

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2024

PANEL ONE

Concurrent Session A **Indigeneity, nationhood, and sovereignty****1** **In the wake of McGirt: Indigenous Nationhood, Tribal economics, and the interplay of scholarship and sovereignty**

The US Supreme Court's landmark decision in *McGirt v. Oklahoma* (2020) potentially reorders relationships between tribal nations and US States. While limited to criminal jurisdiction in specific areas, the overheated reaction on the part of state officials coupled with the tribes' cautious yet firm assertions of sovereignty suggests more than at first meets the eye. Where a century ago, indigenous nations were pushed aside in the drive for Oklahoma statehood, today's descendant organizations are far more formidable. This change to the balance of relationships rests to a significant degree on the economic power of tribal nations and how it translates to political influence. This paper considers the tribal economics and sovereignty through two standpoints: first, the growth of scholarly interest in economic change inside and around Indigenous nations; and second, the dramatic growth and transformation of tribal economies. This paper asks us to consider relationships between how scholars understand indigenous economies and the practices of tribal governments themselves.

Brian Hosmer, Professor and Head, Department of History, Oklahoma State University

2 **Nation-State as a form of 'Body-politic'**

Most studies about 'nation' and 'nationalism' are theoretical attempts to delve into their historical origins. Answering the question of when a nation or the concept of 'nation' existed predominately shapes the literature. In these studies, the cultural, economic, political, and social origins of nation and nationalism are distinguished. Most of them conceive 'nation' as a given product formed through a historical process/moment in which one or a combination of these factors is responsible for its emergence. In this regard, 'nation' becomes a pre-figured and entirely determined phenomenon in the past, not a fluid, changeful category that can be re-defined and rearticulated in different power relations from the past to the present. Today, the empowerment and popularization of right extremism using the rhetoric of nationalism to mobilize people entails a suitable framework for its study. This article outlines the framework through which 'nation-state' is conceptualized as a form of demarcation of a body-politic. Rather than considering 'nation' as a given thing or 'nationalism' as a finished project in the nation-state building moment/process, this article argues that 'nation-state' is the contingent, formal realization of the necessity of the existence of a body-politic for governance which makes 'nation' an ongoing and ever-changing political phenomenon.

Reza Khodarahmi, my research specifically delved into the Constitutional Revolution of Iran (1905) as an embodiment of new social forces and modern discourses. As a PhD student of political science, my research interests and fields of study are philosophy of history, social movements, subjectivity and agency, and nationalism.

3 Unveiling The Paper Genocide of Indigenous Peoples in Xaymaca

This presentation illuminates the historical narrative of the Indigenous peoples of Xaymaca, a Caribbean country known today as Jamaica, and the profound misconception of extinction by genocide following colonization. It explores historical sources and oral histories by Indigenous Elders, identifies the contributing complex factors of paper genocide and highlights the efforts to preserve identity and culture by the current generation. Attendees will gain knowledge on the history of the Indigenous peoples of Xaymaca, the impacts of colonial oppression and erasure, and the importance of Indigenous Sovereignty.

Robin Cunningham is a student in Dalhousie University's Africentric Social Work Cohort. Robin is passionate about social justice, women's and children's rights, and decolonizing systems. Her work focuses on advancing equality and challenging systemic inequities to foster inclusive and equitable communities.

4 One Land Two Hearts: Where We Stand

WWS is a Co-Creative Framework based on the cross Canada multimedia project, which brought together Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants living in very different communities, sometimes even different time zones, to produce a shared narrative. On Feb. 23 and 25, the Canada Excellence Research Chair (CERC) in Migration multimedia storytelling project WWS premiered at the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, Halifax and the Woodland Cultural Centre (WCC), Brantford, Ontario. Through films, songs, spoken word and dance performances, a cohort of student artists shared powerful stories of identity, belonging, self-discovery and collaboration. The choice of locations - Pier 21 and the WCC - added depth to the events. The former is located on a national historic site where nearly one million immigrants landed in Canada from 1928 to 1971. The latter, situated beside the former Mohawk Institute Residential School, which officially closed in 1970, serves to preserve and strengthen Indigenous language, culture, art and history. WWS brought together 16 undergraduate and graduate students of Indigenous and newcomer backgrounds to work in pairs and co-create projects exploring their sense of belonging on Turtle Island, which we call Canada. The resulting creative work delved into themes such as the connection to home, the relationship to the land, the experience of truth and reconciliation for newcomers, resiliency through grief and the unseen struggles faced by minority groups in Canada. The multimedia presentation unpacks the pedagogical processes that led the cohort of 16 diverse participants towards the world premieres.

Cyrus Sundar Singh, CERC in Migration, Toronto Metropolitan University, Toronto, ON, Canada

Concurrent Session B Erasures/Omissions in service conceptualization, design, promotion, accessibility, delivery and utilization

1 Fostering Respect: Indigenous Cultural Safety in Social Work Education

The Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC, 2015) included Calls to Action that directly address social work education and Indigenous children in child welfare. While several scholars have contributed to the development of Indigenous approaches to social work, research is lacking on including Indigenous content in child welfare education and on identifying barriers and facilitators to its inclusion. The aim of the current study was to explore the experiences of child welfare educators across Canada in including Indigenous content into their child welfare social work curricula. Researchers reviewed Canadian institutions and course outlines that teach child welfare curricula to identify potential participants, with a focus on social work programs. Responding to an online survey, all participants had at least three years of teaching experience, including child welfare courses in social work education. Text responses were collectively coded and analyzed using inductive thematic analysis. Participants typically included Indigenous content in the subject areas of historical and contemporary contexts of child welfare, kinship care, and legislation and policies to guide practice. Further research should explore the perspectives of social work students, regarding the integration of Indigenous content in the curricula.

Dr. Ashley Quinn's research focuses on Indigenous research methods and ethics protocols, culturally engaged caregiving in the child welfare system, Indigenous alternative dispute resolution programs, the application of Indigenous historical, contextual and contemporary factors in criminal, family and child welfare law matters, and wholistic Indigenous perspectives in social work education.

2 Moving Forward Together: An Africentric Approach to Healthcare Research

Racism is a social determinant of health. It impacts the bio-psychosocial-spiritual health and well-being of racialized communities. In Nova Scotia, anti-black racism has caused intergenerational harm for individuals, families, and communities of African descent, particularly the African Nova Scotian (ANS) communities. In the "Culturally Responsive Healthcare to Reduce Gender-Based Violence" research project, community members shared their experiences of anti-black racism as barriers to receiving culturally responsive competent healthcare services when seeking help. Building upon the findings of that study, a university – community research team developed the current SSHRC funded project: "Moving forward together: Unsettling racism, silence and violence in health and

social services”. The team is using arts-based participatory action research and Africentric principles to develop a deeper understanding of the experiences of anti-black racism in health and social services systems, the intergenerational harms to ANS communities, and to develop effective pathways towards more culturally responsive care practices in the provincial health and social services systems

Dr. Terrence Lewis is an Associate Professor in the School of Social Work and the Associate Dean, Equity and Inclusion for the Faculty of Health. He co-directs with Dr. Nancy Ross the community-based participatory action research project, 'Moving forward together: Unsettling racism, silence and violence in health and social services

3 Towards a Safer Harbor: Unpacking K12 International Students' Experience in Canadian Homestays

Over the past decades, Canadian Kindergarten to Grade 12 (K12) public schools have been recruiting international students to sustain financial viability amid declining government funding. Despite the recent cap on study permits, K12 students remain exempted, continuing to enter Canada and contributing to school boards' finances. However, the welfare of these students, particularly those in unregulated homestays, is often compromised due to a lack of regulations. This research explores the lived experiences of K12 international students in homestays, a topic that is largely overlooked but crucial for ensuring justice for these students. The data was collected during a one-day research forum featuring five speakers and four group discussions (total n = 20). Reflective thematic analysis was used to analyze participants' narratives. Findings highlight various negative outcomes, including physical and mental health risks for K12 international students. These outcomes are affected by individual characteristics of students, parents, workers, and homestay providers, which are informed by their unique cultural upbringings, cultural conflicts experienced by students in homestays, insufficient attention and support within the schools and communities, and systemic barriers (e.g., unclear governmental responsibilities, Xenophobia, and infantilization of justice-seeking students).

Patricia Quan is a registered social worker with a Master of Social Work from the University of Toronto. Her research focuses on systemic oppression faced by newcomers, anti-oppression frameworks, and anti-Asian racism. Her recent work explores the challenges faced by K-12 international students.

PANEL TWO

Concurrent Session A Erasures/Omissions in service conceptualization, design, promotion, accessibility, delivery and utilization**1 Foreign Credentials, Domestic Disparities: Understanding the value of de- and re-skilling**

Drawing on several research projects, conducted over the last decade, this paper elaborates the social reproductive function of de- and re-skilling amongst immigrant and migrant workers vis-à-vis labour markets and the viability of contemporary Canadian racial capitalism. The workers at the centre of our analysis arrived through a variety of immigration programs, but all intended to remain permanently. That Canada's immigration regime allows temporary migrants, including those in low-waged streams, to transition to permanent residency status is unique, and indeed, lauded as one of the more progressive features of the Canadian system. Many work in low-wages sectors unrelated to their training hoping to secure new, more secure employment once permanency is realized. And yet, research demonstrates that regardless of training and length of time in Canada, newcomers remain relegated to low-waged work. This is equally true for those who arrive with permanent status through programs that target highly skilled newcomers. Responding to the conference theme, our paper asks who (or what) benefits from the pervasive underemployment of highly skilled immigrants and their relegation to low-waged, precarious labour markets? And how can we understand the Canadian state's reliance on skill as a determinant of immigrant inclusion, in a context characterized by profound labour market exclusion? In turn, we argue that skill, as a criterion for immigrant selection, obscures and individualizes the inequalities of capitalist political economy, as well as the ways immigration policy aids in the production and reproduction of those inequalities.

