahead of time, leaving little room for changes. As organizations accept money, they must follow particular rules and guidelines that they and the funding body stipulate. Thus, the accountability measures that are placed onto service

providers, and indeed, queer service provision ensure that service providers report back and document how the money was spent and allocated.

It is important to acknowledge that only certain service providers who have the training, background, and appropriate skills are given the task to apply for grant money. As John, a 54-year-old gay white cisman described:

At my organization there was never any core funding for anything, it was always project funding because it looked good for governments to say they did this project kind of thing. We would have to write grant proposals and pitch it for some sexy new idea that somebody in the system would think would be hip. (13/03/21, Transcript 30, p. 11-12, Toronto, ON)

As John discussed, organizations need adequate and stable funding to survive, but funding can prove difficult to attain. First, the survival of an organization is dependent upon funding and the ability of service providers to have the cultural capital to apply for funding. Second, funding becomes so much more competitive among organizations doing similar programming, which they have to routinely market in a compelling fashion, or as John put it, as “sexy.” Thus, the marketability of queer service provision also requires its service providers to have the adequate skills to effectively pitch their programming in a way that is competitive and “sexy.” What becomes remarkably clear, is that Indigeneity and/or Indigenous service provision remains unimaginable as “sexy,” and thus, is not pitched as the next up-and-coming or incoming initiative for queer organizations to take on.

In addition to the process of acquiring funding, Josh, a 53-year-old queer South Asian cisman, discussed with me the busy work required of funders. As he explained:

We produce this report for funders so they are happy. So we get money to continue for another three years. But at the end of the day, has this changed the lives of the people who experience this? Is it more positive or is it the same? Yet, we can pat ourselves on the back and say: “We trained 6500 people. We are awesome.” It is one of those questions that probably people do not want to go around thinking about because you are just wasting public tax dollars. (13/02/25, Transcript 17, p. 10, Toronto, ON)

As Josh explained, service providers are required to provide their funders with reports at the end of their fiscal year or funding term. However, Josh brought to light an important question pertaining to accountability. If service providers are only accountable to themselves and their funders, as opposed to (perceived or actual) queer and trans service users and communities, they can easily pat themselves on the back and see themselves as doing good work. However, Josh's narrative points to the material realities of doing this particular work by asking: who ultimately benefits? While Josh is required to formulate a report pertaining to the number of workshops completed and people who have attended those workshops, the document itself does not provide any more information surrounding the material and/or structural changes and results that have come out of the work. As a result, these funding constraints placed onto queer service provision have the potential to cause a directing of one's gaze back onto oneself as doing good, instead of encouraging an outward gaze that addresses the changes that occurred as a result of the work being done.

### ***5.3.3. Funding that Limits Possibilities***

Ultimately, as described by the research participants, the crisis that is queer service provision, and the particular funding constraints placed upon them, easily limits the social justice and activist initiatives that organizations can take part in. Skyler, a 25-year-old mixed-race genderqueer, discussed with me the ways in which the organization where they work relies increasingly on private donors. In discussing the particular example of donor choice, Barman (2008) contended that not-for-profits that assume a charity model typically give their donors the opportunity to "attach conditions to their gifts" (p. 42). Although the organization Skyler works at intends to support the "local LGBTQ community," it also is indebted to its members, who primarily consist of white gay cismen. Thus, the private funders for this organization have a lot



of say around what their money is used for, where it goes, and which community initiatives get access to *their* money. As such, queer-centric service provision, as in the example that Skyler described, is “not immune from the pressures and demands of resource providers” (Barman, 2008, p. 52). In other words, while the organization and its service providers have an intention to support a diverse array of LGBTQ community members, the organization’s funding requires them to invest in and appease private funders—white gay cismen—and their desire for a particular type of queer community. Skyler’s example demonstrates that the location of funding matters greatly as it can easily constrain the kinds of activist initiatives and programming that can take place. As a result, in this case, it is white gay cismen who increasingly have more say in what happens in the organization. Thus, as Barman (2008) illustrated, organizations and their service providers cannot be overtly critical of their members, precisely because that would implicate the donors, and, indeed, result in the organizations’ perpetual crisis through the potential loss of donor funds.

Similarly, Candy, a 27-year-old queer South Asian genderqueer, discussed with me the white normativity of some queer organizations and the resistance that occurs if white queer and trans service providers see themselves (and their work) as good. As they went on to explain:

The whole reason why [one of the ethno-racial organizations] emerged was because [a larger organization] was seen as a white gay male space. This city is so amazingly rich with awesome people of colour agencies because the kind of work that they want to have happen at [this organization] or [another organization] cannot happen. It is not because the work should not happen here, it is because there are so many people resistant to it or so much bureaucratic bullshit that goes on that there is just hoops you have to jump through and those hoops are unnecessary. What happens is that exclusion continues. So you have the larger organization that continues to be white and continues to see itself as doing really awesome work when it is really not. (13/01/15, Transcript 8, p. 7, Toronto, ON)

Candy’s narrative offers a *queer of colour critique*<sup>19</sup> of the ways in which the bureaucracy of an organization, particularly the constraints placed upon activist endeavours, can drive queer and

trans people of colour to do their anti-racist work beyond the limits of white-centric organizations. As a result, the separation of services, although useful in addressing the needs of particular ethno-racial groups and in maintaining divergent racialized spaces as “safe zones” (Catungal, 2013), maintains the white normativity of the larger areas of queer service provision because service providers seem to be unable to consider how their work continually sustains and maintains white supremacy. As Candy said, the work that queer service provision is doing might be deemed progressive or queer by some, but for others, particularly queer and trans people of colour, service delivery and programming continues to be limited by the organization’s whiteness. Candy is critical of the white supremacist nature of mainstream queer organizations; thus, their narrative provides an opportunity to consider how the critiques mobilized by queers of colour can be especially useful in supporting Indigenous queer, 2-Spirit, and trans peoples, as well as their organizations, in challenging the imbricated systems of white supremacy and settler colonialism.

In addition to naming queer organizations as sustaining the normativity of whiteness and white articulations of queerness, Kate, a 25-year-old bi/queer white ciswoman, discussed how an organization’s “charitable status” can impact what can and cannot be done and said within queer service provision. As Kate discussed, queer organizations who hold charitable status are limited in the types of positions they can hold in their roles as service providers, and, more specifically, as organizations. As she went on to explain:

Along with government funding comes issues surrounding the organization’s charitable status, dictating what kind of political activities you can engage in. There are really specific rules. Obviously you cannot engage in any kind of partisan political activity, you cannot be like “[this organization] supports the NDP.” . . . There is not a lot of granting bodies that will give you money if you do not have charitable status. (13/03/01, Transcript 19, p. 8, Toronto, ON)

Kate’s narrative describes the constraints placed upon queer service provision, whereby the

money that organizations acquire comes with particular rules and regulations, including in regard to political activities. Kate's narrative connects directly to Smith's (2005) theorization of queer service provision in Toronto and charitable status:

In order to retain charitable status, voluntary sector organizations must limit their advocacy activities to [ten percent] of their total expenditure, a rule that has not changed despite years of lobbying by voluntary sector organizations (Picard, 2003). For sectors such as LGBT and ethnocultural communities, this rule is particularly onerous because such identity-based non-profits tend to mix their activities in ways that easily conflict with this rule. (p. 476)

As Smith (2005) argued, queer service provision is already engaged in activism that might directly impact and challenge the nation-state. However, as I have argued above, the queer service sector tends to address and advocate for queer and trans human rights that might not necessarily imagine Indigeneity within the confines of queer service provision. Thus, an organization's charitable status acts as a mechanism to further control and regulate queer service provision, whereby the funding they receive can directly impact what types of activism can be accomplished. Thus, in order for settler decolonial activism to occur within and beyond the confines of queer service provision, the sector itself might need to radically reshape itself and say no to funding bodies that will place constraints upon advocacy and activist endeavours. Yet, the crisis enters once again insofar as funding ensures the survival of queer service provision within an institutional framework that rests upon legacies of white supremacy and settler colonialism. As Smith (2007) and Ng (1990, 1996) have argued, social justice endeavours that happen within not-for-profits are often constrained by the nation-state. Thus, it is important to consider the limits placed upon service provision, by asking non-Indigenous peoples to consider if such necessary critiques of settler sovereignty would be better supported outside of not-for-profit organizations, rather than within them.

As I have argued, the crisis that is queer service provision comes to be managed through

neo-liberal logics. As a result, the act of acquiring funding, and of justifying why funding was used and for what purposes, continues to divert attention away from the white supremacist and settler colonial structure of queer service provision and toward navigating crisis. The crisis of queer service provision can easily displace activist endeavours and community accountability procedures due to providers wanting to be read as legitimate organizations. I have argued that funding and the constraints placed upon queer service provision can easily control and regulate the overall direction that queer organizations take. The result of all of this, as I have shown, is that activist endeavours, particularly around naming, questioning, and critiquing the Canadian nation-state as inflicting violence upon Indigenous peoples and people of colour, remain starkly absent from the structure of queer service provision. We end up with a structure of queer service provision that produces a normalized white queer constituency that becomes legible through investments in the Canadian nation-state. The crisis that is queer service provision does not engage in Indigeneity, white supremacy, or settler colonialism. Understanding gender and sexuality as singular can reinscribe the normativity of white queerness by creating people of colour and Indigenous peoples as different. Such understandings of exceptionality within white settler Canada come from the desire for a multicultural diversity that attempts to produce queer service organizations as welcoming of difference and diversity.

#### **5.4. Bodies, Representation, and the Quest for Diversity**

Although queer organizations in Toronto are doing their best to implement the use of inclusive language and the spectrum of LGBTQ diversity, the bodies and images used within queer service provision to represent diversity illustrate how these evocations can easily centre whiteness in attempts to appear and become inclusive. Filipe, a 46-year-old gay/queer

Portuguese cisman, discussed how program advertising campaigns can exclude Indigenous peoples by using the word “diversity.” As he stated:

When you look at that poster on your door, it says something about diverse communities. That is code and usually it means multi-ethnicity. A lot of white people feel that [diversity] does not mean them. A lot of ethno-specific people think that means everyone. So what does diversity mean to First Nations people? Because First Nations people do not necessarily see themselves as being ethno-specific, they are First Nations. So to be truly accessible to First Nations people we should be putting First Nations on that poster. “Diverse” does not cover it and I am very aware of that. (13/03/15, Transcript 27, p. 7, Toronto, ON)

Filipe’s story connects to Ahmed’s (2012) theorization of the use of “diversity” within higher education as a way to deflect attention toward inclusivity and away from the structural apparatuses that continue to reify white supremacy. Diversity, in the case of Filipe’s organization’s poster, has multiple meanings depending on one’s social location and overall knowledge of the organization. As the narratives of many research participants suggest below, this particular organization continues to be white-normed by virtue of both the service users who access it and the service providers who work there.

Discussing a separate organization, Lisa, a 46-year-old mixed-race cislesbian, suggested: “over the years [the organization] gained a reputation as a male gay white space. We have developed into a more inclusive, diverse space for every single population to be able to find a program or a space to feel recognized, valued, positive and to be engaged” (13/01/15, Transcript 9, p. 6, Toronto, ON). Thus, organizations use “diversity” as a way to showcase their progress and ability to include all populations within their services and programming. However, as Filipe suggested, the inclusion of diversity alone can be a disservice to Indigenous people’s inclusion within the queer organizations, since they may not necessarily see themselves as being represented. The use of “diversity” within queer service provision may not necessarily be inclusive of Indigenous peoples, since the use of multicultural diversity within a Canadian

national imaginary ensures that Indigenous peoples are represented as another cultural group among many (Lawrence & Dua, 2005; St. Denis, 2011a). Thus, Filipe's discussion of diversity illustrates that diversity is not enough of an inclusionary measure, and if organizations want to have Indigenous peoples participate, they must start to include Indigeneity in queer service provision and in programming advertisements.

While Lisa acknowledged the progress of queer service provision in traversing the white gay normativity of the organization to reach the prospect of inclusion for all, Koinnapat, a 35-year-old gay/queer Asian cisman, discussed with me how queer service provision remains white, despite steps toward diversity and inclusion. As Koinnapat discussed: "I think [some organizations] need to do a lot more to address the specific cultural needs of different groups and have some honest conversations about the racism in the [LGBTQ] community" (13/02/02, Transcript 11, p. 3, Toronto, ON). Koinnapat talked about the complete white washing of queer service provision, as seen in its inability to meet the cultural needs of service users of colour, let alone Indigenous service users. Moreover, in addition to the white washing of queer services delivery, Koinnapat discussed how the actions used to address white racism seem to be absent within queer service provision.

Ryan, a 34-year-old gay white cisman with Indigenous ancestry, discussed the disproportionate number of "privileged" service users coming in to the organization to access HIV and STI testing, versus more marginalized groups. As he stated: "I think the people that we see are a split of 60/40—men who have sex with men and women who have sex with women. That number is so crazily disproportionate if you look at overall representation [of people newly diagnosed with HIV]" (13/03/09, Transcript 23, p. 6, Toronto, ON). As a service provider who is involved with Indigenous sexual health initiatives, Ryan remains cognizant of the degree to

which Indigenous peoples in Toronto are being newly diagnosed with HIV. However, even with his knowledge surrounding HIV contraction and Indigeneity, Ryan, in his role as a service provider, has little individual control over who enters into the organization.

Jett, a 49-year-old gay white cisman, also discussed the diversity among service users accessing his organization when responding to one of my questions:

Q: Who are the service users at your agency?

A: We see all kinds of people. The people we never have problems getting in as clients are gay men. Even if we did not advertise or do outreach, we still would have a ton of gay men coming in. So a lot of the groups that we have available at [the organization] are geared to gay guys. That being said we see lots of women. Within both the men's and women's community, we see some diversity. We have quite a lot of Asian clients. We see a fair number of Black clients. We see fewer Aboriginal clients. (13/03/19, Transcript 28, p. 5, Toronto, ON)

Jett's narrative points to the ways in which service providers, and indeed, queer service provision, are representative and inclusive of diversity. In his narrative, Jett was able to utilize racial descriptors of non-whiteness to describe the service users accessing addictions services. In his estimation, there were some "Asian" and "Black" service users and fewer Indigenous service users accessing services. In using these particular racial markers of non-whiteness, Jett's narrative illustrates how the category "gay" he evokes remains white—a common trope Candy and Josh, as service providers of colour, are working against in their work.

Brandon, a 53-year-old gay white cisman, discussed the diversity of service users within the workshops he facilitates in response to the question: "Who are the service users at your agency?" He replied: "people who are HIV positive gay men. I would say most of those programs would have maybe Caucasian guys but it is diverse. Within the other programs that I do it is a wide diversity—all kinds of ethnicities" (13/03/09, Transcript 22, p. 7, Toronto, ON). Brandon's narrative illustrates that within the programming he offers there are both white male

participants and male participants of colour, indicating that he is cognizant of racialized people accessing programming. Brandon's narrative depicts how the use of diversity and ethnicity can be incomplete when articulating how certain programs attract white men and men of colour. Narratives of diversity, such as the one Brandon uses, fall within larger discourses that Canadians use to demarcate racial difference.

Similarly, Jacob, a 20-year-old gay/queer Portuguese cisman, discussed the service users at the organization he works at, by stating:

[We see] trans guys, HIV positive and HIV negative guys. We also see guys from any and all ethnic backgrounds. Although there is this assumption that Aboriginal people will fall under that last category, it is not explicitly stated. I think that explains a lack of presence of Aboriginal participants in the program. (13/03/13, Transcript 24, p. 4, Toronto, ON)

Jacob's narrative extends the version of "gay" mobilized by the organization he works within to account for diversity among categories of gender and ethnicity. Simultaneously, Jacob recognized that Indigenous peoples might not necessarily see themselves in the category "ethnicity." Interestingly, Jacob's evocation of "any and all ethnic backgrounds" connects to St. Denis' (2011b) discussion of "culture," whereby its iteration can easily erase race in an attempt to gloss over the differences that exist among those accessing services. Jacob's narrative illustrates how the use of ethnicity can erase the presence of Indigenous peoples, since Indigenous peoples do not necessarily see themselves represented within the category of "ethnicity" used to include racial and cultural difference within the organization.

In addition, Steve, a 38-year-old gay Latino cisman, discussed with me the ways in which queer service provision tries to make spaces more inclusive of 2-Spirited service users. As Steve indicated: "Let me be fair. At this organization there are a lot of posters of 2-Spirit[ed People of the 1st Nations]. [2-Spirited people] are [as] welcome as any other client. If they want something



specifically for them, they are going to be referred [somewhere else]” (13/03/02, Transcript 20, p. 10, Toronto, ON). Steve’s story illustrates how representations of 2-Spirited people alone may not necessarily translate into culturally relevant queer service provision. While Steve suggested that 2-Spirited people are as welcome “as any other client,” he also said that if they require additional or more focussed services, they will be sent somewhere else. Steve’s narrative connects to larger discourses of Canadian multiculturalism where Indigenous peoples are included but their inclusion rests upon their erasure. Within queer service provision, organizations want to appear inclusive of difference and diversity, even when the particular services offered may not necessarily be suitable for or culturally relevant for Indigenous peoples. As a result of the white supremacist and colonial violence that Indigenous peoples experience within mainstream service provision, Indigenous-led organizations, such as *2-Spirits*, came into fruition to meaningfully support Indigenous queer, 2-Spirit, and trans service users. Consequently, due to the emergence of organizations such as *2-Spirits*, larger organizations, such as the one Steve works at, can support queer people more generally and might therefore understand their work as disconnected from race and settler colonialism.

Joseph, a 47-year-old queer white genderqueer, echoed Steve’s narrative, particularly in their discussion of how Aboriginal/2-Spirit peoples can assimilate into gay-specific programming. As he stated:

Aboriginal folks can also be poz [HIV positive] and queer, [so] they [can] fit into my poz work, which is not limited to gay men. Although, my gay male [workshop] is limited to gay men. Some Aboriginal folks may not identify as gay men, they may identify as 2-Spirit and those may be two distinct things for them. That is their identity and I am okay with that. So [in] our gay men’s group they are most welcome but if they are not feeling that they are gay male identified then maybe the program is not best for them ... and [then we] think about connecting them to an Aboriginal ASO or a Aboriginal organization to validate the Aboriginal identity experience. (13/02/13, Transcript 15, p. 6, Toronto, ON)

Here, Joseph discussed with me how Indigenous peoples fit into the work that he does. Joseph's narrative defends the existence of gay male programming where 2-Spirit people might not necessarily fit, by understanding them as finding little refuge in gay male programming; as a result, it is thought that they can simply access other (Aboriginal) programming. Joseph's narrative thus indicates how his own investments in maintaining gay male programming and constructed for him as a way of caring for the (different) needs of 2-Spirit people: a difference making process that requires 2-Spirited people to go elsewhere. Joseph's narrative illuminates how the inclusion of 2-Spirited identity in programming is conditional upon static identity categories like "gay" that can easily constrain who can ever feel like they belong within programming such as the kind Joseph described.

My interaction with Robert, a 32-year-old white queer trans man, demonstrated how the imagery of 2-Spiritedness, using the *2-Spirits* flag, can be included in the form of a poster to signal the organization's claims to diversity, and yet, when examined more closely, can remain disconnected from the bodies in the poster:

Q: I see that there is a [*2-Spirits*] flag on that poster.

A: Interesting.

Q: [Names poster title].

A: Yes—I have actually never noticed that before and it is not like it is above a picture of people who identify as 2-Spirit. I know most of these people personally and none of them identify as 2-Spirit. So what the hell is it doing there? (13/02/07, Transcript 13, p. 28, Toronto, ON)

As Robert pointed out, the inclusion of 2-Spirit seems additive, as none of the people in the poster self-identify as 2-Spirit, nor do they have Indigenous ancestry. Although Robert's organization attempted to include Indigeneity, in the form of a *2-Spirits* flag, on the poster, its inclusion alone showcases how celebrations of diversity in the form of Indigenous difference on

a poster can disconnect queer service provision and service providers from engaging with Indigeneity and settler colonialism within their programming. The imagery of a *2-Spirits* flag becomes a (un)meaningful gesture used to signal an organization's celebration of diversity.

The focus on multicultural diversity in some queer organizations was exemplified by Eric, a 39-year-old gay white cisman, who discussed with me the demographics of attendees of a workshop he had organized. As he went on to explain: “[we] had the rainbow. The Asian, the Black person, the Latino. However, [we] did not have a Aboriginal person” (13/03/29, Transcript 33, p. 5, Toronto, ON). Although “diversity” was achieved in the form of “the rainbow,” as Eric noted, Indigenous peoples and perspectives were not present. Thus, in connection with larger projects of Canadian nation building, to be truly diverse, the workshop would require perspectives from as many racial and cultural groups as possible. Eric's discussion of diversity brings to the forefront how racial diversity can easily end at a checklist, whereby multicultural diversity is achieved when the bodies of people of colour and Indigenous peoples are present. Moreover, the use of diversity can easily inhibit service providers from gazing at the institution in which they work to view it as sustaining white settler colonialism. Directing one's gaze toward diversity, as Ahmed (2012) argued, diverts attention from the structural realities that facilitate the normalization of white supremacy. Thus, these stories of racial and cultural representation within queer service provision can be easily used as a way to divert attention from the ways in which multicultural diversity remains white supremacist and settler colonial.

The stories above depict how queer and trans service providers wrestle with trying to foster diversity and inclusion within their respective organizations. These narratives of diversity showcase how service providers working within queer service provision are propelled into sustaining projects of Canadian nation building, which their work indeed supports. After all, the

goal of queer service provision is to support, help, and care for as many diverse queer and trans service users as possible. Yet, in making the inclusion of people of colour and Indigenous peoples an exception of diversity, queer service provision can easily normalize whiteness within the walls of the institution. In doing so, people of colour and Indigenous peoples are then perceived as different: they are invited to participate in the organizations, and if they require additional support or services, they can access those at separate organizations. Simultaneously, white service providers and service providers of colour are working against such narratives of diversity by naming the organizations they work within as sustaining white supremacy. Although white supremacy is being named, service providers' challenging of diversity must also consider how Indigenous peoples may not necessarily be slotted into diversity campaigns, since their active inclusion would result in the need for naming and taking action against white supremacy and settler colonialism of which their queer service provision is a part. Thus, the narratives of the research participants provide an avenue to consider how multicultural diversity is used to mark the bodies of people of colour and Indigenous peoples as different, which further normalizes whiteness within these institutions.

## **5.5. Conclusion**

Amid the dominant discourses of Canadian nation building as multicultural diversity and inclusion, I have shown how fostering diversity itself can easily divert much needed attention away from the structure of queer service provision. It is clear that a singular focus on gender and sexuality within service provision can have consequential effects surrounding what types of services can be offered, the kinds of activism and social justice initiatives that organizations can support, and the ways in which the bodies of people of colour and Indigenous peoples and their representations within these organizations should belong. Findings highlight how projects of

Canadian nation building, in essence to invite difference and diversity, can reproduce white supremacist and settler colonial logics. A “politics of care” is mobilized within queer service provision, which normalizes whiteness by minimizing the concerns of people of colour and Indigenous peoples. Yet, despite the normalization of whiteness, queer people of colour are addressing and challenging white racism within their work contexts. In conjunction with outlining the process used to determine who becomes deserving of care as a process that is limiting and constraining through services, I have shown here that queer service provision is neo-liberal. In other words, queer service provision is placed into a state of on-going crisis, whereby the bottom line, business models, and financial progress come to replace the needs of queer and trans communities as well as social justice work. Funding, however, is not free from the effects of culture and its ties to the nation-state. I have argued that state-sanctioned funding can often redirect activist and advocacy endeavours that maintain organizations’ accountability toward sustaining the white supremacist status quo.

