Examining the "Promise" of Intersectional Policy Analysis to Drive Social Change

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the adoption of intersectional policy analysis within governments and governmental bodies in Canada, focusing on the years 2019-2020, to understand what led to the adoption of intersectional policy analysis frameworks and what these frameworks accomplish through governments and governmental bodies. I interviewed intersectional policy practitioners from all levels of government and governmental bodies in Canada and triangulated this data with political transcripts from provincial and federal parliamentary debates and key government documents about intersectional policy analysis. A critical decolonial feminist framework is employed to analyze the data and to align with intersectionality's promise as a "resistant knowledge project" (see Collins, 2019, pp. 87-120). Key insights that emerge from this study are that intersectionality is disassociated from its history as it is adopted by governments, limiting its potential for meaningful public engagement through a policy process, and the Gender-Based Analysis Plus methodology, the primary intersectional policy analysis framework employed by public bodies in Canada, functions as a technology of performative accountability rather than a means for radical justice or imagining decolonial futures.

PREFACE

This thesis is an original work by Ashima Sumaru. The research project, of which this thesis is a part, received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board 1, Project Name “Examining the Promise of Intersectional Policy Analysis to Drive Social Change”, Pro00085873, April 25, 2019.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This thesis describes the adoption of intersectional policy analysis by governments and governmental bodies in Canada between the years 2019-2020. The data for this study comes from interviews of public service practitioners and a review of political dialogue and official government documents. The theory used to make sense of this data is a pluriversal lens – a critical decolonial feminist framework – which enables me to look at the intersection of concepts such as racialization, colonization, and heteropatriarchy as they emerge through the data as well as to trace the history of intersectionality through multiple channels or "multiple colonialisms" (Da Costa & Da Costa, 2019). This enables intersectionality, with its roots in Black feminist theory, to have a conversation with decoloniality, for the purpose of challenging, informing, and supporting each other through an ethic of relationality, and resists one framework (often unintentionally) serving to elide the other. The research that follows lends clarity to the concepts of intersectionality and intersectional policy analysis as they are understood by public bodies, helps us to understand what is accomplished by public bodies in using an intersectional policy analysis approach, and considers how intersectional policy analysis compares to other frameworks employed by governments to drive social change in Canada, such as anti-racism or multiculturalism.

This introduction outlines some of the key concepts being used, my research questions, the conceptual framework, the significance of this study, my positionality in relation to the issues I am discussing, and how the insights from this research might contribute to furthering

understanding and research around intersectional policy analysis in academia, within governments and governmental bodies, and in community/activist spaces.

Intersectionality's Arrival in Canadian Governmental Spaces

Intersectionality (and its related theoretical concepts, such as *interlocking, multiple jeopardy, discrimination-within-discrimination, multiple consciousness, multiplicity, multiplex epistemologies, translocational positionality, multidimensionality, inter-connectivities,* and *synthesis* (see Dhamoon, 2011, p. 232)), asserts that people are composed of diverse and mutually reinforcing or influencing social identities, such as race, class, gender, and ability. Furthermore, these identities, *and the interactions between them*, are contextualized within historical developments and concepts such as coloniality and racialization and structures of power (such as laws/citizenship, the education system, media, and the justice system). Stated simply, an intersectional approach acknowledges that identities are messy, people's experiences are invisibilized when we cannot see the compounding nature of being made vulnerable or being put into jeopardy across all areas of our lives, and social reform or transformation is limited when some perspectives are marginalized and silenced. Intersectionality is a tool for both understanding how interconnected systems of oppression influence a person's access to services and opportunities and also how to transform personal, institutional, and system outcomes of "advancement," "equal outcomes," or "meaningful participation" toward futures that are, for example, anti-racist, decolonial, or gender equitable.

An intersectional approach to policy analysis considers the intersections of social locations, their emergence and fluidity within historical and social developments, and their interactions, in order to develop more "socially just" policies and to determine whether a policy

will bring about stated goals of social change (Hankivsky & Cormier, 2011; IIRP, 2014; The Manning, 2014; Corus, Saatcioglu, Kaufman-Scarborough, Upadhyaya & Appau, 2016).

Governments, and the people/citizens that comprise them, have been increasingly interested in using various frameworks for intersectional policy analysis, as evidenced by the uptake of intersectional dialogue in digital media, human rights frameworks (at the national and international level), and in scholarship (see Collins & Bilge, 2016, pp. 88-113). This uptake of the concept of intersectionality is evidenced in the Canadian context by the now publicly stated requirement for a GBA+ (Gender Based Analysis Plus) review of policy and legislation at the federal level, and at many provincial and municipal levels (see, for example the *Canadian Gender Budgeting Act* of 2018 that legislates the "consideration of gender equality and diversity in the budget process" for the federal government). However, the "promises" of using the intersectional approach, such as creating more socially just and equitable societies, increasing the participation in policy-making of those who have been silenced/marginalized, and expanding the scope and depth of knowledge production, have not translated into action (Hankivsky & Cormier, 2011; Hankivsky, et al, 2014).

As Sara Ahmed (2006, 2007, 2012) has noted in her studies of racism and diversity within institutions, if initiatives such as intersectionality are tools that might allow one to *do* things, then we need to keep asking: *what are we doing* with intersectionality (2012, p. 17)? Does the "doing" of intersectional policy analysis result in action or inaction? And who benefits from that action or inaction? Alternatively, we must ask what is *produced* through all this engagement with intersectionality if it is not any of the "promises" named above.

Understanding the knowledge-to-action gap in intersectional policy analysis is a critical issue for practitioners tasked with implementing frameworks such as Gender and Diversity

Analysis (GDA), Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+), or Intersectionality-Based Analysis (IBA), who, by writing and rewriting documents and policies, and engaging in continual "consultation," end up "doing the document rather than doing the doing" (Ahmed, 2007; Ahmed, 2012, pp. 85-97). In this context, "doing the document" means that equity, diversity, and inclusion or anti-oppression work does not have a process, resources, or mechanism in place to move to a critical praxis phase. The result is much organizational work around the way we *say* we do things around here (as it relates to intersectionality) versus interrogating how we *really* do things around here in terms of organizational culture, actions, and initiatives.

The knowledge-to-action gap is also an issue for social movements who have been at the forefront of advocating for an intersectional approach to inform state interventions (which range from policy reform to societal transformation) as well as for people who are *living the effects* of racist, heterosexist, classist, colonial, ableist, (structurally oppressive) systems with unjust policies and practices. Some of the social issues that have driven the interest in adopting an intersectional approach to policy analysis show no signs of abating, such as growing global economic inequality and violence against women. "New" issues are also emerging that are beyond a single-issue approach, for example, the refugee and migrant "crisis," mass incarceration, and Indigenous sovereignty. The failure of *implementing* intersectionality as a tool for social change within governments and governmental bodies has serious consequences from the personal to the global level. The inverse of this concern is to ask "who benefits" from the maintenance of the status quo and the adoption/co-option of intersectionality?

As I started this inquiry, my initial conclusion (after a review of the literature) was that it was important to understand the knowledge-to-action gap in intersectional policy analysis. However, as I worked through critical, feminist, and decolonial readings of intersectionality,

where structures of epistemic authority are deconstructed and the relations of oppression and exploitation are historicized and unearthed, I realized that my research questions needed to change to ensure that accountability for action, or lack of action, lay with state *actors* rather than those *acted on* by the state. Instead of asking, "What would it take to implement the findings from intersectional policy analysis (from within the institutions that claim they are interested in using it to build more just social policy)?" the questions became:

(1) W*hat led to the adoption of intersectional frameworks as a tool for policy analysis (i.e. what were the policy drivers for adopting this policy of intersectionality)?*

(2) *What does intersectional policy analysis/GBA+ accomplish through state actors/governments/governmental bodies?*

The first question "turns the lens up" (see Tallbear, 2013 p. 17) to examine the systems of power and institutions that make claims about doing social justice work through the concept of intersectionality. In tracing why intersectionality (via GBA+) emerged as a foundational element for social policy analysis in Canada, the key queries become, "intersectionality for whom?" and "intersectionality for what?" Therefore, subjects of state policy (usually thought of as *citizens* or *governable subjects*) are not the focus of this study, nor are the "wicked" policy problems that they seem to always be entangled with; the focus is on "*who* decides what intersectionality *is* within governments and governmental bodies?"

The second question allows one to explore *how* or *if* intersectionality might be used through a social policy analysis process to contribute toward goals commonly outlined by liberal

democratic governments such as "equality," "justice," "freedom," and "full participation."[1] These goals have been stated and restated in Canadian (federal, provincial, and municipal) government plans and are infused in government strategies intended to "manage" diversity (such as multiculturalism and anti-racism initiatives) and yet these goals continue to be stated under

[1] See Lowe, 2015; Day, 2002; Bollen, 1993; Wood, 1995 for a discussion of the "promises" of liberal democracies. Each of these scholars approach the discussion of the functioning of liberal democratic governments from a different lens but they all highlight that liberal democracy is the ascendent form of democracy in western countries (and increasing globally) and that it is marked by a system that features toleration of differences (free speech, freedom of assembly) and individual representation in the political system, usually mediated through an elected representative. The guiding assumption in liberal democracies is that governments are accountable to the general population to practice freedom as the expression of *individual* interests (Bollen, 1993, p. 1209) rather than, for example, freedom "as positive *social* equality that grants all humans the opportunity to shape their destinies in the most healthy and *communally productive* [emphasis added] way" (hooks in Shah, 2019, p. 569). Critiques of liberal democracies highlight that recognition by the state as an individual who has *personal* "freedoms," *individual* participation in the political process, and equality as an *individual* before the law erases the history and ongoing reality of social oppressions experienced as a group (e.g. racialization and colonization) and alienates people from communal forms of social organizing that would be more effective in dismantling oppression by advocating for collective rights rather than individual liberties.

new frameworks, such as intersectionality or GBA+, which indicates that little progress has been made where "diverse" peoples feel "included" and achieve equal opportunities and outcomes.[2]

This question (what does Intersectional Policy Analysis (IPA)/GBA+ accomplish through governments/governmental bodies?) explores whether GBA+ contributes to *societal reform* or *societal transformation/decolonization*. Societal reform is reductionist and incremental and maintains the status quo structures of society, while societal transformation/decolonization entails a radical rethinking of foundational policy concepts such as "citizen," "democracy," and "social justice" as well as policy systems such as "education" and "health." This research question also explores a key tension within the concept of *"intersectional"* policy analysis itself -- that while *intersectionality* is a theory/methodology developed to destabilize and transform social relations, *policy-making* and *policy implementation* are fields that emerged from within the logics of the neoliberal/colonial governments that produced the social relations that are experienced today. My deployment of a critical decolonial feminist lens examines what produced the *commonsense* structures of dominance embedded within public policy-making to resolve the contradiction named above; that is, how might the use of intersectionality as defined by governments/governmental bodies actually be consistent with *maintaining* social relations rather than transforming them, despite public promises to the contrary?

I suggest that using intersectionality to unsettle policy-making must also involve, as Sylvia Wynter (2003) states it, "unsettling the coloniality of being/power/truth/freedom" (p. 257). This involves an ontological project in addition to a epistemic or methodological project; it

[2] See *Canadian Multiculturalism Act, 1985; Canadian Gender Budgeting Act*, 2018; and *Building a Foundation for Change: Canada's Anti-Racism Strategy 2019–2022*, Government of Canada, 2019.

involves unsettling what we think of as being a citizen, a government, a nation-state, living in a democracy, and the concept of social policy itself, as the taken-for-granted notions of being/power/truth/freedom are born from colonial logics, especially in a settler state such as Canada. In other words, how can intersectionality shed light on "the culture and class-specific relativity of our present mode of being human" (Wynter, 2003, p. 282) and go beyond using categories like race, class, and gender to define ourselves so that we might think of social policy problems in new (not novel) ways. For example, how might policing be reimagined as a community safety initiative involving an interconnected set of issues through IPA rather than engaging in policy analysis around how we create a "better" policy as it relates to "policing" urban "Indigenous communities?" The questions we ask in policy making, the problem definition, and the way we come up with the answers are crucial in understanding "what difference does difference make?" (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1299). How we know, define, and produce new knowledge through those differences is dependent on the frameworks we use to understand the world and intersectionality has emerged as one of the latest frameworks within governments to attempt to know and define who "we" are. I argue that thinking intersectionally requires an intersection of theoretical positions to fulfil this promise of social transformation – a critical decolonial feminist pluriversal lens. This critical decolonial feminist analysis involves interrogating the logic of systems of power (e.g. the government, the nation-state) rather than evaluating the promise of intersectional policy analysis as an inclusion methodology or a social justice project.[3] I am more interested in exploring from whose history and whose understanding

[3] As Tuck & Yang (2012) highlight, decolonization is not concerned with the futurity of the nation/settler-state and does not ask for recognition, redistribution, or reparations (i.e. "justice") from the existing society that continues to practice colonial forms of organization, leadership,

is intersectionality operating from? When social policy contradictions emerge through an intersectional policy analysis process within governments and governmental bodies, are they symptoms of a system that is not working well or indicators of a system that is functioning just as planned?

How intersectionality is named and defined (my first research question exploring *who* decides what intersectionality *is*) directly influences what intersectionality can do. So, if we follow intersectionality around (in governments/governmental bodies), where does it go? *Who* does *what* with it? And what can we learn about the opportunities or constraints of adopting social justice/decolonial projects into public policy-making?

Conceptual Framework: Critical Decolonial Feminism -- An Interdependent, Pluriversal Lens

A critical decolonial lens, when applied to intersectional feminism, provides a means to cultivate radical subject positions and revolutionary subjectivities from outside eurocentrism; that is, intersectional knowledge production becomes rooted in a critique of eurocentrism from subaltern epistemic locations rather than from within Eurocentric thought and frameworks (see

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etc. Whereas "social justice" implies seeking justice from within the current society, for example, by asking for redistribution of wealth as access to private ownership of land or seeking inclusion in the form of "official" government recognition of identity that then receives individual "rights" as a "vote" or access to social benefits, decolonization and radical justice seek to destroy the legal and political structures and mental constructs by which colonial formations such as private property can exist. Decolonization deconstructs and recreates the logic by which freedom, health, and belonging (social policy) can be understood.

Grosfoguel, 2007), which enables true epistemic disobedience. This interdependent pluriversal lens includes Black feminist subaltern/U.S. Third World Feminists such as bell hooks, Audre Lorde, Kimberlé Crenshaw, and Patricia Hill Collins while bringing in the insights from non-Black, non-Indigenous anti-racist feminist radical thinkers such as Sirma Bilge, Gloria Anzaldúa, Maria Lugones, and Rita Dhamoon, and theorists who specifically look at decoloniality/decolonization/Indigenous resurgence such as Lisa Lowe, Sylvia Wynter, Franz Fanon, Jodi Byrd, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, Eve Tuck, Anibal Quijano, and Ramón Grosfoguel. I must note that the terms I am using to define and distinguish each group of thinkers come from the very western canon that many of these theorists strive to implode and the "lines" between them are not as clear as I have delineated above.

I am bringing together this critical decolonial feminist lens to counter the politics of memory (Lowe, 2015, p.39) in settler colonial states such as Canada where there is a "forgetting" of the conditions that enabled/still enable the current system of liberal humanism to flourish: a system of historical and on-going racism, colonization, and neoliberal/capital exploitation and alienation. Rather than dismiss non-Western knowledge as particularistic or to think of subaltern/Indigenous theorists as "people without history," I am intentionally engaging a multiplicity of geo-political and body-political vantage points in order to uncover that the history nation-states such as Canada are working within is simply a Western episteme, and "the disembodied and unlocated neutrality and objectivity of the ego-politics of knowledge is a Western myth" (Grosfoguel, 2007, p. 214).[4] Rather than the neat and orderly teleological

[4] The ego-politics of knowledge is a term developed by Walter Mignolo (1991) to describe the influence of Cartesian thinking on the modern world system and to expose the particularity and limitations of that system of knowledge production. Within the ego-politics of knowledge, the

sequence of development professed by the colonial power matrix (see Quijano, 2000), I seek to shake up the habitus by engaging discontinuities and a cacophony of perspectives. Byrd (2011) describes cacophony as a methodology or "critical tool" where

> Identifying the competing interpretations of geographical spatialities and historicities that inform racial and decolonial identities depends upon an act of interpretation that decenters the vertical interactions of colonizer and colonized and recenters the horizontal struggles among people with competing claims to historical oppressions. Those vertical interactions continually foreground the arrival of Europeans as the defining event within settler societies, consistently place horizontal histories of oppressions into zero-sum

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subject of enunciation is hidden from view while solipsism prevails as the mode of thought for the subject (for example, "I think therefore I am" is exposed as "ego-politics," where an individualistic mode of empiricism is extended to an ontological level and is transformed into, "I think, therefore it's only my thoughts, and my point-of-view, that produces the reality of everything and everyone"). Theorists such as Mignolo and Grosfoguel (2012) expose that this "epistemology [that assumes] axiological neutrality and empirical objectivity of the subject" (p. 89) produces epistemic racism or epistemicide because it takes for granted that "universal reason and truth can only emerge through a white-European-masculine-heterosexual subject" (p. 94) and erases the knowledge of all other peoples. The concepts of "geo-politics" and "body-politics of knowledge" are used by Mignolo, Grosfugel, and other decolonial theorists to reinscribe the geo-historical and bio-graphical nature of knowledge production (see Mignolo, 1991), exposing "Western" knowledge as particularistic and proposing a decolonial pathway through which people can enter into dialogue with many different knowledge systems that have been erased through colonization, racialization, sexism, and other structures of dominance.

> struggles for hegemony, and distract from the complicities of colonialism and the possibility for anticolonial action that emerge outside and beyond the Manichean allegories that define oppression (pp. xxxiv-xxxv).

As Anna Tsing says, "the point of noticing friction is to allow the irregular and unexpected into our stories of global history" (2005, p. 1); that is, I seek to make the invisible, visible, and to create new pathways for learning and resistance through a frictional discomfort.

The goal of this conceptual framework is not to develop a means for a comparative analysis of how policy might be made by the "West" or "the rest" but to find an alternative to the universal conception of the human and its ontological, epistemological, and methodological limitations for the concept of social policy by engaging with a diversity of resistant knowledge projects that can keep intersectionality accountable for sustaining critical inquiry (Collins, 2019, pp. 87-120). A pluriversal lens enables the construction of "a world in which other worlds fit" and builds on the methodology of the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN) by "walking while asking questions." Indigenous/decolonial theorists and critical race/queer feminisms scholars provide a means for countering the hegemonic discourse of the Centre; they are all reflexive in questioning how the dominant discourse shapes the centre as much as it shapes the periphery and turn their lens on this isomorphism because to ignore this context "reauthorizes the centre to function unmarked as the centre" (Pratt, 2002, p. 23). I argue that this coalitional/"intersectional" lens is exactly the type of lens required to fulfil intersectionality's potential to not only "dismantle the Master's house" (Lorde, 1984/2007, p.112) but to potentially build a new one.