Catherine Bryan, School of Social Work, Dalhousie University, Nova Scotia

Shahidur Rahman (MSW, M.Ed, B.Ed) is a Child Protection Social Worker with the Government of Nova Scotia. His research focuses on post-colonial social work, intersectionality, migration, and critical race theory. Shahidur also has a decade of experience leading community and family development projects in rural Bangladesh.

2 My Migration Story: Cross-Border Exchange of Indigenous Knowledge

Migration is complex in many ways. As people move across territorial boundaries, they meet with opportunities and challenges that will either make or mar their outlook toward life. Indigenous epistemology – traditional ways of knowing – is one way by which this complexity of migration is tested. In this paper, I use autoethnography to tell a story about my lived experience as a Nigerian who now lives and works in Canada. The story centres the context of

‘the local’ versus ‘the foreign’ within the ambit of knowledge re/production and sustainability in Canada. The paper, in summary, foregrounds the transcendence of knowledge as a universal concept.

Gbenga Adejare, University of Calgary, Sociology, Alberta, Calgary

3 Centering race, systems and structures in mental health and substance use (MHSU) service delivery to youth of African Descent in Nova Scotia

Grounded in Afrocentrism with a focus on collectivism, postcolonial theory and critical race theory, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) project centers on the experiences and recommendations of youth of African Descent and their caregivers regarding mental health and substance use (MHSU) services in Nova Scotia. This mixed method project includes, interviewing, focus group discussions and arts-based method to offer space to often overlooked or deprioritized voices in the analysis of health care delivery. Research participants are youth of African Descent between the ages of 18 and 25 who have either had services, attempted to gain services, or are presently working to gain MHSU services in Nova Scotia. Our workshop will present a summary of our findings; interrogate the role and impact of race, systems and structures in enabling comprehensive MHSU service delivery to youth of African Descent; and discuss barriers and possibilities for applying culturally responsive MHSU services with help-seeking youth of African Descent in Nova Scotia and Canada.

Ifeyinwa Mbakogu (PhD) is Associate Professor at Dalhousie School of Social Work, and Chair of the Diversity and Equity Committee (DEC). Her interests include human trafficking, child labour, forced migration/displacement, health/mental health and displacement, reintegration, African Diaspora studies, health, rage, retention and racism, explored within anti-racist and anti-colonial lenses.

Lotanna Odiyi is a Master of Social Work student at Dalhousie University. She has a Bachelor of Arts in political studies and a postgraduate diploma in psychology. Lotanna's research and educational interests encompass decolonizing healthcare and Afrocentric social work interventions.

Concurrent Session B Activism as healing, resistance and liberation

1 Voices from the South: Exploring transnational feminist approaches to menstrual education to catalyze a transformative development agenda

This study examines critical menstrual education models emerging from transnational feminist movements in the Global South. These models challenge the dominant approaches within the development sector, criticized for their hygienist, essentialist, colonial and biomedical framings, which perpetuate the silencing of menstruation and fail to address the broader social, cultural, religious

and structural factors influencing menstruators' experiences. In contrast, critical menstrual education models adopt decolonial epistemologies, emphasizing body literacy, local knowledge, and horizontal methodologies. These approaches resist the androcentric and colonialist frameworks that often dominate menstrual education by integrating community-led practices and reframing menstrual blood through art and positive meanings. This ongoing research explores how these critical models are conceptualized and implemented, focusing on their political stakes and the lived experiences of young menstruators. Through qualitative research methods, including talking circles, in-depth interviews, and participatory decolonial methods such as body mapping, this study documents the contributions of critical menstrual education models in Latin America. The analysis, rooted in feminist critical discourse analysis and grounded theory, aims to trace potential pathways for integrating these critical contributions into existing development strategies. This research contributes to the scholarship on body politics in development and seeks to amplify the voices and experiences of menstruators from the Global South, who challenge oppressive norms and advocate for transformative, community-driven approaches to menstrual education.

Estefania Reyes (she/her) is a Ph.D. Candidate in Sociology at Western University. She also holds a master's degree in media, gender and social justice from the University of Leicester. Her research is centred around the intersection of gender, body politics, and feminist activism, specifically focusing on menstrual justice and sexuality

2

Community and territory in social work education in Chile: between new approaches and terminological placebo

Unlike what happens in several Global North countries, community social work is still relevant in Latin American countries. In the case of Chile, most of the social work programmes include courses about community, and they frequently incorporate the concept of territory. In this context, this study aimed to answer how community is addressed in social work education in Chile, and what are the implications of the incorporation of the term territory in the curriculum. The method consisted of the analysis of the programs of the courses that explicitly refer to community and territory. After identifying the total number of courses in all universities of the country, the course programmes were required by email to the programme heads. 76% of the universities sent their course programmes. The analysis was qualitative, and organised in three subsets: courses that in their titles refer only to the community (n=27), only to the territory (n=18) and to both (n=6). The findings show that territory is a concept frequently used in association with community issues, but this does not necessarily mean new perspectives on community social work. The mainstream approaches separate theory from practice, and conceive territory as a mere contextual factor.

Felipe Saravia, Social Worker. Master in local and regional development. Doctorate in social sciences in territorial studies. Post-doctorate in Social Work at the University of Manchester (England).

3 Beyond “Wu Nai” (being hopeless about the experiences of racism): Documenting Activism and Advocacy Efforts Against Anti-Asian Racism during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Since the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2019, the incidents of anti-Asian racism have skyrocketed in Canada. Unfortunately, such forms of racism has always existed in the history of Canada with the legacies of Head Tax for Chinese immigrants and the mass incarceration of Japanese Canadians (JCs) to name a few. Still, it is shocking to know that thousands of anti-Asian racism incidents have been reported during the pandemic. In fact, in our previous community-based research project, many Chinese Canadian community members reported feeling a sense of “Wu Nai” (helpless/hopeless) in the face of anti-Asian racism during the pandemic. Since the outbreak of the pandemic, a few grass-roots groups and organizations have, in fact, worked on raising awareness about anti-Asian racism in Canada, which is not widely recognized. Thus, in our current research project, we (1) conducted a comprehensive Internet search to locate advocacy/organizing efforts against anti-Asian racism during the pandemic in Canada, and as a result, (2) identified and interviewed six grass-roots organizers/activists about their experiences of organizing efforts against anti-Asian racism. The preliminary results suggested that (1) many actions against anti-Asian racism were limited to one-time-only events, such as conferences, seminars, rallies, petitions, etc. and lacked a lasting online presence; (2) only a few grass-roots organizations that were already focusing on anti-Asian racism before the pandemic had outlived the pandemic to continue their online presence. Through KTE efforts through social media, we aim to raise awareness about the means for resistance and communal healing toward anti-racist futures for all.

Dr. Izumi Sakamoto is Associate Professor at the Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, and Academic Fellow with the Centre for Critical Qualitative Health Research, at the University of Toronto. For the past 20+ years, her research has focused on immigration, anti-oppression, anti-racism, gender, empowerment, community organizing, and the arts.

PANEL THREE

Concurrent Session A **Colonial and postcolonial harms**
1 **From Discomfort to Accountability: Exploring an Ethical Relational Approach to Teaching Anti-racism and Decolonisation in a Canadian Introductory Social Work Classroom**

In this article, we share results from an introductory social work course evaluation that infused an ethical relational approach into anti-racist and decolonial pedagogy. Fifty-three out of the 137 students enrolled in the course provided written informed consent. A variety of creative approaches, including reflective writing, podcasts, infographics, social media posts, and letters to the editor, were used to capture students' understanding of social work history, ethics, theories and approaches, and their emerging social work identity and future practice aspirations. The data was managed with NVivo 14, and thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. Study findings suggest that this approach contributed to students' demonstrated awareness and comprehension of decolonial and anti-racist concepts, leading to critical self-reflection, empathy, and a greater appreciation for diverse perspectives. These findings emphasise the need for pedagogical advancements prioritising ethical relationality in preparing students for social work practice grounded in decolonial and anti-racist principles.

Prince Chiagozie Ekoh, University of Calgary, Canada, Alberta, Calgary

2 **Coloni(inferior)ized African Masks 'Becoming' an Assemblage Through Deluzian Thought**

Colonialism came with political, social, economic, and cultural interference with Indigenous identities, cultural values, languages, and art forms of colonized societies. It also suppressed indigenous knowledge, crafts, governance, and technology. One of the significant African art forms is African masks, which were looted and exported to different parts of the world. Frantz Fanon and Roberts Young describe these upheavals as inferiorization and disruptions of native identities, cultures, and civilizations. African masks, which are originally integral to the ritualistic and communal lives of Africans, undergo a process of "inferiorization" when they are appropriated and commodified by colonial and postcolonial Western culture. However, there are potentials and possibilities of discussing colonized and inferiorized African masks as what Gills Deleuze and Felix Guattari described as 'becoming' an assemblage due to its fluidity, dynamics, and functionality within the positionality of space and time through constant reterritorialization and deterritorialization processes. The paper explores how these masks, once symbols of spiritual and communal forces, became part of Western artistic and cultural assemblages, thus losing their original signification and gaining new meanings. This transition is analyzed through Deleuze's concept of "becoming," where the masks are not fixed in their identities but are in constant

flux. The analysis highlights the implications of this transformation, reflecting broader colonial dynamics of exploitation and cultural erasure, challenging fixed identities and allowing for alternative assemblages that might reclaim or subvert their colonial appropriation. This approach opens new possibilities for understanding African masks as active participants in a global assemblage rather than passive objects of cultural theft.