The research participants’ narratives provide an avenue to consider how whiteness becomes normalized within queer service provision. Consequently, queer service provision institutionalizes whiteness, which ultimately produces which queer and trans lives are worth caring for. In a sense, queer service provision caters to a particular white queer politic that invites inclusivity and diversity in, and yet maintains that gender and sexuality must be considered as singular, disconnected from other interlocking systems of oppression. Below, I will argue that such notions of white goodness exist within queer service provision in service providers’ attempts to help “other queer or trans people like me.” It is the “like me”—the whiteness of service providers—that I pay particular attention to. To the detriment of inclusive helping narratives, the stories offered by the research participants depict Indigenous peoples in a very

different light than queer or trans peoples. Thus, I theorize how white supremacy and settler colonialism are sustained within queer service provision and within the practices and interactions of service providers in working with Indigenous peoples, who are produced as unworthy of care or too difficult to care for.

## Chapter 6

### Being Good, Positioning Difference: Towards a Politics of Care

There is no theory that can shield us from the complexity of the gesture of a white middle class woman giving an alcoholic Native homeless man a bowl of soup. It is a gesture that is overdetermined by my history of ancestors who landed in the New World, and great aunts who were missionaries, and great grandparents who were farming folks who moved West and destroyed his linguistic and cultural heritage in order to cover up the theft. We are helping out of this history, not apart from it, and this necessarily troubles the act of helping and thus our identity as helpers.

Amy Rossister (2001, n.p.)

#### 6. Introduction

What follows is an exploration of the helping work that is made to be routine and mobilized by white service providers working within queer service provision in Toronto. Service provision is a significant site for exploration and raises a number of issues. For example, Schick (2004) and Ahmed (2002) have been critical of service provision, specifically its capacity to divide people within the binary of self/Other—a differentiation process that associates normalcy with that of the self, whereby the self is known through its disconnections from its Other. Willinsky (1998) suggested that coming to know the “Other” has evolved out of a history of examination and subservience, which is fueled by a global colonial project that attempts to establish and sustain differences between the colonizer and the colonized. In other words, as Rossister (2001) indicated, shown in the epigraph above, service provision never exists outside of its attachments to and investments in colonial history. More specifically, service providers, as helpers, are placed within a historical relationship with whomever they help. This “helping imperative”—the desire to bring the “Other” into modernity—reinscribes and remakes colonial continuities within service provisional contexts (Heron, 2007).

This chapter investigates how queer service provision is not immune from such processes I have outlined above, since colonialism continues to be naturalized within its everyday

workings. Service provision is a function of the European colonial modernity that arose and transpired across the entire globe. As a result, this chapter examines how within theorizations of the colonization contained in queer service provision, whiteness also remains normalized in two separate but linked ways: one, the predominance of white settlers among queer and trans service providers; and two, their helping role that can contribute to, reinscribe, and satisfy white supremacy within their respective queer organizations. I consider how white queer and trans service providers mobilize white goodness within aspects of a helping ethos that they are required to mobilize. I postulate how notions of singular understandings of sexuality and gender identity creep into white queer and trans service providers' understandings of help. I deliberate upon how white queer and trans service providers can often reassert white supremacist and settler colonial helping discourses within queer service provision, which can easily preclude an analysis of settler colonialism. Moreover, following Badwall (2013), I illustrate how queer and trans people of colour might mobilize their helping and notions of goodness differently, as active attempts to challenge white supremacy and colonialism within queer service provision. These subversions provide an avenue to consider how the activism of queer and trans service providers of colour can encapsulate critiques of colonialism and be in support of Indigenous resurgence and decolonization.

To theorize how whiteness and settler colonialism can be normalized within the practices of white service providers, I first explore how Indigenous peoples are routinely evoked as “problems” who then become constructed to be unworthy of care or too difficult to care for. Next, I discuss how queer and trans service providers' understandings and articulations of help are firmly rooted in their own experiences and understandings of gender and sexuality. Finally, I will examine how the helping work done by white queer and trans service providers is deeply



engrained in white settler goodness. I investigate how notions of goodness can easily preclude white queer and trans service providers from understanding that their roles as helpers in reinscribing white settler dominance can fit directly within their attempts to “help.” It is the theories and practices of queer and trans service providers used in queer service provision that might contribute to and actively resist contemporary manifestations of white supremacy and settler colonialism. Thus, I focus on how notions of helping can erase (often unknowingly) the presence of Indigenous peoples within queer service provision.

### **6.1. White (Settler) Goodness**

As Applebaum (2011) argued, evocations of white goodness can often preclude whites from acknowledging and taking responsibility for the white supremacist structure that they remain deeply tied to and invested in by virtue of their whiteness. Moreover, as Schick (2014) has suggested, whites “know how to act in ways that illustrate racial dominance; it is their prerogative to make the rules and retain the privilege to transgress them when it suits the project of white supremacy” (p. 99). I extend Applebaum’s (2011) and Schick’s (2014) discussions of white dominance as goodness and argue that, within the context of queer service provision, evocations of white goodness do very little towards naming and effectively dismantling or even subverting white supremacy. Srivastava (2005) honed in on evocations of white goodness within feminist activist circles in Toronto and addressed the ways in which feminists of colour recognize white women—who hope to appear morally good anti-racists—as racist. Srivastava (2005) noted that white women’s understandings of racism remain deeply individualistic; thus, the naming of white women as racist becomes construed as an attack on their goodness. However, Srivastava (2005) noted, notions of white goodness preclude white women from implicating themselves in the system that is white supremacy, allowing for routine deflections of

acts of racism as doings done by those “bad whites.” Evocations of white goodness thus allow for white women—or, more broadly, white people—to construct racism as a personality flaw, rather than understanding racism as something that all whites, by virtue of their whiteness, routinely sustain and contribute to (Applebaum, 2011; Srivastava, 2005).

In fact, white goodness has been theorized by Azzam (2011) and Coleman (2008) as being firmly rooted within constructions of white civility. Coleman (2008) argued that white civility operates through modalities of self-governance, where “the subjects of the civil order discipline their conduct in order to participate in the civil realm, and they themselves gain or lose legitimacy in an internally striated civil society depending on the degree to which they conform to its ideals” (p. 11). White civility operates within service provision to relocate authority onto white service providers, as they are required to monitor and discipline themselves through their conduct with racialized and colonized service users. Moreover, Azzam (2011) contended that elementary teachers of colour mobilize white civility and are not immune from deploying normative evocations of Canadian nationalism, since within their teaching they continue to invest in multiculturalism and tolerance. As a result, I utilize the scholarship of Azzam (2011) and Coleman (2008) by arguing that service providers are not immune from the historical processes of white goodness since they are placed into relationships with the Other by virtue of their helping roles (Heron, 2007; Jeffery, 2009). Further, Dion (2009) and Thobani (2007) understand notions of white goodness to be imbricated with settler colonialism since service providers are required to partake in projects of Canadian nation building that evoke tolerance and multiculturalism. Canada, and by extension “Canadian” identity, is produced not only as good, but also as “victimized by outsiders and tolerant of insiders” (Mackey, 2002, 49). As a result, the goodness of whiteness produces itself by constructing a white settler society that is dependent

upon subordinating both Indigenous peoples and peoples of colour, distinctly and yet interrelatedly (Thobani, 2007).

Mackey's (2002, 2013) and Thobani's (2007) understandings of Canadian national identity as it is tied to white settler goodness is useful insofar as the helping work service providers partake in can easily naturalize the effects of white supremacy and settler colonialism. Thus, I address white queer and trans service providers' everyday practices, which evoke often mundane narratives of white civility and white settler goodness within queer service provision to foreclose the possibility of doing service delivery differently. I also address how queer and trans service providers of colour actively resist the normatively white foundation of queer service provision through their evocations of help and goodness. However, some of the narratives of people of colour critiquing whiteness may not necessarily resist nor comprehend the specificities of settler colonialism, which are normalized within service provision culture through white stereotypes of Indigeneity. The narratives below come out of questionings pertaining to the research participants' own motivations in working within queer service provision and how Indigenous peoples fit into such motivations. In order to showcase the direct causality of white supremacy and settler colonialism within queer service provision, I now move to discussions of queer and trans service providers who differently position Indigenous peoples within queer service provision.

## **6.2. Positioning Difference**

This section looks to how the narratives of Indigenous peoples within queer service provision are positioned differently, which results in them being constructed as unimaginable, unworthy of care, and at times, too difficult to care for. These problematic constructions of Indigenous people are normalized within the general culture of white settler colonialism in

Canada as a white settler society. They also have become normalized within institutions of service provision, state and private, which derive from the broader white settler culture of the management of racialized populations. Thus, when these constructions continue to be taken up in service provision—even in forms that are intended as anti-racist, or embracing of Indigenous people—they provide service providers an opportunity to individualize the historical and contemporary ramifications of white supremacy and settler colonialism that make such stereotypes of Indigenous peoples possible. Thus, I present some stories that mark and depict Indigenous peoples differently—constructing them to be outside of white settler rationality and neo-liberal models of care.

Jett, a 49-year-old white gay cisman, spoke with me about how Indigenous peoples continually face barriers within queer and trans communities in Toronto.

Q: In your opinion, is the LGBTQ community concerned with people of colour?

A: Yes, perhaps more so than the Aboriginal community. I think Aboriginals are very marginalized, misunderstood, ostracized in lots of ways. I think lots of people of colour can fit in and maybe be more generally accepted.

Q: Why do you say that?

A: There is a lot of prejudice towards First Nations people. My impression, I guess, in talking to lots of folks, is that people feel that Aboriginal folks do not really want to fit in. They do not really want to assimilate. But that creates challenges for a lot of people who are not sensitive to that. And, who really wants to have to deal with someone who has a lot of, maybe, anger. (13/03/19, Transcript 28, p. 2, Toronto, ON)

Jett's narrative illustrates that he feels people of colour want to assimilate, that some people of colour have assimilated successfully, and that it would be a good idea for people of colour and Indigenous peoples to assimilate. However, within Jett's narrative, the assimilation of people of colour is into something that is never named. It is clear that Jett holds a strong investment in the normalization of white supremacy and settler colonialism as the only mode through which

people are allowed to be understood as human. Jett's story provides a context to consider the ways in which whiteness is normalized within queer and trans communities, whereby the mythology that people of colour are required to assimilate is sustained, and the on-going struggles of Indigenous peoples for self-determination and sovereignty are reduced to the realm of individuality and a product of their own anger. Connecting O'Shane's (1995) scholarship to Jett's narrative, Indigenous peoples within queer and trans communities in Toronto are marked as disruptive (i.e., they are angry) vis-à-vis their unwillingness to assimilate and accept the white supremacist and settler colonial conditions placed upon their lives. Placed in conjunction with Byrd's (2011) theorization of the function of Indigeneity as transit,<sup>20</sup> Jett's narrative illuminates how the necropolitics of eliminating Indigeneity forces the status of non-Indigenous peoples to exist indefinitely so that Indigenous peoples can be perpetually subjugated. Here, Jett's narrative exposes how white supremacist and settler colonial logics construct people of colour as assimilateable and Indigenous peoples as too difficult to care for due to their anger. Jett's narrative can be situated within the larger historical process of service provision that regularly requires Indigenous peoples to stifle their anger—and indeed be content with their own genocide—and assimilate themselves into white settler normativity if they are ever to receive adequate support and care.

Upon completing our interview, Nicole, a 46-year-old white queer ciswoman, shared an important story of how some Indigenous youth reacted to one of the workshops that happened at her organization.

Q: Are there any additional issues you think need to be raised as part of this research?

A: Just thinking off the top of my head, one question might be: what are the needs of . . . what are the needs expressed by the First Nations people that you have met? I can answer that. I find that the ones who self-identify and there are a range of personalities and peoples who are experiencing their own challenges for complex reasons so the voices

come loaded. We have been challenged by Indigenous youth saying that the workshops we run do not speak to them. For example, we ran a workshop about how to vote. We wanted all of the youth to ask questions when voting. Yet, we received word that the workshop does not speak to First Nations youth. Before the last federal election we had a conversation about issues to consider before voting and one of the issues that came up was around First Nations solidarity. But because the staff were white, the youth challenged them saying, “you do not know what you are talking about, you are Othering me.” The staff was saying, “well, we are actually trying to be allies and be in solidarity.” So this workshop did not meet the youth’s needs and they did not feel safe. I think it is about not wanting to have their issues outed in that environment. (13/03/13, Transcript 25, p. 7, Toronto, ON)

Nicole’s narrative indicates that in the context of talking about voting, once Indigenous peoples’ relationship to Canadian nation-state came up, the Indigenous youth attending the workshop argued that the service providers had no idea how these issues truly impacted Indigenous people. Nicole concluded by connecting the challenges Indigenous youth had with the voting workshop with that of not wanting their “issues” outed. However, what is missing from Nicole’s narrative is her difficulty in considering how her own leadership surrounding the voting workshop directly impacted how queer service provision operated in this context. Constructing the Indigenous youth as “not feeling safe” and, as a result, viewing them as not wanting their issues “outed,” can create the Indigenous youth as “problems” who require specific care and attention. This provides non-Indigenous service providers the opportunity to disconnect from how the delivery of services is directly tied a larger white settler colonial culture of which queer service provision is a part.

Moreover, Justin, a 61-year-old white gay cisman, shared a story of working very closely with a psychiatrized Indigenous trans service user. As he said:

Aboriginal people have been absent from any real conscious engagement in the agency and that was true for me too until I had a client whom I was very fond of. I worked with him off and on for a couple of years. This client had a very terrible traumatic history and also had a dissociative personality disorder. He was always suicidal and it was really difficult to do anything really effective with him. He recently died. Just before his death, a couple of months before he died, he disclosed that he was First Nations. He said, “oh I

have just been part of a healing circle and I am going to do some sweat lodges and I have a spiritual mentor.” I thought to myself, how did I miss that? How did I miss that? I was so focussed on his growing up as a trans young person in far interland of Northern Ontario. Being First Nations is a really critical piece of his identity as well. (13/03/08, Transcript 21, p. 6, Toronto, ON)

Justin shared with me his deep discomfort about not asking this particular Indigenous trans service user questions about their Indigenous identity. This experience of working with this particular Indigenous trans service provider provided an opportunity for Justin to reevaluate how Indigeneity was easily unimaginable and dismissible within the context of queer service provision. Justin’s narrative provides a context to consider how the absence of Indigenous peoples from queer service delivery can result in the narrowing of practice approaches that can easily disconnect gender and sexuality from other axes of a service user’s identity. As a result, Justin’s narrative points to possibilities for doing queer service delivery differently insofar as Indigeneity must be considered part of queer practice in order to ensure that Indigenous people’s identities and experiences are supported and affirmed. Justin’s narrative also provides the context to consider how white service providers cannot necessarily tell when an Indigenous person is an Indigenous person. Thus, the culture of whiteness within queer service provision does not provide white service providers with the possibility that Indigenous peoples might be Indigenous or that Indigenous peoples will present themselves in some white-imagined stereotypical way that white people will recognize and be ready for.

In discussing some of the service users he interacted with when working as a case manager, John, a 54-year-old white gay cisman, spoke with me about a particular Indigenous service user he remembered supporting:

I remember working with an Aboriginal person who was trans-identified, but they did not pass as a woman in any way. At the time, they were experiencing psychotic episodes and I could only infer that they had a really complex and difficult life of incarceration and involvement in mental health services. They were living in a dumpster at the time, and

due to lack of access to hygiene facilities, I tried really hard to spend time in a room with them. I almost threw up all the time. As a result of their mental health, they threatened harm and violence toward others. They were one of the most vulnerable marginalized people that I have ever worked with and that was at [xxx organization] that has a reputation for being a nice white middle class organization with lots of nice white middle class people that access services. This person was certainly someone whose life was very different. (13/03/21, Transcript 30, p. 12, Toronto, ON)

John's story illuminates how psychiatrized Indigenous trans people are imagined within the confines of a "nice white middle class organization." John uses mental health language, such as "experiencing psychotic episodes," as a way to make sense of the Indigenous trans service user's experiences of trauma; after all, this Indigenous service user was perceived to be unable to take care of themselves, and, to their own demise, was unable to pass as female. As such, this particular story illuminates white settler goodness in that, despite the Indigenous service user's shortcomings and the constraints placed upon John, he was able to provide this Indigenous person with support and care. Here, white settler goodness operates within John's narrative to sustain the necropolitical construction of Indigenous peoples as "problems" through the inability of white service providers to recognize Indigenous peoples' experiences of multigenerational trauma outside of a white settler imaginary.

Leslie, a 27-year-old Mestiza trans woman, discussed with me how trans Indigenous women and trans women of colour are constructed as "problems" within her respective organization and stated:

I guess most of the trans women of colour and trans Aboriginal women that I know of are sex workers. They do not have a very good relationship with my organization. Maybe they come in inebriated or high on something. However, I do not know the policies to deal with that. Usually they come in and there is no problem, they can get their food. For whatever reason there might be an incident that prevents them from coming back. (13/01/04, Transcript 4, p. 4, Toronto, ON)

Leslie noted that in her experience working with trans women of colour and Indigenous trans women, they are typically accessing services available to them, as they are likely sex workers.



Leslie posited that trans women of colour and Indigenous women tend to have a contentious relationship with the organization since they are assumed to routinely enter while they are on various substances. Moreover, Skyler, a 25-year-old mixed-race genderqueer, who works at the same organization as Leslie, said: “The only time I do see First Nations [is] when they are coming in to use the washroom. Many of them are intoxicated and are asked to leave” (13/01/09, Transcript 7, p. 7, Toronto, ON). Leslie’s and Skyler’s stories evoke stereotypes around how drunkenness is used to actively remove Indigenous peoples from queer service provision. Although Skyler indicated that Indigenous peoples are intoxicated when entering their queer organization, Leslie reflected a narrative of drunkenness that is so readily pinned onto Indigenous peoples by indicating that it is their perceived drunkenness that ensures their relationship with the organization remains fractured. Leslie’s and Skyler’s narratives provide the context to consider the ways in which the perception of drunkenness can easily limit harm reduction approaches for Indigenous peoples within queer service provision, where substance use could be made safer for Indigenous service users.

Ryan, a 34-year-old white gay cisman with Indigenous ancestry, discussed with me the everyday impacts of colonialism on Indigenous women and spoke about a HIV/AIDS testing satellite at a local queer organization, stating:

When we were testing at the [xxx organization], we did not anticipate it, but we saw a lot of trans women who self-identified as Aboriginal and who were also involved in sex work. These women were very proud of their culture and very aware, but they are living these miserable grimy lives. Everyone likes to talk about the theoretical legacy of colonialism, but when you actually see people on their traditional land and it is rightly theirs, and they are slamming meth in the bathroom of McDonalds, where is the analysis then? (13/03/09, Transcript 23, p. 3, Toronto, ON)

Ryan’s statement highlights that the analysis of the effects of colonialism on Indigenous people’s lives is “theoretical” and therefore dismissible. Ryan’s narrative illustrates how such a focus on

substance use alone, for service providers, is enough of a “reality” to prevent or toss out any “theoretical” critique of the colonialism within Indigenous people’s lives. Reducing Indigenous trans women to “problems,” specifically constructing them as living “miserable grimy lives,” produces them to be outside of neo-liberal models of care, and consequently, to be unworthy of care. Narratives that service providers use to abject Indigenous peoples, in particular their experiences of poverty or drug use, provide an avenue for queer service providers, like Ryan, to disconnect a critique of settler colonialism from the practices used within queer service provision. Once again, it appears that within service provisional contexts, only Indigenous peoples who can evict themselves from their “problem” status remain worthy of adequate support or care.

Amanda, a 28-year-old white queer/lesbian ciswoman with Indigenous ancestry, discussed the degree of difference that exists between Indigenous service users and queer and trans service users who are accessing substance use treatment.

Q: How do Aboriginal peoples fit into your motivations in doing this work?

A: I think that again that is a very highly marginalized population and for me who is not doing the direct clinical work I see more high level information. So what I am seeing is that we are constantly receiving referrals for folks who are identifying non-beverage alcohol as their substance of concern. We do not really see that in the queer service and I think that when we look at the social determinants of health that is such a clear example that the person who is identifying Listerine as an issue versus vodka. There is a huge discrepancy when you look at the population. So I think that there is a huge motivation to work with Aboriginal folks when you see tangible examples in the ways in which that group is not only marginalized but the way that that marginalization manifests into different concerns that they have. (13/04/23, Transcript 35, p. 5, Toronto, ON)

Amanda’s role within queer service provision is administrative, and thus she continues to receive referrals from Indigenous-led organizations for Indigenous service users to access the queer-specific addictions services. Yet, in differentiating the substance use concerns of Indigenous peoples from those of queer and trans peoples accessing services, Amanda placed Indigenous

peoples into a category deemed worthy of care insofar as public health deems their consumption of Listerine as harmful. Amanda pointed to the substance use patterns of Indigenous peoples she encounters and how their specific concerns motivate her work to reduce their overall harm.

Amanda's narrative connects to Ryan's discussion of how Indigenous people's substance use concerns become the focal point of queer service providers. Focusing on substance use alone can easily erase the everyday processes and practices of settler colonialism that Indigenous peoples experience that make substance use an appropriate coping mechanism. Thus, the "deficit" construction of Indigenous peoples as alcoholic is used in Amanda's story to suggest that Indigenous peoples with substance use concerns must access services in order to be helped and brought into modernity. I make use of Amanda's narrative here to illustrate a missed opportunity to address Indigenous people's health beyond an epidemiological perspective. Following the scholarship of Millon (2013) and Thatcher (2004) on Indigenous people's health, I argue that white supremacy and settler colonialism are indeed social determinants of health that queer service providers must incorporate into service provision when working with Indigenous peoples.

Finally, Lisa, a 46-year-old mixed-race cislesbian, discussed with me how her perception of Indigenous peoples changed after moving to Canada. As she stated:

My portrayal of First Nations persons was through the very few that I ever met who were drunk, who were living on the reserves, and gambled a lot. This perception of First Nations persons is similar to how my own people are viewed. It is not the best depiction of First Nations persons but it is all that I have been exposed to. I never heard of Aboriginal people until I landed here. (13/01/15, Transcript 9, p. 1, Toronto, ON)

Lisa's narrative exposes the discourses of Indigenous peoples as "deficits," a similar trope used to stereotype Jamaicans. Lisa drew from her own experiences as a racialized woman to suggest potential cross-racial/transnational understandings of the racial and colonial stereotyping of

Indigenous peoples. Lisa acknowledged that there is a white supremacist and settler colonial narrative of both Indigenous peoples and Black peoples in the Americas, which she was compelled to take on when she arrived in Canada. Thus, Lisa's narrative provides an opportunity to consider how white supremacist and settler colonialism work together to further marginalize and subjugate Indigenous peoples and Black people within and outside of queer service provision.

It is clear that Indigenous peoples are routinely positioned as unimaginable, unworthy of care, or too difficult to care for, which can easily allow for most white service providers to distance themselves and their work from how white settler colonialism remains firmly intact within queer service provision. Many of the research participants were not working against the different positioning of Indigenous peoples within their respective organizations. However, some research participants, such as Justin and Lisa, provided possibilities for working against the white settler narratives associated with Indigeneity. Popular stereotypes of drunkenness that are pinned onto Indigenous peoples are sustained as they are asked to leave the premises, further maintaining the normativity of whiteness and settler colonialism within queer service provision. Here, white settler colonialism is sustained by actively removing Indigenous peoples from spaces of belonging or worth. As a result, the day-to-day work of white queer and trans service providers produces Indigeneity as additive to its foundation of gender and sexuality. The nature of identity within queer service provision—the add and stir method—further perpetuates the individuality of Indigenous people's concerns and experiences of white supremacy and settler colonialism. I have shown how Indigenous people's lives and experiences have difficulty in fitting into the kinds of models of care queer organizations can offer. Despite this, some research participants' narratives, in particular Justin's and Lisa's, provide an opportunity for Indigeneity

and settler colonialism to be taken seriously—as an urgent and necessary condition of queer service provision and the work done by queer service providers. Following this discussion of the critical urgency of meaningfully supporting a settler colonial analytic within queer service provision, I now move to a discussion of how queer and trans service users (perceived or actual), who are constructed as requiring help, are differently positioned within queer service provision.