This lens also helps to explain how intersectionality can be "'hailed' and 'failed' simultaneously" (Bilge, 2013, p. 407); for example, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has

strongly supported an intersectional analysis in all federal government policies, especially to protect women and children (i.e. to safeguard "human" rights), but he is also comfortable with selling arms to a state such as Saudi Arabia, a state with particularly well-documented gender oppressive policies and laws (Human Rights Watch, 2019), because they are Canada's "business partner" (CBC News, 2021). A critical decolonial feminist lens enables me to clarify who (or what) state actors are accountable to when they employ intersectionality within their social policy analyses -- is it to the "public/electorate," the "economy," or something else? This lens also allows me to ask whether "human rights," "social justice," the "nation," or "democracy" functions as a site of liberation or oppression within social policy contexts and whether we want to engage with those terms in the first place.

Furthermore, if social policy "identifies what a majority of Canadians accept as legitimate public issues at a given moment in history -- that is to say, the issues for which we see the state having responsibility rather than individuals, families, or communities" (Westhues & Wharf, 2012, p. 3), then a critical decolonial feminist lens also enables a consideration not just of how the issues represented in current policy debates might be "overcome" through an intersectional lens but also of who or what defines what a legitimate social policy issue is in the first place. For example, if intersectional policy analysis (via GBA+) is linked with economic progress within governments and governmental bodies, then this lens takes us beyond looking for correlation or causation between these two things (an evaluation of the effectiveness of "evidence based" decision-making) but also considers how aesthetics (as in the will to represent a particular "reality") might be employed in the service of political life. What a critical feminist decolonial lens challenges is not the correlation between an "robust" intersectional lens and the outcome of economic growth/individual prosperity (or other professed outcomes). Rather, it

contests the unfettered belief in economic growth itself and the trust in individual development (often framed as an investment in private goods as capital) that leads to a more democratic, just, and egalitarian State. This lens opens up a space to interrogate how aesthetic/semiotic and political forms of representation become linked together; that is, how do we come upon the "social contract" by which we agree that "this" will stand for "that?" "Turning the lens up" means interrogating legitimizing discourses that ultimately control what social policy will seek to know, define, and address and not just seeking to shift the locus of responsibility for the "success" or "failure" of policy to another actor. In other words, I am suggesting it is not useful to shuffle responsibility between government, individuals, families, or communities without considering how the contradictions that emerge in social policy are not symptoms of an ineffective system but to be expected as inherent to the system itself.

Applying a critical decolonial feminist framework enables me to uncover gaps in public accountability and contradictions between what is promised and what is actually done by those in power. In particular, a critical decolonial feminist framework exposes/illuminates/reveals the alignments or contradictions between the state's "promises" of using the intersectional approach, for example, to create more socially-just and equitable societies, to increase the participation in policy-making of those who have been silenced/marginalized, and to expand the scope and depth of knowledge production, and what is actually being operationalized by these same state institutions. Therefore, this study focuses on state actors, those individuals working on behalf of a government or governmental body, including politicians. To determine more concisely where accountability lies when it comes to action or inaction, the study makes a distinction between those who are tasked with implementing social policy (practitioners in the public service), those who are engaged in influencing social policy (upper management within the public service), and those who have the power to create or sanction social policy (politicians).

The "pluriversal lens" within this conceptual framework takes synthesis as its organizing framework rather than analysis. Whereas starting with a particular analytical or conceptual position as the basis for understanding the world locks us into an ontological prior that determines the kinds of questions one may ask and how they come up with the answers to the questions, starting with synthesis, "cacophony" (Byrd, 2011), "epistemologies of coordination" (Whyte, 2020), "multiple colonialisms" (Da Costa & Da Costa, 2019), or "critical transmodern dialogue" (Grosfoguel, 2012) – what Collins (1990) deems, multiple interpretive communities that co-exist and where "one has no need to decenter anyone in order to center someone else" (Brown in Collins, 2000, p. 270) – presents new possibilities of understanding how intersectionality and IPA are constructed and what they achieve within governments and governmental bodies. This pluriversal framework, for example, enables one to notice the "friction" between racialization and colonization, not to the end of putting them into conflict or putting them to rest, but putting them into conversation with each other. One of the effects of using this pluriversal conceptual methodology is, for example, that the concepts of race and racism can be held as important and meaningful within intersectionality while simultaneously discussing how the use of racialization by the state serves to elide a discussion of colonization (see Byrd, 2011, p. 54). A pluriversal conceptual methodology also helps "reveal how racialization is the process by which whiteness operates possessively to define and construct itself as the pinnacle of its own racial hierarchy and disavowing indigenous sovereignty" (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, p. xx).

A framework that uses synthesis as its organizing structure *notices* the knowledge of the other, looks for points of connection, listens, asks questions, and understands the other well enough to make points of connection, all while managing power within its organizing

framework. It is inherently, by design, a relational framework. In the context of this study, it opens up polyvocality in the reading and writing of what happens when governments adopt intersectionality. As Alexander and Mohanty (1996) assert, this pluriversal lens (what they describe as the "critical application of feminist praxis in global contexts" (p. xix)) opens up a "a paradigm of decolonization which stresses power, history, memory, relational analysis, justice (not just representation), and ethics as the issues central to our analysis" (p. xix).

Furthermore, although this thesis describes what happens inside of state structures, this conceptual framework enables an analysis that aligns with resistance movements and praxis led by subaltern groups, people who experience racialization and colonization, and Indigenous peoples' theorizing. It is hoped this methodology brings forth knowledge and action from the space of the colonial difference.

Methods and Participants

To explore my research questions, I have conducted semi-structured interviews with respondents from all three levels of government in Canada (municipal, provincial, and federal), and have also included those who are part of governmental bodies from federal and municipal levels. All of the respondents had the development or implementation of IPA/GBA+ as part of their portfolio. To engage with the political discourse at all three levels of government, I have analyzed debates, council proceedings, and committee notes from either municipal city councils, provincial legislatures, or the federal parliament where IPA/GBA+ was debated or discussed. Furthermore, I have conducted a document review of relevant texts issued by these same governments/governmental bodies.

Significance of the Study

In using a critical decolonial feminist framework, I am hypothesizing that there is a need for critique and transformation of the state/state actors under study and that the adoption of a social justice/social transformation project such as intersectionality is likely to be integrated in a less than adequate fashion. Intersectionality, and frameworks that incorporate this concept as a tool/paradigm, such as Gender Based Analysis Plus (GBA+), are positioned by the state as an "answer" to the "problem" of diversity (for example, see Government of Canada, 2021), which is similar to previous initiatives such as multiculturalism, cultural competency, diversity and inclusion, and anti-racism (see Day 2002). Since the state continues to adopt new frameworks to accomplish the same goal, it is important to historicize and contextualize current intersectional projects to see whether investments within them are justified or whether they are simply placeholders and buzzwords that serve to maintain a racist/(settler)colonialist/capitalist/ heteropatriarchal status quo. I am interested in placing intersectionality within the lineage of state projects used to manage diversity in Canada to see if this "new" type of policy discourse is an actual break from previous frameworks such as multiculturalism or anti-racism (and how they have been adopted/co-opted by governments, politicians, and other governmental bodies) or if it is an extension of previous approaches where the "name" of the policy approach changes but the outcomes of the policy approach remain the same.

My concern is that the 'textbook' adopted for intersectional policy analysis by many governments/governmental bodies in Canada (i.e. Gender-based Analysis Plus) is not aligned with professed interests in social justice/transformation (see Government of Canada, 2020) and instead functions as another tool of state management. I believe a critical decolonial feminist

reading of intersectional policy analysis is a promising approach to answer the earliest inquiry of this paper, *who benefits from the status quo*?

As such, the general objective of this study is to describe the patterns and contradictions within state intersectional projects that make claims about bringing about equality and social justice. More specific objectives include:

- to describe alignment and contradictions between intersectionality intentions/objectives, theory, and practice,
- to explore the meaning people (state actors) are making of intersectionality and how this will influence their practice (including the effects on society as a whole), and
- to provide insight into the current operations of governments/governmental bodies in Canada when it comes to the adoption of intersectionality as a policy position.

The key assumptions for this study are that it is important to describe what is happening within institutions through the lens of more mainstream and canonical theorists as it relates to critical decolonial feminism, before looking at the tactics and strategies that might dismantle oppressive systems or provide alter-strategies and theories to build new forms of "social policy." For example, Caouette & Kapoor (2015) describe the importance of a grassroots radical pluralism perspective to avoid the replication of grand narratives and to resist the delinking of activism from its roots at the local level where "resistance is experienced and practised in daily actions, guided by autonomy and self-sufficiency" (p. 8). The pluriversal lens constructed in this study attempts to defer the salience of grand narratives but it is focused on the perspectives of those who are embedded in institutional life as well as people who are theorizing from the land, local contexts, and lived realities of particular experiences of being made vulnerable. It is

assumed that engaging the "funds of knowledge" (Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 1992, p. 133) generated by theorists at different vantage points will help to clearly depict what happens inside governments and governmental bodies.

The delimitations and limitations of this study are somewhat intertwined. I have limited this study to state actors who are directly involved in the implementation or influence of intersectional policy analysis within their organizations. This constitutes a small sample size as this is quite a specialized field with a small number of practitioners. Due to the constraints in writing a Master's thesis, I have also not engaged with an exhaustive sample size for my qualitative interviews, however, within my sample size, there has emerged a saturation of themes. To protect the confidentiality of this small sample size, who have very specialized positions, I have also chosen not to directly name the governments/governmental bodies that generated the data for this thesis, limiting the replicability of this study. Lastly, the methods used in this study could have more strongly reflected a critical decolonial feminist approach to knowledge production, such as Participatory Action Research; however, with the time and resource constraints of writing a Master's thesis, a more conventional, interpretive approach was used in the research design for the qualitative interviews, where the interpretation of social phenomena was not through a collective and collaborative lens. In naming this, I hope this research is seen as community-generated and community-owned knowledge by those practitioners that participated in first-person interviews and welcome further dialogue with the ideas that follow as we all work within our policy-making communities. I hope I have produced something meaningful to engage with, to reflect on, to plot with.

Additional limitations are in using a framework that attempts to balance decoloniality and the concept of decolonization through a synthesis of "multiple colonialisms" (Da Costa & Da

Costa, 2019). For example, decolonial theorists from the "mainland" of Turtle Island look at what it would mean to "give back the land" and to engage in refusal whereas Sylvia Wynter, writing from the context of Jamaica – where the land is "back" but colonialism continues through transnational structures such as capitalism, racialization, colonialism, and neoliberalism focuses on skepticism and exposing the limits and arrogance of Western thought. Tiffany Lethabo King (2017) argues that bringing these positions together (Native refusal and decolonization with Black "skepticism/pessimism") can be useful in moving beyond conversations around identity to destroying the grounds (e.g. the U.S. police state and the United States as a nation-state) that are necropolitical and together serve to "determine the conditions of possibility for being considered human" (p. 180). However, there are still tensions in this thesis where decoloniality might be read as "critical analysis" without "critical praxis." I offer that this attempt to intersect these perspectives is a theoretical "experiment" within this thesis and there are places where they may be read to contradict each other. I am offering the pluriversal lens in this thesis as a heuristic rather than a fully formed theory. As a result, there are many limitations that I hope are identified and challenged through the reading of this thesis – including whether intersectionality aligns with decolonization projects.

There is also a limitation in my own positionality and reflexivity. I acknowledge that I live in the space of contradictions and this produces blind spots and places where I may focus on reform rather than radical justice. I believe the "Master's tools will never dismantle the Master's house" but what does it mean to live in that house while we're building a new one? For those of us who are trying to break some windows and remodeling that house while we're living there, there is always a danger of being complicit rather than radical.

Locating Myself

> In telling you all of this in this way, I am resigning myself and you to the idea that parts of my telling are confounding. I care about you understanding, but I care more about concealing parts of myself from you. I don't trust you very much. You are not always aware of how you can be dangerous to me, and this makes me dangerous to you. I am using my arm to determine the length of the gaze.
>
> At the same time that I tell, I wonder about the different endings, the unfurled characters, the lies that didn't make it to the page, the anti-heroes who do not get the shine of my attention. Each of the entries in this glossary is a part of the telling. Together, they are the tarot—turn this one first, and one divination; turn another first, and another divination. Yes, I am telling you a story, but you may be reading another one (Tuck & Ree, 2013, p. 640).

For the topic of this thesis, I thought it would be essential to locate myself; that is to introduce myself culturally, socially, and geographically, in order to provide insight into my relationality with the reader, and to make salient how I am working through this reflection from "human epistemological lenses" (Absolon & Willett, 2005, p. 97). Also, as Dei (2009) writes, "bodies matter because of the link between identity and knowledge production… [and] because of the embeddedness and/or rootedness of racist ideologies in bodies" (p. 59). But as Tuck & Ree assert in the quote above, this telling is always already incomplete, and in some ways feels dangerous; it lies in the space between authentic/inauthentic for me.

I am a second-generation immigrant living in amiskwaciy-wâskahikan on land that is home/nation for many Indigenous Peoples including the nêhiyawak, anishinaabe, niitsitapi,

saulteaux, Métis, dene, Inuit, and iyāne nakota. I am an occupier of lands that are under Treaty 6 – a treaty that is only partially enacted or respected – and on unceded land by nations and groups that have not been recognized or privy to the treaty process. This land is also Metis Nation Region 4 and traditional land of the Papaschase nation. Thinking of the land, politically and culturally, reminds me that there have been many conceptions of nation, province, and territory before this one, and that there can be new ones in the future.

My parents came to Canada in 1977 from the Fiji Islands, a British colony at that time, which meant that they spoke English fluently and were familiar and entangled with British administrative, political, social, and cultural systems, including an educational system based on Western epistemological assumptions. This knowledge/embodiment of the colonizer (as they were also settlers in Fiji) was something they brought with them when they moved to Western Canada (which is still deeply entrenched with British colonial systems and institutions). However, when my ancestors arrived in the Fiji Islands, they came from India and South Africa as indentured labourers, entangled within global colonial systems that moved and used racialized bodies to extract and consolidate capital within the metropole. My family's experience of Canada also includes elements of marginalization as our racial identity inserted us into the hierarchy of racial oppression that exists in settler colonial societies. As brown-skinned, racialized settlers, we work simultaneously in, with, and under colonial and racialized systems of oppression.

In considering anticolonial and decolonial knowledge, I have named and renamed my social identity as I have struggled to locate and relocate myself. Rather than seeing this as a futile task, I have tried, as Leigh Patel (2015) argues, to be open to the

> rupture[s] and change[s] to being and learning that may be appropriate to counter up the built up habits of coloniality. These habits that trundle teleologically onward, without often pausing to either check coordinates of social, physical, and ethical locations, which profoundly compromise the potential for transformative change (p. 13).

I have become open to unlearning and to relearning and to opening up my ethics for scrutiny. I recognize learning as more than education, which "for centuries, within the grip of coloniality, has sought to make this essential aspect of humanness, learning and changing, definitively known" (Patel, 2015, p. 14).

I also bring to this analysis a background in organizational and social policy and equity/social justice/anti-racism work as experienced from the side of social movements, from within government, from working within not-for-profit organizations and coalitions, as well as from the position of a consultant who has been engaged directly to develop and deliver government initiatives around equity/social justice/anti-racism. I have designed and facilitated many workshops (hundreds of them, spanning more than a decade), trainings, toolkits, lenses, audits, community engagement processes, and engaged in policy analysis and/or policy development on the topics of inclusion, equity, and anti-racism. I have sought to work through participatory, anti-oppressive, and decolonial approaches, and often failed, while learning over time. I call them "approaches" and not "tenets" because it's about learning *how* to get somewhere rather than applying something that is already known. In this work, I have always worked alongside the knowledge of others: co-constructing, dismantling, and rebuilding what we know and what we do.

As I wrote this thesis, I found myself speaking to different audiences and there are places where my personal relationship to the topic leaks out. I decided to keep these words of

relationality. They are not words that are meant to build credibility with the academy but words that will be heard *in the way I mean them* for the people with whom I also want to dialogue with; these are the people with whom I have meetings after *the* meeting; the people with whom I exchange looks in the classroom or the boardroom, which is sometimes the only way we can communicate in spaces that privilege whiteness (communicating in silence but with deep *knowing*). I did not want to erase these words; these are moments when I am writing from where I am situated and from where I have been situated.

These are the lenses that I bring to this analysis.

Acknowledgement of Indigenous Land, Presence, Life, Learning, Resurgence

I see "treaty/land acknowledgements" as opportunities to be disruptive, to stay uncomfortable, to be challenged to move beyond recognition, to examine opportunities to relate in different ways, to not "fall back" to what I always already know. I have gleaned this learning from many Indigenous peoples, including Chelsea Vowel (2016) who says, "Moving beyond territorial acknowledgments means asking hard questions about what needs to be done once we're 'aware of Indigenous presence.' It requires that we remain uncomfortable, and it means making concrete, disruptive change." I also want to counter the notion that treaty or land is only about looking back or "honouring the past." When I am in spaces where I am "tasked" with "acknowledging," I see it as an opportunity for the acknowledgement of Indigenous presence, life, learning, and resurgence. To make that acknowledgement here, I will quote Leanne Betasamosake Simpson:

> One of the things birds do in our creation stories is they plant seeds and they bring forth new ideas and they grow those ideas. Seeds are the encapsulation of wisdom and

> potential and the birds carry those seeds around the earth and grew this earth. And I think we all have that responsibility to find those seeds, to plant those seeds, to give birth to these new ideas. Because people think up an idea but then don't articulate it, or don't tell anybody about it, and don't build a community around it, and don't do it.
>
> So in Anishinaabeg philosophy, if you have a dream, if you have a vision, you share that with your community, and then you have a responsibility for bringing that dream forth, or that vision forth into a reality. That's the process of regeneration. That's the process of bringing forth more life—getting the seed and planting and nurturing it. It can be a physical seed, it can be a child, or it can be an idea. But if you're not continually engaged in that process then it doesn't happen (Simpson in Klein, 2013, para 34 & 35).

As I reflect on this acknowledgement and what it means in the context of this thesis, I centre myself on questioning whether the choices that are made on behalf of communities/citizens/people through intersectional policy analysis actually brings forth more life. Where the current research in IPA shows that there is an increasing interest in IPA but no new solutions to complex problems are brought forth by governments and governmental bodies (see Bilge, 2013, 2017 & 2020), I will question what we are continually engaging in, if it is not to support the movements, people, and ideas that "gets us out of this mess?" I see this acknowledgement as both theory and methodology and not just an "acknowledgement."

Organization of this Thesis

This thesis is organized into six chapters. After this introductory chapter, a literature review of intersectionality and social policy is employed to lend clarity to these key concepts and

to highlight how these concepts might be delineated and understood through a critical decolonial feminist (pluriversal) lens.