Philip Akoje, Brock University, PhD in Interdisciplinary Humanities, Faculty of Humanities, Canada, Ontario, St Catharines

3 Double tragedy: Igbo nation grappling with another colonization in Canada

This presentation is based on the lived experiences of an immigrant parent that has lived in Canada for twenty-years and is grappling with the realities of raising five beautiful children in Canada. Recently, Jessica Clogg, published an article titled: “Colonialism Is Alive and Well in Canada.” By colonialism, I refer to the policy or practice of “acquiring full or partial political control” over another nation. UN Convention on the Rights of the Child requires policy makers to think about what is in the best interest of the child when decisions impacting the lives of children and teenagers. As a parent raising five culturally competent children, this presentation contends that educational and child welfare policies that emphasize restraint and diplomatic engagement with parents and ethnic groups in Canada will serve the interests of children better than policies that prioritize maintenance of colonial dominance. This presentation is divided into four parts. It begins with a brief introduction of the Igbo nation as cultural background to their external and internal colonisation. Then, it explores relevant UN child rights and Canadian educational curriculum to unveil its colonial context. Then follows, the challenges and opportunities facing parents of Igbo Descent raising children in Canada. Next it closes with a call to action to adopt a culturally sensitive and human face approach to child welfare and educational curriculum.

Olugu Ukpai, Goldie Theological College

Concurrent Session B Colonial and postcolonial harms/ Rigidity, white fragility and institutional dominance

1 De-spiriting social work knowledge through generative Artificial Intelligence

Recently, a torrent of books have been published on how to use generative artificial intelligence in higher education. Melding neurobiology and technology, scientists working on artificial intelligence have dreamed of superseding other forms of knowing in order that we could “address the grand challenges of humanity” (Kurzweil, 2012, 278). All forms of artificial intelligence are coded by humans who make decisions about how to represent society and how to make the world more computable by reducing complexity and nuance. While scientific objectivity is sought, the designers are western scientists with logics of capitalism, policing, militarization and western universalism. This WEIRD dream however

quickly becomes an Indigenous teaching/marking nightmare when the data relied on by the students is incredibly biased, missing, flawed, and is only capable of producing hallucinations and/or poverty porn (Daryl Dennis, 2013), Trauma Porn (Leanne Simpson, 2020) and/or pain based research (Eve Tuck, 2009. 2014).

This two-road (Anishinaabe) grounded presentation explores current hindrances to “nourishing the learning spirit” (Battiste, 2013) in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners. We ask the central question “how have we come to NOT know what we know” with a particular focus on Social Work Education in Anglo-British former Colonies?

WEIRD = Western, Educated, industrial, Rich and Democratic

Michelle Sutherland-Allan, Laurier University (PhD), Dalhousie (Professor)

Marjorie Johnstone is an Associate Professor in the School of Social Work at Dalhousie University.

2 **Barriers to Well-Being: Understanding the Experience of Black Women in Nonprofit Organizations**

Society depends on charitable nonprofit organizations for food, shelter, education, and so many other social services. The health and global economic crisis caused by COVID-19 highlighted how important nonprofits are as they were tasked with providing even more support to the communities they serve. Whilst employee health and wellness are integral to the successful operation of a non-profit, there is a growing problem of mental and emotional burnout among nonprofit workers which has negatively impacted employee retention. This study aims to understand the barriers to the wellbeing of Black women in nonprofit organizations as well as the ramifications of that on the services that nonprofits provide. The study aims to center the experience of Black women as they interact with the nonprofit sector recognizing that their experiences are influenced by the intersections of their race and gender. With an understanding of the challenges faced by nonprofit employees presented through the lens of Black women, this study can help inform social policies and practice that seeks to improve employee wellbeing and also provides an avenue for organizations to think of ways to improve the health of their staff. Informed by critical race theory and intersectionality, this qualitative study will be conducted in Nova Scotia, which has the largest indigenous Black community in Canada. Black communities in Canada are currently experiencing a critical period of history, and this study provides vital intersectional analysis that will directly benefit some of the most marginalized members.

Timi Idris, Dalhousie University, PhD. Health. Canada, NS

3 **Their Way or No Way: “Whiteness” as agent for marginalizing and silencing Minority voices in Academic research and Publication**

The field of academic research and publication have traditionally been the almost exclusive domain of White Academics. They institute, control and apply “White codes” to syndicate the publication of academic journals, magazines and books, all from their White privileged positions in academia, especially in the Western World. As a result of this, non-White academics, especially those from the so-called “Third World” have had a lot of difficulty moving ahead in the world of academic research, and especially publication in the journals, magazines and books that are controlled exclusively by White academics. Knowledge, in this sense, is therefore constructed, reconstructed, distributed and reproduced by Whites who, more often than not, see no value in the knowledge base of academics and researchers from the so-called “Third World.” Using Critical Race Theory and Post-Colonial Theory as the anchors of analysis, this study takes an oppositional and deconstructive stand on the construction, reconstruction, distribution and reproduction of knowledge, in research and academia. It examines the experiences of non-White academics in this domain, by telling their own story, not the “single story” that “Whiteness” often tells about them. Conclusion: It makes recommendations that aim to promote equity in the arena of current and future knowledge construction and reproduction in research and academia

Buster Ogbuagu (PhD) is a Professor of Social Work, University of St Francis, Joliet Illinois. His philosophy and pedagogy ensconce on intersectionalities and anti-oppressive epistemologies to social work theories, practice and Empowerment, which underscore and inform his teaching and practice. Dr. Ogbuagu cofounded “Strangers in New Homelands” annual international conference.

4 **Whiteness in Academia and Knowledge Production**

Academia and the processes of publishing and grantsmanship in North America are centered on whiteness. The result of this is that research based in positivist theories and methods is lauded as “hard” science (interpreted as “real” science), while interpretivist research is relegated to “soft” science (interpreted as “not real” science). Positivist research often uses theories that have predominantly been generated by white men. The publishing and grantsmanship processes are steeped in this bias. The decision-makers who develop priorities in calls for applications are likely to be white, as are the reviewers who decide which grants are funded. This maintains the hegemony of whiteness. Finally, this bias is reproduced when journal editorial boards are comprised mainly of white researchers. Thus, the cycle continues, as those who generate more publications are more likely to have grant applications accepted. This biased cycle of knowledge production can leave out important voices, particularly of women who represent the Global Majority (non-white). Although universities have recently begun to declare that they support equity, diversity, and inclusion, and some even

go so far as to proclaim to want everyone to “belong,” the policies around tenure and promotion further cement the centering of whiteness. This paper will describe how race and racism impact the production and dissemination of knowledge in health professions, with examples from speech-language pathology, medicine, and other disciplines. The outcomes, challenges, and suggestions for change will be discussed.

Ellen Hickey, PhD, SLP-Reg(NS) is an associate professor of speech-language pathology at Dalhousie University. She specializes in work involving persons living with neurological communication disabilities. She has participated in international collaborations for development of the profession. She participates in research and DEI committees in the SCSD and Faculty of Health.

PANEL FOUR

Concurrent Session A **Reinforcers of erasures and remediation strategies**

1 **Bringing “ethical space” to curriculums as a way to address erasures and embrace marginalized voices**

Social work knowledges have been critiqued for: reflecting mainly euro-western, colonial, patronizing, middle-class, white, cisgendered and heteropatriarchal origins; their individualized focus that marginalizes the collective; their preoccupation with risk and the individual; their positivist, empiricist, short-term stance that undermines relationality and ignores the structural; and excluding or disrupting multiple, non-euro-western and Indigenous worldviews. As a result, social work knowledge production is increasingly contested and disrupted as marginalized groups and their allies demand visibility and recognition of the legitimacy of a range of knowledges. In the context of euro-western post-secondary education, we recognize the power of euro-western education, the curriculum, sources used (such as textbooks), and educators to perpetuate colonialism. In this presentation, we provide an example of incorporating Ermine’s (1995) concept of “ethical space” as a framework for the inclusion and legitimization of multiple worldviews, truths, and knowledges in course textbooks—moving toward more de/anti-colonized social work education “subvert[ing] the intentional erasures, omissions, negations, and absences of difference in our institutional settings” (George Sefa Dei, keynote speaker, Dal Conversations Conference 2024).

Kimberly is a middle-aged, cis-gendered, heterosexual, able-bodied, white-settler Canadian from Ottawa. She is currently a full professor in the Department of Social Work at Trent University Durham GTA in Oshawa, Ontario. Kimberly’s most recent re-search has been about social work curriculum and field education, particularly de-colonizing curriculums and pedagogy.

Dr. Sasan Issari holds a PhD in Social Work and has worked in various social work settings across Canada/Turtle Island. He is an Assistant Professor in the School of Social Work at Trent University. His research, teaching, and practice experience are grounded in a decolonizing, and intersectional lens.

2 You can sit with us, but do so at your own risk: the banality of white supremacy in social work field education

Despite social work field education being implemented in Canada for over one hundred years (Social work, n.d.) there is a dearth of scholarship relating to white supremacy in social work field education in Canada. Drawing upon Benjamin (2003) and Kumsa et al's (2014) conceptualizations of anti-Black racism (ABR), I will use an ABR lens to highlight the ways in which ABR is deployed within Canadian social work field education, including various sites of erasure. Engaging in an oral traditions framework via oral presentation, I seek to highlight the nuanced and common themes of ABR in social work field education and the various ways it is antithetical to the tenets of the CASW social work code of ethics (2024). As students learn core social work courses, they also learn the institutional culture of their School of Social Work, including role-modeling behavior of faculty, staff and other students. Whether consciously or not, these behaviors further impact the student as they graduate and begin their career as an emerging practitioner. During the oral presentation, I seek to provide an overview of social work field education, the ways in which white supremacy is implicated in social work field education, how ABR is deployed in social work field education, as well as discuss tangible strategies to be used within social work field education. This includes a pathway of support and guidance to increase student, staff and faculty well-being and belonging, particularly those who have been harmed by white supremacy in social work field education.

Talena Jackson holds an MSW and BSW from Toronto Metropolitan University. She has been involved in the social work field education sector as a student, field instructor, field education coordinator, faculty-field liaison and field education manager.