### **6.3. Helping Narratives**

Within this section I investigate how queer and trans service providers position the appropriate subject within the particular site of queer service provision. The research participants' narratives offer a glimpse into their personal motivations for working within queer service provision. In fact, queer and trans service providers mobilize a “politics of care” within queer service provision, which evolves out of their deeply personal accounts of marginalization and experiences of gendered and/or sexual oppression and the desire to help “other queer and trans people like me.” Simultaneously, the motivations of queer and trans service providers can also connect to larger processes and practices that normalize whiteness within the queer service sector landscape. White queer and trans service providers, by virtue of their helping roles and embodiments, are actively invested in white settler colonialism (however inadvertently) as they try to navigate the violent imposition of caring work, which they are indeed required to mobilize.

Although scholars have critiqued the singularity of a “LGBTQ community” within downtown Toronto (Catungal, 2013; Giwa & Greensmith, 2012; Greensmith & Giwa, 2013), many queer and trans people desire to be incorporated within such a community, since it is assumed that more similarities exist between them than differences. The notion of a singular “LGBTQ community” also enters into queer service provision as a way to “ensure services reflect the needs of the LGBT communities” (Smith, 2005, p. 469). Yet, as Morgensen (2011a)

argued, the false notion of a singular queer and trans community rests upon white settlement and the Canadian nation-state that folds people of colour and Indigenous peoples into itself while simultaneously perpetuating their differences. Although queer service provision attempts to gather “the rainbow” together and support the “community,” one must ask: what is lost in centring gender and sexuality alone within queer service provision? The research participants’ stories below offer an opportunity to examine evocations of a “community” where certain queer and trans people belong. The research participants discussed below spoke about how their own individual experiences of queerness can connect to potential service users who are accessing queer service provision.

The research participants discussed their need to get involved within the queer service sector in downtown Toronto. Mark, a 33-year-old South Asian queer cisman, articulated that his desire to get involved and engage in queer work came from wanting to re-write service provision from the standpoint of intersections of race, sexuality, and gender.

Q: What is your motivation for doing this work?

A: A lot of people who do this work or are even educators in any way, shape or form are often white women, right? The drop-out rate for especially young men of colour is the highest of any demographic in North America. I believe that people need to see people who they can identify with, talking to them about . . . quite frankly teaching them about anything but also talking to them about issues that may very well get spoken about but are not spoken about by people who look like them, or have had experiences like them, so that is a huge reason as to why I do this. (13/03/15, Transcript 26, p. 4, Toronto, ON)

For Mark, the reason for getting involved with queer service provision was to help support and care for other queers of colour like him. However, the subject Mark evokes is not one who can be hailed as white. Instead, Mark takes it upon himself to subvert the whiteness so normalized within Toronto’s queer service provision and act as a role model for young men of colour.

Mark's approach to helping is unlike his white counterparts discussed below, and is informed by centralizing race within his helping role.

Paul, a 28-year-old white gay cisman, discussed his motivation to start working at his particular organization, so that he could help support other gay men like himself.

Q: What brought you to this work?

A: Of course, being a gay male, I always knew that there is a higher prevalence of HIV and STIs in our community. When I was finishing up grad school, I felt that I wanted to volunteer. I really wanted to be engaged in helping people out and I just thought this was a great organization to do that. (13/03/23, Transcript 31, p. 4, Toronto, ON)

As Paul discussed, his involvement stemmed from the aspiration to connect his sexuality to meaningful and rewarding work. Paul's motivation for getting involved was the desire to support gay men in "our community," a similar motivation to Cory, a 28-year-old white gay cisman.

Q: So what brought you to the work that you do?

A: I wanted to participate in a free program and give back to the community. I also joined to gain personal experience, while also giving back to my communities, because I had guessed that there might be other queers that might need the attention. It was my way of giving back my skills to my community. (13/01/08, Transcript 5, p. 4, Toronto, ON)

Cory decided to volunteer for a program that provides accessible counselling for queer people, and as he described, he has acquired newly developed counselling skills that can be potentially useful for queer people. Similarly, Alex, a 50-year-old white queer cisman, discussed with me his motivations for getting involved, particularly around helping "his community."

Q: Right now... what are your motivations for volunteering?

A: I want to give back to my community because I realize now more than ever that the queer community is my community and I am a proud member of it. In my own way I want to help. I started volunteering, I went back to school and I am in this whole area quite simply [to] help the guy who was where I was. So now I am stepping into my queer identity so it is not just about helping the community, it is making a statement about myself and it is a way for me to help heal myself, heal others and hopefully through my lived experiences and skills that I have to help the community. (13/03/20, Transcript 29, p. 5, Toronto, ON)

For Alex, his primary motivation to work within queer service provision is to heal his own and other service users' trauma.

The stories offered by Alex, Cory and Paul provide the context to consider how “our/my/the community” is evoked within the context of queer service provision. Although Alex, Cory and Paul discuss queer service provision as a site of multiraciality, their evocations of community warrant further questioning. As Catungal (2013) and Giwa and myself (2013) have theorized, particularly within the context of HIV/AIDS service provision, evocations of community normalize whiteness by folding the differences of people of colour into service provision. Thus, the helping narrative evoked by Alex, Cory, and Paul centres themselves (white queer/gay cismen) and their desire to help others in “our/my/the community.” In turn, their narratives illustrate how their own articulations and understandings of queerness, and indeed the needs of white queers, can obscure the queer and trans communities of colour and the queer, trans and 2-Spirited Indigenous communities that may not be imagined but that still exist within downtown Toronto.

Additionally, Eric, a 39-year-old white gay cisman, discussed his motivations for volunteering, which were sparked by his desire to help other gay men like himself.

Q: How do Aboriginal peoples fit into your motivations to do this work?

A: I did not get involved because of Aboriginal people. I think it was a motivation because there were gay people there and I identify as gay so I wanted to help out the gay community so that was a motivation, but not so much for Aboriginal peoples. It was cool because there were Aboriginal people there and I enjoyed them and everything.  
(13/03/29, Transcript 33, p. 11, Toronto, ON)

In addition to the above narrative, I also include mention of Eric's discussion of the service users he imagines in the organization he works at to provide additional context. As Eric discussed with me: “there are a lot of people who are there that are Aboriginal too. I do not think any of them



are actually gay or have identified as gay” (13/03/29, Transcript 33, p. 7, Toronto, ON). Eric’s narrative illustrates how Indigenous peoples were not necessarily part of his own motivations to volunteer with the organization; instead, his initial motivation was to help gay men in the gay community he is part of—a community that does not include Indigenous peoples. Eric pointed out that although Indigenous peoples are very much present in the organization, they do not fit into his motivations, simply because, he assumed, they are not or have not self-identified as gay. Although Eric was happy to help and support Indigenous peoples he came into contact with, his overall motivation for getting involved centres gay men. Eric’s narrative connects to the above discussion of the imagined “community” queer service provision attempts to support. In Eric’s example, the community he evokes is centred on/in whiteness and typically considers Indigenous peoples to be incommensurable with gayness and thus only recognizable as separate and or different to those found within queer service provision. As a result, Indigenous peoples are removed from queer service provision (as a white and settler colonial space) since their bodies are made to belong elsewhere.

Whereas the research participants discussed above entered the field of queer service provision through their own desire to help “the/our/my community,” Joseph, a 47-year-old white genderqueer, and April, a 30-year-old white genderqueer, entered into their local queer service work as helpers who had worked as HIV/AIDS development workers in Namibia and Malawi. Joseph and April gained personal satisfaction by travelling outside of Canada to parts of Africa—a site of racialized desire to help, for white Northerners who want to help care for Africans. Joseph discussed how understanding stigma helps them support others, and also helps them to engage in social change:

A: It just so happened that those experiences in Malawi crystalized my decision to move away from [the work I was doing] and away from that organization but still [stay] within the HIV sector.

Q: What is your motivation for doing this work?

A: Social Justice. Whether it be queer stigma or HIV stigma or if you are a queer poz [HIV positive] person, you have a couple more layers on there—it's basically about stigma. I guess my personal thing is help people to change, whatever change that is. It could be internal; it could be external—psychological or behavioural. (13/02/13, Transcript 15, p. 4, Toronto, ON)

Joseph's experience with helping others toward self-improvement began when he volunteered as an HIV/AIDS development worker in Malawi. Joseph spoke about how their understandings of stigma, specifically HIV stigma and queer stigma, can be used to support the service users they interact with. As a result of understanding the complexities of how queerness and one's health status can multiply marginalize people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS, Joseph got involved in order to support service users in personally changing, whatever that might mean for them. Although multiple marginalizations do exist, discussing marginalization in such a singular way can result in understanding oppression as additive rather than as interlocking (see Razack, 1998a).

Moreover, April discussed their desire to volunteer, which emerged out of their experiences doing developmental work and HIV/AIDS research in Namibia. As they stated:

Q: What brought you to this work?

A: I was living in New York and before that I was in Namibia doing research and a lot of my previous experience around sexual health and HIV had been on an international scale and I had really been looking to make a contribution locally. I found out about this and it met all of the things I wanted to do. So, I wanted to be involved. I always have done a lot of volunteer work and I have interests in sexual health, sexualities, and gender. I felt safe going into the space knowing they were inclusive. (13/06/05, Transcript 40, p. 3, Toronto, ON)

April discussed with me how their experience doing HIV/AIDS work internationally in Namibia provided a deeper context to continue doing sexual health work locally in Toronto. For April, the organization that they volunteer at was inclusive of sexuality and gender, and thus they decided to participate by making a local contribution. These narratives provide the context to consider how April's and Joseph's previous development work in Africa provided an opportunity for them to gain satisfaction from the helping they do because when working internationally they understood themselves to be helping African people elsewhere. The way they viewed their current roles in queer service provision had been shaped by their experiences in Africa, whereby they continued to understand the helping work they were doing as devoid of connections to white racism and colonization.

Some research participants mobilized helping narratives through their own articulations of queerness vis-à-vis their social locations. For Joseph and April, their experiences helping African people in parts of Africa propelled them into sustaining larger global colonial projects within which they were invited to submit authority as white helpers helping racial Others. Within the particular local context of queer service provision in Toronto, research participants spoke about being motivated to get involved as a way to provide "the/our/my community" with assistance and support. Although the research participants indicated their awareness of Toronto as a multiracial site where both queer and trans people of colour and queer, 2-Spirited, and trans Indigenous peoples are accessing queer service provision, it is clear that the supposed subject that requires help remains connected to service providers' own understandings of gender and sexuality. For Mark, his involvement in queer service provision occurred so that the normatively white representation of gender and sexuality would be compromised. Thus, the helping work done by queer and trans service providers within queer service provision can easily reinforce the

normatively white construction of a singular queer and trans community, further producing white queer and trans service users as deserving of help and care. In order to get a full picture of the normative and regulatory regimes of white supremacy and settler colonialism within queer service provision, I turn now to a discussion of how goodness is mobilized within queer service provision. I do so to connect the helping work of queer and trans service providers to larger discussions of goodness and civility.

#### **6.4. Being and Feeling Good**

The narratives offered by the research participants depict how white queer and trans service providers easily evoke goodness, which, in effect, can ensure that whiteness remains normalized within queer service provision. Below, I illustrate how white queer and trans service providers offer narratives of goodness as a way to disconnect and deflect their ties to larger projects of nation building and the on-going naturalization of white supremacy and settler colonialism. When white queer and trans service providers only recognize their actions as good, they can easily avoid considering white supremacy and settler colonialism as being firmly engrained within queer service provision. For example, Ronald, a 32-year-old white gay cisman, discussed why he started volunteering, a desire deeply connected to his own experiences of being an Other.

Q: What is your motivation for doing this work?

A: My main motivation is to basically help people. I had such an easy time. I have a very supportive family and friends, and my coming out process was super easy. My being openly gay has been really easy. It really felt like I wanted to pay that forward. It felt like I was in a position where I feel really good about the way I am and I feel really excited about what I am. I feel like being somehow an Other is such a gift and I just wanted to help other people see that. There is a lot of inner turmoil when it comes to sexual orientation. Also, I cannot deny the reward that I get internally from feeling I am doing good work. It makes me feel good and every time I tell someone they tell me “oh, that is so great that you do that.” That also makes me feel good. (13/02/09, Transcript 14, p. 4, Toronto, ON)

Ronald's motivations for volunteering in a queer organization stemmed from a desire to extend his positive experiences outward to others who might not have had such a positive experience "coming out." Ronald's story provides the context to consider how the helping work he does is predicated on his experiences of marginalization, which he can transcend and feel good about when helping other queer and trans service users. However, in Ronald's attempts to support others less fortunate than himself, he brings his own understanding of gayness as Other into the ways in which he mobilizes help. Ronald's understanding of gayness as Other is embedded within his own whiteness as a white gay cisman who foresees gay Otherness to be disconnected from other interlocking systems of oppression. As a result, the gay Otherness Ronald evokes as a primary motivator for his helping is a white understanding of gayness as Other insofar as he equates being an Other with the Otherness of any other Other that he might encounter. Moreover, he does this without noticing the power differentials between them nor the capacity for white gayness to become an Othering of another Other.

Additionally, Brett, a 31-year-old white genderqueer, discussed their experiences working at an organization, and their desire to transcend HIV/AIDS stigma within their service provider role by helping service users learn more about sexual health.

Q: What are your motivations for doing the work?

A: I find it incredibly rewarding work mostly because I dealt with my shit around HIV. I am not afraid of it. I really relish the opportunity to be able to talk to people about something they never really get to talk about with anyone else. I do not think any old counsellor would decatastrify sexual health and HIV. It is really nice to be able to make a space for someone that did not necessarily exist for them, but is like safe and accommodating and supportive. So, I love doing that. (13/04/30, Transcript 38, p. 6, Toronto, ON)

Brett's narrative offers a slightly different approach to white goodness insofar as they take it upon themselves, as their moral duty, to support marginalized service users around their own sexual

health. Although Brett spoke about their desire to help in a non-judgmental way, they also illustrated that the work they do informs their own understanding of self. This story of help connects to Applebaum's (2011) theorization of white goodness, where whites disconnect themselves and their perceived good intentions from larger structures of white supremacy. As a result, feeling good about helping Others is directly tied to Brett's own embodied whiteness insofar as the interventions they make as a service provider remain on the plain of the individual. These interventions then become disconnected from important structural concerns (e.g., white supremacy) of which they and their work are a part.

Cassandra, a 29-year-old white lesbian ciswoman, also discussed her desire to support and care for the "LGBTQ community."

Q: What is your motivation for doing this work?

A: I feel that being able to provide a space where I am genuinely able to care about them and follow them through this journey of recovery is quite a privilege. So, I do this work because I really like it. I really enjoy working with the clients. I think we are making a difference in terms of providing the service in general. I think it is its own piece of advocacy, and carving out a space for addictions work is pretty cool and innovative. I think there is a lot of opportunities in this work to, kind of, on many different levels to help people individually, and to help our community as a whole, and to help our community and other service providers learn how to work with our community. (13/02/28, Transcript 18, p. 7, Toronto, ON)

Cassandra's narrative links to the helping narratives offered, which evoke "the/our/my community," whereby difference is folded into queer service provision to naturalize the space as normatively white. Here, white goodness is evoked in her desire to care for and help service users accessing substance use treatment. As a result, Cassandra's story points to the neo-liberal machinery of service provision, since this version of help when mobilized presumes that queer and trans service users who are using substances can individually change and reintegrate into society. Thus, if service users are able to embody this particular version of "service user

subjectivity,” Cassandra can see herself as doing good work. Cassandra’s narrative provides an opportunity to consider how white settler goodness manifests in such attempts to bring service users into modernity, which requires them to ultimately care for themselves as good (contributing) members of a white settler society.

Jett, a 49-year-old white gay cisman, worked at the same organization, and he discussed the pleasure that he experiences when he is able to help services users transcend their addiction by making positive changes in their life.

Q: Right now, what are your motivations for doing the work that you do?

A: It is about helping people. It can be a high stress job and there are lots of people who are difficult to deal with or who are so marginalized or are affected by so many different problems. It can feel really overwhelming. But the reality is we do help lots of people and that is a wonderful sort of thing to be part of. You go from a place where they are in a lot of difficulty, trouble and experiencing a lack of understanding to getting them to a place where they can make connections and make all kinds of changes that they felt were not possible and come out the other side. It gives me tons of pleasure to say goodbye to clients who have done a ton of good work and who are in a really strong position in their lives. I run into people at the gym, or on Church Street, who I have worked with in the past and they are often looking healthy. Sometimes people confide into [sic] me and let me know they are still doing really well and it is great to be part of that. I like talking to people I work with. They are all kinds of interesting people and that continues to give me lots of interest and pleasure. (13/03/19, Transcript 28, p. 4, Toronto, ON)

Jett’s narrative connects to Cassandra’s around the neo-liberalization of service provision, where the rhetoric of white goodness is mobilized when service providers feel good about the helping work they do. Both Jett and Cassandra feel good when service users leave the program once they are able to reintegrate into society. For Jett, this experience induces pleasure, when he hears of and sees former service users who have been able to care for themselves and (appear to) remain sober. Notably, Jett’s narrative outlines what many service providers are expected to do: *good* service providers are ones that care for and are able to support the most marginalized into being

able to care for themselves—in a sense, to no longer need or require service provision since they are able to reintegrate into and contribute to the larger white settler society.

Although white service providers mobilize their goodness in ways that reify and normalize the whiteness of queer service provision, it is equally important to consider how goodness is employed by queer service providers of colour. As Badwell (2013) argued, service providers of colour mobilize goodness as a way to challenge the normative whiteness of service provision. Lisa, a 49-year-old mixed-race cislesbian, shared a story of goodness that is enacted through her ability to seek support surrounding her own settlement and her subsequent personal satisfaction found in helping others through their own settlement process.

Q: What is your motivation for doing this work?

A: I have to admit that during the time that I have worked in Canada it has worked for me too in my own settlement process. It has been great therapy with me also in my own quest for settlement in Canada. It has created a community for me too. I personally feel it has been very fulfilling on a professional level. I think I have managed to excel at doing this because I enjoy it so incredibly much. It is incredibly rewarding. (13/01/15, Transcript 9, p. 7, Toronto, ON)

Lisa's commitment to her work around the issues queer and trans people of colour and queer and trans diasporic people experience as they connect to settlement in Canada has contributed to her personally in creating community and professionally by helping service users navigate the immigration system in Canada. Yet, her use of settlement is disconnected from colonialism insofar as racialized migrants are taught to think about their movement and their arrival in a white settler society in ways that impede an awareness of the colonality of the state from being made known. As a result, the work that Lisa does requires her as a queer person of colour to consciously challenge the white supremacy and colonialism conventions that refugees experience when trying to traverse the immigration system in Canada. For Lisa, her goodness is mobilized through her capacity to aid other diasporic people and people of colour in navigating the



immigration system that scrutinizes their refugee claims because they are seen as not being queer enough.

As Emily, a 52-year-old white lesbian ciswoman, another worker at the agency Lisa works at, suggested: “this organization has become the first place [for queer refugees] to stop and get a letter or acknowledgement that they are queer” (12/12/23, Transcript 2, p. 5, Toronto, ON). The immigration system in Canada has set up exclusionary criteria for refugee claimants in order for them to be read as queer. To be able to justify their refugee status, claimants must submit themselves to routine surveillance and document how their sexuality or gender and the violence they do (or might) experience as a result of their sexuality or gender impacts their safety and their need to settle in Canada. Thus, Lisa’s version of goodness involves attempts to work within the confines of queer service provision, and indeed, the immigration system in Canada, to provide support for and help other refugee claimants navigate the harsh and often violent realities of white supremacy and (settler) colonialism that impede on their daily life—since failing to be read as queer can result in a refugee claimant’s deportation. This concept of being queer enough, linked with the white settler colonial system of immigration, means that whether she believes she is doing good or not, Lisa is inextricably part of an organization that both inflicts violence upon and acts to support queer and trans diasporic people and queer and trans people of colour.

Unlike Lisa, who works to assist queer and trans diasporic people and queer and trans people of colour in fitting in to Canadian society vis-à-vis being able to navigate the immigration system, Skyler, a 25-year-old mixed-race genderqueer, spoke of their experience with working to subvert the normatively white confines within the organization they work at.

Q: What is your motivation for doing this work?

A: I have no motivations. I am pretty good at this job because I am the only one who is super friendly to all the clients who come in here no matter what they look like. I am

friendly to them. I make sure they are welcomed and warmed. I cannot really leave to do anything with the managers, but I can work with the people who walk in who need support. I can work under this regime to create space for all. Not just rich white gay men who support us with dollars. (13/01/09, Transcript 7, p. 4, Toronto, ON)

Skyler's story points to the constraints that are placed onto front-line service providers and the attempts they make to subvert the white supremacist and settler colonial confines of queer service provision. Similarly to how Catungal (2013) discussed how large ASOs reinscribe white gay male dominance, Skyler called attention to the structural limitations of their organization, particularly to the investments made in white gayness as white gay males are able to support the organization financially. Skyler discussed taking every opportunity to challenge the normativity of whiteness within their organization and trying to make the working environment more inclusive by being welcoming of difference. However, Skyler's narrative provides an opportunity to consider the possibilities in engaging in resistance being mobilized by queers of colour in queer service provision when they do not necessarily have authority or decision making power.

Similar to Skyler, Alex, a 50-year-old white queer cisman, shared a narrative in which he named the organization as a whole as normatively white.

Q: You talked a little bit about who the service users were at [the organization], did you want to expand at all on that?

A: One of the reasons I love the group I am co-facilitating right now is that there is six people and four of them are not Caucasian which I find at this organization is unusual. I love it because in my training at this organization . . . the volunteers were predominantly white and probably the majority of them were male. Most of the folks working, volunteering and who are clients seem to be white. So, I just like the diversity because to me it reflects the community and it reflects the city. (13/03/20, Transcript 29, p. 6, Toronto, ON)

The diversity within his support group shifted Alex's perception of who belongs at the organization by troubling the whiteness associated with the organization. Alex's story connects

to Ahmed's (2012) discussion of diversity, particularly in directing his attention to desiring diversity within the organization. While Alex is critical of the organization's whiteness, he uses diversity as a way to associate difference with the bodies that enter the organization, which ultimately sustains the space as white. As a result, although Alex is able to feel good about the work that he is doing with service users who are "not Caucasian," he reinscribes white goodness even as he mobilizes his critique.

While white goodness operates within everyday moments within queer service provision, it also manifests in queer and trans service providers' own articulations of what a good service provider should do. As Kate, a 25-year-old white bi/queer ciswoman, argued, critique for critique's sake does not engage anti-racist action within the context of queer service provision. Kate discussed the ways in which service providers "talk the talk," while noting that this talk can preclude any structural change.

Q: What is an example of someone saying "oh my gosh my privilege"?

A: I think that service providers get good at the talk, right. For example, I always say I am acknowledging my privilege, but I am left asking: but then what? I say all of this feeling guilty of that myself, just to be clear. I know that a bad habit of mine that I fall into is getting immobilized by my concern about the ways I might enact racism so that I just do not do anything, that I do not engage with communities of colour, that I do not engage at all. Which I think is a problematic dynamic. It is so much easier to pick on things than it is to actually suggest alternatives or new ways of practicing within the work that we do. I think that sometimes people say that and they mean, "if you do not have anything nice to say, then do not say it at all." From my experience, there is a lot of talk and not a lot of action. (13/03/01, Transcript 19, p. 3–4, Toronto, ON)

Kate discussed the ways in which queer and trans service providers "get good at the talk" but fail to act in transformative ways, which can often reinscribe their white dominance. Kate suggested that service providers need to move beyond critique within their work by proposing new ways of practicing as one way to engage with everyday racism. Kate's narrative points to the ways in which cause and effect thinking is sustained within queer service provision by requiring tangible

and deliverable outcomes that may not necessarily engage in nor effectively do anti-racist action (Smith, 2007). Kate's narrative connects to Jeffery's (2005) discussion of good anti-racist social workers and their desire for prescriptive steps to address racism, placing her in a complex relationship with queer service provision whereby white goodness is enacted in calls for action that reify service provisional institutions. Kate's narrative also connects to the work of Lensmire et al., (2013) and Smith (2013) insofar as they argued that white privilege talk alone can reinscribe white supremacy in centring the learning of the individual white subject since no real anti-racist action occurs.