The methodology chapter introduces a key heuristic employed throughout this thesis which attempts to clarify the difference between "the government" and "the people." For example, is "the government" synonymous with its electorate or all the people that live within its defined physical borders? Or when we say, "the government decided *this*" are we referring to very specific actors who have the power to make decisions on behalf of "the people?" Since this thesis focuses on "the government" as the actor/site of the adoption of intersectional policy analysis, this clarity is important in understanding which questions are asked as a part of this study and how I came up with the answers to the questions. The methodology chapter also outlines the research design, data analysis approach, and the suggested quality criteria for evaluating this research project.

Two data analysis chapters attempt to provide a rich picture of what happens within governments and governmental bodies in the years 2019-2020 as they adopt a policy of intersectionality/intersectional policy analysis and then to examine how that picture aligns with or contradicts the key features of intersectional policy analysis as defined in chapter 2. These chapters look at what happens as a result of this new policy framework being endorsed and implemented.

The discussion and conclusion in chapter six look at the implications of the data analysis through a critical decolonial feminist lens. It outlines the insights that can be made as it relates to the general objective of this study: to describe the patterns and contradictions within state intersectional projects that make claims about bringing about equality and social justice.

CHAPTER 2

WHAT IS INTERSECTIONALITY AND HOW DOES IT HOW DOES IT RELATE TO SOCIAL POLICY-MAKING IN CANADA?

The literature review in this chapter clarifies the key terms used in this study – intersectionality and social policy – and then brings them together through a critical decolonial feminist lens. The careful tracing of the definition and history of these terms, through a cacophonic and pluriversal lens, lays the groundwork for examining the alignment or contradictions that emerge when governments and governmental bodies in Canada adopt the concept of intersectionality to build "better" social policy.

What is Intersectionality?

The term *intersectionality* is now widely used to describe a concept that has been applied historically by many different people/groups/communities throughout the world as they attempt to better understand how society, and our places within it (our "social locations") are constructed and maintained. "It is a way of understanding and analyzing the complexity in the world, in people, and in human experiences" (Collins & Bilge, 2016) and its key premise is that conditions, structures, institutions, etc. are shaped by multiple factors that interact with each other in mutually reinforcing ways. Cho, Crenshaw & McCall (2013), in attempting to define a field of intersectionality studies, emphasize intersectionality's heuristic function, and many theorists highlight intersectionality's political project grounded in an examination of power, collective identity politics, and social justice (Dhamoon, 2011; Dhamoon & Hankivsky, 2015; Collins & Bilge, 2016; Cho, Crenshaw & McCall, 2013; Nash, 2008; Puar, 2012). As Collins & Bilge (2016, p. 33) implore, using an intersectional approach *should* entail a dialectic of critical

inquiry and critical praxis, which means that it is not just about what intersectionality *is* but more importantly, what intersectionality can *do*.

Reclaiming Intersectionality: Redrawing the Map

> "If oppressions intermesh but are represented as 'interlocking' oppressed people are categorically lumped together and categorically broken from each other" (Lugones, 2003, p. 15).

European colonialism resulted in a literal redrawing of the map of the world. Part of that redrawing included the categorization of people as human and non-human, along the lines of the colonialist and colonized. Albert Memmi says, "The colonialist stresses those things that keep him separate, rather than emphasizing that which might contribute to the foundation of a joint community" (Memmi, 1967, p. 71). To fully understand the social "categories" that we use in intersectional policy, it is necessary to understand the history of those categories, which emerge "in tandem with the nation-state, industrial capitalism, and the burgeoning social and biological sciences – in the time and space of colonial modernity" (Patil, 2013, p. 862).

In Anibal Quijano's model of globalization, the *coloniality of power* and *modernity* form two axes of a grid of domination (Quijano, 2000). The coloniality of power creates a social classification of the world through the "cognitive model of Eurocentred, global capitalism" (Lugones, 2007, p. 190; also see Quijano, 2000 and Wynter, 2003). This colonial logic "naturalizes" the difference between people by conceiving of human relations fictionally, in biological terms (Quijano, 2000; Wynter, 2003; Lugones, 2007). The discourse of modernity works to institute a teleological aspect to the reasons for racial, gendered, or other social difference: "other" humans are "as an anterior stage in the history of the species" (Quijano, 2000;

Lugones, 2007, p. 192). Eurocentric education (serving a global capitalist project) spread around the world in tandem with colonial conquest and further served to justify the subjugation of the colonized by the colonizer.

Barbara Tomlinson (2013) argues that the latest theorizing of intersectionality by Europeans denies the history of colonialism that produced the intersecting categories and elides a discussion of ongoing racism. This results in treating the intersectionality of the oppressed as a site to (re-)colonize and control (Tomlinson, 2013, p. 266). Without the discussion of coloniality and modernity as the guiding logics of social categorization and difference, then at best we can expect intersectional analysis to produce an incomplete narrative about people's lives. A decolonial and transnational approach to intersectionality "demands accountability to our positioning in the belly of the beast… [it is] through political identification [that] we recognize how our 'common vantage points' intersect with 'relations of rule' or systems of oppression like heteropatriarchy, capitalism, racism, and colonialism" (Santa Cruz Feminist of Color Collective, 2014, p. 33).

Examining Intersectionality's History -- Who is Categorically Broken from Each Other in its History, By Whom, and to What Purpose?

> "Ultimately, history is the root of all people, it is what gives them foundation" - Ejercito Zapatista de Liberacion Nacional (EZLN), 1999
>
> "If you are not visible as a producer in an economy, then you will be invisible in the distribution of benefits" - Marilyn Waring in Neale & Haig, 1995
>
> "Capitalism has fallen in love with difference" - Sirma Bilge, 2017

The use of the term "intersectionality," and tracing its origin story to Kimberlé Crenshaw's 1989 and 1991 articles, functions as a trope in much of the grey and academic literature on intersectionality. This leads scholars such as Patricia Hill Collins (2019) to ask why so many scholars introduce intersectionality with a brief mention of Crenshaw "coining" the term and then proceeding with an analysis that does not include serious engagement with the concept of intersectionality put forth by Crenshaw. The "terranulism" (see Le Camp in Lawrence & Dua, 2005) of intersectionality prior to 1989, and the singular focus on Crenshaw, leads one to ask, "who has the power to tell intersectionality's story?" In actuality, coterminously and contemporaneously scholars/activists such as Deborah K. King (1988), The Combahee River Collective (1978), Audre Lorde (1984), bell hooks (1984), and Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith (1982) were also theorizing a black feminist ideology in which the idea of "intersectionality" as a theory of non-additive social positionings or as the "interstructure" of multiple oppressions was salient. Furthermore, "the transformation of silence into language and action" (Lorde, 1984), where Black women themselves were redefining difference was essential in their frameworks. This is a crucial question since epistemic power and political power are intertwined and "the question of who gets to tell intersectionality's story reflects how epistemic power shapes critical inquiry" (Collins, 2019).

An example of the Crenshaw trope, and the resulting whitestream feminist conceptualization of intersectionality, can be seen in a 2008 article by Kathy Davis. She tells the story of the impetus for her article -- where she delivered a seminar on intersectionality in Germany and was surprised and overwhelmed by the interest and attendance by many academics that did not know anything about intersectionality but were interested in "using" it, "convinced that intersectionality was absolutely essential to feminist theory and they have no intention of

'missing the boat'" (p. 67). How did this story of intersectionality as essential become so ingrained in popular discourse that Davis calls intersectionality a "spectacular success within contemporary feminist scholarship" (p. 67) while at the same time highlighting that intersectionality causes much confusion and is poorly understood? For Davis, "success" for intersectionality is ambiguity and openness and that it "promises feminist scholars of all identities, theoretical perspectives, and political persuasions, that they can 'have their cake and eat it, too" (p.72). Davis, similar to many theorists who use the "Crenshaw trope," is missing two critical elements from intersectionality's history which are foundational to its critical analysis and praxis within non-dominant epistemic communities (i.e. intersectionality's originators): considerations of axiology and accountability. Without these two foundational elements, intersectionality loses any of its potential liberatory power and becomes a means through which racialized/colonized communities can be recolonized and controlled.

What if the story of intersectionality's origins began instead with the slogan "Feminist since 1492," (INCITE! in Arvin, Tuck, & Morrill, 2013, p. 13) indicating that Native/Indigenous feminist theories and the project of decolonization are central to the story of intersectionality on Turtle Island or América (with accent), the land which is supposedly the "birthplace" of intersectional thinking? What if Crenshaw, along with other contemporaneous Black feminist theorists, were seen as key contributors to this story rather than as a clear break from what came before; that is, a story against "terranullism" and for building a sense of non-threatening visibility for marginalized communities ("a collective process and non-hierarchal distribution of power" (The Combahee River Collective, 2014, p. 279))? A close reading of Crenshaw's 1991 article, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Colour," one of the supposed "textbooks" for the current theorizing of intersectionality,

highlights that the story of intersectionality, even starting with this 1991 timeline, was one of intersectionality as an "ethical methodology" (Bilge, 2017) where the values and ethics (axiological stance) driving an intersectional analysis were to be salient. Crenshaw also highlights the story of intersectionality as one of accountability, where even within the "margins" there was a shared responsibility to honour epistemological diversity (not a diversity of discrete social identities) in the service of a liberatory politics. In terms of ethical conduct, Crenshaw (1991) implores us to examine 'what difference does difference make?' (p. 1299) in order to engage in *meaningful* identity politics; furthermore, she explains,

> Vulgar constructionism thus distorts the possibilities for meaningful identity politics by conflating at least two separate but closely linked manifestations of power. One is the power exercised simply through the process of categorization; the other, the power to cause that categorization to have social and material consequences. While the former power facilitates the latter, the political implications of challenging one over the other matter greatly (p. 1297).

Implicit in this reasoning is that there should be a consideration of "right or wrong conduct," that is, of the ethical stance of those "doing" intersectionality. It is not about everyone 'having their cake and eating it, too' but about focusing on impact and the real harms endured by marginalized communities; it can also lead us to ask the powerful, inverse question, "who benefits from the maintenance of the status quo?" when intersectionality only focuses on theories of categorization (for example, as the anti-essentialist school of intersectional thought commonly does; see Bilge, 2020 and King, 2017). Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) makes a similar argument to Crenshaw when she connects the impetus for deconstruction to a much larger intent: "It [deconstruction] provide[s] words, perhaps, an insight that explains certain experiences -- but it does not prevent

someone from dying" (p. 3; quoted in Collins, 2019, p. 143). If the "feminist success story" of intersectionality does not focus on social and material consequences of categorization, then what is actually produced by all this engagement with intersectionality? The erasure/invisibility of the epistemic disobedience found in Indigenous and Black feminisms theory and practice of intersectionality ("since 1492") means that these scholars/activists are invisible in the distribution of benefits of intersectionality; they are invisible in the "policies" of the academy (and other institutions) that decide what intersectionality is.

Crenshaw also examines intersectionality's implications for coalitional politics -- of how to navigate the power differentials in the margins -- implicitly providing direction for how multiple interpretive communities can co-exist and how "one has no need to decenter anyone in order to center someone else" (Brown in Collins, 2000, p. 270). Crenshaw (1991), in contrast with Kathy Davis (2016) who seems to promise a smooth adoption/co-option of intersectional analyses for *any* "feminist scholar," talks of the "great deal of energy" and "intense anxiety" (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1299) that comes from the examination of power within intersectional coalitional work which involves being open to ruptures and changes within the categories that we might use to define ourselves:

> We [must] first recognize that the organized identity groups in which we find ourselves are in fact coalitions, or at least potential coalitions waiting to be formed… With identity thus reconceptualized it may be easier to understand the need for and to summon the courage to challenge groups that are after all, in one sense, 'home' to us, in the name of the parts of us that are not made at home (p. 1299).

If I am distilling Crenshaw's argument to its very essence correctly here, she is saying that intersectionality cannot be an individual/isolationist endeavour. Said another way, intersectional

research is about making connections through the 3 R's of indigenous research methodology: respect, reciprocity, and relationality; a process that takes "a lot of work, dedication, and time" (Wilson, 2008, pp. 89-90). Or, as Collins (1990) outlines, "For Black women new knowledge claims are rarely worked out in isolation from other individuals and are usually developed through dialogues with other members of a community" (p. 260). Bringing accountability and axiology together within an intersectional framework, we can ask, 'do intersectional feminists really believe that Crenshaw is the "foundation" of intersectionality, or are they just mouthing the words?'(Collins, 1990, p. 265; and see Bilge, 2013, 2017, 2020). When Crenshaw is evoked in intersectional policy analysis, does the intersectional framework used by governments result in action for *accountability* and not just accountability for action? Said differently, are governments simply "doing things" with intersectionality or are they doing *intersectional things* (e.g. furthering resistant knowledge projects)?

To engage in intersectional work in a coalitional way means that people must know who they are in relation to one another, not just in terms of identity/social location or place but also in time. Byrd (2011) discusses the need for Indians to be *present* within the present, not to only be lamentable or pitiable for what happened in the past, but to be seen as a remediable subject by having a life in the present:

> Grieving, on the other hand, calls people to acknowledge, to see, and to grapple with lived lives and the commensurable suffering, and in [Judith] Butler's frame apprehend – in the sense of both its definitions that include to understand and to stop – the policies creating unlivable, ungrievable conditions within the state-sponsored economies of slow death and letting die (p. 38).

Non-hierarchical coalitional politics demands that we all know our histories, whether that is a history of privilege or marginalization, to explore the interrelationships with other histories, and to examine what effects those histories have on the present. It is history that gives people a "root" or foundation from which they can then discuss the messy work of solidarity; for example, to examine how one may not have race or ability privilege while still engaging in settler complicity or how "people of color engage in the process of indigenization of white settlers when they work towards upward class mobility" (see Dhamoon, 2015, pp. 24-25). And as Tuck & Yang (2012) implore, "this joining cannot be too easy, too open, too settled. Solidarity is an uneasy, reserved, and unsettled matter that neither reconciles present grievances nor forecloses future conflict" (p. 3) but it looks for, and is honest about the incommensurabilities between movements in order to interrupt the (re)absorption of people into the settler-native-slave triad (see pp. 35-36).

Reinterpreting intersectionality's history through critical decolonial feminist (intersectional) epistemological lenses does not just map the state of the current debate but also provides the historical, social, cultural, philosophical, and political underpinnings that determine how the map of the current debate has been created (see Bridges & Jonathan, 2002, p. 8). It enables us to explore "intersectionality for whom?" and "intersectionality for what?" The Crenshaw trope enables mainstream feminism (what Bilge (2013) calls "disciplinary feminism" (p. 409)) to categorically break Indigenous, Black and Other Feminisms from each other and from their epistemological foundations. The current story of intersectionality, as suggested by Sirma Bilge (2017), is of capitalism's love story with difference, not of creating a more "socially just" society.

Therefore, in the "definition" of intersectionality I am using, accountability and axiology, as determined by the people who are living with the effects of unjust systems, are key elements of intersectionality. Furthermore, I assert that a critical decolonial feminist reading of intersectionality can be employed as an interpretive framework (used to explain social phenomenon), an epistemology ("which determines which questions merit investigation, which interpretive frameworks will be used to analyze findings, and to what use any ensuing knowledge will be put"), and a methodology (principles of how to conduct research and how interpretive paradigms are to be applied) (see Collins, 1990, p. 252) .

The next section of this chapter provides a definition of social policy that can be used to understand what happens when social policy meets intersectionality in Canadian government policy-making.

What is social policy/public policy?

My definition of social policy brings together both localized, "Canadian" interpretations of policy in addition to transnational considerations of a definition of social policy from within a critical feminist decolonial lens. Note that social policy and public policy are sometimes used synonymously and do not have clear boundaries. I am using the term "social policy" in this thesis but I am using the term very broadly in terms of which policy issues it encompasses.

Defining social policy is challenging because it can seem boundless. If a very broad definition of public policy is that it is "a course of action or inaction, chosen by public authorities to address a given problem or an interrelated set of problems" (Pal in Westhues & Wharf, 2012, p. 6), then almost everything falls under the policy "universe" that governs our lives; it could encompass military strategy, school lunch programs, regulating alcohol, gaming, and cannabis,

and there might even be a policy that responds to a connection between these three areas. However, if social policy "should reflect what a majority of Canadians believe are just approaches to promote health, safety, and wellbeing" (Westhues & Wharf, 2012, p. ix), then there are values involved in social policy and policy options are adopted based on those values and their corresponding worldviews. McKenzie & Wharf (2010) use the 1974 definition from Titmuss to emphasize this idea of choice and that policy is not just a "course of action" but an on-going site of contestation:

> Social policy is all about social purpose and the choices between them. These choices and the conflicts between them have continuously to be made at the governmental level, the community level, and the individual level. At each level by acting or not acting, by voting or not voting, by opting in or contracting out we can influence the direction in which choices are made (pp. ix-x).

Westhues (2012) touches more directly on the idea of power relations within social policy when she writes, "Policy decisions at the international and governmental levels reflect the *values acceptable to the dominant stakeholders* at the time that the policy decision is taken [emphasis added]" (p. 6) and makes the connection between the micro, meso, and macro levels of policy as well as the interactions between them when it comes to the decisions around the "course of action or inaction" to be taken (i.e. frontline social workers may decide on a course of action that constitutes their "policy" on an issue and that decision may or may not lend support to the institutional or governmental policies on the same topic) (see Westhues, 2012, p.6).

Finkel (2019) sketches a global history of social policy in his book, *Compassion*, and is explicit about the role of historically-situated social power within social policy:

> The intertwining histories of compassion and social policy cannot be separated from the histories of competition among social classes over the distribution of wealth and competition within elites over who has the right to provide social aid and in what form… Social policy is an expression of institutional compassion by private organizations or governments and it might be motivated by pity, by empathy, or simply by a desire to legitimate inequalities through compensatory measures of charity (pp. 1-2).

Reading these definitions through a critical decolonial feminist lens, I have constructed the following definition of social policy for use in this study: *Social policies are decisions made on behalf of people (usually named as "citizens") who are recognized by and visible to state or organizational structures, in order to move society toward a particular political view of health, safety, and wellbeing. Social policy is also driven by transnational structures, such as capitalism, colonialism, neoliberalism, and racialization that influence the direction of society from the micro to the macro levels. Those who make a decision (that is, choose a course of action or inaction) about a policy direction may or may not be aware of these transnational structures as an influence on their policy-making or that there are policy effects on those who are unrecognized or invisible within the policy universe (i.e. "non-citizens") as well as those who are formally "considered" within policy.*

This definition is intentionally "voiced" through the perspective of those who currently stand outside of governmental social policy-making and implementation and makes it clear that policy-making and enactment are sites of contestation. It highlights the tensions between constraint and agency of policy actors (Ball, 1993, pp. 13-14); making people either invisible or visible through policy (Cannella & Swadener, 2006; George, Maier & Robson, 2020; Corus, Saatcioglu, Kaufman-Scarborough, Upadhyaya & Appau, 2016; Johnston, 2012); policy as a tool

of colonial/state control through enacting citizenship (Johnston, 2012); and social policy as a non-performative (George, et al, 2016; Ahmed, 2006; Ball, 2015, p. 311).