3 Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) in the Canadian Context; Social Policy Implications for Equity-Seeking Populations and Communities

Amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic, Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) was noted to increase in both prevalence in severity; a trend that has concerning and devastating consequences for those impacted. Not only are women more likely to experience IPV from their current and former partners; female-identified populations that belong to equity-deserving communities face an abundance of aggregated difficulties. Following the deaths of multiple victims of IPV, Carol Culleton, Anastasia Kuzyk and Nathalie Warmerdam in Ontario, Bill 173 was initiated by the NDP party to request that the Government of Ontario to declare IPV an epidemic. However, this request has not been actioned on the basis that

IPV is not contagious nor infectious, making it not an epidemic. Without prompt response and the initiation of swift preventative strategies, IPV will continue to be rampant and to have pernicious outcomes. Emphasizing prevention over reactive approaches to intimate partner violence (IPV) can significantly reduce its' devastating effects on individuals and communities. Lastly, there is a lack of research and awareness into the intersection between IPV and equity-deserving communities, such as disabled women, BIPOC communities, older women, and the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. This presentation will explore and discuss the impacts, considerations, and strategies in intervening for IPV amongst the intersections and communities of equity-deserving groups, within the Ontario, Canada context.

Tori Lewis is a first-year doctoral student at the University of Windsor at the School of Social Work. As an engaged social work practitioner and emerging researcher, her interests encompass gender-based violence, social justice, neurodivergence, community-based initiatives, and feminist perspectives.

4

School Violence: Towards Anti-Racist Frameworks

The topic of school violence has been studied across multiple disciplines including social work and education, and scholarship has offered a multitude of theoretical orientations and interventions on the issue. What counts as school violence has expanded to include multiple forms of racism and whiteness that commonly form the backdrop of schooling experiences for Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC). However, dominant discourses of school violence have worked to erase the importance of foregrounding racism in interventions to school violence, further disenfranchising BIPOC. Towards the goal of developing an anti-racist framework for community members and professionals to implement context-specific and equity-seeking interventions to school violence, this paper presentation is based on a scoping review that aimed to identify and map the characteristics of anti-racist understandings, approaches and interventions on the issue. With date limits from 2004 - 2024, we conducted a systematic search in five electronic databases. We share our emerging findings resulting from the synthesis of selected studies that met our search criteria. We provide a preliminary summary of how school violence at the elementary and high school levels is resisted, challenged, and disrupted, through anti-racist forms of intervention. It is our hope that this research will interest social workers, teachers, researchers, and practitioners concerned about interventions that address the relationship between school violence and racism, and thereby contribute to more equitable educational experiences for students racialized by schools

Dr. Amanda Gebhard is Associate professor at the University of Regina, Faculty of Social Work and Adjunct professor in the Faculty of Education. Amanda's interdisciplinary research focuses on (anti)racism and whiteness in education and across the "helping" professions.

Courtney Chambers, MA, MSW, RSW. Courtney's research interests lie in structural and anti-racist responses to school violence, specifically interrogating notions of "safe spaces" for racialized youth in Canada.

Concurrent Session B Reinforcers of erasures and remediation (PANEL)

Pathways to Precariousness: Canada's Intentional Failure of Migrant and Undocumented Care Workers

In this panel discussion, we will delve into the findings from our systematic narrative analysis of policies affecting migrant care workers, particularly personal support workers (PSWs), within the healthcare sector. Our research uncovers a complex network of policies and practices that contribute to precarious working conditions, human rights violations, and the devaluation of care workers' labor. We will explore how these policies create an environment of invisibility, discrimination, and control, where care workers are surveilled, restricted, and punished with minimal recourse. This convergence of erasure, devaluation, and authoritarian practices results in what we term a "synergy of failures," severely limiting the autonomy and decision-making capacities of migrant care workers and leading to systemic rights violations. The panel will also highlight our community-based approach, which included consultations with policymakers, legal professionals, PSW advocates, and migrant health workers, as well as a community dinner with migrant health workers. These engagements were crucial in enriching our analysis with the lived experiences of those directly impacted by these policies. Our goal is to contribute to ongoing discussions on policy reform, advocating for the protection of the human rights and dignity of these essential healthcare workers

Panelists

Invisibility, Undervaluation, and Hyper-Authority

Wing Lam (Veen) Wong, MSW, PhD(c) will explore the systemic invisibility and undervaluation of migrant care workers, particularly PSWs, within the healthcare sector. She will discuss how policies contribute to these workers being undervalued and erased, often rendering their labor invisible despite its critical importance. Veen will also address the authoritarian practices embedded in these policies, where care workers face heightened surveillance, restrictions, and punitive measures with little recourse, resulting in a loss of autonomy and control over their working conditions. As the facilitator of this panel discussion, Veen will draw on her extensive experience and research expertise to guide the conversation on migrant care workers and healthcare policies. Veen will also share her deep understanding of the complex issues surrounding migrant healthcare workers, and ideas on how social workers can engage and advocate for policy reform and social justice.

Veen has over a decade of experience in health and social service sectors, working with im/migrant populations both in the community and in research. Her PhD research at the School of Public Health Sciences at uWaterloo considers health equity, arts-based methodologies, and the use of technology to address social issues

Violation of Human Rights

Tyheriah Philbert, BSW, MSW, will explore the human rights violations stemming from the precarious working conditions of migrant care workers, focusing on personal support workers (PSWs). Her analysis will examine how policies create environments of discrimination, exploitation, and dehumanization, leading to systemic breaches of workers' rights. Drawing on her community-based work, Tyheriah will highlight how these overlapping policies perpetuate environments of marginalization and how these policies must be reformed to protect the fundamental human rights of PSWs and other healthcare workers. As a panelist at this conference, Tyheriah will bring valuable insights from their extensive experience in community work, particularly in the analysis of healthcare policies affecting migrant care workers. Tyheriah's contributions are rooted in a commitment to social justice, aiming to shed light on the systemic barriers and human rights concerns that these essential workers face, and to advocate for meaningful policy reform.

Tyheriah is a Coordinator for Children, Youth, and Family Services at West Neighbourhood House. With a strong background in community program coordination and community-based research, Tyheriah is deeply committed to advancing equity, inclusion, and diversity within social services, addressing and advocating for the complex and evolving needs at community-level.

Equity-Based Tools for Reform

Dr. Trish Van Katwyk, MSW, PhD will address the urgent need for equity-based tools and approaches to create meaningful policy reforms that address the systemic inequities faced by migrant care workers. Through her research, she has identified key areas where policy interventions can promote justice, equity, and dignity for these workers. Trish will emphasize the importance of community engagement, artistic expression, and holistic approaches to developing equitable healthcare policies that protect the rights and well-being of migrant care workers. As a panelist, Trish will share her expertise in leading this critical research, offering insights into the complex interplay of policies and practices that perpetuate inequities for migrant care workers. Her contributions will be pivotal in discussing pathways to policy reform and advocating for equity in healthcare.

Trish is on faculty at the School of Social Work at uWaterloo. Trish brings an understanding of structural inequities that shape the lives of marginalized communities. Her work focuses on the transformative power of community

immersion and artistic expression in fostering healthy communities and uncovering diverse ways of knowing.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2024

PANEL ONE

Concurrent Session A **Erasures/Omissions in service conceptualization, design, promotion, accessibility, delivery and utilization**

1 **“Small Stories, Big Mental Space”: Immigrant Women's Artistic Expression of Mental Health and Social Support in Canada**

Immigration can be quite a challenging process. Immigrants may leave familiarity behind while having to face and deal with the unfamiliar. Such a complicated journey may negatively impact their mental health. Immigrant women, specifically, may endure gender-related difficulties on the topic of general migratory-related challenges. Canada has been one of the host countries for immigrants. Given the increasing number of immigrant women in Canada, it is important to maintain and improve their mental health. Evidence shows that social support may serve as a protective factor for mental health among immigrant women. Support in various forms and from diverse resources may help these women maintain their mental health. In addition to social support, artmaking may preserve these immigrant women's mental health. Engaging in art and creativity may increase self-awareness, assist with self-expression and promote self-esteem and self-confidence. Positive effects of social support and artmaking can be amplified when occurring at the same time. Group artmaking can open space for engaging with art and with other group members simultaneously. Creating artwork with others can facilitate socialization and support exchange resulting in promoting mental health. Using constructivist grounded theory, arts-based methodology and semi-structured interviews, I explored the mental health of immigrant women in Canada. As such, I investigated the role of art in helping these women to share stories of their migration. In this conference, I will share early findings illuminating mental health and social support to boost these women's mental health.

Maryam is a PhD Candidate in Social Work at Wilfrid Laurier University. She engages in arts-based research with immigrant women and pedagogy-related research with BSW students, teaches courses to MSW students, provides counselling services at the probation office and volunteers with community centres to improve immigrant women's quality of life.

2 **Intention, Conversation, and Bias in the Teaching of Architecture**

This presentation concerns bias and harm in the training of architects. More particularly, it examines biases in the self-image of the profession developed in the contexts of time, space, and institution. Our literate sense of time is one-dimensional and teleological, as reinforced through millennia of writing and reading scrolls and books. Cultures may coexist, but even at institutions that have

explicitly shaped themselves to be culturally inclusive, the vectorial framework puts some peoples in the place of the antecedent and the displaced. Conceptions like spatial time and mobile time present alternative views of difference and sequence. They can be deployed both in text and in hyper-text. Expressing degeneration as “going south”, referring to equatorial latitudes as the “Global South”, calling the trans-Saharan “sub-Saharan” all exhibit a Euro-North-American (though arguably not North-Asian) bias. A bias that reflects the “textbook latitudes” where professional knowledge and prejudices are developed. Attitudes toward sustainability developed in these contexts aren’t sustainable across the planet as a whole. Alternate geographies are presented that take a more truly global point of view. Professions like architecture, engineering, and planning—along with the academies which grant them their social status—claim for themselves considerable authority to teach others’ stories and other lives. In the author’s experience, what is intended as generous and inclusive may unwittingly and irretrievably become arrogant and destructive. The paper closes by proposing several principles for conduct among us expert writers and teachers.