Mobilizing what Kate called "the talk," Nicole, a 46-year-old white queer ciswoman, discussed the need to address and name one's white privilege by looking inward and becoming conscious of one's embodiment.

Q: Do you experience challenges or obstacles?

A: Yes. [laughs]

Q: What would be some of those?

A: I question myself regularly. This is being really transparent, is being white, middle aged now, middle class. I carry privilege and I know that I do good work. I know that I am committed to this work and I know where I have come from. But I also acknowledge and feel some pressure around that. Maybe I should step aside and make space for someone else. Some of the challenges relate to not being able to do enough and not really knowing why we are not doing enough. I want to truly respond to the needs of young people and communities whether it is the Black community or First Nations youth, and knowing that there might be people from those communities who are looking and going: "so, most of your staff are white, how are you ever going to deal with that if you do not change that?" We have been working on trying to change that. However, that is all tied up with, "I have been here a long time." I am conscious of that and try to lead with being comfortable with my discomfort around that and work through it rather than just feel guilty because it is not helpful. (13/03/13, Transcript 25, p. 4, Toronto, ON)

Nicole's story illuminates the problems that occur when one's white privilege is named.

However, as Lensmire et al. (2013) and Smith (2013) argued, centring one's individual learning

on white privilege can obscure the structural realities (e.g., white supremacy) within which one benefits. Although Nicole brought up the need to embrace discomfort, her story can reinscribe white dominance as, while being white herself, she attempted to critique her organization and simultaneously seemed to situate herself as authoritative (Applebaum, 2011; Smith, 2007). The naming of whiteness as a consciousness-raising endeavour, although helpful, does not serve Nicole nor her organization well. In essence, Nicole is caught in the “problem with privilege” (Smith, 2013) in that acknowledging privilege can easily sustain the very structure of the white dominance she is part of. Naming of one’s white privilege cannot be the only actionable action service providers mobilize, since doing so can prohibit action-oriented steps that can effectively subvert and even challenge systems of white supremacy and settler colonialism. Therefore, Nicole’s story reinscribes white goodness through her desire to appear good, and indeed, through her ability to “talk the talk” as Kate put it.

Although Thomas, a 25-year-old white gay cisman, did not name his white privilege, he discussed how he utilizes his interpersonal relationships with Indigenous peoples as a way to remain aware of Indigenous issues and bring this awareness into the work he does.

Q: Are there any additional issues that need to be raised as part of this research?

A: Personally, I have two [Aboriginal] friends who do not live on reserves. I have learned so much [from them]. I am empathetic. One of my friends is Metis and the other one is Ojibway. From them, I have been more sensitive and it has informed my volunteer work. It is a shame that it has not happened with the other people I volunteer with. (12/12/12, Transcript 1, p. 8, Toronto, ON)

Thomas’ narrative illustrates that he remains hyper aware of Indigenous content and contexts due to his interpersonal connections with two Indigenous friends, and he connects his hyper awareness of Indigeneity with being empathetic. However, Thomas’ narrative illuminates how the self/other binary—coming to know the self in relation to the different Other—remains central

to how he understands his role as a service provider. Thomas' story connects to Jones' (1999) work on the removal of Pakeha (white) students from the same learning spaces as that of the Maori and Pacific Islanders, when the Pakeha students saw themselves as entitled to "learn from the Other." Thomas' white settler goodness is evoked in him requiring the Indigenous Other (his friends) to be the one enlightening him. The powers of white supremacy and settler colonialism are thus reproduced in Thomas' narrative.

Candy, a 27-year-old South Asian genderqueer, discussed how notions of solidarity can easily reinscribe settler dominance within service provisional contexts.

Q: What do you mean by appropriative?

A: I find it often is on the good person list. You know, that like to be understood a good person is you recycle, you buy free trade, free range beef, and then Indigenous solidarity is just one of the things that you do. I think there are plenty of people who are really engaged in these things and that is super. But I also think that it can be like any other anti-racist politic like wearing a pin or a patch and that is your politic. But the Indigenous piece, as you are finding is the hot spot for people. What does [it] mean to be Canadian? "You need to shut the fuck up about that." And that is, that is the easiest thing for white queers to let go of. (13/01/15, Transcript 8, p. 3, Toronto, ON)

Candy called out the complicity of white queer and trans people who want to be read as good by simply including Indigeneity among other solidarity endeavours. Candy importantly noted that Indigenous solidarity can be very essentializing, similar to other alliance politics, and that its significance can be trivialized. Such evocations of Indigenous solidarity within white queer and trans people's notions of goodness act to centre whiteness and settler colonialism, and thereby disavow the decolonization that is central to Indigenous resurgence. Therefore, the naming of Indigenous solidarity does not require action, just as Candy described, and does nothing, as its naming alone reinscribes white settler colonialism in such attempts to appear good.

Brett, a 31-year-old white genderqueer, discussed their own understandings of how decolonization informs the work they do.

Q: How do Aboriginal peoples fit into your motivations to do the work that you do?

A: As a white person who does not have any Aboriginal ancestry, words like solidarity sound really nice but are not necessarily appropriate. One thing I would reflect on is some of how I conceive parallel discourses around decolonization as especially for queer Aboriginal people. Really setting a standard and having some really strong leaders who have taught me a lot about the way the world works and about the way colonialism works and how we can think about decolonizing. I am really committed to this idea of acknowledging colonialism. If there is a problem or something that is not good in my life I cannot look away from it and pretend it is not there. I have to fully invest myself in understanding and having a position on it or a place in that rather than avoiding it, right. So in terms of Aboriginal peoples' rights and activism, I do as much as I can to learn, to listen, to speak when appropriate and to shut up when not appropriate. (13/04/30, Transcript 38, p. 10, Toronto, ON)

Brett's narrative attempts to engage with Candy's cautioning of Indigenous solidarity politics within queer communities in Toronto. Brett spoke about how mentors of theirs and leaders in the community have taught them about colonialism and decolonization stating that they are committed to acknowledging colonialism and learning about Indigenous peoples here in Canada. Here, Brett's narrative provides the context to consider how queer service providers' experiences can provide an opportunity to take Indigenous decolonization seriously. Although Brett has taken active steps in acknowledging how white power and privilege intersect with colonialism, their narrative points to a difficulty in considering how their version of decolonization can easily connect to an analytic of settler colonialism and white supremacy of which they and their work are a part.

As some queer and trans service providers articulated, they remain deeply invested in queer service provision so that they can help support "the/our/my community." These investments articulate complex relationships with the intention of queer service provision to widely support diverse queer and trans people and illustrate how such understandings of diversity as it is tied to the helping work done in queer service provision can reinscribe white dominance. The research participants' narratives of goodness illustrate how feeling and wanting

to be read as good can easily reinscribe and normalize whiteness. Such good intentions can easily reinscribe white dominance even when the institution's whiteness is being critiqued. Below, I conclude by articulating why it is necessary to connect a "politics of care" to queer service provision so that the white settler colonial realities are exposed.

## **6.5. Conclusion**

This chapter has shown, through the narratives mobilized by queer and trans service providers, how those doing helping work evoke their goodness by naturalizing whiteness within their respective queer organizations. The research participants' narratives illuminate how white queer and trans service providers' desire to promote and foster caring services for queer and trans people comes at the expense of disconnecting gender and sexuality from other interlocking systems of oppression. This has adverse effects as it perpetuates a singular "the/our/my community" in which all queer and trans people are invited to participate. In containing "the/our/my community" as singular, its whiteness is normalized and thus people of colour and Indigenous peoples remain different or at best additive. It is therefore under the rubric of goodness that white queer and trans service providers utilize white supremacist logics to differently position Indigenous peoples within queer service provision, as one way to disavow their care or ensure that they become too difficult to care for. I have shown how Indigenous peoples, within the context of queer service provision, are removed as being worthy from spaces that care. This chapter has outlined how, even among the best of good intentions, white queer and trans service providers mobilize their own investments in queerness, which consequently normalizes and reifies white supremacy.

Moreover, the queerness mobilized within queer service provision remains white and sustains the perception that white queer and trans peoples are legitimate to care for. This in turn



means that Indigenous peoples are produced within this context as unworthy of care vis-à-vis their “deficit” status, produced to be outside of “the/our/my community.” This chapter has exposed the pervasive nature of white supremacy within queer service provision by showing how white queer and trans service providers can no longer consider their actions or practice approaches as only and inherently good. Goodness, as I have argued, is steeped within white supremacist and settler colonial logics to prioritize the needs of white queer and trans service users, and in doing so, relocate Indigenous presence to be outside of the confines of queer service provision. Thus, it is goodness itself, as it is mobilized by white queer and trans service providers, that needs to be interrogated, as it can easily reinscribe white supremacy and settler colonialism in attempts to help and bring people of colour and Indigenous peoples into modernity.

However, despite the use of goodness by the white research participants, the narratives from Lisa, Candy, and Skyler provide an opportunity to consider how queer people of colour are working against the white supremacist and colonial foundation of queer service provision and the helping work of white queer and trans service providers. Unfortunately, despite these types of active attempts to subvert white supremacy by queer people of colour, Indigenous peoples and a settler colonial analytic remain deeply disconnected from queer service provision, making the whiteness of the organizations natural.

To expose the workings of white supremacy and settler colonialism within queer service provision, I move now to a discussion of queer and trans service providers’ deflections of their responsibility. I will discuss how non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers within queer service provision mobilize innocence within the context of their helping work. To accomplish this, I specifically asked the research participants how Indigenous peoples are imagined within

their work life, and how they have come to know and understand them. As I will illustrate, evocations of innocence strongly contribute to white queer and trans service providers' ability to recentre their white articulations of gender and sexuality. They also provide opportunities to distance one from one's own implications in white supremacist and settler colonial projects and logics.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Innocence and Complicity: Non-Indigenous Queer and Trans Peoples' Deflections of Responsibility**

#### **7. Introduction**

What follows is an exploration of how non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers can move toward innocence and deflect their responsibility in white supremacist and settler colonial projects. I explore how the trauma experienced by white queer and trans research participants can perpetuate an approach that understands oppression to be singular, rather than interlocking (see Razack, 1998a). An interlocking approach contends that axes of oppression are inseparably linked, whereby they co-constitute and rely upon each other (Fellows & Razack, 1998). The outcome of understanding oppression as singular can foster the common perception that certain oppressions weigh more than others. As I have argued, within the context of queer service provision, gender and sexuality become centralized and categories such as race and class tend to become additive. As a result, this chapter looks to everyday engagements non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers have with Indigeneity.

In order to examine how non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers move toward innocence—"the belief that because we are ourselves in a subordinate position, we are unimplicated in the oppression of others" (Fellows & Razack, 1998, p. 339)—, and, as a result, move toward being complicit in white supremacist and settler colonial projects, I will first examine how innocence and trauma have been theorized. Next, I explore how queer and trans service providers centre the trauma and pain they (and others like them) experience within the context of queer service provision. Furthermore, I will investigate how Indigenous peoples and cultures are symbolically included within queer service provision, thus connecting service providers' actions to larger white supremacist and settler colonial practices, projects and

processes. I consider how queer and trans service providers continue to claim innocence in terms of the on-going oppression of people of colour and Indigenous peoples. However, in order to fully understand and describe the stories of non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers, I first outline how white (settler) innocence and notions of trauma have been theorized to firmly root this chapter's analysis.

### **7.1. Theorizing Innocence and Trauma**

In order to conceptualize how non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers can move toward assertions of innocence, it is important to first look at how innocence and notions of trauma have been theorized. The ground-breaking work of Fellows and Razack (1998) addressed how, when marginalized subjects are “challenged about their domination,” they “respon[d] [by] call[ing] attention to their own subordination” (p. 339). Fellows and Razack (1998) implicated white women in racing toward innocence as a way to deflect their association with and reproduction of white supremacy. In deflecting their attachments to and investments in white supremacy, the white women described in Fellows and Razack's (1998) work naturalized a hierarchical model of understanding oppression, whereby their experiences of sexism were deemed the most concerning and valuable. In centralizing their experiences of sexism, white women can easily deflect their responsibility in upholding systems of white supremacy and “race to innocence” by disconnecting from how they may very well contribute to “the oppression of others” (Fellows & Razack, 1998, p. 340).

Fellows and Razack's (1998) work becomes ever so useful in this research as it provides an opportunity to expose the ways in which white supremacy is routinely naturalized within everyday life. As I argue more fully below, in order for white queer and trans service providers to understand, know, and act against the workings of white supremacy and settler colonialism,

they must “stop racing to innocence [and understand] how all the systems [of oppression] operate simultaneously” (Fellows & Razack, 1998, p. 340). The unmarked nature of whiteness allows for white subjects to understand their actions as neutral, and thus see themselves as unimplicated in systems of white supremacy and projects of nation building (Schick & McNinch, 2009). As Dyer (1993) contended, “white power secures its dominance by seeming not to be anything in particular” (p. 44).

In discussing the connection between white innocence and settlerhood, Razack (2002a) argued that evocations of white settler innocence easily allow for white settlers to understand themselves as naturally belonging to the land. Evocations of white settler innocence impede on the ability of white settlers to consider the conditions beneath their feet or wheels as contributing to the white settler colonial projects they often belong to. Haig-Brown (2009) also alluded to notions of settler innocence, when asking her non-Indigenous pre-service teachers to consider how the land they reside on—as a place they have made or might be able to call home—is contested. Moreover, as Cannon (2012) argued, in order for Indigenous decolonization to prevail, Indigenous peoples, diasporic peoples, and white settlers alike must be conscious both of the land they reside on and of the already formed relationships they have with Indigenous peoples. Such relationships are taken up in Tuck and Yang’s (2012) work as a way to implicate all non-Indigenous peoples as settlers in settler colonial projects, and contend that they must move beyond evocations of settler innocence.

Tuck and Yang’s (2012) settler moves to innocence are described as “excuses, distractions, and diversions from decolonization” (p. 10). Although I make use of Tuck and Yang’s (2012) work, I consider such settler moves to innocence within the narratives of the white research participants, as, in conjunction with my larger discussion of settlerhood in

Chapter 2, the research participants of colour have different relationships to settlement. Settler moves to innocence relieve white settlers from feeling the guilt, shame, and/or responsibility for their own implicatedness in white supremacist and settler colonial projects. As Tuck and Yang (2012) argued, settlers can move to innocence in six different ways: 1) *settler nativism*—(fictitiously) identifying with Indigeneity as a means of deflecting one’s settlerhood and implicatedness in projects of settler colonialism; 2) *settler adoption fantasies*—having “the desire to *become without becoming* [Indigenous]” (p. 11), where settlers place Indigenous practices and ways of knowing into a settler colonial imagination that is disconnected from spiritual, land based traditions; 3) *colonial equivocation*—understanding Indigenous experiences of settler colonialism as commensurable with other marginalized (and colonized) groups; 4) *decolonization of the mind*—locating Indigenous struggles for decolonization within consciousness-raising endeavours alone, which reinscribes settler colonialism; 5) *a(s)t(e)risk peoples*—relocating Indigenous peoples to the margins and constructing them as unworthy of help; and, 6) *re-occupation*—discussing occupation and urban space in ways that erase Indigenous presence and reify settler colonial understandings of land as property, even in attempts to critique the nation-state. Tuck and Yang (2012) argued that these six ways through which settlers can move toward innocence allow for the effects of settler colonialism and the erasure of Indigenous peoples to remain present within contemporary life. Although I make use of Tuck and Yang’s (2012) work here, I am left asking: can their six ways for settlers to move toward innocence be considered a set of prescriptive steps?

Regardless, Tuck and Yang’s (2012) work contributes to my analysis of how settler colonialism is present and exists within the everyday life of white settlers, people of colour, and Indigenous peoples working in queer service provision in downtown Toronto. I show how the

processes and practices of queer service provision, where white queer and trans service providers move toward white settler innocence somewhat differently, can easily sustain white supremacy and settler colonialism. I extend Tuck and Yang's (2012) work on settler moves to innocence to bring discussions of white queerness and settler colonialism into conversation. Here, I push Tuck and Yang's (2012) work to illustrate that not all non-Indigenous peoples are straight, by considering how white queer and trans people's evocations of innocence are connected to their own (or their organization's) understandings and articulations of gender and sexuality. Thus, I consider the effects and experiences of trauma in relation to innocence within the context of queer service provision. Some research participants articulated that the everyday effects of heterosexism, homophobia, transphobia, and cissexism are traumatizing. Thus, trauma becomes an important analytical marker in theorizing innocence within the context of queer service provision.

### ***7.1.1. Trauma***

Brown (1995) theorized how "wounded attachments" are positioned within subjects' deployments of trauma within identity based political movements, and discussed the problems and possibilities with identity based politics by asking: what kinds of foreclosures manifest within iterations of identity? Evocations of trauma that come along with particular political referents and identities can easily re-centre the wounded subject and their experiences of pain. Within these deployments of trauma, subjects' own investments in and attachments to white supremacy are not always addressed. I concur with Brown's (1995) argument that such "wounded attachments" readily preclude subjects' ability to consider, let alone take action against, how they benefit from and remain complicit in the oppression of others. The discourse of trauma itself requires subjects to re-centre the wounded self, and in doing so, to erase an

engagement with how they can, and do, contribute to the oppression of others. Within the context of colonial trauma, using Millon's (2013) work, I theorized in Chapter 3 how the TRC proceedings in Canada routinely require service providers to individualize the trauma Indigenous peoples experience through confessional acts of "truth telling." These confessional acts are problematic, insofar as the colonial trauma that Indigenous peoples experience becomes and remains normalized.

I utilize Brown's (1995) and Millon's (2013) theories of trauma as a way to contextualize the differences of evocations of trauma, particularly for non-Indigenous queer and trans people and (2-Spirit, queer, and trans) Indigenous peoples. Evocations of non-Indigenous service providers' pain or woundedness can easily deflect their attention away from how they can "take power," whereby the status quo is supported and used to uphold interlocking structures of oppression (Smith, 2009). In other words, I contend that non-Indigenous subjects must remain intently aware of how their own evocations and articulations of trauma may indeed re-centre the status quo and invest in the oppression of others. Thus, I argue that privileged subjects (e.g., white queer and trans service providers in particular) must begin with accepting that, as black feminist critic Patricia Hill Collins (2010) argued, "there are few pure victims or oppressors" (p. 332). Until this realization occurs and is made explicit, wounded subjects may not have the tools to, nor be able to consider, "new ways of thought and action" (Hill Collins, 2010, p. 332).

Utilizing the above works, I now look to the ways in which queer and trans service providers centre their experiences of trauma, and in doing so, contribute to acts of deflection within white supremacist and settler colonial projects. Moreover, some acts of deflection also provide avenues to consider the critical thinking processes of non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers and the ways in which Indigeneity is included and simultaneously excluded within queer service



provision.

## 7.2. Evocations of Trauma

The narratives below depict how some queer and trans service providers imagine queer service provision through the lens of trauma—as very real experiences that must be addressed and minimized. The trauma evoked within queer service provision operates within larger frameworks of “normative” LGBTQ politics that are invested in whiteness. Whiteness becomes naturalized through queer and trans service providers’ own investments in the white citizenship of the nation-state (Morgensen, 2011a). As a result, the normativity of sexual minority and gender minority identity politics becomes a form of national whiteness. Although white service providers might act in ways that reify and normalize whiteness within queer service provision, some queer service providers of colour actively resist whiteness within their work. Thus, the contributions of queer service providers of colour within queer service provision can at once be understood as subversive and provide an opportunity for critiques of settler colonialism to emerge when the normativity of whiteness is challenged. The stories below offer a glimpse into how normatively white understandings of gender and sexuality are evoked within non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers’ own understandings of trauma and pain.

Josh, a 53-year-old South Asian queer cisman, discussed how such a focus on experiences of trauma can sometimes be unproductive and disconnected from his own experiences as a queer person of colour. As he explained:

I go to a lot of conferences and I see gay men whining about what Catholicism and Christianity has done. I am like “oh for heaven sake you are 50 years old get over it, get a grip. Stop blaming your mom and dad and the Church for everything that has happened to you.” I look at the way Western gay culture has been perpetuated and it does not in any way enlighten me. I try to consciously distance myself from it. (13/02/25, Transcript 17, p. 12, Toronto, ON)

Josh's narrative comes out of a larger discussion of the whiteness of gayness and the representations of respectability within queer and trans communities in Toronto. Here, Josh discussed with me his own experiences as a queer person of colour, whereby his experiences do not necessarily fit within "Western gay culture." In the context of the conferences Josh goes to, white gay cismen in Canada typically evoke the common perception that one's religious upbringing is anti-gay, and thus, they experience trauma and pain to this day from those traumatic experiences. Josh noted that this perception of trauma, popularized for white gay cismen, is not representative of his own experiences. As a result, Josh tries his very best to distance himself from white gay cismen who perpetuate the notion that they continue to experience oppression due to their past experiences with Catholicism and Christianity. For Josh, the imminent focus on trauma experienced by white gay cismen with a Christian or Catholic upbringing is unhelpful, since it focuses on blame, re-centres the whiteness of gayness, and erases gay cismen raised in, for example, Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, and Jewish families, as a 'singular' form of control—given that Indigenous peoples experienced this singularity as a connective form of control and conquest.

In response to the routine trauma gay men experience, Ryan, a 34-year-old white gay cisman with Indigenous ancestry, said to me: "I just feel that gay men are remarkably well suited to dealing with shit hands. In so many areas of our lives everything is shit and it is accepted and it is fine. You know, it mystifies me that it is acceptable" (13/03/09, Transcript 23, p. 6, Toronto, ON). Ryan outlined the repetitive trauma that gay cismen experience within their daily lives. Ryan's narrative, which can be read through Cohen (1997), is problematic because it invokes a universalizing idea of gayness as an experience of only oppression, which uplifts the pain of white gay cismen and leaves their claim to being wounded unavailable to critiques of how their

pain is experienced through their whiteness. Using Cohen's (1997) work, Ryan's narrative erases the existence of black queer and trans people, who experience what he calls "shit hands" through the intersection of racism and heterosexism, which produces their specific experience as black queer and trans people. Moreover, Cohen (1997) situated her intersectional argument within the experiences of black people who are subjected to a sexualized anti-black racism that produces all black women, and indeed all black people, as sexually questionable, perverse, or criminal. Ryan's normatively white understanding of "shit hands" experienced through gay oppression in particular excludes the multifaceted ways in which violent systems of oppression impact others marginalized by heteropatriarchy who may not necessarily be, nor want to identify as, "gay."

Paul, a 28-year-old white gay cisman, shared a narrative of the trauma gay cismen experience when he discussed his own experience of being HIV-positive. Paul shared a story of being victimized when he was first diagnosed as HIV-positive, and talked about how this traumatic experience continues to impact how he provides services to other newly diagnosed HIV-positive gay cismen. As he went on to share in response to my question:

Q: What is your motivation for doing this work?