Furthermore, this definition enables one to see the links between a single policy under consideration and the very high level policies that influence the entire constellation of policies, such as neoliberalism as a political policy or racialization as a social policy. By "turning the lens up," it makes the invisible, visible; for example, we may forget that "the economy" or "society" are the result of historical and current policy decisions and not neutral, organic structures that developed teleologically "as they should." We can then ask much more complex questions about where and when the influences on Canadian federal, provincial, and municipal social policy originated. For example, has social policy only "thought about" intersectionality since 1991 (that is, since Crenshaw)? Or has Turtle Island been (intersectional, decolonial) feminist since "1492?" Williams (2016) argues that a critical approach to policy analysis must "encompass vertical micro-meso-macro dimensions with the horizontal claims of different movements for social justice and connect these to future alternatives" (p. 629). When we look at intersectional policy analysis as a *policy position* taken by governments in Canada, and at the *policy drivers* for adopting a certain approach to IPA, we then necessarily also have to analyze the embeddedness of this policy of intersectionality within historical, structural, and ideological constructs -- constructs that constitute the macro level of policy -- and at a level that is often rendered invisible.

Unearthing these constructs through a definition of social policy also enables me to look at policy as both text and discourse (see Ball, 1993). Textual analysis of social policy focuses on the words within them, how they are interpreted, and what people do with them. This type of analysis can help evaluate whether a policy accomplished what it set out to do; for example, if a

policy is designed to increase employment by reducing social assistance payments and providing greater access to retraining programs, a textual analysis might focus on how policy actors translated this policy into action and whether employment increased as a result, or not, and why. However, a discursive analysis of the same policy would look at how is "employment" or those who are "unemployed" envisaged? And how is this policy the result of particular choices that "hail" us "to speak, listen, act, read, work, think, feel, behave, and value in particular and specific ways?" (Ball, 2015, p. 307). Policy as discourse is about who has the power to define what constitutes a legitimate policy issue or approach to policy analysis in the first place. It also changes the locus of analysis from individual actors who "independently" interpret and enact a policy to "unpacking the underlying relations of power and inequality embedded in policy" (George et al, 2020, p. 160).

Intersectionality and Social Policy: Decolonial Possibilities

Intersectionality within policy discussions is often confused in practice as a narrow project of gathering information about the Other [personal observations]. "Attend[ing] to the specificity of Others has become a universalizing project that is always beholden to the self-referentiality of the 'center' [which is ironic] given that intersectionality functions as a call for and a form of antiessentialism" (Puar, 2012, p. 55). My observation is that in policy discussions, there needs to be a distinction made between trying to know/understand the Other and being open to intersectionality's pedagogical function. This educative function could bring about the "rupture" and "changes" that Leigh Patel, as previously discussed above, speaks of as critical to countering habits of coloniality. This educative/learning function can be unleashed by engaging in listening and emphasizing *answerability* which means "emphasizing relationships, interactions, echoes and connections… [and] emphasizing complexity, enfoldings, multiplicities,

and contingencies" (Tuck, 2015, p. 11). It would also mean that those who are practicing intersectional policy analysis and development are open to unlearning and relearning:

> The knowledge, critical insights, and political strategies produced from the subaltern side of the colonial different serve as a point of departure to move beyond colonialist and nationalist discourses. Rather than underestimating the subaltern, we should take seriously their cosmologies, thinking processes, and political strategies as a point of departure to our knowledge production (Grosfoguel, in Baker, 2012, p. 15).

Critical knowledge production, "as a viable corrective to epistemic violence" (Puar, 2012, p. 55) is possible through an intersectional framework but this means we need to be attentive to the influences on our own knowledge production.

As Grosfoguel, Oso & Christou (2015) argue, "there is no neutrality in knowledge production" (p. 646). They outline an organizing principle to social identity based on Franz Fanon and Boaventura de Sousa Santos work on the zone of being and the zone of non-being (Grosfoguel, Oso & Christou, 2015, pp. 637-9). They argue that when the social identities used for an intersectional analysis are considered, it makes a difference whether those identities are located in the zone of being (where people are racialized as superior beings) or the zone of non-being (where people are racialized as inferior beings) within a 'Capitalist/Patriarchal Western-centric/Christian-centric Modern/Colonial World system'" (Grosfoguel, Oso & Christou, 2015, p. 638). Moving past this 'order of things' in intersectional analyses, requires epistemic decolonization, a "delinking from Eurocentrism… [and] the pretention that the knowledge produced by subjects belonging to the zone of being – whether from the right-wing point of view of the imperial 'I' or from the left-wing point of view of the western oppressed 'Other' within

the zone of being – is automatically considered as universally valid for all contexts and situations in the world" (Grosfoguel, Oso & Christou, 2015, p. 646; Baker, 2012, p. 11).

Critical decolonial feminist readings of intersectionality have the potential to clarify how the relations of oppression and exploitation came into being and what this means for linking our social locations. These readings can bring about a "civilizational consciousness," building the "the capacities for critical self-reflection on one's own civilizational consciousness and inter- and intra-civilizational dialogue" (Baker, 2012,p. 15). It is my hope that these critical intersectional decolonial readings can help address the contradictions in the field of intersectional policy analysis and contribute to forging new alternatives for social policy-making.

An alternative to seeing identities as divided (men/women, black/white/brown, etc.) "requires collectively imagining ways of being human that do not reproduce this violence" (Roshanravan, 2014, p. 53). It is about knowing each other through a logic of resistance rather than a logic of oppression, and cross-cultural solidarity can facilitate the expansion of the decolonial imagination (Lugones, 2003; Roshanravan, 2014).

> *I keep secrets. Even though I am told over and over by white feminists that we must reveal ourselves, open ourselves, I keep secrets. Disclosing our secrets threatens our survival.* (Lugones, 2003, p. 19)

Characteristics of intersectional policy analysis (IPA) that employs a decolonial lens would entail *not* fixing people into categories, asking them to "reveal" themselves, and using language that temporally indicates a "falling behind" and a "catching up." It would *not* see social categories as *interlocking* pieces, which denies a collective politics and subverts the coming together as a community.

Decolonial readings of intersectionality show us that IPA should *not* be about separating, dissecting, and studying "others" through a rational/objectivist lens in order to learn the "truth" about people and then to use that truth to decide about their fate. It shows us the futility of looking at gender (e.g. as it is practiced in gender-based analysis or gender mainstreaming) without also looking at how gender is a product of colonial/racial logics which would show us that "other" people (those constructed as non-human) are not even seen as gendered but simply as sexed (see Lugones, 2007). For example, "French colonial discourse infantilized and emasculated Arab men, constructing them at once as sexual deviants who possessed a 'masculine weakness and child-like behavior' and as barbaric in their excessive domination of the Arab woman" (Patil, 2013 p. 856). The colonial workings of the patriarchy are "racialized, gendered, and transterritorial" and order the lives of the human/colonizer as well as the non-human/colonized. In the colonized, it authorizes and justifies a "civilizing" mission which spreads Eurocentric ideas about social identities (See Patil, 2013, pp. 856-7).

Jaime Martínez Luna writes, "the 'isms' are aberrations that convert themselves into authorities that impose themselves and are not naturally born" (2010, p. 97), implying that it is important for Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples to critically examine the epistemological notions that guide us (Luna, 2010) and to excavate "the past as a means of guiding political work now and in the future" (Martinez, 2010, p. 339). This "re-thinking" or "unlearning/relearning" helps to conceptualize problems in the service of generating viable alternatives; for example, if we understand that "The poor are not those who have been 'left behind'; they are the ones who have been robbed" (Shiva in Leech, 2012, p. 29), then effective resistance becomes a project of conceptualizing *alternatives to social policy* (as it is currently "known") rather than *alternative policies* (that is, IPA always already involves an epistemic project versus a "problem-solving"

method). The "goal is to overcome the colonialist mental structures that affect everyone, and simultaneously to fight the entrenched and enduring racism and the discriminatory nature of society" (López, 2010, p. 203).

Overcoming these limitations includes rethinking the ontological boundaries of how we ask questions about "bringing forth more life" through social policy. Altamirano-Jiménez (2020) offers the concept of "body land" as a way of thinking about the interconnections between land, human, and non-human life and how "these relational stories and the ways in which the land, the non-human world and the body (social and individual) intersect to produce specific experiences" (p. 324). Although most theorists of intersectionality focus only on the "body (social and individual)," this framework has the potential to broaden intersectional analyses to consider how "bringing forth more life" cannot consider bodies without thinking about how they are interconnected with non-human entities and the land (see Altamirano-Jiménez 2020 & 2021). Furthermore, "body land is not only useful to evoke the impacts of resource extraction [or other forms of colonial violence] on the bodies of human and non-human entities but also the potential that emerges when these bodies come together to refuse colonial power (Altamirano-Jiménez, 2020).

The effect of this kind of decolonial thinking on government policy would entail rethinking economic systems, educational systems, our relationship to land, etc. Furthermore, perhaps there is a paradox at play if we believe that governments (born out of the logics of coloniality and modernity) are the proper site of intersectional work; for example, Hankivsky & Cormier (2011) caution that "it is important to recognize that the typical way of 'doing' public policy is antithetical to an intersectionality approach: 'Public policy, by its very nature is reductionist and incremental'" (p. 227). Perhaps this is why it is easier to think of what

decolonial intersectional policy would *not* be than to imagine what a decolonial practice to social policy development and implementation looks like.

Bringing a decolonial reading to intersectionality means that one must interrogate the epistemological and ontological boundaries of what intersectionality can do and for whom. For example, as Tuck and Ree (2013) assert, at some point "we're going to have to talk about returning stolen land" (p. 647) and to consider that the political project of intersectionality is not to find a solution but to critique the solutions (see Ahmed, 2012, p. 17) and that a decolonial intersectional project is not about social justice but to redefine the "state" and "justice" as concepts. Tuck and Ree (2013) write,

> Social justice may want to put things to rest, may believe in repair in reparations, may consider itself an architect or a destination, may believe in utopic building materials which are bound to leak, may even believe in peace (p. 648-9)

but "with some crimes of humanity – the violence of colonization – there is no putting to rest" (Tuck & Ree, 2013, p. 648).

Engaging in this decolonial work of intersectionality must also continue to align with the Black (feminist) scholars/activists that have built up intersectionality as a political and theoretical tool. A pluriversal lens that places Black feminism in relation with decolonial approaches broadens the discussion of how intersectionality might incorporate an anti-oppressive axiology and maintain accountability to those who are marginalized by current social structures, creating new pathways to move forward from liberal frames of identity and to unsettle the hegemonies of nation and power (see Dhamoon, 2015, p. 29). Furthermore, as Tiffany Lethabo King (2017) explicates, "Native feminist refusal and Black feminist abolitionist skepticism function as

intervening comportments, dispositions and modes of critique that expose the violent and unself-conscious ways that Western theory attempts to move beyond the human through the annihilation of the Other" (p. 179). This brings us back to intersectionality as both critical analysis and praxis (Collins & Bilge, 2016) and as Crenshaw, Smith, and countless community members (in my own experience) have articulated, "deconstruction does not prevent someone from dying."

If intersectionality has an important heuristic function, then it must enable us to ask questions in new ways (not novel ways) and to engage in knowledge production that is aligned with, for example, Smith's 25 Indigenous projects, where communities have control over identifying the issues that matter to them and processes and methodologies that work for them (Smith, 2012, p. 198). It should also enable us find new ways to answer those questions, "to think carefully about the ways in which those currently inhabiting the underside of the category of Man-as-human -- under our current epistemological regime, those cast out as impoverished and colonized and undesirable and lacking reason -- can and do provide a way to think about being human anew" (McKittrick (explicating Sylvia Wynter's ideas), 2015, p. 3). When it comes to understanding identities, intersectionality can open up new lenses by noticing that being human is not a noun but a verb… that "being human as praxis is… 'the realization of the living'" (pp. 3-4). Intersectional thinking can also help us to think otherwise about seeking inclusion through the liberal democratic state and to posit alternatives to "impossible choices: to articulate freedom at the expense of another, to seek power and recognition in the hopes that we might avoid the syllogisms of democracy created through colonialism" (Byrd, 2011, p. xxiv) by putting "social justice" movements into conversation with concepts/projects such as decolonization.

Intersectional heuristics provide pathways to "bring forth more life" when it seems like nothing new can be said, done, or imagined.

A critical decolonial feminist intersectionality, as a political methodology, brings agency to those who will never achieve "social" justice because society has erased them. "In other words, we need to consider on whose backs or through whose blood a theory developed and then circulated while hiding its own violence" (King, 2017, p. 170). It connects Black feminist theories of intersectionality with Indigenous feminisms and critical policy analysis. A decolonial IPA insists on "disrupt[ing] the elisions of multicultural liberal democracy that seeks to rationalize the originary historical traumas that birthed settler colonialism through inclusion" (Byrd, 2011, p. xii). It has the potential to counter intersectional social policy projects that serve to reaffirm the state as the site at which race is erased (see Melamed, 2006, George et al, 2020, and Bilge, 2013) while troubling "belonging" through social policy as citizenship within a colonial nation-state (see Johnston, 2012). Perhaps Jodi Byrd best states the call to action for a decolonial IPA: "How might one imagine radical justice that addresses the cacophonies of colonialism?" (p. 83).

My definition of intersectionality combines the following three features:

- It looks at the intersectional effect of different epistemological/ontological lenses combined together – it is more than the combination of different social identities and incorporates social locations (geo politics and bio politics of knowledge) with the dimension of time. Time, and the way that time and space is experienced together, produces different lenses. Whereas governments (and much research) tend to produce a "snapshot" of the experiences of people at a particular point in time, as Albert Einstein noted, "events that are simultaneous in one reference

frame are not simultaneous in another reference frame moving with respect to the first" (Grøn, Hervik, & Hervik, 2007, p. 26). Therefore the intersectional effect of different frames within different points in time, and the memory of historical events that are experienced as cyclical as well as teleological, are important in realizing the full potential of intersectional thinking.

- Both critical analysis and critical praxis (Collins & Bilge, 2016) are necessary for intersectionality to function as a resistant knowledge project. The "critical" qualifier indicates that agents of intersectionality are trying to bring about change, and so, in some way, are attempting to change the world as we know it and experience it. As noted earlier, it is not about people doing things with intersectionality but that people are doing *intersectional* things – which means working to dismantle the interstructure of oppressions.
- It focuses on axiology and accountability. The ethical stance of those "using" intersectionality has to be explicit and open for scrutiny. In addition, who or what people are accountable to has to be stated clearly so it can form an evaluative framework for understanding whether there is alignment between intersectionality's intentions/objectives and theory and practice.

When we look at social policy-making as a process of making decisions on behalf of people that will bring about health, safely, and wellbeing, I will be using the definition outlined above to consider whether intersectional policy analysis, as a policy-making tool within governments and governmental bodies that honours intersectionality, lives up to the history and promise of intersectionality as a framework for social change.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

> Epistemology shapes discourse itself -- namely who gets to tell intersectionality's story -- and methodology determines what counts as a plausible story (Collins, 2019, p. 123).

To determine what intersectionality is, why it was adopted, and what intersectional policy does within governments and governmental bodies, I examine the various ways the state communicates about this topic: through documents, through public service practitioners, through "influencers" (public servants who are in upper management or strategic roles), and through politicians and political work. An observation of this study, and relevant for this discussion of methodology, is that the public or electorate's interest in intersectionality is mediated through politicians, public service influencers, and public service implementers (practitioners); in general, governments and governmental bodies in Canada do not engage in strongly participatory policy development processes.

As stated earlier, the approach of this study is to "turn the lens up." Rather than examining why the public are not active participants in the practice of IPA or GBA+, this study asks questions about "intersectionality for whom?" and "intersectionality for what?" These queries are important as they help us to be clear on who determines what intersectionality is and to identify which interpretive community these political agents represent (see Collins, 2019, p. 133) and then to focus our analysis on where the social, political, economic, material, and epistemological power lies.

It is also important to clarify who or what we mean by the "government," the "public," or the "electorate." As Arundhati Roy (2004) explains, in Hindi "we have *sarkar* and *public*, the

government and the people" (p. 6) and these two things can easily get blurred. It follows that it is important to clarify, in a representative democracy such as Canada, if the functioning of the government (and therefore the development of social/public policy) reflects the will of the "public" and to what extent. Roy (2004) writes:

> Inherent in this use [of *sarkar* and *public*] is the underlying assumption that the government is quite separate from 'the people.' This distinction has to do with the fact that India's freedom struggle, though magnificent, was by no means revolutionary. The Indian elite stepped easily and elegantly into the shoes of the British imperialists… for most Indians, *sarkar* is very separate from *public*. However, as you make your way up India's complex social ladder, the distinction between *sarkar* and *public* gets blurred. The Indian elite, like the elite anywhere in the world, finds it hard to separate themselves from the state. It sees like the state, thinks like the state, speaks like the state (pp. 6-7).

In examining the history of the construction of the nation-state in Canada's colonial settler society context (in contrast to places like India that experienced a "freedom struggle"), Gogia and Slade (2001) implore, "we need to view Canada as a country based on the displacement of Indigenous Peoples, alongside intentional recruitment of white English and European peoples to create a specific population and cultural traditions. This is our history" (p. 18). This quote illustrates that the group that constitutes the *sarkar/*government in Canada, and those who are in the ranks of the social and cultural elite of the *public* (that is, collectively, those people who have and still do determine the social policies within the country), are limited to particular social, ethnic, and cultural groups. This tells us that social policy history in Canada is particularistic and culturally-specific to White, male, heteropatriarchal, Protestant, liberal, capitalist, Anglo-Saxon knowledge of what health, safety, and wellbeing might look like. The

limitations of this specific geo-political and body-political mode of thought are contained within the policy "universe" we live within. A historical analysis of social policy in Canada would reveal that the interests of those at the top of social, economic, and cultural power within governments and the public in Canada align with these particularities, whether they are named as such or not.

Furthermore, the *idea* of the *public* in Canada – what they are conditioned to see, think, and speak – is not neutral but shaped by the ideology of the *sarkar*(government) and public elite:

> Mahon argues that the ideologies most evident in social policy debates in Canada can be categorized as belonging to the 'liberal family' (Mahon, 2008). By this she means that all of the major political parties support an economy based on markets rather than a socialist, centrally planned economy. Furthermore, individuals and their families are expected to retain a key role in the provision of social care and financial support – a value often described as independence – supplemented by state supports. These state supports are expected to be more or less generous depending on which variation of liberalism one supports (Westhues & Wharf, 2012, p. 10).