Emanuel Jannasch studied architecture at Cornell and Dalhousie Universities. He has worked in film design and the building trades as well as in architecture proper and has lectured around the world on systemic design and related topics. He is currently exploring divergent paradigms in forestry and wood construction.

3 **Where is the love? Overcoming the “joy deficit” in social inequality teaching**

My presentation examines the hazards of centralizing discourses of social harm and suffering in undergraduate teaching on social inequality. Drawing from Tuck’s contrast between “damage-based” and “desire-based” politics, and what Shuster and Westbrook describe as a “joy deficit” in my own discipline in sociology, I discuss how an overemphasis on disempowerment and social injustices in undergraduate teaching can perpetuate the invisibilization of actually-existing social justice projects and the stifling of emancipatory imagination. In response to this erasure, I argue for joy, desire, and coalition-building to be incorporated as focal points of social justice- and inequality-related course curricula. Exemplars of empowering responses to systemic oppression can be found in the work of radical scholars and activists across many social intersections (e.g., pleasure activism; Indigenous resurgence; joyful militancy; Black, queer, and transgender joy). In this regard, I demonstrate how postsecondary education on social (in)justice might illuminate not only the complexities of intersectional oppression but also the rich tradition of subaltern and transformative responses to it. The stakes for the inclusion or erasure of joyful, desire-based alternatives to structural injustice are considerable. Far-right populism, ecofascism, and neoliberalism have demonstrated an extraordinary capacity to capture negative discourses of social subjugation for their own

reactionary, supremacist, and commercial ends. If educators are to defend against this co-optation, promote a more complete understanding of social (in)justice, and foster robust dialogues about social change, then the motive and messaging of our curricula must not simply be about surviving, but thriving.

Robert Nonomura, Western University, Department of Sociology, Ontario

4 Accountability and Intervention at the Intersection of Disability and Environmental Justice: Improving Rural Endometriosis Care in Consideration of the Northern Pulp Mill in Pictou County, Nova Scotia

Join registered social worker (RSW) and Dalhousie Alumni, Hannah Parks (she/they), in discussing the erasures/omissions within rural endometriosis care, in consideration of the Northern Pulp Mill in Pictou County. Within a brief presentation, she will review (a) the history of the Northern Pulp Mill in relation to environmental and health impacts, and its involvement in environmental racism (b) current endometriosis care available in rural Nova Scotia, and (c) the relationship and intersection of disability and environmental justice. In unpacking this intersection further, they will address the role of accountability in intervention when considering how to improve endometriosis care in rural areas impacted by an absence of disability and environmental justice. Hannah will also connect her lived experience knowledge as a disabled white settler living with endometriosis and additional chronic illness, who lived in Pictou County when she began to really struggle with endometriosis.

Hannah is a social worker residing in Calgary (AB, Canada), who was formally diagnosed with deep infiltrating endometriosis in 2021, after ten-years of living with chronic pain. Managing life with the disease, she brings with her, lived experience knowledge as a service user, and direct practice knowledge in social work.

Concurrent Session B Anti-racist, anti-colonial discourse and/or frameworks, resistance or insubordination

1 Intentional Epistemological Erasures: Making a Case for Black Studies

Presently, a distinctively increasing push for Canadian Black studies is taking place through the hermeneutics of decolonial thought and the necessity for different phenomenological approaches to make meaning of Black life as underpinned through anti-Black racism. Black studies is an intellectual, liberatory, transformative project, constituted through different epistemologies, which challenges the singular, universalized, colonial Euro-modernity readings of our worlds regarding how to be and how to know. Put simply, Black studies entails a refusal of anti-Black racism, which seeks Black reciprocity through a totalizing embodiment that writes Black life into an abyss of its unintelligibility. At the heart of the emancipatory project of undoing the colonial legacies inherent

within educational research, are Black sociocultural imaginaries with the capacity to temporally traverse colonial ways of knowing through place and Black life as emerging from the Black diaspora. This discussion attends to the limitations and possibilities when Black studies, becomes imported, legitimised and governed by colonial edicts of educational institutions. The paper addresses the ways in which Black studies as a field of knowledge become intelligible, made durable and installed within the hallways of academe. In summary, the discussion considers the ontology of Black studies to query: what is the nature of the political struggle of Black Studies; the epistemological question regarding the underlying ways we come to know the terms and conditions concerning the historicity of Black studies; and, what is at stake when anticolonial ways of knowing becomes instituted, governed and concomitantly harnessed through limiting epistemic credibility within schools.

Marlon Simmons, PhD, is the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs and Professor, Adult Learning - Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary. Marlon's research include Black Diaspora and decolonial thought, with the aim of enhancing public education and responsiveness, regarding changing beliefs and attitudes embedded in colonial ways of knowing.

2

Pagsamahin: Merging culture, identity, and mental health care with 1.5 generation Filipinx Canadians in Winnipeg, MB

In Canada, Filipinos are the third largest migrant group with the first Filipino immigrants landing in the 1960s. Yet, there is a dearth of information on Canadian social work engagement with Filipino immigrants. Contemporary literature lacks the specificity of Filipino immigrants and their various needs, especially facilitators and barriers to accessing healthcare in Canada. The history of colonialization in the Philippines may result in Filipino immigrants unwillingly agreeing to western treatment plans that negatively affect outcomes. For instance, differences in communication styles between Filipino expectations and western paternalistic approaches result in challenges in building therapeutic relationships due to different understandings of the doctor-patient relationship. Given the extensive history of colonialization experienced by the Philippines, it is relevant to dismantle colonial ideologies when working with Filipino immigrants navigating the Canadian healthcare system. In addition, critical race theory is worthy of consideration as decolonization and race are usually entwined. In this paper, I illustrate how social workers can dismantle colonial ideologies by adopting principles from critical race theory to counter the dominant western hegemonic power privileging the white European landscape. I explain how decentring western views allows racialized groups to not be seen as special groups or framed from a deficit perspective. Secondly, accommodating non-western views is a more respectful approach conducive to sharing emotional issues as the healthcare provider is viewed as an insider. Third, I will outline how decolonization is a struggle for self-determination as colonized peoples must determine their own destiny and not be dictated by a colonial power.

Ben is a Social Work PhD student at Memorial University of Newfoundland. Ben has a passion for issues involving race, diversity, and equity. Currently, he is studying mental health help-seeking behaviours of first-generation Filipinx Canadians utilizing a Filipinx indigenous methodology of kwentuhan.

3

Resisting Intentional Erasures, Reproducing the Statue of Peace

The Statue of Peace, a bronze sculpture erected in 2011 in Seoul South Korea, stands as one of the most contentious public artworks in the nation. The statue depicts a seated teenage girl, symbolizing the “Comfort Woman”—a term used by the Japanese military during World War II to refer to women coerced into sexual slavery. Japan has persistently denied its systematic enslavement during its colonial rule and has refused to acknowledge its wartime atrocities or apologize to the victims. Moreover, pro-Japan politicians in South Korea and their supporters have contributed to Japan’s effort to erase the lived experiences of Comfort Women and silence their voices. The statue was created as part of collective activism to support the survivors and remember their sufferings. Due to its portrayal of the contested colonial experience, the statue has become a target of vandalism and dismantlement. However, these attempts to destroy or discredit the work have backfired, instead fueling grassroots efforts to amplify the survivors’ stories and honor their legacy. The statue has evolved into a powerful symbol of the resilience of the Comfort Women and their resistance against being erased from history. In a show of solidarity, South Korean students and various community members have come together to reproduce the Statue of Peace. Numerous casts and variations have been created and installed across the country, reflecting a collective determination. The proliferation of these statues demonstrates a continued communal commitment to ensuring the Comfort Women’s stories are neither silenced nor forgotten.

Nogin Chung, is a specialist in modern and contemporary art at West Chester University of Pennsylvania. Her current research focuses on the role of art in social change and examples of protest art in contemporary Asia.

4

Centering Africentric Perspectives in Social Work: Telling our Stories

In this presentation, Dr. Wanda Thomas Bernard and Dr. Sasan Issari use storytelling to identify why it is important to move Africentric theory from the margins to the centre of social work education and practice in Canada. Centering Africentric Perspectives is not about excluding different world views from social work education. On the contrary, it is about centering Black and African voices that have historically been erased and marginalized in social work (Este and Walmsley 2022). Drawing on over 40 years of research, teaching, community-engagement, and practice experience, Dr. Bernard is not only a founding member of the Association of Black Social Workers (ABSW) but instrumental in introducing Africentric Perspectives to the field of social work in Canada. Similarly, Dr. Issari had the opportunity to work closely with Dr. Bernard to deliver two Africentric courses in-person and online in Nova Scotia and Ontario. In this paper, Dr. Bernard and Dr. Issari explore how the experiences of Black, African, Indigenous, and ‘other’ racialized students and educators continue to be erased and marginalized in certain social workspaces. By drawing on the principles of Africentric theory (James, et al., 2010; Mullings, et al., 2021; Schiele, 2017), the authors share their collective journeys through narrative and storytelling. The authors provide examples throughout their careers of intentionally challenging and disrupting racist and colonialist spaces that continue to be hostile to African, Black, Indigenous, and ‘other’ racialized service providers and users in the community.

Dr. Sasan Issari holds a PhD in Social Work and has worked in various social work settings across Canada/Turtle Island. He is an Assistant Professor in the School of Social Work at Trent University. His research, teaching, and practice experience are grounded in a decolonizing, and intersectional lens.