A: I was not going to let my diagnosis get the best of me and I was going to own it. I feel like I have done that and really made the best of what could have been a really bad situation. I have seen it affect a lot of different people in really terrible ways. I was not going to let that happen. So that was probably my biggest motivator, and the reason I stay in the sector and fight as best I can. (13/03/23, Transcript 31, p. 5, Toronto, ON)

For Paul, guiding other gay cismen through their newly discovered HIV-positive diagnosis is a big part of his motivation to continue working in the queer service sector. Paul outlined how many gay cismen who are diagnosed as HIV-positive often have negative experiences, particularly due to experiences of HIV-phobia. Paul's own experience of repetitive harm ensures that he is intently aware of the impacts of an HIV-positive diagnosis, particularly its physical,

emotional, and psychological impacts on the lives of gay cismen. Notably, as Giwa and I (2012) have argued, not all gay cismen understand HIV/AIDS to be the primary locus of their identity politics. In working to ensure HIV-positive gay cismen experience the most supportive HIV-positive diagnosis possible, and encourage affirmative understandings of the self for this population, Paul can easily privilege health status and the residual trauma HIV-positive gay cismen experience as the most important. Thus, Paul's narrative connects to Smith's (2013) discussion of moving beyond singular articulations of privilege, insofar as the trauma associated with being and/or becoming HIV-positive alone can prevent gay cismale service providers from engaging with other axes of oppression or stigma that queer and trans people of colour and queer, trans, and 2-Spirit Indigenous peoples experience when accessing queer services.

Additionally, Brandon discussed with me his thoughts on how there can be similarities between the trauma experienced by HIV-positive gay cismen and that of Indigenous peoples.

Q: What is some of the learning that you are getting out of working within your organization?

A: That we have things to learn from the Aboriginal community so a lot of the tools that we are developing ... even the holistic model ... honouring that we are working on Native lands ... the historical perspective because we see a lot of trauma. I came across the trauma informed tool kit, which actually came out of [a province] with a larger Aboriginal influence on its development. It talked about historical trauma. They did not just grow up invalidated for what they did but for who I was. That actually really resonated with me as a gay man. So it actually informs the work that I do in terms of expanding my own awareness around what does it mean to be Othered. (13/03/09, Transcript 22, p. 6, Toronto, ON)

Brandon's narrative discusses how his learning shifted around the work that he does through a perceived connection to Indigenous peoples and their experiences of trauma. This connection Brandon sees occurs through understanding shared experiences of invalidation. Yet, within Brandon's narrative, he makes a switch from "they" to "I," since the category "gay" cannot be shared and is thus claimed for himself—no matter who (Indigenous or non-Indigenous) is

inhabiting it. During Brandon's discussion, he at first understood that Indigenous difference must be acknowledged. Yet, within the particular slippage from "they" to "I," Brandon used gay identity as a way to dissolve difference when considering the trauma gay cismen and Indigenous peoples experience. Here, gayness becomes produced as a universal—a cross-cultural phenomenon that grants gay cismen "access" to the experience of Indigenous peoples whom they otherwise would not be able to say they understood.

While Brandon's work attempts to bridge a gap between gay cismen and Indigenous peoples, his narrative fails to consider how the experiences of "invalidation," "trauma," and being "Othered" are different pertaining to who experiences the trauma. As Millon (2013) has argued, Indigenous peoples' trauma results from their multi-generational experiences of colonial violence that still takes place in the present day. Thus, the residual heteronormative trauma experienced by gay cismen cannot be equalized to that of Indigenous peoples' experiences of colonial violence. In essence, Brandon's narrative connects to Tuck and Yang's (2012) theorization of colonial equivocation whereby the articulation of the "invalidation" and "trauma" gay men experience is understood to be commensurable with that of Indigenous peoples. Centring the trauma gay cismen experience within the context of Indigenous peoples' historical trauma can contribute to the naturalization of white gayness and perpetuate settler colonialism within the present. Brandon's narrative provides the context to consider how Indigenous peoples' traumatic experiences of white supremacy and settler colonialism become folded into a universalizing trauma that then is consumed by gay cismen.

In connection to Brandon's narrative on the similarities of trauma between white gay cismen and Indigenous peoples, Brett discussed why it is important to consider the impact of colonialism and decolonization within the queer work that he does. As he described:

We need to acknowledge that we live on colonized lands and that we have some major cultural violence going on around Aboriginal people. But then also between the links between the idea of colonialism, decolonization and how that might be applied to other aspects of our [queer] lives and identities. How are queer people colonized by straight people? (13/04/30, Transcript 38, p. 2–3, Toronto, ON)

Brett's narrative addresses the ways in which colonialism continues to inflict violence upon Indigenous peoples and the need for decolonization to occur. In discussing the connection decolonization has to other axes of oppression, Brett asked: "how are queer people colonized by straight people?" By asking this question, Brett can easily erase the historical and contemporary differences in power between white queers and Indigenous peoples within the white settler society we live in—specifically, how white settler colonialism invites white settlers to participate in its violent projects of Indigenous elimination, and assimilate and surveil the bodies of people of colour. More importantly, Brett's turn of phrase "queer people [are] colonized by straight people," illustrates how queerness is conflated to experiences of trauma and used as the basis from which to interpret any form of trauma. Thus, resulting from Brett's narrative, if Indigenous people are colonized, then that must mean that queers are colonized too.

Although queer service provision is flourishing and developing rigorous programming and supports for its service users, it is clear from the research participants' narratives that whiteness remains normalized and the differences between white queers and Indigenous peoples are made to dissolve when centring trauma. A hyper focus surrounding trauma and its alleviation can constrain queer service provision and the ability of its workers to address white supremacy and settler colonialism as they interlock with gender and sexuality. While the trauma experienced by queer and trans service providers comes to constrain the delivery of queer services and the imagination of who is queer, it is also essential to consider how Indigeneity is imagined within queer service provision. In particular, I look to how Indigenous peoples and cultures continue to

be symbolically included by non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers, which ultimately fuels white supremacist and settler colonial logics through deflections of responsibility within and outside of queer service provision.

### **7.3. Symbolic Inclusion and Empty Gestures**

The narratives around Indigenous peoples' inclusion are important to consider insofar as they can easily reinscribe normatively white articulations of queer service provision. Many of the research participants discussed how Indigenous peoples are symbolically included within the context of queer service provision. Josephine, a 33-year-old white queer ciswoman, shared with me that the organization she works for invited an Indigenous organization to come into the weekly drop-in.

Q: How do Aboriginal people fit into your motivations to do the work that you do?

A: We definitely partnered with Aboriginal agencies now and brought people in because we recognized this is a population [Aboriginal people] that we really need to openly support [laughs]. We brought in [an Indigenous-led organization] to come in and work with us. We thought that we could run specific population programming by partnering with other agencies. So we are reaching out to other agencies because we also recognize that we cannot do it on our own and do not want to. (13/01/09, Transcript 6, p. 9, Toronto, ON)

Within the neo-liberal confines of queer service provision and the particular mandates placed upon queer and trans service providers, Indigeneity, as shown in Josephine's narrative, remains additive. Thus, including Indigeneity through "population specific programming" requires Indigenous-led organizations to come into the organization and fill a gap. Josephine's narrative requires further investigation insofar as she articulates that the collective "we" of non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers is compelled to include Indigeneity by working with Indigenous-led organizations while knowing that the queer organization itself does not want to develop Indigenous programming on its own. Josephine's narrative provides an opportunity to

consider how Indigenous peoples' inclusion rests upon their difference insofar as queer service provisional organizations appoint Indigenous service providers to address Indigeneity, which further normalizes the whiteness of these organizations.

Speaking to Indigenous inclusion within queer service provision, Duncan, a 42-year-old Ojibway gay/2-Spirit cismale service provider from an Indigenous-led organization, stated in response to my questions:

Q: What do you want to see of non-Indigenous organizations? How can Aboriginal peoples be present? What can they do? This does not have to be answered because this places a lot of responsibility onto you both to educate me on what needs to be done.

A: People do not want to partner with us. They just want to take the information and use it. They feel like they are experts. The partnership that is often proposed is similar to when [one worker at our organization is] going to another organization and sitting there for two hours a week. Nobody has ever asked us to do a presentation there. They do not want to partner with us. They do not want to hear our voice. They do not want us to be there. They would rather have an Aboriginal position where they can control it.  
(13/08/13, Transcript 41b, p. 16, Toronto, ON)

Duncan's discussion of Indigenous inclusion within queer service provision directly ties to Josephine's organization's desire to include Indigenous peoples, where their inclusion remains partial. Duncan's narrative provides an opportunity to consider how partnerships between organizations place authority and power into the hands of white queer and trans people—after all, they are the ones who invite Indigenous peoples into their organization. Thus, as Duncan illustrated, the inclusion of Indigenous peoples rests solely upon their bodies being present within the queer organization. For Duncan, Indigenous peoples are not called upon to do presentations, or even speak, with the result being that he feels the partnerships with queer organizations are indeed controlling. Thus, Duncan's narrative illustrates how the logics of settler colonialism remain present within queer service provision, placing Indigenous service providers into subservient positions to those of non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers.



As Duncan highlights, issues of control shape the relationship between the queer organizations and the Indigenous-led organizations to ultimately reify how white settler colonialism remains naturalized within queer service provision.

Terrance, a 35-year-old Cree/Metis gay/2-Spirited cisman, added to the conversation that the partnerships Indigenous-led organizations have with queer organizations are often constraining. As he stated:

That partnership Duncan is speaking to is small. Duncan could be [at that organization] for a whole day on Wednesday to offer counselling to 2-Spirit people that drop in, but we have never been asked for that. We are given the IDU project and the Sunday night outreach project. When do most people go to [that organization]? Mostly, Monday to Friday, from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. They have kind of pigeon-holed us to just drug users and people that will just come and use a quick service. (13/08/13, Transcript 41a, p. 16-17, Toronto, ON)

Terrance's story illuminates how the inclusion of Indigeneity within queer service provision rests upon being positioned differently within a normatively white queer organization, whereby difference is reified through the perception that all Indigenous peoples remain in spaces of marginality (e.g., as injection drug users). Terrance explained how his organization is invited into a queer organization during times when service users are accessing services less frequently. However, Terrance asked an important question: what would it mean for their Indigenous-led organization to be present in the queer organization all of the time, Monday to Friday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.? The absolute inclusion of Terrance's organization would require a radical reshaping of the relationship between Indigenous-led organizations and queer organizations into one that is not controlling, as Duncan put it. Yet, Terrance's narrative illustrates how the imagination of Indigenous peoples within queer service provision remains constrained, with the result that they are "pigeon-holed." Consequently, these symbolically inclusive gestures continue to represent Indigenous peoples within queer service provision as being additive, and indeed, as unworthy of

being meaningfully included. Inclusion thus rests upon the white supremacist and settler colonial logics that are firmly in place to differently position Indigenous peoples, and consequently, they must remain outside of the confines of queer service provision. The narratives from Duncan and Terrance provide the context to consider an Indigenous critique of queer service provision, and thus my analysis of the all of the research participants' narratives takes their criticism seriously. Their critiques contribute to my white settler criticism of white settler colonialism insofar as they provide a powerful experience of exclusion that I cannot ever experience.

In talking about what queer service provision could do differently to be more inclusive of Indigenous peoples, John, a 54-year-old white gay cisman, illustrated that there are appropriate avenues for service providers to follow.

Q: What shape would your programs you are involved in take if they were designed to address the needs of Aboriginal people?

A: It would be developed by Aboriginal people for Aboriginal people. Whatever advisory groups or whatever would be [developed would] largely consist of Aboriginal people. I imagine there would be all sorts of community consultations and needs assessments that would specifically ask Aboriginal people what kinds of services they need in that area and the hiring of counseling staff or whatever would be from that community and the services would be put together in a way that reflected what the needs assessment would be for them and would be evaluated on a ongoing basis with service users and community people and on-going connections would happen with other Aboriginal organizations to get on-going feedback around its effectiveness. (13/03/21, Transcript 30, p. 12, Toronto, ON)

It is important to locate the research participants' narratives within a larger historical critique of service provision, whereby white service providers have been told for years that service provision needs to stop barring Indigenous participation, permit Indigenous service providers access to Indigenous service users, redirect Indigenous service users to Indigenous service provision, and grant forms of control over Indigenous service provision to Indigenous people and communities. John's narrative indicates that non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers

must consult with and indeed let Indigenous peoples and communities have primary say around how this particular area of queer service provision should operate. However, this model of queer service provision is saturated in neo-liberal logics insofar as the appropriateness of the service is not based on the Indigenous communities' wants and needs; rather, the service is deemed appropriate if needs assessments are measured alongside its effectiveness. This particular version of inclusive queer service provision illustrates how the effectiveness of programs outweighs the accountability of white service providers to Indigenous peoples and communities and erases the already well-established work of Indigenous organizations in Toronto. Thus, this particular understanding of queer service provision, although seemingly inclusive of Indigeneity, can easily reinscribe settler colonial power relations whereby the responsibility of program development and service delivery rests upon the backs of Indigenous peoples.

Another example of how Indigenous peoples are included within queer service provision came from Cassandra, a 29-year-old white cislesbian, who stated:

Q: How do Aboriginal peoples fit into your motivations in doing this work?

A: I think there are probably ways in which we could incorporate teaching and form a culturally competent space. Not to have myself deliver that, but to have some of our colleagues in the Aboriginal services deliver. (13/02/28, Transcript 18, p. 9, Toronto, ON)

Cassandra's narrative illustrates that a more appropriate queer services delivery model for Indigenous peoples would need to be more culturally competent than it already is in her organization shedding light on its normative whiteness. However, the inclusion of cultural competency, in Cassandra's estimation, should not come from her, but her Indigenous colleagues. Cassandra's narrative points to the ways in which the inclusion of Indigeneity within queer service provision must be framed within a culturally competent approach, which can be criticized as reproducing cultural stereotypes of people of colour and Indigenous peoples (Pon,

2009; St. Denis, 2011b). Cassandra's approach to thinking about queer service delivery differently includes placing Indigeneity and Indigenous culture and teachings within a normatively white system. Such inclusion can manifest into symbolically inclusive gestures that reduce Indigeneity and Indigenous peoples' inclusion within queer service provision to culture. Again, as Indigenous scholars have noted, reducing Indigenous peoples to culture alone is a project in itself that sustains white settler sovereignty (Cannon & Sunseri, 2011; Murdocca, 2009; St. Denis, 2011a). Utilizing a culturally competent approach to queer service provision when working with Indigenous peoples leads service providers to think in terms of cultural inclusion alone and requires Indigenous colleagues, like Cassandra's, to "do the work," further placing the responsibility onto them.

Additionally, Josh, a 53-year-old South Asian queer cisman, shared a story of how Indigenous cultures were appropriated by one of his colleagues within the queer organization he worked at. As he explained:

We talked about First Nations healing circles and the talking stick and all of that. I did not do it but a colleague of mine did it and I was like: "do not do it, just do not go there." He was smacked—not literally—for being culturally inappropriate to go there. You cannot do it because you think it is cool: be in a circle, have a stick passed around and have people talk and not really understand what it means or the history of it. (13/02/25, Transcript 17, p. 5, Toronto, ON)

Josh's narrative depicts how his colleague decided to include a healing circle within the context of queer service provision and in doing so appropriated Indigenous spirituality and cultures. As Josh's narrative illustrates, his white colleague can never be nor become an expert on Indigeneity. Thus, Josh named the inclusion of a healing circle within queer service provision as inappropriate precisely because the organizer and participants are erasing its significance, history, and context. Although Josh's white co-worker wanted to incorporate Indigeneity into the work that he does, he reduced Indigenous peoples solely to culture and inappropriately

incorporated a healing circle. Josh's narrative provides the context to consider how when non-Indigenous people participate in Indigenous spiritual life, such as a healing circle, they will never be doing so "on their own" or "of their own volition." Instead, in connection to Duncan's and Terrance's Indigenous critiques of queer service provision, non-Indigenous people's participation in Indigenous spiritual life should always be under the direction of, and only after having been given the responsibility by, Indigenous people who can remain in control of what is taking place.

Moreover, Brett, a 31-year-old white genderqueer, discussed with me their own understanding of decolonization. As they shared:

For me decolonization means—I do not know if I can describe it accurately in one sentence—it is like because it is something that is visceral as much as it is academic and intellectual right? For me decolonization means learning as much as I can about colonialism and making myself open to every opportunity I can to learn about the process of colonialism and the cultures of Aboriginal people that have or have not been taken away or erased. To me decolonization is naming those colonizing tendencies and ideas. For me personally decolonization is about finding a place of self-acceptance and authenticity that does not necessarily align with cultural or social norms particularly of the colonizer. For me that could mean having the kind of sex that I want without too much fear or repercussion or it could mean having the kind of sex with the people that I want or decolonizing for instance my gender and how I express it and think about it. (13/04/30, Transcript 38, p. 3, Toronto, ON)

Brett's narrative attempts to be responsible to Indigenous leaders (and Indigenous peoples) and their everyday experiences of colonialism. Brett's attempt to define decolonization illustrates how coming to know and understand colonialism and its effects on the lives of Indigenous peoples is so important for white people who fit the category of settler/colonizer. As Jones (1999) argued, coming to terms with being in the colonizer role should not stop with such a realization. As such, Brett's approach to decolonization is about making the invisible visible.

What becomes starkly clear is how Brett's notion of decolonization, within the realm of queer service provision, can ignite much controversy. Specifically, Brett's narrative connects

very closely to Tuck and Yang's (2012) settler adoption fantasies, insofar as their understanding of decolonization stays within their own genderqueer lexicon as "having the kind of sex that I want . . . with the people that I want" (13/04/30, Transcript 38, p. 3, Toronto, ON). Here, the historical and routine violence Indigenous peoples experience as a result of white supremacy and settler colonialism are erased in Brett's attempt to shape shift the roots of decolonization to encapsulate and centralize a (gender) queer politic. In effect, this definition of decolonization ends up re-centring Brett's own politics surrounding sex as liberation, and, in doing so, it erases the ways in which decolonization should be used to further Indigenous self-determination and support for sovereignty outside of white settler understandings of the Canadian nation-state. Brett's narrative provides the context to see how white settler responsibility and understandings of decolonization, if located within one's own white settler (gender) queer politic, can misappropriate Indigenous peoples and their struggles—effectively erasing longstanding injustices that routinely erase Indigenous peoples and violently subjugate them.

Additionally, Kate, a 25-year-old white bi/queer ciswoman, discussed how her approach to queer service provision connects very closely to an Indigenous worldview. As she explained:

My personal values which are informed by my educational background, [which] in many ways [are] complementary to an "Indigenous worldview," specifically focusing in on like understanding health holistically. When we talk about sexual health, often we are talking specifically about STI prevention basically, or pregnancy prevention. That is different in the queer population. Sexual health, mental health, and physical health are super connected. We need to understand that all of these things are connected. My values of holism are still informed by my white settler perspective understanding [of] how my program would be different [as in] it would need to be geared towards Aboriginal women. I mean I think it is like the ways in which erasure of any people from anything often happens by like not talking about the specifics. . . . When working with Aboriginal women, you will talk about sexual violence, you will talk about disconnection from cultural heritage, you will talk about consent and communication when the language you are speaking is not your language, you will want to talk about self-determination as it relates to land and bodies, and all of these things that are specific to Aboriginal women are absent in general from the way that we talk about sexual health. You will want to talk

about sexual health as a way it connects to reproductive justice also. (13/03/01, Transcript 19, p. 11, Toronto, ON)

As Kate contended, sexual health within queer service provision typically operates within the realms of STI prevention and pregnancy prevention, which locates the “problem” in the individual bodies of the service users accessing services. If health is looked at holistically, as Kate argued, larger systemic concerns, such as sexual violence and the connection between land and Indigenous women’s bodies, can no longer be erased from, or at best can only be supplementary to, queer service provision. However, despite understanding how holism informs sexual health, she indicated that her perspective as a white settler can limit her capacity in truly understanding the needs and experiences of Indigenous women. Kate’s narrative provides the opportunity to consider how settler responsibility (in this case) can be mobilized by non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers in order to link sexual health to larger systemic concerns (e.g., settler colonialism) within the context of queer service provision. Here, settler responsibility is mobilized as a way to rupture the notion that oppression only exists on the level of the individual, in recognition of the need for an interlocking understanding of oppression when working with Indigenous women and their experiences of sexual/colonial violence.

While some white research participants, like Kate and Brett, considered their responsibility as white settlers within queer service provision, Josh, a 53-year-old South Asian queer cisman, spoke with me about how evoking the responsibility of white settlers, specifically in the form of land recognition, can result in meaningless gestures of inclusion. As he shared:

We do the usual tokenistic sort of declaring that we are on stolen land and that we have never recognized treaties and all that kind of stuff. It is not that we are giving back the land anytime soon. [Laughs]. So we do that disclosure but I think it is okay but I really wonder what it means to somebody who is First Nations sitting there. Does it make them feel any better [about ]the historical persecution? I do not know. It would need me the token off white person to go and ask: “so how does that make you feel?” [Laughs]. Right? I think we have a long way to go but also I am not the one to make these

decisions. People often say to me: “well you are racialized because you think it is an issue.” The white people [need to start] saying we need to take the steps to show that we actually genuinely care or want to make the change. (13/02/25, Transcript 17, p. 10, Toronto, ON)

Josh’s powerful narrative illustrates how declarations of the land as stolen—in this case, referring to Mississauga nation—during queer conferences and/or workshops make him feel uneasy. Josh asked if the declaration of the land as stolen adequately addresses the ongoing (historical) prosecution of Indigenous peoples. Within Josh’s queer of colour criticism of land recognition, he contended that it should no longer be the sole responsibility of people of colour to take up white supremacy and settler colonialism as causes of concern; rather, white people need to take active steps in meaningfully engaging with Indigeneity and the land. Josh’s narrative provides the context to consider how queers of colour are working toward meaningfully engaging with the struggles of Indigenous peoples and provides an opportunity to consider the depths of action required of white settlers in addressing the historical legacy of settler colonialism in Canada.

Similarly, Robert, a 32-year-old white queer trans man, illustrated how discussions of the land can often be empty and shared:

I think twice about what [this gesture] actually does when we open a conference or we open a discussion and somebody who is not a white settler says—but who’s also not Native—says: “I’d like to thank the people who are lending us our land.” It creates some sort of level of recognition in the room. But then some people just roll their eyes. Is it like recycling—it makes us all feel better while it’s actually still destroying the planet. (13/02/07, Transcript 13, p. 10, Toronto, ON)

Robert’s narrative illustrates that at times the primary responsibility to “thank” Indigenous peoples for the land is placed upon people of colour. Robert also reported that, while these declarations of the land do create a sense of recognition, some audience members typically “roll their eyes.” The rolling of the eyes can be considered a reaction to such a gesture. Yet, the deeper



meaning attached to Robert's story involves the audience's reaction to the people of colour who are doing the thanking. The act of rolling one's eyes can be a reaction to being required to think about the land as a contested site where Indigenous peoples actually exist. Thus, the gesture of rolling one's eyes can dismiss such calls to bring attention to the contested nature of the land we all (as non-Indigenous peoples) occupy. Robert's narrative also provides the context to consider how people of colour within the context of queer service provision are already knowledgeable of and are working toward developing relationships with Indigenous peoples and communities. Thus, the gesture of naming the land, although it sparks racism in the conference or among workshop attendees, provides an opportunity for people of colour to acknowledge their own potential complicities in the land being taken from Indigenous peoples. For example, Thobani (2007) and Smith (2012) have argued that people of colour are placed into colonial relationships with Indigenous peoples as they invest in settler sovereignty. Consequently, it is important then for people of colour to consider the types of mechanisms in place that encourage such erasure of white settler colonial processes and practices, and the kinds of action possible so that white supremacy and settler colonialism can be challenged and subverted.

The inclusion of Indigenous peoples within white normative queer organizations typically occurs through white queer and trans service providers asserting their power and control over Indigenous peoples and communities. Although Indigenous scholars, activists, and service providers have provided countless directions and guidance for white service providers and organizations in supporting Indigenous service users and organizations, there still remains a deep desire on the part of white queer and trans peoples to be the decision makers in terms of how Indigeneity is represented and included within queer service provision. The whiteness of queer service provision is made to appear through some of the criticism offered by queers of colour.