Mahon's observations of the ideologies evident in social policy debates in Canada, and the policy assumptions that are normalized through this ideology, reinscribes the geo-political and bio-graphical nature of social policy construction. We may assume that the electorate in Canada vote for different political parties in the hopes that the social policies that govern all aspects of their life, such as access to child/elder/family care, healthcare, and education would be transformed, and result in a different future. But only "one world is possible" through the way the government functions in Canada because the epistemological foundations of social policy thinking are limited to the logics of coloniality and modernity. As Mignolo and Tlostanova

(2006) note, "the rhetoric of modernity is a rhetoric of salvation (conversion, civilization, development, market democracy) while the logic of coloniality is the logic of land appropriation, exploitation of labour, control of gender and sexuality, of knowledge and subjectivity" (p. 19).

And finally, the line drawn between the *sarkar* and the *public* when it comes to influencing social policy development is a historical feature of political systems in Canada:

> What do we know about influencing policy from outside government? It is clear that the mechanisms established by government bodies to meaningfully engage citizens remain weak. These mechanisms effectively leave citizens on the sidelines with little hope of bringing change about. Another grave concern is the lack of policy changes arising from the engagement process when these changes would run counter to economic interests or those of entrenched powers (Westhues & Wharf, 2012, p. 71).

Employing Roy's delineation between the sarkar and the public as a heuristic enables us to see the colonial logics that influence the behaviour of both the government and the people in Canada. It clarifies that "the state" in Canada does not necessarily see, think, or speak like *all* the people of Canada.

The methodology employed in this study ensures the distinction or blurring between the *sarkar* and the *public* is named and traced back historically. This methodology enables me to move beyond evaluating the "effectiveness" of policies and to assess whether silencing and subordination of the public within social policy is not a contradiction but a sign that the *sarkar* is functioning just as it should (i.e. as it has been intentionally set up to function).

When the *sarkar* employs intersectional policy analysis as a means "to do something," what part of the public decides whether that "something" is legitimate and accountable to the

public or the electorate? Who holds the government accountable for their investment into using IPA as a social policy tool? And in turning the lens up and examining the ways in which the *sarkar* practises IPA, how might we make visible knowledge from people within and outside of governments that is "routinely dismissed as mere opinion rather than informed testimony that illuminates the truth of being silenced and subordinated?" (Collins, 2019, p. 135).

Research Participants and Subjects/Partners in this Study

To learn about the perspectives of public service practitioner (those who are tasked with implementing an intersectional policy approach) and public service influencer (those who are tasked with strategizing or defining an intersectional policy approach) on what led to the adoption of intersectional frameworks and what intersectional policy analysis/GBA+ accomplishes through government systems, I employed purposeful sampling to identify and interview five individuals who spoke about their work with six different governments or governmental bodies. The respondents' scope of work was across municipal, provincial, and federal levels and they each had a portfolio related to intersectionality/GBA+ or had responsibility or accountability for the implementation of intersectionality/GBA+ within their organization. Participants were identified through government/government agency websites (information is publicly available about the government staff who are engaged in the intersectionality/GBA+ portfolio at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels) and also through snowball sampling. Some participants were simultaneously both influencers and practitioners in their organizations.

Because there is a very small sample size of practitioners across Canada who work on intersectional policy within public bodies, I am not naming the particular jurisdictions or organizations to protect confidentiality. Using a semi-structured interview guide designed to

explore my research questions (included in Appendix A), I conducted 60-90 minute conversations with each respondent, transcribed the interview data, and then sent back the transcripts for review by each respondent before conducting my analysis.

To incorporate elements of a critical decolonial feminist approach, I began each interview by sharing my background in doing similar work and building relationality, respect, and reciprocity for the work that these public servants engage in and the holistic lives they bring to their work. It is within these networks of trust and understanding that different kinds of data may emerge than in a traditional formal interview where the only dialogue is the asking of a question and the narrow response from the respondent. I did not view the respondents of this study as subjects to be "objectively" studied. I view the respondents as a community of people who have different sources of wisdom when it comes to thinking through the field of intersectional policy analysis; they find themselves bound to a framework (intersectionality/GBA+) within their workplaces but all of the respondents also indicated they are committed to intersectional thinking within other communities they belong to. When they enter into this study, they are engaging with me (the researcher) and a network of their colleagues/community members as a co-thinker (through my synthesis of their ideas). Through their participation, they are helping to write what happens within state institutions; some of that writing happens in the moment of the interview as we reflect together and not just in their "objective" observations of what they have seen and heard in their work. In the interviews, we discussed *who we are* in the context of this work while discussing the work. So although this study "turns the lens up" it attempts not to replicate the harms that have often been involved with "turning the lens down" (see Darder, 2019 and Tuhiwai Smith, 1999) and studying communities as if they are closed, static, systems that can only speak within a narrowly defined language of "acceptable" responses.

In these interviews, we explored thoughts, feelings, and relationships in doing the work and also looked at our shared experiences or knowledge in doing this work within state bodies. Although public servants may not be defined as a subaltern population, many of the respondents of this study carry within them intersections of non-dominant identities and work within colonial and patriarchal institutions which respondents named as a site of contestation to varying degrees, the variance depending on their social/epistemic locations. Furthermore, public servants are hailed to ascribe to a particular social order that legitimates particular ways of knowing, being, and doing and they are at the nexus of the *sarkar* and the *public* but this does not mean that the two concepts are synonymous within their being, and so I do not treat them as such. My small attempt to decolonize interpretive research within the limitations of this Master's thesis harkens to an overall intersectional methodology of listening deeply to and hearing Others' (worlds), consciously working not to project Eurocentric or settler sensibilities onto research partners/respondents, and trying to create a space where people are seen and heard, especially within contexts that may render parts of their identity or knowledge to be invisible or irrational (see Darder, 2019, p. 19).

One caveat to this relational approach is that I acknowledge how important it is to balance out my personal insights and my experiences within similar working environments of interviewees with managing my biases to ensure I am taking accurate notes, not asking leading questions, and not filtering what I hear (see Bhattacherjee, 2012, p. 105). I accomplished this by closely following the questions in the interview guide while being conversational in the way I worked through the order of questions with respondents. I also saved audio recordings of the interviews and then transcribed them verbatim before conducting data analysis. Most importantly, I continually focused on my own biases and my social and epistemological locations

and how they influenced my sense-making and interactions with both the respondents and the data. I did this by writing down my assumptions and associations (what I was reaching to "conclude") after each interview and challenging myself to centre the voice of the respondents while recognizing "that we always speak from a particular location in the structure of power" (Darder, 2019, p. 6). This means that I am also looking at how the respondents reproduce colonial sensibilities or how their words and actions contribute to the maintenance of historical and social structures of oppression. I am attempting to read their data "as it is" rather than through a predetermined filter or biases that would lead to false associations. For example, as one respondent commented, "I don't think you can decolonize an inherently colonial institution. I think there are certain things you can do within it to make things a bit better and to ask certain questions but it's really risky business." This quote lends insight into the nuanced understanding of the respondent -- by working within a colonial institution, they are not always already responding from a lens of settler privilege nor are they necessarily working from a decolonial standpoint because they understand the scope of what decolonization means -- positionality is much messier and murkier in the spaces where personal, institutional, social, and collective power come into contact with each other on a daily basis. And this insight applies to my own positionality and the attempts to manage my biases. I acknowledge that the methodology I have chosen limits my data analysis because it is closed off to my own understandings rather than being worked out in relation with others and there are times when I might reproduce, for example, colonial sensibilities rather than disrupting them.

To learn about what politicians and the political side of governments/governmental bodies say and do as it relates to intersectional policy analysis, I gathered data from municipal council minutes and committees, provincial and federal Hansard transcripts and committee

meetings, and government-issued documents relating to GBA+ or intersectional policy analysis (IPA). In these documents, politicians contribute to a discussion of my research questions as they debate and dialogue with their colleagues in these spaces and "speak" to the public and public servants through their statements and commitments about GBA+/IPA. The data for this document analysis comes from the same institutions that the public service respondents are members of. Combined with the literature review and political discourse analysis of key texts as it relates to IPA/GBA+ within governments and governmental bodies, I am able to triangulate the data to explore the continuities, discontinuities, and contradictions that emerge as governments/governmental bodies integrate an intersectional approach.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data from government-issued documents, I used a critical feminist decolonial approach to political discourse analysis. I have specifically chosen to employ political discourse analysis (PDA), as a subset of critical discourse analysis (CDA). According to the method of PDA promoted by Fairclough & Fairclough (2012), an analysis of political discourse should focus on what actors *do* as well as how people, ideas, and things are represented. It is about the *relationship* between representations, decisions, and actions (p. 4) and so PDA is all about policy choices and implementation (p. 1).

The critical lens within PDA looks at "Who is behind the policy?" (see Diem, Young, Welton, Mansfield & Lee, 2014, p. 1082). This approach is not only about which *representations* take precedence (descriptive and normative standpoints) but also how agents are looking for *reasons for action* (an explanatory critique) where "discursive practices contribute to maintaining or transforming a given social order, including existing power relations" (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012, p. 12)

The intersectional (feminist/decolonial) lens applied to PDA also examines epistemic power within the text. Collins (2019) writes that epistemic power "grant[s] testimonial authority to one person's story at the expense of another" (p. 132). This is where intersectionality's feminist, decolonial lens is so essential to ensuring PDA considers the interaction of epistemology and methodology to unveil whose story is recognized, whose story is invisibilized, whose story prevails, *and* how that story has real, material effects on people. Referring back to Crenshaw, a key question that emerges in an intersectional approach is what are the considerations of axiology and accountability when it comes to how IPA/GBA+ is presented and is sought to be implemented? Or, following Collins and Bilge (2016), another question within an intersectional PDA is to ask, "is there a synergistic relationship between critical analysis and critical praxis?" (p. 49) where new ways of understanding an issue, by using a bottom up approach to inquiry (providing space for unheard voices), and/or connecting structures across domains of power (such as racism, colonialism, patriarchy, and nationalism) support the implementation of remedies that work (i.e. improving people's lives) and vice versa -- where taking action outside the frameworks of prevailing political/social/economic theories builds an understanding of dimensions of intersectionality and gives them epistemic power (see pp. 49-62). In other words, how might we examine, through PDA, the relationship between representation, decisions, and action, *and* whose ways of knowing are legitimized or dismissed (epistemicide) through discursive choices and strategies? Is there a misalignment or contradiction present in the text where politicians are messaging, "we want your theory" (intersectionality) but "we don't want your identity politics" (the political implications of that theory)? (see Collins, 2019, p. 137). An alternative way of looking at this intersectional PDA is to ask, "does this particular political representation of intersectionality/IPA/GBA+, and its associated line of action, bring forth more life?"

Yunana Ahmed (2021) and Macgilchrist (2014) have incorporated a decolonial approach to CDA and PDA to show the limitations of the dominant/Western episteme within the text and how this results in partiality of knowledge. My PDA of the texts in this study employs this approach, where the analysis does not focus on a line-by-line summary but examines how the residue of colonial vocabulary, Eurocentrism, and mono-epistemicism within the text "reproduces power differentials and extend[s] the colonial preoccupation to the present" (Ahmed, 2021, p. 146). I examine how "agency and structures are connected: structures provide agents with reasons for action. Power itself provides such reasons and can only be understood in relation to how it enters agents' reasoning processes" (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2021, p. 12). As Wolfe (2006) has asserted, colonization is a structure and not an event and it is the structure within which the epistemological rules and power relations of the political community in Canada are forged. The relationship between representation, decisions, and action are always foregrounded within this structure. "In this regard, intersectionality must consider how the demographics of interpretive communities and the epistemic standards that characterize those communities influence its own critical inquiry" (Collins, 2019, p. 128).

My critical decolonial feminist approach to PDA involves identifying key excerpts from the texts named above: municipal council minutes and committees, provincial and federal Hansard transcripts and committee meetings, and government-issued documents relating to GBA+ or intersectional policy analysis (IPA). These "key excerpts" of political discourse are where a particular representation of intersectionality "subserve a greater concern of political agents and agencies to make their proposed line of action, their policies, their strategies prevail over others" (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012, p. 4). These excerpts also lend insight into the intersection of my research questions: what led to the adoption of intersectional frameworks as a

tool for policy analysis (i.e. what were the policy drivers for adopting this policy of intersectionality)? *and* what does intersectional policy analysis/GBA+ accomplish through state actors/governments/governmental bodies? This intersectional PDA methodology focuses on

1. *who* determines what intersectional policy is,
2. *what* is the description/representation of what intersectional policy analysis can do,
3. *how* does that description/representation further a particular action,
4. *what* is the alignment or contradiction between the description/representation of IPA and the action, and
5. *how* does that action contribute to the maintenance or dismantling of historical and social structures of oppression?

Essentially, I am looking at accountability for action *and* action for accountability from political agents as "the purpose of political discourse is ultimately not to describe the world but to underpin decision and action" (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012, p. 13).

To analyze the data from the interviews, I used NVivo coding software to identify units of significance (as they relate to my research questions) after reading the transcripts fully to get a sense of the whole interview. I then coded those units, synthesized them, and looked for patterns, themes, and meaning and then read those themes through a critical decolonial feminist lens, as identified through the preceding literature review, to reflect back on my research questions. I looked beyond research participants' "data" as a form of testimonial authority about IPA/GBA+ that was coming from official state channels, and also looked closely at participants' own experiences as a way of knowing, potentially as an "informed testimony that [may] illuminate the truth of being silenced and subordinated" (Collins, 2019, p. 137) within the very

systems that may be assumed to provide them with institutional power. I also looked at how they were linguistically managing their interests (and have compared this to how politicians manage their interests as represented through the document analysis). The same methodological questions were applied to the analysis of the interview data:

1. *who* determines what intersectional policy is,
2. *what* is the description of what intersectional policy analysis can do,
3. *how* does that description further a particular action,
4. *what* is the alignment or contradiction between the description of IPA and the action, and
5. *how* does that action contribute to the maintenance or dismantling of historical and social structures of oppression

Research Evaluation

Lincoln & Guba (2001), in their attempt to identify quality criteria for qualitative research, identify one of the measures of validity as an "ethical relationship" (p. 182). This means that validity is strongly determined by the community from which the research emerges and that standpoint, critical subjectivity (intense self-reflexivity), reciprocity in the research relationship, and polyvocality are important elements to consider when it comes to the quality criteria for research (see p. 182). Furthermore, Smith (2021) discusses how research exists within a system of power and that the criteria for Indigenous activists, researchers, and their communities is that "Indigenous work has to 'talk back to' or 'talk up to' power" (p. 282).

Keeping this quality criteria from Smith and Lincoln & Guba in mind, and combining them with the intentions of this study, which are:

- to provide institutions with information and insights to improve policy-making when using intersectional frameworks
- to unify varied understandings of intersectionality within and between public bodies
- to provide insights that inform the knowledge-to-action gap when it comes to using intersectional policy analysis for social change

I will suggest the following framework for assessing this research through a critical decolonial feminist (intersectional) lens:

- Are the research questions clear? (Dixon-Woods, Shaw, Agarwal & Smith, 2004, p. 224)
- Are the research questions suited to qualitative inquiry? (Dixon-Woods et al., 2004, p. 224)
- Are the following clearly described? (sampling, data collection, analysis) (Dixon-Woods et al., 2004, p. 224)
- Are the following appropriate to the research questions [and the conceptual framework]? (sampling, data collection, analysis) (Dixon-Woods et al, 2004, p. 224)
- Are the claims made supported by sufficient evidence? (Dixon-Woods et al, 2004, p. 224)
- Is the axiology explicit?
- Do the methodology and methods align with the conceptual framework (specifically, is intersectionality consistent as both theory and methodology)?
- Does the study work against epistemicides and disrupt dominant ideologies? (see Pirayesh, 2019, p. 88).
- Does the research "turn the lens up" to place accountability for government action/inaction within the spaces where power is located?

- Does the methodology and methods produce polyvocality[5] (see Lincoln & Guba, 2001, p. 182)?
- Is it clear how the researcher is positioned in relation to the research subject and the respondents, (is it clear how their social locations and their epistemic locations interact)?

Ultimately, if "intersectionality is a methodology for decolonizing knowledge" (Collins, 2019, p. 144) then this is what this study seeks to accomplish.

[5] Polyvocality is a feature of qualitative research where each interviewee's data or "voice," *and* the voice of the researcher, are contextualized and seen as valid "facts" that can be used to understand the phenomenon that is being studied. Together, each voice and their unique subjectivity, provide a rich description of the overall picture. "The polyvocal world that qualitative research seeks to convey is naturalistic, complex, varied, expansive and cacophonous" (Thody, 2006, p. 129).

CHAPTER 4

HOW DO YOU CONVINCE THOSE WHO ARE WINNING THAT THEY ARE PLAYING THE WRONG GAME?

In this chapter, I analyze the data from five interviews to examine what public service practitioners/influencers say and do with intersectionality and intersectional policy analysis (IPA). I also review documents of legislature/parliament proceedings, committees, and other IPA-related documents from governments and governmental bodies to examine what politicians say and do with intersectionality and IPA. Collectively, this provides a rich description of what is happening within governments with IPA.

I hope that this description may complement studies of racism, diversity and inclusion, equity, and other frameworks for social change within institutional life, especially those institutions that approach the size and structure of governments and governmental bodies. As Sara Ahmed notes in her institutional ethnography of how diversity and anti-racism initiatives are incorporated into universities, the IPA practitioners in this study encounter many "brick walls" and "blockages" (2007, p. 186) when trying to bring intersectional thinking into a government policy process. However, another analogy that comes to mind after analyzing the data in this study is that the practitioners are playing a board game. They are trying to move pieces around where public/government power lies, trying to find the "right" strategy to move forward in the game. In the data that follows, a strong maxim emerges in governments that "when intersectionality wins, we all win." But this is a game with a gameboard that has been designed by others and the odds are stacked in the favour of only one particular strategy being able to get to the end of the game or "winning." Ahmed concludes her study by saying, "we might need to get in the way if we are to get anywhere" (2007, p. 187). I would like to focus on

how we might need a whole new gameboard in order to make progress towards using intersectional policy analysis to drive social change. I would like to consider where the *public* ends and the *sarkar* begins in this game. Is the public relegated to the terra nullius where the gameboard ends? Is the public/electorate given playing pieces but is always off the gameboard, with no opportunities for game play? Are they told to make moves but those moves never count because they're not in the right space and time? How effective is it for practitioners to get in the way? And how might they get in the way in a manner that *is* effective? I hope that bringing a critical decolonial feminist lens to the data helps to answer these questions.

By "turning the lens up," this chapter looks at my first three methodological queries to clarify *who* decides that happens with IPA in governments and then *what actually happens* when governments adopt IPA:

1. *who* determines what intersectional policy is,
2. *what* is the description of what intersectional policy analysis can do, and
3. *how* does that description further a particular action.

The data from the interviews and the political discourse analysis of documents that answers these questions fulfills the following objectives of this thesis:

- to explore the meaning state actors are making of intersectionality and how this influences their practice, and
- to provide insight into the current operations of government/governmental bodies in Canada when it comes to the adoption of intersectionality as a policy position.