Dr. Wanda Thomas Bernard is a Senator, Professor Emeritus of Dalhousie’s School of Social Work, and a social justice advocate. She has dedicated her career to fighting systemic racism, supporting African Nova Scotian communities, and advancing equity in health and social services.

PANEL TWO

Concurrent Session A Community and collectivism as resistance

1

Speaking and Witnessing Child Welfare Truths

Grounded in the belief that truth in systems of child welfare is a precursor to reparation and reconciliation, this presentation discusses the intentions, processes and outcomes of child welfare truth-telling and witnessing circles. In child welfare systems, truths are obscured and distorted in a myriad of genocidal everyday practices that normalize identity erasure, protect Whiteness, and

maintain silence. Truth-telling and witnessing circles are designed to be safe enough spaces where people who are doing or supporting child welfare practices shatter silence by speaking authentically of their roles and responsibilities in perpetrating harm and by bearing witness to the truths of others who are also complicit in harming. Inspired by Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, truth telling and witnessing circles amongst those who perpetrate harm in child welfare systems are in their infancy. We discuss how a truth-telling and witnessing circle differs from professional training and how the responsibilities associated with witnessing are as important as those associated with speaking. We explore the necessary ingredients to foster authenticity, including strategies that shift the emphasis away from the politics of recognition and the perils of professional empathy. Truth-telling and witnessing circles are embodied experiences that mobilize individual and collective accountability. Sometimes, experiencing truth circles brings healing; often it brings fresh awareness and reclaimed voice. One of the fruits of our work is that people who were reared in the system and those who were investigated by it are attracted to our authenticity and open to sharing their experiences and healing journeys. To that end, this process is a humble beginning - a first step - in a long journey toward reconciliation.

Nancy Freymond (she/her) is a White settler of European ancestry. Prior to entering academia, I worked in child protection. I am passionate about the experiences of people who encounter this system and the transformative dynamics of truth-telling and witnessing; I am a founding member of the Child Welfare Truth-Telling Collective.

Rhonda Andall (she/her) is an Afro Canadian with many years of service within the social service sector. As a Master of Social Work Student, she learnt and appreciates the benefits of truth telling and witnessing. Therefore, she is eager to share how this practice can be transformative.

2

Food spaces as sites for social change (Food spaces as places of resistance)

A sociological review of the literature on food and race politics reveal that much of it is interpreted through Pierre Bourdieu's concepts on distinction, as a way of understanding social organization through food behaviours (Sato et al, 2016). However, the concept of distinction has gaps in fostering understanding about how mechanisms of power construct social hierarchies at the intersection of race and class. This paper/presentation aims to flip the script on themes in food theory and demonstrate how food culture can pave the way toward positive political change and advocacy for civil rights. It features doctoral thesis work in Sociology that discusses how Afro-Caribbean food culture is interwoven with social justice movements protecting the rights of Afro-Caribbean communities in North America. It showcases everyday food ways of Afro-Caribbean culture and explores how local food spaces serve as hubs for resistance, resilience and social change. While many of the examples and existing literature referenced in this

discussion, arises from U.S., it also draws attention to some emerging conversations in Nova Scotia and among Indigenous communities in Canada. It draws on Paul Gilroy's concept of conviviality to explain how people from Black immigrant communities use food spaces to navigate and access civil rights and circumvent barriers to socio-economic inclusion. I look to the work of Dr. Daniel McNeil, Psyche Williams-Forsen and Joshna Maharaj to illustrate the role and relevance of everyday food ways in social justice.

Nadine Powell is currently working as an instructor at Red River College Polytechnic's Shelter Support program for housing and gender violence. She is also completing a doctoral dissertation in Sociology at Carleton University, where she has explored food and culture, transnational identities, race theory, capitalism and stratification.

3 Resisting the Covert Control of Neoliberalism in the Non-Profit Industrial Complex: Abolitionist Alternatives to Community Care

This paper explores the covert ways in which neoliberalism manifests within social movements via the non-profit industrial complex; and as a solution, proposes strategies rooted in abolitionist feminism to reclaim community care. The non-profit industrial complex infiltrates social movements from within by uniquely situating itself at the intersection of community and state. Despite consisting of activists that are truly dedicated to the proclaimed missions of their organizations, the non-profit industrial complex, as a globalized industry, reproduces the goals of neoliberalism through its hierarchal composition; prioritization of credentials and "expert" status over lived experience; and by pathologizing and individualizing social issues (Finley & Esposito, 2012). The non-profit industrial complex can be understood as an ideological apparatus, advancing the dominant values of neoliberalism by exercising soft social control to ensure conformity and reshape our perceptions of care, while also working in tandem with the repressive apparatus of prisons and police (Gilmore, 2017; Sharma & Gupta, 2009). The non-profit industrial complex utilizes discursive methods to rebrand neoliberal values of individualism in the form of self-care, isolating activists from each other, and in turn, reducing their ability to collectively organize. When community care becomes a neutralized construct in a commodified care industry, activists are more susceptible to estrangement from their values and related social movements. Abolitionist feminism has a robust history in Black and Indigenous movements and offers a promising foundation to redefine community care through its emphasis on intersectionality, collective action, and "both/and" logic (Davis et al., 2022)

Grisha Cowal, School of Social Work, Dalhousie University, Nova Scotia

3 **Feminist Pedagogy and Psychotherapy: A Quiet Resistance**

Trauma- and Violence-Informed Care (TVIC) (Wathen & Varcoe, 2023) has become the new terminology representing millennia of care work embedded in nurturance culture (Samaran, 2016). Foundational to communities of Indigenous, women, racialized, disabled, and LGBTQIA+ peoples around the world, nurturance and trauma-care have always been here, around the kitchen table and firesides, holding space for those hurting most and healing together. Intersectional and transfeminist pedagogies remind us of the oppressive histories of the medical industrial complex, psychology, and mental health pathologization. Amidst a global mental health crisis following the COVID-19 pandemic, what is the opportunity for feminist perspectives to remind TVIC of its roots, and reignite healing for the personal, the political, and the psychotherapist?

Lisa Trefzger Clarke, Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario

Concurrent Section B **Dangers of discursive myths, ideological priorities and dark chapters of national histories**

1 **The Countering Disinformation About The 2SLGBTQI+ Community in Rural Canada Project: Project Information and Research Assistant Insights**

Despite early beliefs that digital technologies would usher in gender and social utopias, these technologies have become important factors and forces undermining democracy and social cohesion around the world. One such force is the nascent anti-SOGI (Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity) movement. Having gained mainstream traction across the political spectrum, anti-SOGI discourse presents an important case study for understanding the use of mis/disinformation. It has taken a particular hold in rural and semi-rural spaces in Canada creating discursive myths, highlighting institutional dominance, and potentially foreshadowing a dark chapter of Canadian history. The emergence of anti-SOGI rallies and protests have prompted "myth-busting" initiatives from provincial governments, statements opposing anti-SOGI rallies from provincial teachers' associations, as well as concern from 2SLGBTQI+ communities and activists. The Countering Disinformation About the 2SLGBTQI+ Community in Rural Canada Project aims to explore anti-SOGI ideology, and the 2SLGBTQI+ communities it impacts in rural and semi-rural Nova Scotia, Alberta, and British Columbia. This presentation will give an overview of the Countering Disinformation project, and provide insight from two undergraduate researchers in Nova Scotia deeply embedded and engaged in data collection and analysis. Each will reflect on what they have learned about 2SLGBTQI+ communities in this province and the impacts that anti-SOGI ideology and rhetoric have had on these communities. Each will also explore the personal impacts of engaging in this type of research, and how others might be better prepared to engage with

problematic discourses and the (sometimes) intentional erasure of the impacts of research on students.

Luc S. Cousineau is an instructor of Recreation Management at Dalhousie University and the co-director of research with the Canadian Institute for Far-Right Studies. His research explores the roles and impacts of involvement with men's rights groups online, and the impacts of surveillance on leisure practices.

Kamryn Zboya completed an undergraduate degree in Political Science with honours from Saint Mary's University in 2024. Her undergraduate thesis looked at the use of the palindromic phrase "the personal is political" in the field of Feminist Security Studies.

Jonah Wozney is an undergraduate student at Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada

*Paulo Ravecca works in the Department of Political Science and Global Development Studies at Saint Mary's University. His research program mobilizes Marxism, psychoanalysis, poststructuralism, and post/decolonial theory to make sense of contemporary political challenges. He is author of [*The Politics of Political Science: Re-Writing Latin American Experiences*](#) (Routledge 2019).*

2

My grandfather's Stories of Women Leaders (and Erasures of Knowledges)

This title concerns a story. Wassaygijig was one of the stories that my grandfather told my mother about what she would witness in life. The world would change when “the women will be the leaders.” He was referring to the Anishinaabekwe. This talk explores knowledge production and social change. Indigenous peoples practiced methods of storytelling. It was the preliminary frame for preserving and creating knowledge. Stories assisted in the process of ensuring past events, traditions, spatial conceptions were preserved. For the Anishinaabe, values such as reciprocity, sharing, relationship and responsibility informed stories. Stories, like all aspects of this society, continue to change. Anishinaabe women's experiences of intentional erasure in our stories as well as how we (re)matriate our societies are considered. These issues and others related to storytelling and the Anishinaabe will be presented.