Here, their narratives provide an opportunity to consider how relationships already exist between queer people of colour and Indigenous peoples insofar as they are naming, subverting, and taking action against both white supremacy and (settler) colonialism within and outside of queer service provision. Despite the work done by both queer people of colour and Indigenous peoples, Indigeneity remains merely symbolically included within queer service provision—a gesture that can easily reinscribe white supremacy and settler colonialism. While it is clear that settler colonialism continues to constrain how Indigenous peoples can be meaningfully included within queer service provision, the stories below provide a more detailed account as to how Indigenous exclusion manifests. In particular, I take up the stories of non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers as deflections of responsibility—as justifications for service providers to not include or address Indigeneity within their respective organizations.

#### **7.4. Deflections of Responsibility**

In this section, I show how non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers can remain complicit in white settler colonialism through acts of deflection. Cory, a 33-year-old white queer cisman, explained how the gesture of not knowing is often reflected in queer organizations' desire to research Indigenous peoples and their respective needs.

Q: Did you know that approximately 50% of the people who come to the drop-in are Aboriginal? Right now the organization is trying to talk to Aboriginal people to see what they want and need.

A: People are also researched to death, especially Aboriginal peoples. Sometimes they are not. Sometimes they are and it is a little frustrating to hear that we still do not know what they want. You would like to think that there are some answers out there and that we have a sense of what their needs are. Maybe we do not and if that is the case that seems pretty pathetic at this point that we have no sense of their needs. I would like to think that they are researched enough that we can start moving to do something. I mean every organization wants to do their own damn research, their own needs assessments, and their own environmental scans, which is fine. It is part of the work that they have to do I guess. (13/01/08, Transcript 5, p. 10, Toronto, ON)

Cory's narrative connects to the neo-liberalization of service provision whereby organizations routinely conduct research among their particular demographic populations as a way to understand the particular needs of "the community." Specifically, Cory indicated that queer organizations generally seem to be unaware of the particular needs of Indigenous peoples who are accessing services. Doing a needs assessment, environmental scan, and/or focus group with Indigenous service users can easily reinscribe settler colonialism by requiring Indigenous peoples to educate non-Indigenous service providers on their respective needs. What remains clear is that these acts of research require non-Indigenous service providers to delay engaging with the urgent needs of Indigenous peoples that they continue to work with and support, and the work Indigenous-led organizations are already doing in the city. All of this "research" maintains the perception that non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers (and queer service provision) are doing good work since they produce themselves to be interested and invested in the needs of Indigenous peoples and communities.

Ryan, a 34-year-old white gay cisman with Indigenous ancestry, discussed how when working with Indigenous-led organizations, non-Indigenous service providers evoke an all too common rhetoric of "tell me what to do."

There is this new funding we had, [and] we identified Aboriginal people as a population we want to work with in Toronto. I set up a meeting with [a Indigenous-led organization] which went really well, but it has not moved forward from there. I sent out an email to [another Indigenous-led organization] to see if someone from there would want to sit in and talk about if we [can] set up a satellite. However, we would need to know where would we do it, how would we do outreach, and what would it look like. There was no response and it was frustrating because you participate in these working groups and advisory bodies. I think [this Indigenous-led organization] is amazing. I think that my understanding of their organization was a little bit limited and so it might not have been the best fit. But they gave me some great starting points. Yet, the ball was completely dropped! How much am I going to push to say: "tell us what to do." (13/03/09, Transcript 23, p. 4, Toronto, ON)

Ryan discussed an interaction with an Indigenous-led organization that surrounded the best ways to support and meet the needs of Indigenous service users who would be accessing a newly developed initiative. In particular, Ryan's organization named Indigenous peoples as one such group that they wanted to support as a "priority population." However, as Ryan indicated, the inclusion of Indigenous peoples required his organization and its workers to address a gap within their work, and their lack of knowledge pertaining to where Indigenous peoples in Toronto congregate and where the initiative could be located within the City of Toronto in order to achieve maximum results—after all, funders want to know that their money is being spent appropriately. Ryan had assumed that partnering with these Indigenous-led organizations would mean that those organizations would provide him with support. Yet, he indicated that, in his opinion, the Indigenous-led organizations "dropped the ball" as they did not respond to further requests for support or meetings pertaining to the initiative. Ryan's narrative provides the context to consider how responsibility is evoked. Here, the responsibility to directly engage with Indigeneity is once again placed onto the backs of Indigenous service providers and Indigenous-led organizations. By indicating that the Indigenous-led organizations have "dropped the ball," queer and trans service providers are able to easily wash their hands of the historical processes of white settler colonialism that continue to require Indigenous peoples and communities to "do the work." Ryan's narrative illustrates how Indigenous-led organizations that reject the subservient position pinned onto them vis-à-vis their Indigeneity become, and remain, in the eyes of queer and trans service providers, unaccountable.

Ronald, a 32-year-old white gay cisman, talked with me about his uncertainty around knowing how queer service provision could be culturally appropriate and relevant for Indigenous service users.

Q: Do you have Aboriginal service users at your agency?

A: I do not know if I know enough about the specific needs of Aboriginal peoples who are accessing community services. I would hope that the shape that they would take would be one that represents those very specific needs. I am sure a lot of it would look very much the same. (13/02/09, Transcript 14, p. 6–7, Toronto, ON)

Ronald illustrated that he does not have enough knowledge of the “specific needs” of Indigenous peoples in Canada to be able to imagine queer service delivery differently. Although Ronald indicated that he does not have the appropriate or necessary knowledge of Indigenous peoples and their needs, he was able to articulate his feeling that the organization’s overall structure would not change significantly in meeting those needs. In his expression of “not knowing,” Ronald’s narrative acts as a deflection of his responsibility. Thus, Ronald’s narrative provides an opportunity to consider his and others’ complicity in on-going settler colonial projects through a seemingly innocent admission regarding not having enough knowledge.

Similarly, Aaron, a 24-year-old white queer cisman, discussed his own trepidation around engaging with Indigeneity within the queer work he does. As he shared with me:

If something comes up that I can read or educate myself on, it [Aboriginal issues] is always something that I try to tackle. It is also something that I would feel, not uncomfortable, but to speak for because it is an experience that I definitely could not describe in all of the complications that come with it. I am not close to anyone who identifies as Aboriginal or who has come from that background so it is not even something I can say that I know someone who has had this experience. It is something that I really am interested in and also that I am hesitant, completely hesitant to speak to. (13/04/23, Transcript 36, p. 5, Toronto, ON)

Aaron shared with me his hesitation in speaking to Indigenous issues within the work he does. Although he works to educate himself, due to identifying as non-Indigenous, he is uncomfortable with taking on Indigenous issues. Aaron also spoke of the lack of connection he has to Indigenous peoples within his personal life, which, in his estimation, is another reason why he is uncomfortable with addressing Indigenous content. Aaron’s narrative illustrates an active

manifestation of complicity in settler colonialism, particularly in his exclusion of Indigeneity as an appropriate topic of discussion for himself and the work that he does. Not speaking to or addressing Indigeneity can easily naturalize the notion that Indigenous peoples only exist in the past—and, if they are seen to be present, their existences become unworthy of meaningful inclusion and disconnected from queer service provision.

In addressing the silencing of Indigenous content within queer service provision, Lisa, a 46-year-old mixed-race cislesbian, spoke to the fact that people of colour and diasporic people, when accessing newcomer services more generally, are rarely educated on Indigenous issues. As she shared:

When I first came to Canada I knew nothing about Aboriginal folks. Most of what I learned sort of by the way and to this day if you were to ask me to speak to the difference between Metis for instance and Inuit I would not know what you are talking about. I educated myself. As a newcomer, it is safe for me to say that there are not many programs that taught me about who was here before I was here. (13/01/15, Transcript 9, p. 1, Toronto, ON)

Within the context of her own experiences and as a queer service provider of colour providing services for queer and trans diasporic people and queer and trans people of colour, Lisa pointed out that when she landed in Canada, she did not have a strong understanding of Indigenous peoples here, and as a result, had to educate herself. As she illustrated, queer organizations rarely take on or educate newcomers—people of colour—about Indigeneity, let alone about the effects of white settler colonialism in Canada. Upon coming to this realization of Indigenous exclusion within queer service provision, Lisa spoke with me about taking it upon herself, in the work that she does within queer service provision, to provide queer and trans service users of colour and queer and trans diasporic service users with more information surrounding 2-Spiritedness. Thus, Lisa takes it upon herself to act against the erasure of Indigenous peoples and include 2-Spiritedness within her workshops so that queer and trans service users of colour and queer and

trans diasporic service users cannot claim that they do not have knowledge of the Indigenous peoples here in Canada.

Unfortunately, many white research participants indicated that they felt uncomfortable teaching about Indigenous issues and content, especially when discussing 2-Spiritedness. Robert, a 32-year-old white queer trans man, and Josh, a 53-year-old South Asian queer cisman, both indicated that they are reluctant to do so for different reasons. As Robert discussed:

I am very reluctant to throw 2-Spirit into [workshops] because we do not actually have any resources developed there specifically—2-Spirit resources. Another example is we have a publication on [xxx] but that actually do[es] not talk about bi-people or queer people who are outside of homonormative frameworks or Trans people. So why are we calling the pamphlet LGBTQ—it might be LGBT, but why are we calling it LGBT if there is nothing about T [trans] in there or B [bisexual]? So if we are going to throw 2-Spirit in there without actually doing any work on that I do not think that is responsible and I do not think it is okay. (13/02/07, Transcript 13, p. 28, Toronto, ON)

Robert's narrative describes his particular organization as not having the means to adequately support 2-Spirited peoples, and how, consequently, he is reluctant to include 2-Spirit in workshops, particularly as it would seem tokenistic. In connecting other non-homonormative identities to 2-Spiritedness, Robert indicated that there are very few resources available to bisexual people, and none for 2-Spirited people, at his respective organization. Robert voiced the opinion that his organization would be irresponsible if they included 2-Spirit without having the appropriate resources in place. His narrative thus speaks to the complexities of whose subject positions are valued within queer service provision, and the difficulty in meeting the needs of bisexual service users, let alone 2-Spirited ones. Robert's narrative provides the context to consider how institutional barriers, such as resources, prevent non-Indigenous queer and trans service users from engaging with or including 2-Spiritedness. Although Robert is very critical of his organization's structure, he can easily remain complicit in white settler colonialism, insofar

as he deflects the responsibility of inclusion onto his organization, rather than taking it on himself in the work that he does.

Additionally, Josh discussed how 2-Spirit is included in a basic way in his work as a way to illustrate the diversity within queer and trans communities in Toronto. As he explained:

I just explain what 2-Spirited means and that is it. We do not go beyond that because I feel my cultural competency level . . . I cannot be the expert to tell them what 2-Spirit Aboriginal communities mean. [They have experienced] hundred of years of cultural genocide and all that kind of stuff, so I feel if I was there with a First Nations or 2-Spirited person, Aboriginal person that it might be respectful. (13/02/25, Transcript 17, p. 5, Toronto, ON)

Using the framework of cultural competency, Josh told me that he does not want to be placed into an expert role and expected to educate workshop participants on 2-Spiritedness. In his estimation, the only appropriate way to address 2-Spiritedness in a culturally competent way would be to work alongside a 2-Spirited person. Josh also expressed wanting to make sure that he is respectful of the routine violence that 2-Spirited people experience within their everyday lives. However, in adopting a culturally competent approach to educating workshop participants about 2-Spiritedness, and by requiring a 2-Spirited person to educate them alongside of him, Josh can easily place Indigenous peoples into a subservient position where they are required to educate non-Indigenous peoples on their experiences of gendered and sexual diversity. As Cannon (2012) has suggested, the most respectful way to address Indigenous issues is to ask diasporic peoples and white settlers alike to take action against colonial dominance and its reparations. Taking action inevitably starts with inviting non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers to consider their own relationships to settler colonialism and its continual impact on how they imagine queer service provision with 2-Spirit/Indigenous peoples and speak to these issues as non-experts.



Some research participants shared with me that, although they understand 2-Spirit is an appropriate category to include to showcase the spectrum of diversity within queer and trans communities in Toronto, they ultimately just do not have enough time to do so. Jacob, a 20-year-old Portuguese gay/queer cisman, discussed how time itself can be used as a deflection and stated: “When we do workshops and someone says ‘why don’t we talk about intersex or pansexual people or 2-Spirit people’ the staff person who are there will be like ‘we just do not have enough time’” (13/03/13, Transcript 24, p. 9, Toronto, ON). Jacob’s narrative addresses how time becomes one of the limiting factors in engaging with often marginalized identities, like 2-Spiritedness, within a workshop. Moreover, Aaron, a 24-year-old white queer cisman, who works at the same organization as Jacob, stated: “In the workshops, we tackle whatever the participants bring up. Unless it [2-Spirit] comes up specifically from the participants it is often something that we do not talk about” (13/04/23, Transcript 36, p. 6, Toronto, ON).

Although Aaron and Jacob are trained in 2-Spiritedness, unless it is brought up by workshop participants, as workshop facilitators they “do not talk about” it. Their narratives speak volumes to the ways in which certain identities are privileged, and indeed become necessary to know/talk about. Here, 2-Spiritedness is removed from the workshop space entirely or at best rendered supplementary to the “core curriculum,” which centres the discussions of gender and sexuality, disconnecting them from other interlocking systems of oppression. The privileging of more safe and/or normalized understandings of gender and sexuality can play into service providers’ complicity in white supremacist and settler colonial projects. Through repetitive exclusions of particular marginalized categories of identity, workshop facilitators produce the notion that certain identities, like 2-Spiritedness, are not as necessary as others for understanding gender and sexuality in Canada.

Additionally, Leslie, a 27-year-old Mestiza trans woman, discussed how the workshop time continues to limit the kind of depth facilitators can engage in.

Usually the workshop goes between three to four hours and you can talk about the issues. Sometimes we get two hours or worse—one hour, less than an hour sometimes. That is worse because you cannot talk about all of the issues in such a condensed form. Mostly we are trying to make them longer workshops. We have gotten requests sometimes from different groups we go to frequently, they want to talk more about Aboriginal/2-Spirited stuff, more about the history of trans people around the world and more of that cultural stuff. Sadly when we do these short workshops, you exclude that part of the workshop, because it is not always essential. (13/01/04, Transcript 4, p. 7, Toronto, ON)

Leslie outlined how excess time can often benefit workshop facilitators who want to go into depth surrounding other marginalized areas of gender and sexuality. However, although her particular organization does try to encourage longer workshops, Leslie said that sometimes that is impossible. As a result, “non-essential” materials and information are often left out, such as Indigenous/2-Spirit content—even when such content is desired by both workshop facilitators and participants. Leslie’s story showcases how non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers can use time as a way to dismiss, and indeed exclude, particular materials that are perceived to be cumbersome to include.

In his discussion with me about what happens within a workshop, Mark, a 33-year-old South Asian queer cisman, stated:

When people ask what 2-Spirit means, a lot of them have no idea, like no concept [of it] at all. That being said, when we do our standard workshops, 2-Spirit often does not come up. I would say that Aboriginal people would be a priority sort of as a concept. We want to support everyone but in terms of actually speaking about 2-Spirit identities, Aboriginal peoples and cultures . . . it is horrible to say . . . it is only when we have more time to do it when we can delve into further things. The ways in which homophobia is experienced by people in public schools usually has nothing to do with Aboriginal peoples in a very direct way. Most of the groups that we speak to are first and second generation immigrants from other places. We do not necessarily have a lot of First Nations people who are in our workshops. (13/03/15, Transcript 26, p. 6, Toronto, ON)

Mark's story connects to the points made by Jacob, Aaron, and Leslie insofar as 2-Spiritedness is included in workshops, but mostly when workshop attendees ask for more information. As Mark indicated, 2-Spirit is typically a category few workshop attendees are familiar with. Yet, even though Mark was able to articulate that 2-Spiritedness is something that workshop attendees would like to know more about, the structure of the workshop prohibits workshop facilitators from going into depth and/or constrains their ability to centralize 2-Spiritedness. Mark's narrative points to how workshops are designed to centre particular normatively white strands of anti-homophobic education, and how 2-Spiritedness is often left out unless it is specifically asked to be touched upon.

Although Mark's narrative addresses the temporal realities attached to workshop delivery and its content, he also provided another reason for why 2-Spiritedness is erased from the workshop: "the ways in which homophobia is experienced by people in public schools usually has nothing to do with Aboriginal peoples in a very direct way" (13/03/15, Transcript 26, p. 6, Toronto, ON). Mark's narrative explicitly gestures toward an inability for Indigenous peoples to experience homophobia in public school, suggesting that they can only ever be imagined as straight. Mark's narrative thus points to the ways in which Indigenous 2-Spirit, queer, and trans peoples are assumed to not attend or not be visible in Toronto high schools. This gesture toward Indigenous erasure presents high schools as a site where the needs of "first and second-generation youth" are prioritized, and, by extension, shows how Indigenous 2-Spirit, queer, and trans youth continue to be produced as absent from both the high school and the workshops being conducted. Mark was able to generate these all too common perceptions—"we do not necessarily have a lot of First Nations people who are in our workshops" (13/03/15, Transcript 26, p. 6, Toronto, ON)—within the context of queer service provision. Although Mark's

organization gathers demographic information at the end of each presentation pertaining to the workshop attendees, the gathering of information does not account for workshop attendees' non-disclosures. Thus, the easy removal of Indigenous bodies from workshop and high school spaces acts to normalize a white settler culture within queer service provision.

Indicating that there is not enough time to adequately address Indigenous content or peoples within a workshop can easily reinscribe Indigenous peoples and nations as unworthy of adequate inclusion, once again furthering the naturalization of white settler colonialism. As a result, 2-Spirit and other identity categories that do not fall within the normative white gay and lesbian politics in Canada have been removed from the educational initiatives of queer service provision due to the perception of not having adequate time. While the exclusion of Indigenous experiences within the queer and trans communities can easily naturalize the effects of white settler colonialism and the complicity of non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers, some research participants discussed some of the changes they would like to make, or are making, in regard to developing and maintaining more culturally appropriate services within their queer organizations.

As Tara, a 29-year-old white genderqueer, shared in response to my question:

Q: What shape would your program take if it were designed to address the needs of Aboriginal people?

A: I think there would [need to] be 2-Spirited folks on staff. I think more space would need to be taken up by queer Indigenous folks on how therapeutic work looks [in] Indigenous contexts. It would be more visible. There would be a better understanding of it among non-Indigenous folks who do counselling work. Then [there would be an] understanding if you are a non-Native person who is doing counselling work with a Native client and it is not working for them or it is not reflective of their experience, that you know that they have every right to seek those services elsewhere. [Counsellors] have a responsibility to do that and help them [Native clients] in doing that. (13/05/06, Transcript 39, p. 10, Toronto, ON)

Tara's narrative points to some of the positive outcomes that could arise out of hiring a 2-Spirit-identified counsellor within their queer organization. For Tara, having an Indigenous presence within the organization would ensure that Indigeneity would be visible and centralized within the queer programming the organization offers. Additionally, having an Indigenous presence within the organization would allow for non-Indigenous service providers, if/when having difficulty with their Indigenous service users, to send them to the 2-Spirit/Indigenous counsellor. Tara's desire is ultimately to hire Indigenous/2-Spirited people within the organization—an act that recognizes that Indigenous/2-Spirited people's needs are not being met. Although Indigenous hiring should take place as a step to subvert and challenge the normative white settler culture of queer service provision, the responsibility to do Indigeneity and Indigenous culture is placed onto the backs of Indigenous service providers. Doing so keeps non-Indigenous queer and trans counsellors off the hook and furthers their complicity in white settler colonial projects by placing the responsibility to do Indigeneity onto the Indigenous counsellor.

Finally, Candy, a 27-year-old South Asian genderqueer, illustrated that a desire to include Indigenous peoples remains among white queer and trans service providers and the queer organizations that they work within. As they explained:

I think we need to talk about colonialistic intent, you know, moving programming toward what the colonialistic queers want, making all of these things and prescribing them that way. I think Aboriginal specific programming can be great, at the same time I wonder what the place would be of [xxx organization]? I think the knee jerk reaction for us is “yes, we have to, we have to do that because of inclusion and all of the other.” Yet, as a QPOC [queer person of colour] I would say that sometimes the deal is that you give money to places that are already doing work with 2-Spirited people. There is 2-Spirited [People of the 1st Nations]. But, 2-Spirited [People of the 1st Nations] has no funding, they have no money, and this is the most highly funded LGBT organization in the world. (13/01/15, Transcript 8, p. 11, Toronto, ON)

Candy's narrative illustrates how there is often a desire coming from white queer and trans service providers to invite diversity and difference into queer service provision. For normatively

white queer organizations, the inclusion of Indigenous peoples would make the organization appear more inclusive. However, Candy also directed such a notion of inclusivity toward a “colonialistic intent” that subsumes Indigenous difference within queer service provision. Candy thus offered a queer of colour critique to queer service provision that would not require Indigenous peoples accessing services to do the work, suggesting that organizations, such as the one they work for, can provide smaller Indigenous-led organizations like *2-Spirits* with some money in order to better serve their own population. Instead of including for the sake of including, Candy suggested that the best way to support Indigenous peoples is to support already existing organizations that are financially struggling. Candy’s narrative points to the barriers posed to queer service provision and its providers insofar as endeavours of solidarity aim to bring Indigeneity into an already normatively white system. Providing financial support to smaller Indigenous-led organizations would, in effect, challenge the normativity of white settler colonialism embedded within queer service provision.

The narratives offered by the research participants have provided a context to consider how non-Indigenous peoples can deflect their responsibility in white supremacist and settler colonial processes, practices, and projects. Although some white queer and trans service providers try to engage with responsibility by practicing decolonization or broadening the narrow version of sexual health within queer service provision, the structure itself warrants further investigation as a structure that condones Indigenous difference being included and yet simultaneously excluded. Some queer service providers of colour showed how their practices of queer service provision work toward rupturing the normativity of whiteness within queer service provision. And, although some queer service providers of colour connected their own experiences of racism and colonialism to those of Indigenous peoples, some did slip into

complicity. However, following Thobani (2007), I argue that larger processes and practices of white settler multiculturalism in Canada encourage non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers to invite difference into queer service provision while effectively erasing it. As such, non-Indigenous service providers are often scripted into (often unknowingly) sustaining the logics of white settler colonialism through their attempts to foster inclusivity and diversity within queer service provision.

As a result, I call attention to the (proclaimed) innocence of non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers as an act of deflection that diverts much needed attention away from an analysis of white settler colonialism within the context of queer service provision. These deflections of responsibility are heightened within the “partnerships” queer organizations have with Indigenous-led organizations, insofar as they recreate a settler colonial history, whereby relationships are one-sided due to attempts to control Indigenous service users, service providers, and organizations. This continues through the attention that is given to Indigenous inclusion without any real or meaningful discussions surrounding the nature of normative whiteness and the settler colonialism embedded within queer service provision.

## **7.5. Conclusion**

The aforementioned narratives offered by the non-Indigenous queer and trans research participants provide a context from which to theorize how white supremacy and settler colonialism are sustained within queer service provision in downtown Toronto. As I have argued, white settler colonialism is naturalized when white queer and trans service providers centre the trauma they and others like them experience. Universalizing an understanding of the trauma all queer people experience does away with the complexities and interlocking nature of oppression. Moreover, centralizing a universal experience of trauma that all queer and trans

people experience can allow for queer and trans service users of colour and 2-Spirited, queer, and trans Indigenous service users to be folded into the larger structure of queer service provision. Here, the singular focus on gender and sexuality perpetuates queer service provision's sustaining of itself as normatively white and gives it control over how particular services should be run. Although the mandate of queer service provision is to be inclusive of everyone, particular practices of non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers warrant further investigation.