The interviews took place between January and April 2020 and the document review spans January 1, 2019 - December 31, 2020. This time period was chosen for the document

review as it lends insight into what was happening politically at the time respondents were sharing their thoughts and experiences. The analysis also looks at what happened immediately after the interviews and ties into the interview question around practitioner and influencer hopes and fears for IPA and what happened with their portfolios of IPA.

68 documents were reviewed and 220 individual segments were identified for further analysis using the following search terms, “GBA+/plus”, “gender-based analysis”, and “intersectionality.” The excerpts included below met the criteria for PDA -- they are “key excerpts" of political discourse where a particular representation of intersectionality “subserve[s] a greater concern of political agents and agencies to make their proposed line of action, their policies, their strategies prevail over others” (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012, p. 4), and they lend insight into my research questions:

(1) what led to the adoption by government agencies of intersectional frameworks as a tool for policy analysis (i.e. what were the policy drivers for adopting this policy of intersectionality)?
(2) what does intersectional policy analysis/GBA+ accomplish through state actors/governments/governmental bodies?

Please note that all gender pronouns used are they/their/theirs to decontextualize the respondent data. In addition, efforts have been made to keep the respondent's personal information and institutions confidential. As a result, federal government documents are cited directly but provincial documents are decontextualized. This decontextualizing limits replicability but it also conforms with ethical protocol.

Who Determines What Intersectionality Is? A Story About Structures and Power

"I was doing a sneaky project," said one of the respondents who had worked for a decade within their institution. "So, I think it's [intersectionality/intersectional policy analysis] dangerous work. It's dangerous work if you *really* want this to be transformative. If you *really* want to change a colonial system. And if you really want to start talking about power" (interview notes from an IPA practitioner/influencer).

This quote lends insight into the transformative potential of intersectionality to disrupt power relations within state institutions, and, as such, make change in the larger society. However, who determines what intersectionality is within governments and governmental bodies is a question that is strongly tied to the structure of colonialism and epistemic power relations that operate in governments and governmental bodies. Within the public service (to clarify, the public service is composed of IPA implementers and influencers, not politicians), the respondents in this study communicated varying levels of understanding of how their representation of intersectionality is always foregrounded in the structure of colonization which in turn affects whose ways of knowing intersectionality and IPA are legitimized or dismissed within their institution. Politicians' understanding of intersectionality/IPA, as communicated through their debates and statements in councils, committees, and other political arenas, seldom demonstrated that their concept of intersectionality/IPA was foregrounded in the structures of colonization, capitalism, heteropatriarchy, neoliberalism, or racialization. I position politicians as "respondents," although I did not directly interview them, as most of the data comes through their dialogues with each other within legislatures, federal parliament, or political committee work – they are often being asked a question about intersectionality/IPA/GBA+ and they are

responding with their thoughts, perspectives, and analysis – as recorded in Hansard transcripts and other official government documents.

Although the public service interviewees had less agency to determine the decisions and actions that will dictate the overall direction of IPA/GBA+ as government policy than some of the political "respondents," all of the public service interviewees had some level of direct access to the highest levels of public service leadership who could determine how intersectionality is understood and implemented within social policy processes within their portfolios. This means that they could, to varying degrees, influence the methodology of intersectional policy analysis within their institution, that is, they could influence what counts as a plausible story about what intersectionality is and what it can do.

The interview data consistently confirmed that, to a large extent, it is the federal government that determines what IPA is in provincial and municipal governments and governmental bodies in the years 2019 and 2020, especially through the influence of its *Gender-based Analysis Plus Course* that is offered online.[6] All respondents referenced that their institution's initial understanding of GBA+/IPA was based on this course and other training materials produced by the federal agency, Status of Women (renamed Women and Gender Equality Canada and established as a federal department as of December 18, 2018).

[6] The course can be accessed at: https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/en/gender-based-analysis-plus/take-course.html (Last updated May 2017; accessed August 27, 2021)

In terms of "who" defines what intersectionality is within the public service, that concept still draws on a story of Kimberlé Crenshaw "coining the term." The following excerpts from the document review illustrate this point:

- "The term 'intersectionality' was coined by black legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw to acknowledge that individuals are affected by existing systems of power, privilege, and oppression differently based on the intersection of their identity factors, social status, and/or lived experiences" ("GBA+ Workshop: Participant's Guide" [from a municipal government and provided by one of the respondents in this study]).
- "The term "intersectionality" was coined by American scholar Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw in 1989. While notions of intersectionality originated in the United States of America, it has been adopted and adapted around the world by individuals and groups that are seeking to identify the root of various inequalities" (Government of Canada, GBA+ Online Course, accessed August 27, 2021).

However, as we will see in the next section of analysis (what is the description of what intersectionality can do?), this "coining" does not translate into a serious engagement with Crenshaw's work. As stated in the chapter on the history of intersectionality, the Crenshaw trope is used to give intersectionality legitimacy as coming from Black women – that is, the trope is used to indicate that the interests of the *public* and the *sarkar* are intertwined, but this only functions to further alienate the public with engagement with IPA by indicating that this knowledge is *always already* "validated" by "community" or "racialized bodies" and adequately addresses topics of social justice, the "public good," and anti-oppression.

All of the IPA practitioners and influencers, across municipal, provincial, and federal jurisdictions, made modifications to the description/definition, methods, and methodology of

GBA+ as presented in the federal online course, which indicates they had some agency in determining what intersectionality is. But they also mentioned being engaged in a set of power relations within their organizations where they constantly considered their strategies to ensure intersectionality/IPA was not invisibilized or pre-determined by those with more institutional power before they could roll out "their version." As one respondent stated, "it's a hard environment because you're constantly… not in conflict but you're constantly, like nothing's even neutral, nothing's benign. You're always trying to advance something or thinking constantly." Whereas the Crenshaw trope attempts to insert intersectionality into the institution as something that is already defined and settled, the reality of practitioners is that they are struggling to ensure that intersectionality is adopted rather than co-opted. This quote indicates that "who" determines what intersectionality is embedded in the current power dynamics of the institution; that is, it is a site of contestation rather than a neutral space.

To even have this small degree of agency in defining intersectionality and IPA, practitioners and influencers had to intimately understand the codes and "currency" of the organization (I define "currency" as the ideas, evidence, or data that allow one to "buy" and "sell" ideas within an organization). The closer they were to the highest ranks of institutional power, the more access they had to determine what intersectionality is; but their own social identity and epistemic location also played a role in how that institutional power was mediated. For example, if the practitioner was promoting an understanding of intersectionality that made structural oppression explicit, but the organization as a whole and the highest ranks of organizational leadership understood intersectionality as an "additive" approach, then the distance between those epistemic locations limited the practitioner's access to institutional power, and thus to implement their view of intersectionality or shift institutional implementation.

In addition, when the practitioner held a non-dominant social identity (e.g. non-White, female, or non-binary), then there was an extra layer of influencing that was necessary to be seen as credible with those who held institutional power. Those practitioners/influencers who understood/named that they were working within the structures of colonization, racialization, and heteropatriarchy clearly described this site of contestation,

> "I guess the reality of any institution is that they will always try to find comfort and reduce discomfort… They will inherently try to find ways, probably without even knowing it, to resist it. So you have to constantly chip away at it. You will never achieve full integration of the framework [IPA] because the minute you stop pushing forward, it will push back."

As Tate & Page (2018) note in their observations of the incorporation of unconscious bias training and Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion policies into universities in the UK, and Ahmed (2007) has similarly noted about the incorporation of diversity and inclusion initiatives into Australian and UK university systems, the reality of the "institution" is that it seeks comfort, happiness, and repair. But this is a comfort, happiness, and repair of what Tate and Page call, after Yancy's 2015 work, *whiteliness*, "a social, psychological and phenomenological racial reality for white people constructed by an intersubjective matrix whereby white people enact a common being-raced-in-the world which is seen as utterly benign in its naturalness, but which is 'nefariously oppressive' (Tate & Page, 2018, p. 146). The practitioner/influencer quoted above describes the embeddedness of the norms of the institution ("the minute you stop pushing forward, it will push back"). Tate & Page say, "Norms are not racism neutral but drag the coloniality of white power (Quijano 2000; Gutiérrez Rodríguez 2016) into universities,

impacting epistemology, institutional hierarchies and ideas about who counts as human which begin from whiteliness as the norm (Wynter 2003)" (2018, p. 149).

Ahmed talks about how accusations of institutional racism are personalized and seen as "injuring" the organization. Ahmed observes that,

> preserving the idea of the institution as happy can involve an active turning away – or even keeping away – from those that might compromise this idea of happiness. To bring a problem to institutional attention can mean becoming the problem you bring – becoming what 'gets in the way' of institutional happiness (2007, p. 147).

When we examine *who* decides what intersectionality is within governments and governmental bodies, of which universities would be a strong parallel, it is important to keep the context named above in mind. The "pushing back" is not necessarily an interpersonal issue (i.e. it's not about practitioners "using the wrong words" or not creating the "right" environment for this work and getting *personal* pushback). Rather, institutional resistance is tied to the systems of racism, colonization, and heteropatriarchy that implicitly (for White people and other dominant identities) and explicitly (for people who experience marginalization) structure governments and governmental bodies.

Practitioners who held non-dominant social identities were aware that the marginalization of their identities could be closely tied to the marginalizing of their portfolio of IPA, as the following quote illustrates: "I said it straight up -- there is a danger of me being in charge of this as a Black woman, as a visible minority, that it just gets dismissed as complaining by *those people*. And that's really not the case." This quote again highlights that practitioners and influencers of intersectionality are pushing up against something – the "coloniality of white

power" that is embedded within institutions – and this has implications for whose knowledge counts when it comes to deciding what intersectionality is and what it can do within a social policy process.

Practitioners and influencers of IPA/GBA+ in the public service were acutely aware, as Collins (2019) states, that "testimonial authority rests within the epistemic power relations of a particular interpretive community to determine the rules of truth" (p. 132). The "interpretive community" that respondents consistently named as bestowing that authority within the public service was senior leadership of the public service (Executive Directors, Assistant Deputy Ministers, Deputy Ministers, City Managers, and equivalent positions in governments/governmental agencies) and political representatives, such as city councillors, provincial cabinet ministers, premiers or the prime minister. Within the public service, this epistemic power tied to organizational power was described as:

- "He's [senior government executive] just like, "Where's your analysis? Did you look at all the intersections? Where? Did you think of x,y,z? And is that reflected? Where?" He's just very calm and quiet about it. But then it just…. All of his staff just do it and know that they will be asked."
- "This [CEO, position title has been decontextualized] has been really clear that his interest is in diversity of thought. He doesn't tend to dabble in the systemic stuff. And even though the previous [CEO] didn't necessarily get it, he was like, 'I just need to let the people who understand this stuff, and are the experts in it, to do it.' So I had, in a weird kind of way, a lot more freedom to continue forging and moving through that – which is how we got to the point where we could do the [IPA] framework approach"

- "I think when leadership [that uses their power to define intersectionality as meaningful and relevant institutional work] is not in place, these types of issues are the ones that seem like an irritant to a lot of people so they'd rather not deal with it if they don't have to."

To be acknowledged as credible within this interpretive community, respondents talked about how "you can't just walk in there [into the "interpretive community"/executive leadership that determines the "rules" of the organization] and think 'I've read it' or even 'I've done GBA+ over in this or that organization. You have to have a significant amount of experience [within that particular organizational context/culture]." Using a critical decolonial feminist lens, it then becomes important to understand this interpretive community – both who is behind the *policy* of intersectionality, and, revisiting the definition of social policy offered in this thesis, how is this policy of intersectionality driven by transnational structures such as capitalism, colonialism, neoliberalism, and racialization that influence the direction of policy from the micro to the macro levels? This viewpoint moves us beyond an interpersonal analysis ("how can practitioners and influencers do their job better?") to a historical and social analysis (how does the policy of intersectionality fit into the overall expansion of the state's "social problems apparatus" that has been growing since the 1960s, "incorporat[ing] the issues of a political movement into [...] relations of ruling?" (Smith, 1987, p. 216)).

Dorothy Smith (1987), building on a Marxist conception of ideology, implores a feminist sociological analysis of what happens in institutions to understand "those ideas and images through which the class that rules the society by virtue of its domination of the means of production orders, organizes, and sanctions the social relations that sustain its domination" (p. 54). Smith's method enables us to "see how ideas and social forms of consciousness may

originate outside of experience, coming from an external source and becoming a forced set of categories into which we must stuff the awkward and resistant actualities of our world" (p. 55). This idea that seems to resonate with the description that the practitioners/influencers of IPA offer about the environment that they are "pushing back" against constantly. The "centre" of this government interpretive community is not just the *people* that occupy the centre, but, as Collins (2019) states it, the centre is "the epistemic power relations … that determine the rules of truth" (p. 132).

Respondents also mentioned there was significant pressure around coming up with "quick wins" and immediate solutions to complex problems to build credibility with senior management. One respondent described it as,

> When I go to a meeting… because I have all this experience with different equity measures and done tons of research, and so I can be like, 'Oh yeah, I've seen this before, I've heard this, why don't you try this, this, and this.' And then if you can come up with things, right in the moment for people, they believe your credibility more.

As this data suggests, to be recognized as someone who can determine what intersectionality is, your knowledge and experience must be legible as legitimate/credible and you must play within the existing institutional power relations, which is often, as one respondent called it, "a hypermasculine White organizational culture." This description holds true even when the context of work might not be seen as hypermasculine itself (e.g. early childhood education versus the military) because the model of organizational leadership, across all organizations, including governments and governmental bodies, is aligned with these White hypermasculine ideals. For example, even when the public service leadership within an institution were identified as women, they were described as effective because they were, "not scared," "a

powerhouse," "a little scary," "super smart," and where their colleagues could not resist their promotion of GBA+ "because they didn't know how [to combat them]." Many respondents described this "*thou shalt*" environment as an essential element for leadership to support and enact IPA.

An observation of this study is that public service practitioners and influencers of IPA did not go beyond their own understanding of intersectionality to deeply engage with the communities they serve (i.e. the public) to co-define what intersectionality is nor was there a broader consultation with their colleagues that comprise the "public service." This suggests that the policy of intersectionality within governments and governmental bodies not only invisibilizes communities within governments (such as the public servants/practitioners mentioned above), but also those outside. It also confirms that the focus of this study on those "at the top" is the appropriate viewpoint to understand what is happening with intersectionality and IPA within governments and governmental bodies, given the control they exert over defining the key concepts.

Furthermore, as the experience of all respondents demonstrated, there is no independence or non-partisan nature to the work of the public service. They were acutely aware that politicians have the ultimate epistemic power to determine what intersectionality is within governments and governmental bodies. As one respondent explained, "our goal was to build it [GBA+] into the machinery of government separate and apart from who the elected officials were. Because at the heart of it, it's about doing policy better. It's not partisan." However, in this respondent's experience, there was a shift in the political determination of what IPA/GBA+ was (after an election) and that resulted in a ministerial "order" for the public service to develop a policy framework to match what the new political understanding of what intersectionality is. They

described it as, “we [the new political party in power] need to develop a process to justify the shitty decisions we’re making” and the public service is tasked with creating that process, using intersectionality as the frame. This illustrates the inconsistency in who determines what intersectionality is and brings up deeply structural questions -- for example, do politicians reflect the political will of those they govern or are they representing someone or something else? In all of the political discourse analysis and interviewee data, there was no direct mention of constituents or community members and how they understand intersectionality or expect IPA to be delivered. The public interest in intersectionality, IPA, and what IPA can do, seems to be passively mediated through the elected officials that “represent” them.

Smith (1987) explains that one of the effects of the expansion of the state’s “social problems apparatus” is that

> Bureaucratization fragments issues of class opposition, converting political into social demands. Issues and interests are incorporated into the institutionalized forms of electoral constituencies, interest and pressure groups, and the like…. [The professionalization of dissent and its deposition into official government channels as the mechanism of repair] is more than a guarantee of standards, more than a monopoly of knowledge and skill, it is a monopolization of control within a dominant class. It ensures that bases of organization do not arise out of the discovery of personal troubles; it ensures that personal troubles become no more than public issues framed and contained within the public media, and that they do not become the bases of political organization uncontrolled by the institutional structures of state and relations of ruling (pp. 216-17).

Smith was writing about social policy issues 35 years ago, the data in this study supports the process that Smith outlines above. Personal and political issues of the electorate, the *public*, are

contained by the government/elite, and the public service is used as a mechanism of containment rather than a *service* to the people who experience the effects of unjust/harmful/sometimes murderous social policies and systems.

The political discourse analysis of relevant political texts shows that who determines what intersectionality is within governments and governmental bodies is closely tied to the ruling party at the provincial and federal levels of government, the executive leadership of governmental organizations, and sometimes to international agreements that position IPA as the "progressive" thing to do. Evidence that supports the power to define intersectionality/IPA is tied to the ruling party is the data that, as governments change, the description and methodology of IPA also changes. Governmental bodies are also influenced by the political party in power as their funding comes directly from different levels of government and the definition of the social policy issues that are to be pursued within those bodies come from the ruling party.

Practitioners and influencers of IPA confirmed this consolidation of power by the ruling party at the federal and provincial levels. To maintain confidentiality of respondents the sources of data have been decontextualized but there was strong evidence across all of the interviews that "who decides what intersectionality/IPA is?" was linked to the ruling party's political leadership.

The following quotes from practitioners at provincial levels of government and governmental bodies illustrate how the direction of their work was completely changed due to a change in government:

- "Since then, and since the change in government, it's [IPA has] been completely eroded and changed. The current [new] government has now decided that no cabinet report requires a GBA+ anymore and they are continuing to erode it. So,

it will be interesting to see if or how that might impact [the respondent's governmental body] as well"

- "So the idea of [intersectionality] being a theory of power, that it contributes to multiple oppressions [as was the direction of the work under the previous government], is not understood by this [new] government, nor is it welcomed."
- "We've had to really limit how we position this [with the new government]. It's not about addressing injustices. It's about 'What can we do to create an environment so people are working and paying taxes?' So, how can we exploit them [laughter]? But that is the only language that has currency right now with this [provincial] government. How can we translate this into jobs and how can we better the economy?"

The following quotes from interviewees describe a shift in the federal government's position on IPA/GBA+ and how organizational power drives the understanding, adoption, and impact of the approach:

- "If you look at the pre-2015 world [in the federal government], there *was* an obligation to show a GBA+ in your documents going to cabinet but it was a little paragraph at the end. And everyone would write, 'No gender considerations' and give no evidence that they had even looked for any [and that was passable]."
- "[Then, after Justin Trudeau was elected in 2015], it really gets people's attention when you have the Prime Minister saying, 'You're not getting anything – any funding for anything – unless you show you've done a GBA.' Like that is probably the most powerful thing that can happen in terms of changing public policy development [within a government]."

And then this understanding of what IPA "means" across federal and provincial levels, whether it is a positive understanding of the *policy* of intersectionality or a negative understanding, trickles down to other levels of government and governmental bodies:

- "And so, the weight of the federal government using GBA[+], and the provincial government using GBA[+], sort of became a platform by which the [municipal government/governmental body] was like, "Look, everybody else is doing it. You know we should be doing it too."
- "[With the change in government], no one's doing it because no one's requiring it. If no one cares about it, no one's going to do it. So I think the lack of [political] leadership – it kills it" (practitioner in a municipal governmental body).