Patricia is an Indigenous helper, practicing Meno Bimadizenwin. Research projects involve the restoration and resurgence of Indigenous knowledge(s), resilience, and community interventions. Respectful frameworks for the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge(s) in broader academic, social and political contexts underlay her work. Dr. McGuire is an associate professor at Carleton University

3 **Historical Harm repacked as helping: why we need to reflect on the attitudes and treatment of Neurodivergent individuals by health care professional and society**

The aim of this presentation is to not only refute current practice approaches to neurodivergence, but also to show how current practice approaches are tied to the eugenics movement. By examining the ways in which the eugenics movement has targeted neurodivergent individuals highlighting briefly the holocaust and the emergence of Aspergers syndrome, and then the non-consensual sterilization of individuals to provide context for why current approaches are still tied to eugenics. As the past approaches of best practice have targeted; the biological (nature) aspects of neurodivergence has been unsuccessful, the new practice approaches target the behaviour/traits (nurture) or neurodivergent individuals. Current practice approaches are designed to suppress neurodivergent traits to make these individuals more neurotypical, this is harmful and an example eugenics in current practice. I will show that although the practice approach is designed to 'help' neurodivergent individuals, we are in fact still attempting to erase neurodivergent individuals with current practice approaches. The focus is to discuss how the primary goal of practice approaches being 'normal functioning in society' is tied to the idea of neurodivergence, specifically autism, as a linear spectrum where we equate an individual's worth to how 'normal' (neurotypical) they are. This is the premise of the eugenics movement, this is what we have seen historically, and our current practice approaches are reinforcing this. Current practice approaches are not 'best practice', they perpetuate the idea neurodivergent individuals as only having worth if they can fit into neurotypical society in ways that neurotypicals define as acceptable.

My name is Jessica Perry (she/her) and I am a second year master's of Occupational Therapy student. I am from a small, rural town in Nova Scotia. I am 3rd generation Canadian with my grandparents immigrating from Scotland and Wales. I identify as Neurodivergent .

4 **Glorifying the external, submerging the internal and human trafficking in West Africa**

Human trafficking is increasingly viewed within ideological debates of voice, protocols, tier rankings, charters, and conventions for managing the global problem. Within these often political and economic debates, the religious, cultural, historical, and traditional practices of the people, survivors or at-risk communities, particularly in Africa, are ignored or perceived as contributors to the spate of human trafficking. Further, complete alignment with external interpretations and solutions to human trafficking, ignore the prevalent local, regional, and international reinforcers of the problem. Within this presentation, we will provide critical insights from our ongoing Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) sponsored study with trafficked persons and their family members from several West African countries to advocate for new

approaches and ideological discussions of human trafficking. The focus will be on: prioritising the narratives and diverse experiences of survivors; advocating for wholistic, multidimensional interventions that are informed by the lived social, economic, historical, cultural and religious experiences of survivors; and isolating the impact of terminologies, histories of colonisation, externally generated policies in addressing a persistent problem in the West African region.

Ifeyinwa Mbakogu is Associate Professor at Dalhousie School of Social Work, and Chair of the Diversity and Equity Committee (DEC). Her interests include human trafficking, child labour, forced migration/displacement, health/mental health and displacement, reintegration, African Diaspora studies, health, rage, retention and racism, explored within anti-racist and anti-colonial lenses

Deborah Dzifah Tamakloe is a first-year Master of Social Work (MSW) student at Dalhousie University. Her research and educational interests are centred on the domain of child welfare.

Lotanna Odiyi is a Master of Social Work student at Dalhousie University. She has a Bachelor of Arts in political studies and a postgraduate diploma in psychology. Lotanna's research and educational interests encompass decolonizing healthcare and Afrocentric social work interventions.

WORKSHOPS

Concurrent Session A Embracing Antiracism Approaches in Supporting an Ever-Growing Diverse Population: A Self-Exploration Approach to Embrace, Deconstruct and Operationalize Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Decolonization

Intersectionality is an integral concept to deconstruct then integrate antiracism approaches to supporting a diverse clientele base in Social Work practice. Intersectionality, a term coined by Crenshaw (1989) is a concept that explains how these multiple identity modalities and simultaneous group memberships intersect to shape one's identity and subject them to multiplicative levels of bias, oppression, and racism (Capper, 2015; Gillborn, 2015; Kaushik & Walsh, 2018). The purpose of this interactive workshop is to provide insights about a recent session that engaged community stakeholders in a conversation regarding intersectional forms of identity and self-assessment, reflection on EDID-driven practices embedding antiracism and anti-oppressive approaches and leaving potential social work alumni with messages regarding working with diverse clientele. In exchange, the workshop facilitator intends to engage audience in some direct and critical discussion on antiracism approaches. A closer lens to immigrant and refugee populations will be explored. "What is antiracism and how to be antiracist?" will be a question to be explored. Finally, the session will end with an engagement of audience to deliver social work-specific deliverable messages to alumni as they actively engage with the ever-growing diversity of our communities locally and on a national level.

Dr. Riham Al-Saadi is an Assistant Professor at the School of Social Work, University of Windsor. Academically, she has taught social work courses at all levels. Her research interests include immigrants and refugee populations and Critical Race Theory, and professionally she provides social work and therapeutic support to diverse populations.

Concurrent Session B **Resisting the Erasure of People of Igbo Descent in Canada: A Workshop on History, Unity, and Collective Wellness**

This 90-minute workshop explores the rich history and contemporary challenges faced by people of Igbo descent in Canada, with a particular focus on Nova Scotia. The session aims to foster understanding, promote unity, and develop strategies for maintaining cultural identity and collective wellness in the face of potential erasure. The workshop begins with a comprehensive overview of Igbo migration patterns, tracing the complex pathways that have led to the establishment of Igbo communities across Canada. Particular attention is given to the historical presence of Igbo people in Nova Scotia, examining the socio-economic factors that influenced their settlement and the cultural institutions they developed to preserve their heritage. Participants will then engage in a critical examination of existing programs and initiatives designed to promote unity and cultural preservation among Igbo-Canadians. This analysis will serve as a springboard for a collaborative brainstorming session, where attendees will explore innovative strategies for maintaining relevance and fostering a sense of belonging within the broader context of immigrant and racialized groups in Canada. The workshop culminates in the collective development of recommendations for maintaining and enhancing the wellness of Igbo communities. These recommendations will address various aspects of community life, including cultural education, intergenerational knowledge transfer, economic empowerment, and political engagement. By weaving together historical insights, contemporary challenges, and forward-thinking solutions, this workshop aims to equip participants with the knowledge and tools necessary to resist erasure and promote the vibrant continuation of Igbo cultural identity within the Canadian mosaic.

Ikenna Okpala, Software Architect and Engineer. As part of the Igbo team in Nova Scotia, he helps educate and promote Igbo culture. At the Conversations Conference, Ikenna will lead a workshop on strategies for resisting Igbo cultural erasure in Canada, integrating technology with community engagement

George Chimdi Mbara, PhD. is a prolific academic, with a strong focus on African studies. He is a postdoctoral research fellow at the University of Johannesburg, South Africa. His work has been recognised and cited by peers, indicating the relevance and impact of their research in the academic community

PANEL THREE

Concurrent Session A **Community and collectivism as resistance**
1 **Understanding and addressing injustice behind the national cap on international student admissions in Canada**

The Canadian federal government recently restricted the intake of international students as a response to social problems such as housing crisis. International students who contribute significantly to Canadian economy are being scapegoated as a major cause of these social issues. This disadvantageous situation faced by international students, combined with their precarious status, may lead to their feeling powerless when facing the policy implemented by the Canadian nation-state. To examine the underlying exclusive sentiments behind this policy, neoliberalism is adopted as the macro contextual theory to understand how international students are treated as the ‘cash cow’ who brings in human capital to Canada. Foucault’s theory on governance is used as the mezzo level theory to explain how the government exerts its power in regulating this population despite the economic drive in neoliberalism to secure more international students. Epistemic injustice is further applied as a micro level theory to understand how international students are excluded in this policy-making process as their lived experience is deemed as unimportant by the government. These theories provide a comprehensive analysis of the injustice behind this policy. To promote positive changes, different professionals such as social workers, school counsellors, and community workers can work together with international students and amplify their voices through different initiatives such as organizing relevant petitions and creating supporting groups. Overall, this conceptual analysis advances our understanding of this social issue from an integrated perspective and guides future research and practice to promote justice for more groups with precarious status in Canadian society.

Dr. Kedi Zhao is an assistant professor at the Faculty of Social Work, University of Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada. Zhao’s research focuses on the wellbeing of racialized immigrants and migrants in Canada and aims to understand and tackle challenges faced by these groups.

2 **Moving Forward Together: Unsettling Racism, Silence and Violence in Health and Social Services**

Racism is a social determinant of health. It impacts the bio-psychosocial-spiritual health and well-being of racialized communities. In Nova Scotia, anti-Black racism has caused intergenerational harm for individuals, families, and communities of African – descent, particularly the African Nova Scotian (ANS) communities. In the “Culturally Responsive Healthcare to Reduce Gender-Based Violence” research project, community members shared their experiences of

anti-Black racism as barriers to receiving culturally responsive competent healthcare services when seeking help. Building upon the findings of that study, a university – community research team developed the current SSHRC funded project: “Moving Forward Together: Unsettling Racism, Silence and Violence in Health and Social Services”. The team is using arts-based participatory action research and Africentric principles to develop a deeper understanding of the experiences of anti-Black racism in health and social services systems, the intergenerational harms to ANS communities, and to develop effective pathways towards more culturally responsive care practices in the provincial health and social services systems. In this conference presentation, the team would like to share our experiences and lessons learned from using a methodological approach that centers Africentric principles and community relationships in the pursuit of knowledge, wisdom, and transformative education to ensuring culturally responsive care practice with communities of African – descent in Nova Scotia.

Shirley Hodder, an African Nova Scotian, is the Research Coordinator for Moving Forward Together and a 2023 graduate of Dalhousie’s Master of Health Administration program at Dalhousie. She is dedicated to promoting culturally safe and equitable health services, particularly for African Nova Scotian communities.

Holly Johnson, an African Nova Scotian, is an academic co-researcher with Moving Forward Together and a current Master of Social Work Student at Dalhousie. She brings valuable lived experience, a strong advocacy background, and a commitment to addressing anti-Black racism and social injustices.

Tiffany Taylor, an African Nova Scotian, is an academic co-researcher with Moving Forward Together. A recent graduate of Dalhousie’s Social Work program, she is dedicated to tackling systemic barriers and advancing equity in health and social services for African Nova Scotian communities.