In particular, deflections such as “I do not know” or “we do not have enough time” provide non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers an opportunity to normalize whiteness within queer service provision insofar as the actual inclusion of Indigeneity becomes additive or at best supplementary to understandings of gendered and sexual politics as singular. These deflections provide an opportunity to consider how non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers can distance themselves and the work that they do from any harm. In effect, these deflections once again re-centre the whiteness and settler colonialism embedded within queer service provision to further colonial relationships with Indigenous service users, service providers, and organizations. The research participants' narratives provide the context to consider the urgency in incorporating a white settler colonial analytic within queer service provision that ruptures the notion that white queer and trans people are innocent in the oppression of people of colour and Indigenous peoples. This perception of innocence is damaging to the many queer and trans peoples accessing services in downtown Toronto.

A hierarchy of value or care is maintained within normatively white queer service provision whereby Indigenous peoples, nations, and knowledge systems, as well as the experiences of people of colour, are deemed worthy of meaningful inclusion only when such inclusion rests within a framework of diversity and white settler multiculturalism. The resulting



phenomena ensures that white supremacy and settler colonialism remain intact, by placing service providers of colour and Indigenous service providers into subservient positions. Although whiteness remains normalized within queer service provision, both queer and trans people of colour and 2-Spirited, queer, and trans Indigenous peoples are addressing, subverting, and challenging it within their work and personal life. However, the processes and practices of queer service provision continue to operationalize and naturalize the effects of white settler colonialism.

Thus, I move now to a broader series of conclusions about how the naturalizing of white supremacy and settler colonialism continues to constrain queer service delivery, even when white queer and trans providers attempt to help “other queer and trans people like them” and appear good. As it is the potential complicity and simultaneous settler decolonization of white queer and trans service providers that must be interrogated, since they can either maintain white supremacy and settler colonialism or build upon the critiques of people of colour and Indigenous peoples, I offer how an analysis of white settler colonialism can interrogate how Indigenous peoples are routinely erased, and how the lives of people of colour become assailable within and outside of the confines of queer service provision.

## **Chapter 8**

### **Toward a Practice of Settler Decolonization in Queer Service Provision**

#### **8.1. Introduction**

This dissertation has explored how the structure of queer service provision continues to invest in, sustain, and naturalize white settler colonialism. In order to expose the everyday effects of white supremacy and settler colonialism, I have sought to theorize the connections between critical race feminism and the ever-growing, interdisciplinary field of settler colonial studies, by situating this dissertation research within an in-depth interview study. I engaged with the stories and narratives of non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers in order to consider how white supremacy and settler colonialism are normalized within the context of queer service provision. I interviewed forty-three queer and trans service providers about their perceptions of working in the queer service sector in downtown Toronto, Canada, and about how diversity, anti-racism, and anti-colonialism are practiced. The interview data became the primary means of engaging with how, and under what conditions, white settler colonialism remains naturalized within queer service provision.

In this work, I make use of the scholarship offered by critical race feminists, Indigenous scholars, and white critics to challenge the quotidian nature of white supremacy and settler colonialism within the context of queer service provision. Here, I contend that the analytical referent must shift away from achieving better, more diverse queer services, and toward deeper analysis of how white supremacy and settler colonialism are used to erase Indigenous peoples, assimilate people of colour, and produce white settlers as proper national subjects. The narratives offered by the research participants provide an avenue to consider how white supremacy and settler colonialism are being challenged by some white settler service providers, and indeed,

service providers of colour. The narratives of the research participants of colour actively provide challenges, although sometimes sparse, to the normative whiteness of queer service provision through active subversions. Although most of their critiques of whiteness are not specifically located within the settler colonial context of Canada, their narratives provide an opportunity to consider how critiques of white supremacy, if properly directed or guided by other people of colour or Indigenous peoples, could connect to critiques of settler colonialism. Thus, this dissertation research has an avenue to consider how some white queer and trans service providers evict Indigenous bodies from the spaces of care, and also absolve themselves from taking responsibility for histories of white supremacist and settler colonial violence in which they too are implicated. In doing so, I ask non-Indigenous service providers, particularly in mobilizing a helping ethos, to consider how the foundation upon which their organizations rest can easily maintain white supremacy and settler colonialism.

What follows will be an exploration of the particular conclusions I can draw from conducting this dissertation research. Firstly, I provide my key findings of why the processes and practices of queer service provision are necessary to explore. Further, I situate the findings from this research in the form of research and practice recommendations that attempt to distance this dissertation away from white supremacist and settler colonial articulations of help and prescriptive measures of goodness. I conclude by illustrating why queer service provision must be interrogated insofar as Indigenous peoples can no longer be imagined to be outside of the confines of queer service provision. More specifically, I address why it is necessary for non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers to understand their roles and responsibilities on Indigenous lands, and to work toward responsible relationships and solidarity endeavours that support the struggles of people of colour and Indigenous peoples.

## 8.2. Key Findings

The foundation of contemporary queer service provision is deeply connected to the historical legacy of service delivery, which was originally set up to deride, erase, and constrain Indigenous life, and assimilate and repudiate people of colour. As a result, contemporary queer service provision continues to reinscribe the whiteness of queerness and simultaneously produce Indigenous to exist as difference. Thus, queer service provision's singular focus of gender and sexuality, disconnected from other interlocking systems of oppression, can be of a great disservice to other social movements (e.g., Idle No More). Understanding white supremacy and settler colonialism as being only something that can be pursued by Indigenous peoples and people of colour continues to harm Indigenous knowledge systems, community formations, and forms of decolonization. By engaging with the possibilities of solidarity and the responsibility of non-Indigenous peoples, the practices and processes of queer service provision that naturalize and normalize white supremacy and settler colonialism can be challenged, subverted, and named.

### 8.2.1. *Propelled into Crisis and Care*

The structure of queer service provision invites non-Indigenous service providers to participate in naturalizing white supremacy and settler colonialism through particular constraints placed upon them—specifically, neo-liberal models of care and ideologies of multicultural diversity. White supremacy and settler colonialism remain naturalized when queer organizations acquire and maintain state-sanctioned funding and desire to be more inclusive of “diverse” or “target” populations. It is these structural constraints that have made queer service delivery into what it is today, where it has been set up to care for only certain forms of queerness with the consequence that Indigenous peoples and people of colour are erased from these white spaces of belonging or worth, and thus must receive services elsewhere.

As a result, queer service provision remains at once in a state of perpetual crisis and care. The crisis of queer service provision propels white service providers into addressing and defending why queer service provision is still necessary in Canada when normative LGBT politics frames progress for queer and trans people through law (e.g., same-sex marriage and adoption rights). Moreover, these services that care for queer and trans people centralize gender and sexuality as the primary or sole referent, which typically provides white queer and trans service providers an opportunity to deflect the fact that their experiences and work contribute to the oppression of Others. As a result, the crisis and care of service delivery re-orient white queer and trans service providers into normalizing white supremacy and settler colonialism. While white queer and trans service providers might evoke their experiences of trauma or pain as a way to distance themselves from how they contribute to the oppression of Others, despite pressure or constraints imposed by Canadian citizenship and multiculturalism, queer service providers of colour are working against and subverting the normativity of whiteness within their respective organizations.

Notably, the perpetual state of crisis that queer service provision is in, as well as its constant negotiation of care, also provides non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers the opportunity to deflect much needed attention away from queer service provision and toward acquiring and maintaining funding. After all, the majority of funding utilized within queer service provision comes from the municipal, provincial, and national funders, one-off project grants, and, ever more increasingly, private donors. As a result, queer service provision and queer and trans service providers alike are invited into participating in the white settler colonial project. Their acceptance of this invitation, in their hope of creating an emancipatory queer future for queer and trans people, further results in their complicity in maintaining particular

funding structures and settler homonational articulations of queer activism that are subsumed within white supremacist, settler colonial, and neo-liberal logics. In effect, the perpetual crisis and care of queer service delivery allows white service providers to centralize normatively white understandings of gender and sexuality as the most important and therefore the most deserving of care. As a result, queer service provision and its white service providers typically do not consider how the effects of white supremacy and settler colonialism are worthy of being a crisis. Instead, the crisis and care of queer service delivery and its singular focus on gender and sexuality can ensure that whiteness remains centralized. This approach to queer service delivery, in its centralization of whiteness, has dire consequences, especially in maintaining and contributing to the erasure and assimilation of Indigenous peoples and people of colour.

### ***8.2.2. Reinscribing White Settler Colonial Relations through Caring and Helping Discourses***

While there are particular structural constraints placed onto queer service provision, the helping narratives and articulations of Indigenous inclusion coming from non-Indigenous service providers warrant further interrogation. White queer and trans service providers are compelled to work and volunteer within the queer service sector and are concerned with helping other “queer and trans people like me” in not experiencing the harm of heterosexism, cissexism, and homophobia in their daily lives. However, due to this desire for—and ultimately the creation of—a queer future that “gets better” for “queer and trans people like me,” Indigenous queer, trans, and 2-Spirited people, as well as queer and trans people of colour, continue to be unimaginable within white queer and trans service providers’ understandings of “like me.” Thus, queer service delivery produces the white service users as most deserving of care by positioning Indigenous peoples as unimaginable, unworthy of care, and at times, too difficult to care for.

When Indigenous peoples enter into queer service provisional contexts, white queer and trans service providers require Indigenous peoples to be represented through white stereotypes of Indigeneity. If Indigenous peoples are not represented as such, they remain unimaginable. Thus, the stories offered by the research participants provide the context to consider how constructing Indigenous peoples as “problems” can keep analysis of white supremacy and settler colonialism far away from queer service provision when service providers work with individual Indigenous people. White supremacy and settler colonialism work within queer service provision to further the whiteness of queer service provision and produce white queer and trans service users as the most deserving of care. As a result, contemporary queer service provision remains haunted by the historical effects of white supremacy and settler colonialism that make themselves present today. Here, Indigenous peoples are once again, as historic and compulsory under settler colonialism, being relocated to spaces of marginality, where the problem is located in the bodies and minds of (individual) Indigenous peoples, rather than seen as a consequence of their on-going colonization.

### ***8.2.3. Inclusion and Diversity for Whom?***

White supremacy and settler colonialism are maintained and naturalized within queer service provision through some queer and trans service providers’ deflections of responsibility. These deflections can rest within white queer and trans service providers’ own trepidation with engaging meaningfully with Indigenous peoples and communities. Thus, the ways in which Indigenous peoples are included and represented within queer service provision cannot be reduced to culture alone. Moreover, some queer organizations are understanding that their services might be limited and thus invite Indigenous difference to fill a needed gap. However, two 2-Spirited/Indigenous research participants critiqued queer service provision as maintaining

controlling, colonial relationships with Indigenous-led organizations. As a result, the practices and processes of queer service provision continue to operationalize white supremacy and settler colonialism through the routine erasure of Indigenous peoples and their seeming assimilation or removal from spaces of belonging or worth.

It is important to also articulate that queer and trans service providers of colour may not fall into the trap of deflection, as their lived realities and critiques of white supremacy make it so the action they engage in can operate alongside the action of Indigenous peoples. Within the context of normatively white queer service provision, queer and trans service providers of colour are often required to take on race and anti-racist endeavours. Requiring queer and trans service providers of colour to “do the work” is an act of deflection by whites, whereby they wipe their hands clean from their responsibility in a critical race analysis—let alone a settler colonial one. Although some queer and trans service providers of colour indicated during this research a complete hesitation in engaging with Indigenous content or cultures for fear of appropriation, white queer and trans service providers typically evoked narratives of diversity and inclusion that fold the bodies of people of colour and Indigenous peoples into a white settler colonial culture.

### **8.3. Making Connections and Asking Questions**

I have illustrated that the white settler colonial culture of queer service provision is naturalized to erase Indigenous peoples and assimilate people of colour. In acknowledging this, and in doing this research, as a white settler critic of white settler colonialism and thus responsible to both people of colour and Indigenous peoples, I must be constantly aware of how I routinely and often unknowingly participate in sustaining the white supremacy and settler colonialism about which I write. At first, without any critical engagement, I was compelled to provide educators, service providers, administrators, and volunteers with some recommendations



that could be incorporated into their organizational structure and/or practice approach. However, after much thought, I concluded that such recommendations might very well be an opportunity for me to reassert myself as a white cismale with complete authority over how white supremacy and settler colonialism should be challenged within the context of queer service provision. As a result, below I illustrate how white settlers can collectively address, subvert, and challenge the everyday workings of white settler colonialism in the form of additional questions. This is my attempt to remain accountable to both people of colour and Indigenous peoples and present my work responsibly as a reach toward my own (and others like me) settler decolonization.

As I have argued, white queer and trans people must start to engage in consciousness-raising endeavours that foreground their complicity in sustaining white settler colonialism.

However, acknowledging complicity requires taking responsibility (Applebaum, 2011).

Although I make use of critical white studies scholars such as Applebaum (2011), along with Waldorf (2012), I contend that white complicity pedagogy does not explicitly address histories of settler colonialism and what they might mean in terms of complicity and responsibility. As Waldorf (2012) argued, “complicity in settler colonialism is also a matter of existing or being on land that was and continues to be stolen from Indigenous peoples” (p. 39). Like Waldorf (2012), I highlight this shortcoming in Applebaum’s (2011) work and suggest that theorizations of white settler complicity and responsibility must explicitly engage with and address white supremacy and how it is connected to settler colonialism. My dissertation fills such a gap by showing how white queer and trans service providers move toward innocence and deflect their responsibility in projects of white supremacy and settler colonialism.

As a result, I, along with Cannon (2012) and Smith (2013), argue that if white settlers in particular are to understand how they are complicit in white settler colonialism, then we have a

responsibility to address its effects through action-oriented strategies that attempt to expose and subvert the quotidian nature of such oppressions and meaningfully support Indigenous peoples (and Indigenous-led organizations), as well as people of colour (and people of colour-led organizations), in order to actively and effectively decolonize on both grandiose and minute scales. For white queer and trans service providers and educators, this means acknowledging that there are “few pure victims and oppressors” (Collins, 2003, p. 332)—as such, evoking our own experiences of trauma or pain cannot bring us to innocence in this matter. As I have argued throughout this entire dissertation, white queer and trans subjects must consider how their queerness is operationalized through their other interlocking identities. This means understanding that one’s sexuality or gender identity is already operationalized through one’s own whiteness. We (white queer settlers) must start to develop a critical awareness of how systemic oppressions—particularly white supremacy, neo-liberalism, and settler colonialism—are operationalized within modern LGBTQ politics, of which queer service provision is a part, in order to ensure that white settlers have the imaginative capacity for settler decolonization.

Following Cannon and Sunseri (2011), Razack (1998), and St. Denis (2011a), I contend that on a practical and pedagogical level, this (new) knowledge of white supremacy and settler colonialism cannot be meaningfully addressed within anti-oppression and cultural competency frameworks. Although these frameworks can be useful in providing an introductory base from which to acknowledge and address oppression within contemporary social life, they have the potential to be reductive. Instead, I think it is important for service providers and educators to foreground their work and learning within a white settler colonial analytic, and I contend that such processes can no longer be excluded from pedagogical and practice contexts. If we are to effectively decolonize and support Indigenous peoples’ resurgence in Canada, and support the

struggles of people of colour, we must dialogue and act against the contemporary ways in which white supremacy and settler colonialism is so naturalized. However, such learning does not always come easy, nor is it complementary to the queer service sector as it stands. As a result, addressing the ways in which white settler colonialism is made to be naturalized might mean a complete and utter overhaul of the queer service sector as we know it, by asking on analytical, pedagogical, and practice levels how we can re-imagine queerness and queer formation through an active engagement with an analysis of white settler colonialism.

In order for an analysis of white settler colonialism to occur within the context of queer service provision and service provision at large, I provide a series of questions in which I have found helpful in articulating how a settler decolonial pedagogy could be practiced. Although queer service provision remains normatively white despite the active subversions of white interlocutors, people of colour, and Indigenous peoples, much more can be done. I want to start the dialogue by suggesting that non-Indigenous service providers can practice differently. On pedagogical and practice levels, service providers can start to ask of themselves and their organizations the following:

- 1) How might I benefit from white supremacy and settler colonialism in Canada?
- 2) What kinds of action-oriented strategies could I employ to reduce, challenge, and/or subvert white supremacy and settler colonialism?
- 3) What kinds of organizations are already supporting the particular needs of Indigenous peoples and people of colour?
  - a) How might I (and my organization) get involved and/or support them?
- 4) If Indigenous peoples and organizations do not request or desire support from non-Indigenous peoples, how might non-Indigenous service providers start to incorporate a

analysis of white settler colonialism within their own practices?

It is these types of questions, and more, that non-Indigenous service providers can ask themselves so they can align their practices with those of Indigenous peoples and people of colour.

I also propose that questions such as the following might be asked (and answered):

- 1) Why do you (or your organization) desire to include Indigeneity into your practice and/or organization?
- 2) Are these particular inclusionary measures intended for Indigenous service users?
  - a) If so, how would you ensure that you and/or your organization incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing respectfully?
  - b) If not, why make the active attempt to include Indigeneity?
- 3) Have you consulted written materials for Indigenous-led organizations and/or scholars about the particular ways of knowing you wish to incorporate into your practice (e.g., healing circles)?
- 4) Is the particular inclusion of Indigenous ways of knowing supported by your organization?

These types of questions, and more, are important for non-Indigenous service providers to ask themselves, as a way to consider the risks and benefits of including Indigenous worldviews, which always risks being appropriative and culturally exploitive.

In regards to the land and naming/thanking the land, I have found it helpful to ask oneself:

- 1) Should Indigenous peoples be thanked for their land and generosity?
- 2) What kinds of affects occur when non-Indigenous peoples thank Indigenous peoples

for their land and generosity?

3) Is thanking Indigenous peoples for their land and generosity, and/or naming the land as contested, enough of an action?

4) In naming the land as contested, or thanking Indigenous peoples for their land, how does such an act support and/or act toward settler decolonization?

5) What would it mean for you to leave Turtle Island and give the land back to Indigenous peoples?

a) If this is unimaginable, how instead might you meaningfully support and act responsibly toward Indigenous peoples and people of colour, whose lives are constrained by white supremacy and settler colonialism?

These questions are important to consider, since they get at why such acts of symbolic inclusion occur, and how these particular acts support and/or impede upon Indigenous resurgence and decolonization.

It is clear that Indigenous peoples are accessing queer service provision. In order to adequately support Indigenous peoples and be understanding of their respective needs, I have found it helpful to ask (and answer) the following questions:

1) Why do you and/or your organization feel as though you need to hear or witness the voices of Indigenous peoples to move forward on making changes to service provision and/or programming?

a) Do you engage with qualitative and/or community based research that has already articulated the particular needs of urban Indigenous peoples?

2) Within your respective organization and position, what concerns have Indigenous peoples you have interacted with already voiced?

3) What (if any) initiatives exist in other organizations that support Indigenous service users?

These sets of questions are important to consider, insofar as the inclusionary endeavours mobilized by non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers may not necessarily add anything new to the already well developed pool of resources, and indeed, may deflect much needed analysis of the white settler colonialism within queer service provision. It is these questions that I have found it helpful to ask myself so that I meaningfully centre and practice settler decolonization within and outside of the academy and queer service provision. It is my hope that these questions spark more questioning and more opportunities for non-Indigenous peoples to consider how queer service provision can be challenged insofar as it operates from a historical legacy in maintaining and naturalizing the logics of white settler colonialism used to erase, manage, and contain Indigenous life and surveil and assimilate people of colour.

#### **8.4. Further Research**

In conducting this scholarship, I have discovered many avenues for further research. In sticking with an ethnographic investigation of the effects of white supremacy and settler colonialism within the context of queer service provision in Canada, this exploration could be further elaborated through a comparative analysis to acknowledge some of the potential limitations of this dissertation. Moreover, in light of discussing the investments non-Indigenous peoples have in, and their precarious relationships to, queer service provision, and to Canada at large, it will be imperative that I ask, probe, and discuss their relationships to Canadian citizenship more explicitly. Thus, my further research must address how such investments in citizenship play out on the ground—within and outside of queer service provision. While the role citizenship and belonging of non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers is important to

consider, it is equally significant to postulate how a discursive analysis could strengthen the analysis of the interviews and simultaneously account for the subtitles of resistance present within the work done to unsettle white settler colonialism within queer service provision.

Firstly, in order to conceptualize the ways in which white supremacy and settler colonialism remain pervasive within queer service provision, it would be interesting to examine the following questions:

- 1) How do non-Indigenous heterosexual-identified service providers come to perceive their roles and responsibilities in working with white queer and trans people, queer and trans people of colour, and queer, trans, and 2-Spirit Indigenous peoples within their respective organizations?
- 2) Are the settler decolonial interventions utilized by non-Indigenous heterosexual-identified service providers different to those of non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers?
- 3) How do non-Indigenous heterosexual-identified service providers understand allyship within queer and trans communities, Indigenous communities, and their overlaps?

Looking at connections between heterosexuality, allyship, white supremacy, and settler colonialism within queer service provision would fill a wide gap present within this research study.

Moreover, in honing in on the perspectives of non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers who are working or have worked in queer service provision for this research, I have necessarily allowed for the narratives and stories of non-Indigenous queer and trans service users and queer, trans, and 2-Spirit Indigenous service users to remain seemingly absent. As I have previously indicated, service users were not interviewed due to an desire to examine the

relationship between white settler colonialism and the helping work done by non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers. I opted not to interview service users, since my main goal was to engage with and address how non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers understand their roles and responsibilities in working with Indigenous service users. After all, non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers are one of the main contributors to subverting, challenging, and ultimately changing the white settler colonial structure of queer service provision. While acknowledging this, I also understand that the interviews of service users could triangulate my findings, as well as test for reliability. Thus, in my future research, I intend to fill this particular gap by addressing how service users come to perceive their own accessing of queer service provision as well as its connection to white settler colonialism.

Another future research endeavour would look toward the ways in which non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers come to know, understand, and indeed teach about 2-Spiritedness within their respective queer organizations. I have illustrated that non-Indigenous service providers seem to be reluctant in addressing 2-Spiritedness within their work. Despite this, most research participants were able to provide me with particular definitions and learnings of 2-Spiritedness. As a result, my goal in filling this gap would be to address how white settler colonialism continues on through the fractured and fissured understandings of 2-Spiritedness within the white settler queer culture steeped within queer service provision.

In the end, the above perspectives on queer service provision would extend far beyond the particular constraints placed onto this dissertation research, by engaging with non-Indigenous heterosexual allyship, the perspectives of non-Indigenous and Indigenous service users accessing queer service provision, and the perspectives of non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers on 2-Spiritedness. These unique entry points would allow for important engagements



with how white supremacy and settler colonialism manifest differently vis-à-vis the subject positions of non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers and service users within queer service provision in Toronto, Canada.

### **8.5. In/Conclusions**

The narratives of the research participants obtained during this research provide an avenue for queer service provision to be seen as a white settler colonial structure that produces Indigenous peoples as unworthy of care and engulfed within a larger white settler culture of multicultural diversity. It is my hope that non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers can take an active role in transforming their current contributions to queer service provision so that the white supremacist and settler violence inflicted upon both Indigenous peoples and people of colour is addressed. Non-Indigenous queer and trans service providers are invited (often unknowingly) to participate in sustaining the white settler colonial project in their imaginations of a queer settler future, and, as such, queer service provision cannot escape its history. It is my hope that service providers will not continue to mobilize such notions of help—insofar as helping situates the queer helper in a power-over relationship with whom they are required to help. In centralizing settler decolonization and the analytic of white settler colonialism within the practice approach of queer service provision, new relationships with Indigenous peoples, service providers, and communities, as well as with people of colour and their communities, can be developed by white settler service providers, in an effort to subvert larger white settler colonialism in Canada.