The definition of what intersectionality and IPA/GBA+ is and can do within government and governmental bodies is always positioned against this political environment. A change in "ruling relations" at the highest levels of government trickles down to a change in "ruling relations" around IPA within the public service – that is, how the work has to be maneuvered by practitioners and influencers.

IPA is sometimes positioned above the federal level of policy as the public accountability methodology that maintains your "seat" on the world stage. As one provincial politician describes it,

> GBA plus, as you know, is a global phenomenon. It's a global movement, actually. Any government, any group of people that are looking to understand – lookit, in Canada we are unbelievably blessed to be in a country that sees this as a priority.

As we will see in the next section of analysis, this idea of a "global phenomenon" of intersectionality harkens back to the chapter on the history of intersectionality earlier in this thesis. The governmental interest in GBA+ parallels the uptake of intersectionality within academia; where it has also become so ingrained in popular discourse that intersectionality is always already positioned as a "spectacular success" (Davis, 2008, p. 67) while at the same time data from those institutions indicates that it causes much confusion, is poorly understood, has not yet been substantively embedded into institutional cultures, and there is a paucity of data on its effectiveness in relation to its aims.

An overall observation of this section of analysis is that "the public" is not a dominant stakeholder when it comes to determining what intersectionality/IPA is within governments and governmental bodies, although these institutions are created with a primary mandate of managing/serving the public interest in various areas of social policy. When the public is mentioned in the context of IPA, they are a vague category, mostly referenced for political purposes, as in the following quote from a federal politician describes:

> We have heard from many Canadians, from all parts of the country, who are disappointed with attempts to pit Canadians against one another. They are saddened by what they are seeing. They believe we should be working together to support workers and marginalized Canadians. That is why we are committed to doing [GBA+] on this side of the House, because that is the Canadian way. It always has been and always will be (Young, 2019).

In conclusion, *who* determines what intersectionality and/or IPA is within governments and governmental bodies is the executive leadership of the public service and the ruling party of the government, particularly at the provincial and federal levels. The *sarkar/government* who

determine what intersectionality is are not neutral but come from particular "social facts" (e.g. race, class, and gender) and "social locations" and they organize and theorize according to their identities as much as "women of colour" or other groups do (see Moya, 1996, for a discussion of social facts and social location as the experiences of those social facts) but we tend not to think of the government as doing so. If intersectional policy analysis is a tool of social change, then that tool is wielded, and bestowed, by a very elite group (which constitutes a particular epistemic community) within political and government structures. Everyone else (IPA influencers, implementers, and the public) are left to work out a "sneaky project" to contest this power.

What is the Description of What Intersectional Policy Analysis Can Do within Governments and Governmental Bodies?

Within the governments and governmental agencies that strongly aligned with the GBA+ approach to IPA (the majority of institutions in this study), the concept of gender was a key factor in determining the scope of what IPA could do as a policy tool. Much time was devoted by public service practitioners and influencers in unpacking, understanding, and communicating if gender was to be salient as a part of IPA/GBA+, if other intersecting factors should take precedence within the intersections (e.g. socioeconomic status), or if the focus should be on structural oppression (i.e. patriarchy) versus social identity.

Through examining the interview data and political documents that describe what IPA can do, we see that the category of "gender" becomes a political battleground – where various politicians default to defining gender as "women" and GBA+ as about women needing to be "saved." The battle is over who can save women, as saving women becomes a "stand in" for saving the economy. At the heart of it, GBA+ within governments and governmental bodies, as determined by the elite who have the power to define intersectionality and IPA, becomes a

signifier of public accountability (good/robust/intentional GBA+ = good/robust/intentional government). As we move from the previous section about what intersectionality *is* to an analysis of what intersectionality can *do* within governments, we see the scope of IPA narrow and the effect is an active epistemicide of alternative meanings and impacts of IPA/GBA+.

The Government of Canada's description of IPA/GBA+ in its 2019 *Gender Report: Budget 2019* is

> Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) is an analytical process used to assess how diverse groups of women, men and non-binary people may experience policies, programs and initiatives. *The "plus" in GBA+ acknowledges that GBA goes beyond biological (sex) and socio-cultural (gender) differences to consider other identity factors such as ethnicity, age, income level, and mental or physical ability* [emphasis added] (p. 1).

It goes on to specify that "GBA+ provides federal officials with the means to attain better results for Canadians by being more responsive to specific needs and ensuring that government policies and programs are inclusive and barrier free" (p.1).

In Women and Gender Equality Canada's Gender-Based Analysis Plus online course, GBA+ is described as:

> an intersectional analytical process for examining how *various intersecting identity factors* [emphasis added] impact the effectiveness of government initiatives. It involves examining disaggregated data and research, and considering social, economic, and cultural conditions and norms. Using GBA+ means taking a gender- and diversity-sensitive approach to your work. *Considering all intersecting identity factors as part of GBA+ – not only sex and gender – is a Government of Canada commitment* [emphasis

added] (para 1, https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/gbaplus-course-cours-acsplus/eng/mod03/mod03_02_01.html, accessed August 30, 2021).

However, in the conclusion to the Government of Canada's GBA+ online course (i.e. the "textbook" for initiating and implementing a IPA process in government), the following statements comprise "what you have learned" from the course:

- *Women and men* [emphasis added] are not homogeneous groups;
- Initiatives have different impacts on diverse groups of *women and men* [emphasis added];
- Your assumptions can affect initiatives and their outcomes;
- GBA+ can assist you in determining differential impacts and in developing strategies to mitigate negative impacts on diverse groups of *women and men* [emphasis added]; and
- Everyone has a role to play in GBA+ [para 3. https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/gbaplus-course-cours-acsplus/eng/mod99/mod99_01_03.html]

In this conclusion to the "textbook" we observe a slippage to describing gender as a binary of "women and men." All other social identities are covered by the term "diverse groups" but these diverse groups are tied to the gender binary and do not exist in their own right as a category of analysis – they are the "adjectives/modifiers" to the "nouns"/subjects of men and women. This strongly signifies that GBA+ is primarily about "men" and "women" and definitely not about the transnational structures, such as heteropatriarchy or colonization, that cut across and influence both the understanding of "men" and "women" as a binary and the intersection of "diverse identities" in their totality.

Furthermore, out of 30 segments identified for PDA for this query (what is the description of what IPA/intersectionality can do?), 29 of them mention women or gender equality specifically as the driver for using GBA+ or IPA. Gender is not only positioned as salient within the "intersections" but is limited to a particular focus on "women." This focus on "women" is then used as a signifier of public accountability or "good government." The

following quotes, from political debates within provincial legislatures and federal parliament in 2019 and 2020, illustrate the strong correlations promoted by politicians of all parties between policies that consider the "plight" of women as being synonymous with economic growth or recovery.

- Recently the committee learned of the *numerous negative impacts women have faced* [emphasis added] because of the [federal] Liberal government's failure to follow through with its commitment that all programs and funding would go through a gender-based analysis. Unfortunately, because of the Prime Minister's latest ethical lapse in judgment, we were not able to present our report and recommendations to the government to help address and alleviate their concerns and to *find ways to help get women back into the workforce* [emphasis added] (Sahota, 2020).
- They [federal government policy designers] were wrong not to include gender-based analysis, which could have helped fix their programs to keep Canadians, *especially women* [emphasis added], from falling through the cracks (Sahota, 2020).

The rhetoric around women being the fulcrum for economic recovery ramps up when GBA+ is mentioned as a means to "recover" from the "crisis" of the COVID-19 pandemic:

- But what does this all mean? This means that the old ways of looking at economic recovery simply will not work. This means that if access to child care is not a central pillar of economic recovery, many *women* will not re-enter the workforce. This means that as we talk about getting back to normal, we need to remember that normal was an economy that held many *women* back. This means

that as we reopen the economy, we must also reopen a conversation on *gender equality*. This means that *if this government fails to apply an intersectional, gender-based lens, mark my words: this economic recovery will leave a whole lot of folks behind*. Other governments are doing it, so this one can, too [emphases added] (Provincial government politician)

- The government is committed to ensuring that this growth plan addresses the disproportionate impact that COVID-19 has had on *women*. We have announced the creation of a task force of diverse experts to help our government develop an *action plan for women in the economy, a plan that would help more women get back into the workforce and ensure a feminist, intersectional response* to this pandemic and our recovery. This is evidenced by *applying a gender-based analysis* to every measure in the fall economic statement, which I am very proud to see. *This action plan would help advance gender equality and address inequities faced by vulnerable women, including indigenous, Black and racialized women*. It would strengthen our economy as a whole and benefit all Canadians [emphases added] (Turnbull, 2021 [debate on 2020 business])

Analyzing this data through a critical decolonial feminism lens, we see how the residue of colonial vocabulary shows up in this discourse when progress is framed as "growth of the economy" and helping women to "catch up;" but colonial thinking is also imbued in the urgency to move forward with solutions to this "crisis" without pausing to remember what has caused, is causing, and will continue to cause, inequities as experienced by "women." If we take as our starting point for analysis that we are intersectional, decolonial "feminist since 1492," then the "crisis" of women facing inequities is a matter that spans centuries and is about more than

finding jobs for women. Whyte (2020) describes what a crisis epistemology looks like through the lens of colonialism:

> A crisis is believed to be happening, whether real, genuine, or perceived. The crisis may be articulated as related to many problems, including health, economic well-being, environmental sustainability, cultural integrity, and religious salvation. But what makes some state of affairs of the world crisis-oriented is the automatic assumption of imminence. By imminence, I mean the sense that something horribly harmful or inequitable is impending or pressing on the present conditions people understand themselves to be living in. There is a complexity or originality to the imminent events that suggests the need to immediately become solutions-oriented in a way believed to differ from how solutions were designed and enacted previously (p. 54).

Furthermore, Whyte describes the structure of crisis under colonialism to have the feature of being presentist ("time is put together (arranged) to favor a certain conception of the present as a means of achieving power or protecting privilege" (2020, p. 54)), which results in presumptions that the current situation is unprecedented and urgent (see Whyte, 2020, p. 55).

The crisis epistemology that Whyte describes can be seen in the way the COVID-19/economic crisis and accordant urgency to "to do something to help women" is voiced in the quotes above. There is a newness to this crisis for the government, as one politician implores, "the old ways of looking at economic recovery will simply not work." Although Whyte is writing specifically about the "crisis" of climate change, they mention that there are parallels for other "crises" that are produced in a colonial system. And, I will suggest that the "crisis" of "gender inequity" is a strong parallel as evidenced in the political discourse analysis of the above texts. Whyte writes that the crisis becomes a "rhetorical device that people invoke so they can

believe they are addressing a crisis without having to talk about colonial power" and the feeling of imminence "leads people to obscure and overshadow how their actions relate to the persistence of different forms of power" (p. 57).

Although a genuine health crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic brings to light inequities faced by women and many other people who experience (multiple) marginalization(s), an intersectional policy analysis that works through a critical decolonial feminist lens would look at the rhetoric of social and economic vitality that is promised by these politicians and interrogate their picture of a *collective health* under a neoliberal political system and capitalist mode of economy (see Slater 2015). It would then situate this analysis in the structure of settler colonialism (Wolfe, 2009) and would look at what is *normalized* through this discourse rather than what is new and urgent. What seems to be normalized is that "restoring order" is about bringing women back to or into jobs; so what is normalized is "growing the economy." Slater (2015) writes that crises are "not a sign of capitalism gone wrong but rather a sign of capitalism gone right" (p. 12) and "the dialectic of crisis and recovery must be normalized to permit dispossession to occur without sparking a genuine collapse or proper revolt" (p. 9).

The analysis of these quotes demonstrates that when GBA+/IPA is invoked by governments, it is important to centre the features of accountability and axiology in the analysis of how intersectionality is enacted. To whom or to what are people linking their accountability for action or inaction? Are people taking accountability for their complicity in normalizing certain structures and concepts? Are they engaging in *action for accountability* or do they just see themselves as being *accountable for action*? Unpacking the description of what people with institutional, political, and epistemological power say IPA/GBA+ can do is important as it can clearly articulate the starting points for government and governmental bodies when it comes to

invoking and implementing IPA. It can also give practitioners and influencers (and the public) a means to map out the historical and social coordinates of their work, refuse damage-centered research (see Tuck, 2009), and refuse to use the logic of recovery offered within neoliberal and colonial systems ("not recovering," see Slater, 2015, p. 16).

The "gender" of GBA+ – powerful as a discussion point yet obscure/d

Public Service practitioners and influencers, whether directly influenced by the political discourse (mentioned above) around them or not, also negotiated how GBA+ or IPA should approach the "gender issue". Of note is the slippage between "women" and "gender" in the interview data, as also evidenced in the political texts analyzed above, which serves to further narrow the scope of what GBA+/IPA can do.

One respondent remarked, "I get asked all the time, 'When do we change the name of GBA+ to diversity analysis?' And my answer – it's not a researched answer – but my observation is that as soon as you position something as diversity analysis, the first thing to be dropped is gender." One of this respondent's key strategies was to "Try to find places where people don't think there are any gender implications and show that there are."

Another respondent was resistant to naming gender within GBA+ at all:

> I don't want to privilege gender. I'm not okay with that. Because gender is probably in the best position out of all of the equity-seeking groups and all the marginalized groups. Like White women are just doing actually not too bad. Not 100%, of course, but not too bad. [...] I never want to use the word gender. In the materials we create, I'll use GBA+. I'll talk about gender-based analysis. But all of our training, everything that we say, and everything we do, and everything we print, will not say gender.

The interviewees' roles in developing a description of what IPA can do within their institutions was aligned with an internal educational or consulting role. All five respondents, within the six different institutions where they had a portfolio of intersectionality, were primarily focused on trying to build an understanding of what IPA was. Gender was often seen as a site of confusion:

> That rebrand [from GBA+ to Intersectionality] was because everybody was like, 'But it's [only] about gender!' And I'm like, 'You are a gender.' But then people would then start getting caught up in gender. It was also a push not to get caught up in the binary conversations that were going on – binary and non-binary. So they just wanted to have really clear boundaries in terms of 'We're doing intersectionality. We're looking at this wheel [GBA+ visual of intersecting identities] across sections. We're not just talking about gender.'

Where practitioners/influencers attempted to influence the understanding of IPA/GBA+ as analysis *across* social identity categories, they encountered challenges with communicating the compounding nature of the identities. Their colleagues had a tendency to take an additive approach. As one respondent described their work, "I think there's probably more understanding of the individual identities, like understanding that women experience these barriers to say fair and equitable participation in employment systems. Or racialized people do. But still not that understanding of the compounding nature." This same practitioner/influencer described their own understanding of intersectionality as:

> You can't just take a situation, in, like, again a silo of here's an individual person just telling this story and it happened yesterday and I can't consider the historical implications of that or how power was at play in that. So I think, yeah, inherently in understanding intersectionality, you need to be considering how power is at play in different forms

within the context that someone might be experiencing something and what aspects of somebody's identity either lends to them being able to leverage that power or experience various forms of power-over them. And again, that historical piece too that influences where we're at today. So I think it's deeper than just the intersectional wheel which is used in GBA+ and we also use it in [organizational version of IPA].

Another practitioner described intersectionality/IPA as:

If we're not understanding power, privilege, and oppression within those intersections, then it's not intersectionality. It is intersecting identities, it is that, but it's not what Kimberlé Crenshaw is talking about. It's not what standpoint feminism was talking about. It's not what Black feminist theorists that champion this work, were talking about. What they were talking about is how power and privilege are lapping over each other in order to create unique situations of oppression. And that is what intersectionality is. If you're not looking at the power piece, if you're just looking at "intersecting it", you're not seeing it. It's about power.

But this same practitioner describes the education around intersectionality as a complex and nuanced "dance" of ensuring that those with the institutional power to tap into intersectionality's potential are not feeling marginalized by talking about oppression. This challenge is exemplified when they describe a training activity where participants identify their social location and whether they have privilege or marginalization tied to that social location:

If you say 'class' -- okay, so say I'm upper class. I'm not going to know what people in poverty are experiencing so that's where I need to go first, right? That's where I need to start, you know, looking into things.

> And so I'm giving them [privileged people] a place, and something to do with that privilege. It's an opportunity. It's exciting…. *And saying this is actually not to disempower, but this can be empowering for you to have privilege* [emphasis added].

This example shows that the description of what IPA can do is influenced by the social and environmental context the description enters into. This environment is not neutral but a site of intricate power relations. The description of what intersectionality and IPA can do moves at the pace of those who have the power to determine what it is (i.e. the first query of this chapter) and the respondents' strategies indicate that they are always "playing a game" where they are seeing how far they can go without alienating those who can get them to the next step.

Furthermore this focus on gender or other social locations as the discrete locus of analysis, rather than an emphasis on the intersection of structural oppressions across transnational structures, such as capitalism, colonialism, neoliberalism, and racialization, indicates that within governments and governmental bodies, social location, especially gender and the concept of "women" is a battleground that results in epistemicide. What I mean by this is that the concept of "women" becomes narrower as it enters the governmental domain and the regimes of truth determined by political and public service elites. The emphasis on social location emphasizes individual agency over structural considerations and narrows intersectionality as a conversation about identity without discussing power.

IPA practitioners in this study spent much of their time delivering training or facilitating learning opportunities to clarify what IPA can do within governments and governmental bodies. However, the training designed by these practitioners primarily focused on individual reflection and individual responsibility as the mechanism for IPA implementation, even when the practitioners were well aware of the structural considerations of IPA.

This individualized approach can still have important outcomes as it relates to expanding equitable practices within the institution. For example, one respondent was able to use a participatory learning approach with senior leadership, and used IPA as a framework, to revise an internal policy that affected employees across the organization. They were successful in getting a White male heteropatriarchal leadership team (as described by the interviewee) to acknowledge, "it's not just this is the norm and everyone else is the exception. That is *your* norm. That is the norm of this small group." And that acknowledgement of personal/normative power led to organizational policy change that was more inclusive for people previously unseen, unheard, and marginalized within the organization. However, even in this example, what IPA can do is still mediated through senior leadership teams and through a heteropatriarchal structure. The focus and investment in IPA within governments and governmental bodies is based on the concept "it can be empowering for you [leaders] to have privilege" rather than a serious consideration of how power might be redistributed.

Some interesting questions emerge through this analysis -- should the practitioners and influencers push their leadership harder? Would they be effective this way? Could they work effectively within the institution by working outside of the official hierarchy and power structure? Practitioners grappled with this concept of whether they were "doing the right thing." For while practitioners and influencers spent much of their time "managing up," they were also tasked with bringing IPA to the public service as a whole and within this context, they heard perspectives on what IPA might do from those who lacked organizational and epistemic power.