3 Unmasking EDI: How Diversity Programs Perpetuate Erasure and the Call for Collective Resistance

In 1995, Canada legislated workforce diversity to address systemic biases faced by underrepresented groups. While Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) programs emerged to create equal opportunities, they inadvertently perpetuate intentional erasures of non-white voices by centring on white cultural norms. This centring is evident in questions of equity with whom, diversity from what, and inclusion by whom—often defaulting to white standards. Such frameworks are entwined with colonization, capitalism, and neoliberalism, which advocate for individualization, categorization, and separation to maintain power and control. These dominant paradigms contribute to systemic exclusion by overlooking collective community experiences and solutions. Critical theories of race, feminism, and disability highlight how these structures enforce othering and social exclusion. This presentation utilizes Foucauldian discourse analysis,

Goffman's theory of stigma, and Weber's labelling theory to examine how existing EDI practices reinforce power dynamics akin to historical colonization. In contrast, community and collectivism offer pathways to genuine inclusion and resistance against erasure. Emphasizing collective wisdom and shared values, communities can design solutions tailored to their diverse needs, countering the isolating tendencies of neoliberalism and capitalism. Social workers recognize that communities already possess the keys to their challenges and must advocate for programs that leverage universal design principles grounded in acceptance and humility. By shifting from EDI's white-centric focus to models that prioritize community-driven approaches, systemic biases can be dismantled. This fosters an environment where empowerment and social justice thrive, challenging the entrenched systems of power and creating inclusive spaces that honour all voices.

Laureen Kendall. As a 57-year-old white cisgender woman and 4th-year social work student, I draw upon personal experiences of trauma to inform my advocacy for social justice. I focus on anti-oppressive practice and community-driven solutions to address systemic inequities, aiming for genuine inclusivity and empowerment through collective wisdom and resilience.

4

Kink and Subversive Affirmation: Pursuing Collective Emancipation through Ritualistic Rejection of Systems of Oppression and Hegemonic Sexual Culture in the BDSM Space

This presentation will offer data and supportive literature pertaining to my MSW thesis, a qualitative study exploring codes of conduct and best practices used by professional practitioners of BDSM across North America. Bondage and Discipline, Domination and Submission, Sadism and Masochism (BDSM) has been both “sensationalize[d] and sanitize[d]” in popular media; targeted as immoral by religious conservatives; derided as exploitative by some radical feminists; pathologized in the DSM as a “paraphilic disorder”; and “virtually unstudied scientifically” for decades. Contrary to these perspectives, central to BDSM is the consensual and negotiated subversion of socially determined power dynamics through performative ritual fantasy play, as opposed to their reinforcement. There is a large representation of marginalized community members within BDSM. Existing in-group scholarship indicates that marginalized BDSM community members are experiencing BDSM as a space to pursue decolonization, pervert white supremacy and respectability politics, show radical inclusive care that rejects ableism, and celebrate queer and trans liberation. My research is informed by my lived experience as a queer woman with religious trauma, and as a BDSM community member. The presentation will offer a brief history of the pathologization of BDSM, its departure from the hegemonic sexual paradigm, and clarify how BDSM practitioners center consent in their practice, rather than perpetuating harm (when codes of conduct are properly followed). I will focus on how BDSM became and remains a space of

collective resistance; rather than replicating power dynamics, BDSM spaces become a radical, ritualistic space to subvert and transform the former.

Rae (she/her) is a queer sex educator and MSW student living in Kijipuktuk. She holds a BFA Honors and BA in Psychology. Rae investigates therapeutic potentials of BDSM, performative ritual, ideology and religion, and pleasure activism. She works in research and as a TA while completing her thesis.

Concurrent Session B Anti-racist, anti-colonial discourse and/or frameworks, resistance or insubordination

1 Psychiatric Consumers and Survivors’ (Lackluster) Engagement Indigeneity and Anti-Racism

The Canadian psychiatric consumer and survivor movement purports to advocate for justice and equity. However, the movement has a lacuna when it comes to Indigenous mental health, given the movement’s lack of engagement. Canadian literature is scarce regarding CSX engagement with Indigeneity, which my preliminary study seeks to address. My research question is: How do CSX organizations engage with cultural diversity and Indigeneity? This chapter is based on a constructivist grounded theory which involves interviewing CSX leaders and a secondary data analysis of the documents of thirteen (13) mental health organizations. I show that settler colonialism and whiteness historically overdetermine CSX organizational practices. My findings also reveal the movement has in limited cases chosen to build an anti-colonial praxis with Indigenous communities. New CSX initiatives are emerging that challenge historical practices, illustrated by Western Canadian examples.

Walter Wai Tak Chan, Social Work, University of Manitoba.

2 Experiential Learning as Resistance: ACMP’s Role in Empowering Afro-Caribbean Students Against Anti-Black Racism in Canada

Multiculturalism is often seen as a cornerstone of Canadian society, yet some racialized minorities continue to face systemic barriers that hinders full participation, largely due to racism and discrimination. The settler-colonial structure in Canada perpetuates disadvantages for racialized groups exacerbated by intersecting oppressions like anti-Blackness and other forms of discrimination. According to the 2019 General Social Survey (GSS), 41% of Black Canadians aged 15 and older experienced discrimination, compared to 16% of the non-Indigenous, non-racialized population. Navigating these challenges is difficult for many African, Caribbean and Black individuals, who often lack adequate support and resources, further deepening their marginalization. Addressing these persistent issues requires a pragmatic approach that supports social development and creates safe spaces where individuals feel comfortable sharing their experiences. The Afro-Caribbean Mentorship Program

(ACMP) has effectively implemented this approach through inclusive community initiatives that supports the success of African, Caribbean, Black and other racialized groups. Programs such as Financial Literacy, Barbershop Talks, Mental Health Awareness, Changing the Narrative and the Theatre of the Oppressed has demonstrated how participants can be empowered to develop sustainable solutions as well as acknowledging the complex realities of their lives.

Warren Clarke, University of Manitoba, Department of Anthropology, Winnipeg

Richmond Opoku-Prempeh, University of Manitoba, Department of Anthropology

Kevin Tachie, University of Manitoba, Department of Sociology

Stanley Oyiga, University of Manitoba, Department of Anthropology

3 **Erasing Indigenous identities at Dalhousie: The perspectives of Inuit faculty and students**

Indigenous Peoples are demanding academic institutions craft policies that require identity documentation to ensure that academic and staff appointments, as well as Indigenous-specific student admissions, scholarships and awards, are being given to legitimate Indigenous peoples and not Indigenous identity “fraudsters” or “pretendians” (i.e., people who have no claim or very specious claims to an Indigenous identity). In response, Dalhousie University convened a Task Force charged with developing a proposed policy that would address issues posed by Indigenous self-identification. After twelve weeks of consultations, the Task Force released its report in October 2023 that outlined a series of eleven recommendations, strenuously calling for immediate investigations into potential false claims to Indigenous identity. However, a subsequent human rights and legal analysis written by two Mi’kmaq scholars from Dalhousie’s Schulich School of Law heavily critiqued the Task Force report, noting that it is “too blunt an instrument” to deal with the complexities and nuances of Indigenous identity, and, that the recommendations in the report have the potential to cause serious harm to Indigenous People. The Task Force report’s recommendations closely mirror Dalhousie’s Medical School Indigenous Admissions Pathway, which has already been implemented. Our presentation will highlight the immediate and lasting harm caused not only by Dalhousie’s proposed Indigenous identity policy, but also the Medical School Indigenous Admissions Pathway. We will share our perspectives as Inuit faculty and students whose identities are ironically being erased through Dalhousie’s efforts to address false claims to Indigenous identity.

Debbie Martin, Faculty of Health, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada

*Evan Powell, Memorial University of Newfoundland, Doctor of Medicine/
Faculty of Medicine, NL, St. John's*

*Martina Lavalley, School of Social Work, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova
Scotia, Canada.*

4

**Conversations about International Erasers: Revisiting UNESCO (1978)
Declaration on Race and the Elimination of Racial Prejudice &
Contemporary EDI Initiatives**

EDI initiatives are being attacked and erased in the US and here in Canada have been critiqued as performative and elusive in bringing about substantive change. This presentation critically explores the stagnation in and backlash to contemporary EDI initiatives, arguing at its base the international erasure of the 1948 UDHR and UNESCO's 1978 Declaration on Race and the Elimination of Racial Prejudice urging governments worldwide to eliminate race categorization. And yet after 45 years, this directive has been selectively ignored, allowing the harmful ideology of 'race' to persist within societal structures and EDI strategies. Framed within critical social theory, we examine the post-World War II context of race as a prohibited ground of discrimination and expose how 'race' has been erroneously maintained as a neutral social identity category, despite its destructive nature to human, social, and economic development. The prevailing race thinking, deeply rooted in hierarchy, slavery, and colonialism, has sustained racism, systemic racism, the ideology of "whiteness" and "blackness", and the stagnation and attack on EDI initiatives. The talk concludes with a call to action, urging social work professionals to assume their core responsibility as agents of change in deconstructing race, exposing its meaning and role in history and contemporary society, and advancing professional practice grounded in universal human rights. By redefining social justice in alignment with universal human rights principles and the UNESCO Declaration, this presentation seeks to salvage EDI beyond performativity and to advance it into a substantive transformation of a more inclusive and just society.

Dr. Juliana West is an Associate Professor of Social Work at Thompson Rivers University. Juliana co-originated Anti-Oppressive and Anti-Privilege (AOAP) theory and practice with Dr. Bob Mullaly.

Christine Lwanga PhD. RSW. MBA. is an Adjunct Professor and Research Fellow, at the University of Manitoba, Faculty of Social Work – Graduate Programs & Research. She is a human rights activist, with over 35 years of work experience in Canada and at international level.