However, this will not be an easy task to undertake, since it will require white service providers to do away with the “white saviour complex” we all so easily reproduce, and direct the queer gaze back upon itself as another avenue that sustains, normalizes, and naturalizes white

settler colonialism on institutional and individual levels. As a result, it is indeed our responsibility, as white queer settlers defined by inequality, to uncover and dig deep into how we contribute (often unknowingly) to white settler colonial projects in order to repair such historical wrongdoings. Such repairs would lead to taking action against how modern queer formations continue to repudiate Indigenous life and erase any possibilities for Indigenous decolonization in Canada.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> I only use “Aboriginal” within my reporting on the semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted for this dissertation. The term “Aboriginal,” unfortunately, is a common trope used within everyday speech to mark, differentiate, and Other Indigenous peoples in what is now

<sup>2</sup> My use of queer is at once used as an umbrella category to bring together sexual and gendered differences within LGBTQ communities and a political referent that attempts to disrupt and deviate from normalcy. For instance, some people use the term gay to signal their sexual attraction toward the same sex. Differing from the category gay, queer is used as a more fluid identity category that is less connected to sexual attraction and more with a politic of non-normalcy.

<sup>3</sup> Like queer, trans is used both as a identity category to refer to someone whose gender might not necessarily coincide with their biological sex and as a umbrella category to bring together people who are transgender, transsexual, genderqueer, and gender variant.

<sup>4</sup> 2-Spirited can be defined as “a generic term that was adopted in order to provide a modern means of regrouping Aboriginal people with other gender and sexuality identifications, as well as to reawaken the spiritual nature of the role [2-Spirited] people are meant to play in their communities” (Meyer-Cook & Labelle, 2004, p. 31).

<sup>5</sup> Cis-gender refers to “people who are not transsexual and who have only ever experienced their subconscious and physical sexes as being aligned” (Serano, 2007, p. 12).

<sup>6</sup> As Vidal-Ortiz (2008) suggested, “*People of color* is a term most often used outside of traditional academic circles, often infused by activist frameworks, but it is slowly replacing terms such as *racial and ethnic minorities*” (p. 1037; emphasis in original). The term “people of colour” hails and includes racial and/or cultural groups. My use of people of colour cannot be politically neutral, and indeed it is fraught with tensions in regards to conflating differences among my research participants, who identified as Chilean, Portuguese, Jamaican, Indo-African, Chinese, East Indian, Venezuelan, Sri Lankan, and Mexican.

<sup>7</sup> As I (forthcoming) have illustrated: “bathhouses provide a setting where gay, bi, queer, trans, and same-gender-loving men can connect with other men and engage in discrete encounters of their choosing” (n.p.)

<sup>8</sup> Heterosexism refers to “the presumption that heterosexuality is superior to all other forms of sexuality, often through claims that it is the only natural or normal sexuality” (Temple, 2005, p. 273).

<sup>9</sup> Cissexism refers to “the belief that transsexuals’ identified genders are inferior to, or less authentic than, those of *cissexuals*” (Serano, 2007, p. 12; emphasis in original).

<sup>10</sup> Trotz (2007) dissected transnationalism into three separated but linked analytics: 1) “back-and-forth movement of people across national borders” (p. 5); 2) “border-spanning/crossing activism” (p. 5); and 3) “nam[ing of] the effort to find a conceptual apparatus that can ask critical feminist questions of globalization, understood in this reading as the historical and contemporary materialization of unequal and partial linkages in the worlds we inhabit” (p. 6).

<sup>11</sup> “Neoracism is the sinister counterpart to the cultural politics of difference that the immigrant imaginary and other nonimmigrant[,] but nevertheless subaltern[,] social groups generally invoke as their emancipatory banner. Neoracism works in effect as the mirror image of identity politics[—]that is, as an identity politics of the dominant, since ‘it is a racism whose dominant

theme is not biological heredity but the insurmountability of cultural differences, a racism which, at first sight, does not postulate the superiority of certain groups or peoples in relation to others but ‘only’ the harmfulness of abolishing frontiers, the incompatibility of life-styles and traditions; in short, ...a differentialist racism” (Balibar, 1991, p. 21, as cited in Moreiras, 2001, p. 47).

<sup>12</sup> I use the term prostitute as a way to signal the white supremacist and colonial power embedded in acts of selling sex (Razack, 1998b). Sex work as a term has the tendency to reduce prostitution and its sexual exploitation of women to a transaction between the sex worker and their john. Sex work typically erases the racial and colonial exploitation of women of colour and Indigenous women who may not have any other survival options but to sell their body for money. Sex work relocates sex acts into individual transactions and erases the systems of racial and colonial dominance that comes to control and surveil women of colour and Indigenous women.

<sup>13</sup> Eurocentrism can be defined as “the discursive residue or precipitate of *colonialism*, the process by which the European powers reached positions of economic, military, political, and cultural hegemony” (Shohat & Stam, 1994, p. 15; emphasis in original).

<sup>14</sup> Yee, Hackbusch, and Wong (2013) provided eight steps to do anti oppression: 1) Identify the Intended Outcome; 2) Identify Potential Key Challenges to Reach Outcomes; 3) Ask Questions; 4) Identify Levers; 5) Revisit Outcomes/Assess Impact to Users; 6) Shift Institutional Challenges into Anti-Opressive Opportunities; 7) Identify Action Steps; and 8) Identify Measures of Success (p. 13).

<sup>15</sup> I use genderqueer to describe people who do not subscribe to heteronormative-gendered presentations or situate their gender within a binary. People who self-identify as genderqueer may align themselves with gendered categories of male, female, a spectrum, a combination, or neither.

<sup>16</sup> I use they as a singular pronoun instead of “he” or “she” to account for research participants who self-identify as genderqueer and who did not identify a particular gender pronoun of choice.

<sup>17</sup> Harm reduction can be defined as “offering immediate practical interventions to protect health, regardless of whether or not someone has decided to change their drug use, get HIV medical care, or [make] any myriad of other decisions” (Denning & Little, 2012, p. 15–16).

<sup>18</sup> Convention refugees can be defined as “people who are outside their home country or the country where they normally live, and who are unwilling to return because of a well-founded fear of persecution based on: race; religion; political opinion; nationality; or membership in a particular social group, such as women or people of a particular sexual orientation” (“Determine your,” 2012).

<sup>19</sup> A queer of colour critique tends to “shed light on the ruptural components of culture, components that expose the restrictions of universality, the exploitations of capital, and the depictions of national culture” (Ferguson, 2004, p. 24). It does this by “bear[ing] witness to the critical gender and sexual heterogeneity that comprises minority cultures” (Ferguson, 2004, p. 24).

<sup>20</sup> The notion of “Indigeneity as transit” refers to the ways in which Indigeneity is fashioned through European colonialism as conquerable and in doing so naturalizes the violence and movement of non-Indigenous peoples across the Americas (Byrd, 2011).

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Demographic Information

Transcript No.	Date YY/MM/DD	Name	Age	Sexuality	Gender	Race	Ethnicity / Culture
1	12/12/12	Thomas	25	Gay	Cisman	White	Canadian
2	12/12/23	Emily	52	Dyke	Ciswoman	White	Francophone
3	13/01/03	Andrew	57	Gay	Cis-gendman	White	Italian
4	13/01/04	Leslie	27	Tri-sexual	Trans woman	Mestiza	Chilean
5	13/01/08	Cory	33	Queer	Cis-gendered man	White	Polish, British
6	13/01/09	Josephine	33	Queer	Cis-gendered man	White	Canadian
7	13/01/09	Skyler	25	Queer	Genderqueer	Mixed-Race	Portuguese
8	13/01/15	Candy	27	Queer	Genderqueer	South Asian	Indian, Portuguese, Arabic
9	13/01/15	Lisa	46	Lesbian	Cis-gendered woman	Mixed-Race	Jamaican
10	13/01/22	Rahim	27	Gay, Queer	Cis-gendered man	South Asian	Indo-African
11	13/02/02	Koinnapat	35	Gay, Queer	Cis-gendered man	Asian	Chinese
12	13/02/05	Sara	30	Bisexual, Queer	Cis-gendered woman	White	Canadian, British
13	13/02/05	Robert	32	Queer	Trans man	White	Canadian
14	13/02/09	Ronald	32	Gay	Cis-gendered man	White	European
15	13/02/13	Joseph	47	Gay, Queer	Genderqueer	White	Canadian, European
16	13/02/13	Luke	68	Queer	Trans man	White	British
17	13/02/25	Josh	53	Queer	Cis-gendered man	South Asian	East Indian
18	13/02/28	Cassandra	29	Lesbian	Cis-gendered woman	White	Canadian
19	13/03/01	Kate	25	Bisexual, Queer	Cis-gendered woman	White	Canadian
20	13/03/02	Steve	38	Gay	Cis-gendered man	Latino	Venezuelan
21	13/03/08	Justin	61	Gay	Cis-gendered man	White	Canadian
22	13/03/09	Brandon	53	Gay	Cis-gendered man	White	Canadian, European
23	13/03/09	Ryan	34	Gay	Cis-gendered man	White	Canadian, Aboriginal Ancestry
24	13/03/13	Jacob	20	Gay, Queer	Cis-gendered man	Portuguese	Portuguese
25	13/03/13	Nicole	46	Queer	Cis-gendered woman	White	British

26	13/03/07	Mark	33	Queer	Cis-gendered man	South Asian	Sri Lanken, Tamil
27	13/03/15	Filipe	46	Gay, Queer	Cis-gendered man	Portuguese	Portuguese
28	13/03/19	Jett	49	Gay	Cis-gendered man	White	British
29	13/03/20	Alex	50	Queer	Cis-gendered man	White	Scottish, Irish
30	13/03/21	John	54	Gay	Cis-gendered man	White	European
31	13/03/16	Paul	28	Gay	Cis-gendered man	White	European
32	13/03/27	Jamie	24	Queer	Cis-gendered woman	White	American
33	13/03/29	Eric	39	Gay	Cis-gendered man	White	Canadian
34a	13/03/29	Angel	31	Gay	Cis-gendered man	Latino	Mexican
34b	13/05/15	Dylan	25	Queer	Trans man	White	Canadian
353 5	13/04/23	Amanda	28	Queer, Lesbian	Cis-gendered woman	White	British, Aboriginal Ancestry
36	13/04/23	Aaron	24	Queer	Cis-gendered man	White	Canadian
37	13/04/26	Keith	20	Queer	Cis-gendered man	White Settler	Canadian, Mixed Heritage
38	13/04/30	Brett	31	Queer	Genderqueer	White	European
39	13/05/06	Tara	29	Queer	Cis-gendered	White	British, Irish
40	13/06/05	April	30	Queer	Genderqueer	White	Canadian
41a	13/08/13	Terrance	35	Gay, 2-Spirited	Cis-gendered man	Indigenous, Metis	Cree
41b	13/08/13	Duncan	42	Gay, 2-Spirited	Cis-gendered man	Indigenous	Ojibwa

## Appendix B: Recruitment Flyer

Department of *Humanities, Social Sciences, and Social Justice Education* University of Toronto

*PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR RESEARCH IN LGBTQ SOCIAL SERVICE PROVISION IN TORONTO.*

*Are you LGBTQ-identified?*

*Do you have experience working and/or volunteering in LGBTQ social services in Toronto?*

We are looking for volunteers (regardless of ethnicity, race, nationality, or culture) to participate in a study of *LGBTQ social service practices and policies in Toronto that can be extended to Aboriginal populations*. As a participant in this study, you would be asked to participate in an in-depth interview lasting approximately 60 to 90 minutes. Unfortunately, there is no compensation for your voluntary participation.

For more information about this study, or to volunteer for this study, please contact: (*Cameron Greensmith, PhD Candidate*) Email: ([cameron.greensmith@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:cameron.greensmith@mail.utoronto.ca))

This study (# 28402) has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the Office of Research Ethics, University of Toronto.



## Appendix C: Recruitment Email

You are invited to participate in the research project:

*Rethinking and Re-envisioning Toronto's Queer Social Services*

Are you LGBTQ-identified?

Are you interested in sharing your experiences working and/or volunteering at LGBTQ social services in Toronto?

My name is Cameron Greensmith, a PhD Candidate in Humanities, Social Science, and Social Justice Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) of the University of Toronto.

The aim of the project is to elicit the experiences of LGBTQ-identified social service workers in Toronto regardless of their ethnicity, race, nationality, or culture. I am interested in the kinds of policies and practices implemented by individuals and institutions to meet the needs of all LGBTQ-identified service users. I want to learn more about how these policies and practices can be extended to Aboriginal peoples and populations in Toronto. I want to be able to showcase the progressive, equity minded, LGBTQ-service provision that exists within your organization. I am also interested in documenting the institutional and interpersonal activism that exist within LGBTQ social services to resist racism and colonialism in Canada.

If you are interested in learning more about the project or would like to register to participate, please contact me (E: [cameron.greensmith@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:cameron.greensmith@mail.utoronto.ca)). Unfortunately, there is no compensation for your voluntary participation.

This study # 28402 has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the Office of Research Ethics, University of Toronto.

## **Appendix D: Informed Consent Document**

### *Rethinking and Re-envisioning Toronto's Queer Social Services*

Principle Investigator: Cameron Greensmith, PhD Candidate  
Humanities, Social Sciences, and Social Justice Education  
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education  
University of Toronto 252 Bloor Street West  
Toronto, ON

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research project. This document is intended to provide you with some background to my work, its purpose, and to inform you of what you might expect from this interview. The interview length will consist of 60 to 90 minutes of your time. Please note that you are free to withdraw from this interview at anytime. Upon your withdrawal, the data provided will be destroyed.

**Purpose:** This research project explores the policy and practice frameworks used by LGBTQ-identified social service workers in the GTA. I am interested in engaging with the decisions made by you and your organization as they pertain to the development of programming, education, and outreach materials for Aboriginal service users. Through the use of in-depth semi-structured interviews, I hope to gain a better understanding of the challenges LGBTQ-identified social service workers and volunteers face within your workplace environments.

**Research Benefits:** In undertaking this research, I am hoping to gain new and informed insights of LGBTQ-identified service workers roles and responsibilities shaping progressive and equity-centered service provision. I am also interested in the ways in which Aboriginal peoples are thought about in both interpersonal and institutional contexts. The resulting data collected will help in completing the requirements for my doctoral dissertation.

**Procedure:** In this 60 - 90 minute interview, I intend to ask a series of questions about your experience being LGBTQ-identified and working/volunteering within a LGBTQ social service organization. I will record this interview through the use of my digital voice recorder, which can be turned off at any time on your request throughout the interview. Please Note: These mp3 files are strictly confidential, and will be destroyed upon completion of the written transcript. The principle investigator will keep written transcripts of the audio file indefinitely unless otherwise stated by the research participant.

With your agreement, the principal investigator may contact you for clarification or follow-up interviews, which you may decline to participate. You would only be contacted through the contact information you have provided and if you choose to participate.

**No Irregular Procedures:** In this interview, I do not intend to use any new or experimental methods intended to trick or deceive you. My aim is to ask a series of open-ended questions that will provide you with an opportunity to explain your experiences working/volunteering within Toronto's LGBTQ service sector.

No Negative Consequences: Some of the questions I will ask deal with sensitive topics pertaining to the work you do with the broader LGBTQ community. Should we encounter any questions that you would rather not answer, please inform me and I will move onto a new discussion question. Should you find the very idea of my research – or any of the questions you do not answer – upsetting or politically troubling, please tell me and I will provide you with the names of agencies and counselors who will be able to provide you with more support.

Selection of Participants: I have selected you to participate in my research based on my belief that you can help me to better understand the topic and issues in which I am dealing with. Research participants must be: (1) LGBTQ-identified and (2) have experiences working and/or volunteering in LGBTQ social services in Toronto. In the majority of cases, I am most interested in hearing your perspectives and opinions surrounding LGBTQ identity politics, service provision, and activism in Toronto's LGBTQ service sector. Moreover, I intend to ask questions pertaining to anti-racist and anti-colonial endeavors you or your organization might be involved in.

Confidentiality: All of the interviews are kept strictly confidential. Your name will not be used to identify you with what you have said. If you so choose, a fictitious name instead will be used to protect your identity. You will have an opportunity to pick a pseudonym during the interview. Given that this interview may record feelings, opinions, recollections, descriptions – some of which can be very personal and emotional – I will give you an opportunity to review a transcription of my interview with you and to add, alter, or delete any of your comments in this regard.

Publication of Results: Results of this research project may be published in scholarly journals and presented at conferences. Feedback about this study will be available from Cameron Greensmith, University of Toronto beginning in the fall, 2013.

Participation in this interview is voluntary and there will be no monetary compensation. Participation in this interview can be ended at any time.

If there are any issues please do not hesitate to contact Cameron Greensmith, PhD Candidate (E: [cameron.greensmith@mail.utoronto.ca](mailto:cameron.greensmith@mail.utoronto.ca)) or my dissertation supervisor Dr. Martin Cannon (#: 416-978-0403 or E: [martin.cannon@utoronto.ca](mailto:martin.cannon@utoronto.ca)). If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant please contact Dean Sharpe (#: 416-978-5585 or E: [dean.sharpe@utoronto.ca](mailto:dean.sharpe@utoronto.ca)).

I am fully aware of the nature and extent of my participation in Cameron Greensmith's research project # 28402 as explained above and the possible risks associated with this project. I hereby agree to participate in this project. I am also aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be audio recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this consent statement. I am fully aware that the tape recording of this interview will be kept confidential, and once transcribed, will be stored indefinitely in a locked filing cabinet in Cameron Greensmith's office.

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(Name)

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(Signature)

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(Date)

## Appendix E: Interview Guide

- 1) Personal Information (pseudonym if required)
  - a) Self Identification (categories such as ‘gay,’ ‘queer,’ ‘genderqueer’)
  - b) Self Identification—age, class, race, ethnicity, gender
  - c) Education
  
- 2) Queer community/activism
  - a) Are you involved in any LGBTQ activist (within or outside of your employment) work in the GTA?
  - b) Generally speaking, how would you describe the LGBTQ community in the GTA?
  - c) In your opinion, is the LGBTQ community in the GTA concerned with Aboriginal peoples? If so, how?
  - d) In your opinion, is the LGBTQ community in the GTA concerned with people of colour? If so, how?
  
- 3) Worker/service user subjectivities – employment/service worker
  - a) Position and history with organization
    - i) What is your position?
    - ii) How long have you been with the organization?
    - iii) Can you please describe the history of organization? (mandate, goals, and objectives).
  
  - b) Practice models/education
    - i) What brought you to this work?
    - ii) What is your motivation for doing this work?
    - iii) Do you experience challenges or obstacles?
    - iv) Do you feel like you can do the work here that you want to do?
    - v) How do Aboriginal peoples fit into your motivations in doing this work?
  
  - c) Target users/community members
    - i) Who are the service users at your agency?
    - ii) How does your agency try to meet the needs of LGBTQ peoples?
    - iii) How is LGBTQ inclusion fostered in your organization?
    - iv) Do you have Aboriginal service users?
    - v) Does your agency have Aboriginal-specific programming? Why or why not?
    - vi) If not, how do you imagine Aboriginal peoples are accessing health or social services?
    - vii) How does your agency address race and racism?
  
  - d) Building bridges with other queer social services in Toronto
    - i) Do you or your agency work with/collaborate with other social service/health agencies in the GTA?
    - ii) Have any collaborations existed in the past?
    - iii) Do you or your agency work with/collaborate with Aboriginal-specific organizations?
    - iv) Do you envision collaborations forming in the future? (ethno-specific/Aboriginal



specific organizations)

**2) Funding, Services, and Research**

**a) Funding bodies and grants**

- i) Do you have any knowledge about who funds your organization?
- ii) What is your opinion on funding and service provision?
- iii) From your experience, do funders have any constraints on the kinds of service provision you can offer?
- iv) Does your agency have any specific funding to work with Aboriginal populations

**b) Research**

- i) Do you have any knowledge about current, past, or future research projects within your organization? (goals, target populations, etc).
- ii) Why does your agency engage in research?
- iii) Do any populations or peoples benefit from the research?
- iv) How is research disseminated to the larger LGBTQ community?
- v) Does your research engage with LGBTQ-identified or 2-Spirited Aboriginal peoples?

**c) Future development**

- i) What shape would your program take if it were designed to address the needs of Aboriginal people?

**3) Any other topics of concerns**

- a)** Are there any additional issues you think need to be raised as part of this research?  
Anything I left out?
- b)** Are there any concerns you would like to raise?
- c)** Is there anything you think that I should have asked?

### Appendix F: Primary Coding Schema

Theme	Code	Code Variation
Institution	I1 – Sexuality	LGBTQ; safe spaces; gay men as a ‘priority population’; MSM
	I2 – Neo-liberalism	values/norms; funding; bureaucracy; professionalization
	I3 – Invisibility	representation; whiteness; barrier; exclusion
Practice	P1 – Erasure	universality; culture; anti-racism; minority model
	P2 – Anti-oppression	privileging of oppression
	P3 – Critique	a-political; tension; privilege
Climate	C1 – Help	empathy; sensitivity; help
	C2 – The Other	poverty; stereotypes; alcohol; drug use; pathology; HIV
Subjectivity	S1 – Oppression	trauma; invalidation; stigma
	S2 - Responsibility	deflecting; erasing
	S3 – Erasure	erasure of difference
	S4 – Appropriation	decolonization; holism

### Appendix G: Secondary Coding Schema

Theme	Code	Variation	Response Rate
Institution	Sexuality	Safety	1
		Acronym	4
		Community	26
		Work	27
		MSM	3
	Neo-liberalism	Funding	11
		Time	4
		Constraints	8
		Business models	10
		Volunteerism	2
		Emotional labour	2
		Bureaucracy	8
	Invisibility	Representation	12
		Whiteness	10
		Erasure	8
		Space	4
		Isolation	2
		Priority	3
		Access	2
		Staff	1
		Racism	2
		Services	7
		Interaction	1
		Colonialism	2
Practice	Cultural Competency	Critique	1
		Language	1
		Integration	1
		Culture	1
		Universal	1
	Anti-Racism	Irrelevant	1
		Band-Aid	1
		Optional	2
		Not structured	2
		Culture	1
		POC	1
		Indigeneity	3
		Reverse Racism	1
	Anti-Oppression	Inclusion	1
		Addressing oppression	3
		Critique	3
		Ill-equipped	2
		Neo-liberalism	1

		Mandated	4
		Erasure	1
	Other	Tolerance	1
		Intersectionality	1
		Empathy	2
		Sensitivity	2
		Open	1
		Access	1
		Universal Norms	1
		Safety	1
		Diversity	1
		Unlearning	1
		Strengths	1
Climate	Help	Self-help	5
		Challenge	1
		Make a difference	4
		Give back	4
		Help others	7
		Empathy	2
		Desire	2
		Africa	2
		Perspective	1
	Problem	Lazy	1
		Alcohol	4
		Sex work	3
		Issues	3
		Drop-in	1
		Substance use	3
		Idle-No-More	2
		Different	1
		Poverty	2
		Mixed-race	2
		Disgust	1
		Trauma	1
	Goodness	The other racist	1
		I still helped	1
		Presence	1
		Allyship	3
		Meaning well	1
		Making it easier	1
		Doing what I can	3
		Feeling guilty	1
Subjectivity	Oppression	Queering Space (Drop-In)	8
		LGBTQ Oppression	20
		Statistics	2

		Segregation	5
		Gay-centric	19
		Trauma	3
		Priority	1
		No space for intersectionality	1
		Intersectionality	5
		Being out	1
	Responsibility	Self-education	1
		Indigenous-education	9
		Requiring staff	2
		Research	2
		Indigenous agencies	9
		Not enough knowledge	6
		Complicity	6
	Sameness	City	1
		Service users	1
		LGBTQ universality	6
		Race/culture	1
		Diversity	1
	Appropriation	Decolonization	1
		Land	8
		Holism/culturalism	4
		Tokenism	2
		Solidarity	4