For example, contrast the "official descriptions" of what IPA can do with the description of what the practice of IPA *cannot* do within institutions. This is where practitioners and influencers describe the hopes for IPA from the "subaltern" populations of

government/governmental bodies, including themselves if they fall into this category. They describe being witness to a "secret" world of testimony from those who don't have institutional power:

> [Intersectionality and the reality of the intersection of oppression] is not an open-door conversation. And we're in an open-space concept work situation. So some of the most heart-rending conversations happen in breakout rooms. And it's hard to hear your colleagues talk about, 'People I started with 15 years ago are Directors and Executive Directors and I'm still a team lead [...] they've scooted up the ladder and I'm still here.' Or 'I have tried to make a difference and now I know I have a target on my back as a troublemaker.' You know… seeing people defeated by the process -- that's emotional labour.

Another interviewee described a very different "learning experience" for participants of IPA/GBA+ workshops when the participants were positioned on the "underside" of institutional power:

> I'd go and talk to them [about intersectionality/IPA] and then I'd get emails after. From women. Who'd been obviously holding this in for a long time but wanted to talk about stuff that had happened to them. I found that stuff really hard. Because I feel like I can't do anything for them or now I've gone and put myself out there and said I'm going to do something for them. And I don't work in our harassment section but people see the nature of the work you're doing and they disclose to you. [...] You do think, I've gone in and accidentally given people hope and why do I do that and I need to stop doing that. I think that's the tough part -- you look back and think, did I really do anything and could I have

done something more and should I be doing something differently? So that's the toll for me.

This quote demonstrates a different kind of urgency to "do something for women" with IPA, within an institution that is in the direct control of the public service elite and ruling politicians who can determine what IPA is and what it can do. But this practitioner describes the epistemic and institutional distance between the "public service" and the *government/sarkar/elite* when they say, "now I've gone and put myself out there and said I'm going to do something for them" (by discussing intersectionality/IPA) but this practitioner is (or feels) powerless, even though they have a direct line to the elite of their institution, to incorporate this into their IPA practice for the institution.

Ahmed's quote from the previous section is still relevant here: "preserving the idea of the institution as happy can involve an active turning away – or even keeping away – from those that might compromise this idea of happiness." To bring a problem to institutional attention can mean becoming the problem you bring – becoming what 'gets in the way' of institutional happiness" (2007, p. 147). But more than "happiness," when the practice of GBA+/IPA is positioned politically as about "good government" and "public accountability," a suggestion that GBA+/IPA needs to be reformed puts into question the idea that the government has already considered the subaltern's knowledge and can use it to legitimize *and* make their proposed lines of action prevail. This is what the Crenshaw trope accomplishes – the government states that their theory (of intersectionality) already comes from oppressed women (i.e. Crenshaw) and that the need for further "consultation" has been "put to rest" by always already using *Crenshaw's* (i.e. all oppressed women's) theory of intersectionality in the GBA+ process. "Crenshaw"

becomes a convenient stand-in for all forms of oppression and enables the "centre"/elite to continue to function unmarked as the centre.

Contrast this silencing of those without institutional power with the power of politicians to describe what intersectionality can do. Political descriptions of intersectionality often involve the "testimony" of a politician as a form of epistemic power; that is, the singular personal experience of a politician is often used to describe why IPA is important and what it can do. One example is a political debate around changes to legislation governing financial contributions to political campaigns. A politician brings forward a proposed amendment to the legislation and a request for further consultation based on the intersectional analysis conducted by two advocacy groups composed of people directly affected by the bill under debate. The response from a member of the ruling party, who is responsible for the government portfolio of GBA+/IPA, is a story about her own entrance into politics, used as "data" to deny the request. This ruling party politician says, "the [political member] previous to me that was talking about this was saying about having massive supports around you. It's actually not about that, but it is about having faith in who you are and your ability to run." She goes on to use that personal story to respond to the request for further public consultation:

> I would suggest that [Advocacy Group 1] and [Advocacy Group 2] would see this as a humongous opportunity to make sure that whatever barriers we see, perceived or otherwise, they become a thing of the past, that competency, strength of character, desire to work hard, all of these other things that we see in so many members of this House regardless of what side we sit on, they really define the reasons that we're here.

In this case, the personal *is* political and illustrates that "testimonial authority rests within the epistemic power relations of a particular interpretive community to determine the rules of

truth" (Collins, 2019, p. 133). The personal story of this one politician, who arbitrarily is assigned to the political portfolio of IPA, is legitimized simply by its telling by a person who always already has institutional and political power. "Good" IPA in this case is then about legitimizing the speaker as a supporter of women ("We're all massive advocates for women on this side"), and about defining success as individual women's entry into the existing capitalist, colonialist, heteropatriarchal systems. It is not about examining the structural barriers that exist. We see the myths of a *technocracy* (the idea that specialized experts are in control), *meritocracy* (people are in power because they have legitimately worked harder than others and success is due to individual characteristics rather than structural barriers), and *democracy* (the political system is "fair" for all people), collide in this example. These myths function to ensure that the people in power are not to be questioned, and in this particular case, the collision of these myths in the testimony of a politician with epistemic power shuts down the request for "democratic" engagement.

This lack of political clarity on what IPA can do was reflected in the practitioner and influencer interviews. Gender was often seen as the primary identity factor to consider but respondents had varying reactions in advocating for that approach in their own work. The term "gender-based analysis plus" was debated by all respondents within their institutions. It was often referenced as causing confusion about what IPA was.

How does GBA+/IPA enable the government to "do better" and for whom?

The general description of what intersectionality/IPA can do across the interviewees is that it serves as a "rigorous" analytical approach when it comes to designing policies, "it takes us to different conclusions", and it allows us to "think about things differently." A key assumption, of how IPA works, is, as one respondent described it, "if people know better then they will do

better." This assumption was also reflected in the job design of the interviewees; the practitioner/influencers were primarily occupied in pedagogical functions across their organizations (so people can "know better"). "Everyone else" was supposed to be engaged in "doing better" through IPA.

One interviewee described what IPA can do as

> It's about surfacing complexities, surfacing vulnerabilities, it's about efficiently using resources, both human and capital, to address social justice issues in a way that not only do you identify who's benefiting from that policy, but, more importantly, who's being excluded and then what we need to do is a continual cycle of improvement to address that.

Although at the surface, this seems like it aligns with a focus on intersectionality as a methodology to address power imbalances, the locus of analysis is not on the range of possibilities that might transform the lives of people but the policy itself. Good policy is seen as access to *a* policy and not a consideration of whether "policy" is the means by which people's lives are actually improved. There is a subtle assumption that only one way of being and knowing is valuable (i.e. modernity, development, progress) and that access into this way of being and knowing is what governments and governmental bodies should be working towards.

Through the political discourse analysis, we see politicians narrowing what IPA can do even further by making IPA/GBA+ synonymous with ensuring economic growth and positioning IPA as a means of salvation or visibility for the "oppressed groups," namely women. In many instances, IPA is described as a technology that simultaneously "saves" people

(specifically women) and "saves" the economy and it is used to signal government accountability by all political parties, whether they are the ruling party or the opposition.

The following quotes from politicians, pulled from legislative and parliamentary debates, demonstrate how GBA+ is wielded as a marker of public accountability and of engaging in "good government." The quotes consist of suggestions or instructions about how GBA+ should be applied or approached, usually addressed to the opposite political party, or of responses to queries from politicians about whether GBA+ was utilized.

- Again, I just really want to make sure that we're bringing that intersectional lens not just to the issue of economic recovery but to any legislation that we bring forward, and I do hope that this government – I know the Status of Women minister has mentioned gender-based analysis and an intersectional lens before, so I hope she's pushing that in cabinet (provincial legislature - member of the opposition)
- My questions are about the GBA plus analysis. I really want to get a sense of that. Out of all the programs – and there are so many categories of programs that we've talked about – I'm wondering if you can give me an outline in writing as to how this analysis was used, particularly as it relates to people with disabilities. What were the benchmarks? What was the progress? What were the targets? (provincial legislature - member of the opposition)
- We know that the use of gendered and intersectional lenses like gender-based analysis plus, GBA plus, is critical when drafting legislation, and it has proven to help governments develop better policies and programs – to the minister of status of women: can you update us on your ministry's work on GBA plus, and can you confirm that all of

your bills, including Bill [XX], have undergone GBA plus analysis? (provincial legislature - member of the opposition).

- Again to the Minister of Finance: have you done a gender-based analysis on the proposed pay cut, and please explain why your government is contributing to the gender pay gap rather than helping to solve it? (provincial legislature - member of the opposition)
- First and foremost, I assure the member opposite that we are committed to a fair and compassionate refugee system that provides protection to those who need it most, and despite her accusations, a GBA+ analysis was in fact conducted (Shiefke, 2019).
- Despite Liberal promises, there was no gender-based analysis done. When experts pointed this out at the immigration committee, government members had no answers. The changes will disproportionately impact women and girls fleeing violence by denying their right to seek protection in Canada. Forty-six women's organizations from across Canada sent an open letter to the Prime Minister condemning these changes. Will the Prime Minister do what is right and withdraw these provisions, or is he just content that his version of feminism is just for show (Kwan, 2019)?
- With regard to the government's policy to allow oil imports from Venezuela and Saudi Arabia: has a Gender-based Analysis been conducted on the importation of oil from Venezuela and Saudi Arabia and, if so, what were the findings of the analysis (Thomas, 2019)?
- I doubt very much that this program was put through the government's GBA+ analysis because, if it had, we may have seen that the difficulties of small business owners to approach their landlord to plead and negotiate for this commercial rent assistance is a problem for many businesses (Dancho, 2020).

- I want to get back to the GBA+. Can you tell me how you see that's going to be applied and developed when you look at applications, when you look at funding going forward (Canada, 2020c)?

Although GBA+ is positioned as keeping politicians (particularly the ruling party) accountable, it is never clearly stated, in any of these quotes, who (or what) people are supposed to be accountable to. It's clear that GBA+ is about analysis… but we do not learn anything about whether this is *critical* analysis. Although GBA+, as a term or "name", is used confidently by the politicians voicing these opinions, not one of them offers a definition of GBA+ that would help the electorate, or would help each other, to understand what the "demands" of GBA+ actually are. GBA+ functions as a means and marker of engaging in politically appropriate and accountable action (if we are to follow the line of reasoning provided in these exchanges) but it seems that the guarantor of being accountable and appropriate only comes from the politicians who make up government. What GBA+ can be and what it can do is limited by their understandings.

In the following quotes, GBA+ is a means of "saving" people who experience precarity or marginalization. This saving does not require involving the affected parties but analyzing the existing work of government. As stated above, it's about access to *a* policy but not interrogating whether it's a "policy" that is required.

- Mr. Speaker, the member opposite has pointed out quite rightly that women have been disproportionately impacted by this pandemic, but why is that when all the legislation for all the programs rolling out was supposed to have a gender-based analysis done (Gladu, 2020)? [This quote implies that the "technology" of GBA+ would have saved women from the negative effects of the pandemic]

- The gender-based analysis plus helps document these injustices, and that is why we hope it will be applied in each component of the government's response to this crisis (Larouche, 2020). [This quote demonstrates how GBA+ can add another layer of separation between the politicians and the electorate. Now GBA+ documents the injustices that people experience rather than their elected representatives. All that is required is everyone's passive acceptance of the GBA+ technology.]
- If we are serious about gender equality, we have to integrate it into everything we do. That is why as government, we applied gender-based analysis plus to the decisions that Canadians have elected us to make (Badawey, 2020). [The assumption in this quote is that GBA+ will deliver gender equality rather than the active participation of the people who GBA+ is supposedly designed for.]

To summarize, GBA+ is politically positioned as *the* answer to some of the biggest challenges that governments and governmental bodies face. But GBA+ is mysticized as it is incorporated into public bodies. What is left behind is a lack of clarity for practitioners/influencers within the public service about what intersectionality is supposed to be doing. For politicians, this mysticism around the description of IPA enables GBA+ to function as a floating signifier of political accountability for all political parties while we also see the scope of GBA+/IPA/intersectionality narrow within political debates to issues involving only "women" and the "economy." In the next section, I examine what actions emerge out of these representations of intersectionality as about "women," "the economy," and "political accountability."

How does the Representation/Description of Intersectionality/IPA within Governments and Governmental Bodies Further Particular Actions?

Although the practice of IPA within the public bodies under study is framed by the description of IPA within the Government of Canada's GBA+ online course, all respondents indicated they thought the practices promoted in that training were lacking and they had to augment or tailor the training so it was applicable or useable by those they were working with. The following quotes from public service practitioners/influencers highlight the inadequacy of the GBA+ online course:

- "So the Government of Canada [online course] said, 'Challenge your assumptions." Nobody knows what the hell that means."
- "How can people even do anything with this training?"
- "The GBA+ program [training] wasn't equipping people to *do*; it was equipping people to know a buzzword"
- "I didn't think a lot of GBA[+]. It just seemed a bit hokey to me. It was just, 'Here's a tool and we'll give you this one-hour training, and we'll give you the most obvious examples possible.' And people are going to go away and not know what to do."
- "Our ministry created a specific GBA+ course. Because people were like, 'How does this apply to us and the work we're doing?' So we came up with specific examples."

In the practitioners' experiences, the Government of Canada's GBA+ online course, which is positioned as the "textbook" for GBA+ in Canada, did not even provide a sufficient means for critical analysis, let alone critical praxis. However, through their own efforts,

practitioners tried to support the implementation of the things that they believed intersectionality/IPA could do (i.e. serve as a "rigorous" analytical approach when it comes to designing policies, "take us to different conclusions", and allow us to "think about things differently"). Where GBA+ or IPA was cited as a means for moving from analysis to action, it's impact was largely on the level of administrative policy within the institution (e.g. designing a more equitable dress code or using inclusive language). There were a few examples cited by practitioners/influencers where IPA broadened the inclusion of people who were previously invisibilized in policy (e.g. IPA resulted in continuing to mail notices out to residents who did not have stable internet access and could not access online forms and statements reliably). And rarely, IPA was cited as developing policy at the systemic level (e.g. changing the system of child care so it is more accessible to those who can least afford to pay for it). The vast majority of the practitioners and influencers' time and efforts, however, were directed towards building a "better" version of GBA+ as a tool for analysis, and they communicated that they hoped that actions would come as a result of these efforts. At the point of time that the interviews were conducted, the practitioners saw their immediate actions as getting greater numbers of people within the public service trained in GBA+/IPA and creating intentional learning spaces where public service employees could hone their intersectional analysis skills. As stated earlier, most efforts were to "know better" so others could "do better."

As Shirley Tate (2018) notes, discussions and workshops on unconscious bias become institutional stand-ins for addressing the functioning of racialization and colonization (p. 143). These types of trainings end up investing in whiteness by helping White people to manage their fragility and focuses on journeys of self-discovery rather than on how racism or heteropatriarchy structures the institution at every level. The assumption is that social justice comes about if we

invest in “knowing more” about ourselves from a White, Eurocentric point-of-view. Tate writes, “the continuous production and tenacious fixation on and maintenance of unconscious bias as part of equality, diversity and inclusion, mean that we go from institutional to personal knowledge, focusing on individual practices rather than ideological values and their imbrication with white institutional power” (2018, p. 147). This is where intersectionality's features of axiology and accountability become important. If GBA+ training is truly “intersectionality training,” as the government alludes to by referring to Crenshaw, then trainees should be working on naming their ethical positions and values and open those ethics and values to scrutiny by the public they serve, as they are *public* servants. Furthermore, the actions that lead from the training might result in “messy coalitional work” rather than self-discovery. What we see as the actions that result from the training are non-performativity or performative accountability. GBA+/IPA training functions as the institutional action for governments to say they are doing something with intersectionality. For example, in a February 27, 2020 exchange of members of the federal Standing Committee on the Status of Women (FEWO), the primary concern is about getting people through the training process (the “GBA+ training” mentioned below refers to WAGE’s Gender-based Analysis online course):

- Ms. Raquel Dancho: (1115)[English] Are you aware of how many of your colleagues have completed the GBA+ training?
- Hon. Maryam Monsef: (1115)[English]We have the numbers. My officials can pull them up. Hundreds of thousands of public servants and political staff, both within the Senate and the House of Commons, have taken the training. I encourage anyone who hasn't yet taken the training to do so. It's available online. It's free of charge, of course, and when you're done, you are provided with a certificate.

- Ms. Raquel Dancho: (1115)[English] I'm currently working through this myself. It's very informative. Just to continue-
- Hon. Maryam Monsef: (1115)[English] The number is 150,000.
- Ms. Raquel Dancho: (1115)[English] That's 150,000 people. Does that number include all of your cabinet colleagues?
- Hon. Maryam Monsef: (1115)[English] Parliamentarians and parliamentary staff have completed the GBA+-
- Ms. Raquel Dancho: (1115)[English] -and your cabinet colleagues, correct?
- Hon. Maryam Monsef: (1115)[English] Correct. [...]
- Ms. Raquel Dancho: (1150)[English] Given that the minister confirmed that her cabinet colleagues, including the Prime Minister, have all completed the gender-based analysis plus training, I move that the committee request that the Minister for Women and Gender Equality table the GBA+ completion certificates of her cabinet with the committee.
- Ms. Raquel Dancho: (1150)[English] The motion is: That given that the minister confirms that her cabinet colleagues, including the Prime Minister, have all completed the gender-based analysis plus training, I move that the committee request that the Minister for Women and Gender Equality table the gender-based analysis plus completion certificates of all of her cabinet colleagues with the committee.
- Ms. Gudie Hutchings: (1150)[English]Thank you, Madam Chair. I'd like to adjourn the debate. We're not quite sure whether the department is legally allowed to disclose that information, so I'd like to move that the debate be adjourned.
- The Chair: (1155)[English]The question is on the motion that the debate be adjourned. (Motion agreed to [See Minutes of Proceedings]) The Chair: The motion carries, so debate will be adjourned on the motion. We will thus not continue with it. [...]

- Ms. Raquel Dancho: (1200)[English] I feel we had a productive discussion, Minister. However, given that you've passed legislation about GBA+, given that it's in your mandate letter from the Prime Minister, given that the Prime Minister himself has talked about this at the national level, and given that it's one of the four main pillars of your own mandate, I do feel that it is very disappointing for Canadians that you cannot put forward which members of cabinet have done GBA+. It's just very disappointing.

While practitioners and influencers of IPA within the public service state, "how can people even do anything with this training?" (referring to the GBA+ training discussed in the exchange above) it is performatively positioned by politicians as an important pillar of accountability to the public. It seems that achieving a certificate is sufficient for being accountable to "GBA+," but it is uncertain how this brings about IPA's potential to design "better" social policy.

What do politicians do with intersectionality? Is GBA+/IPA used as accountability for action or does it produce action for public accountability?

When further examining the political documents related to GBA+/IPA, the PDA revealed that political descriptions of intersectionality as primarily about "women," "accountability," and the "economy" translate into government and governmental body actions that position investing in women's individual achievement as the key to economic growth. IPA is seen as a method to invest in economic growth that moves society "forward" and the use of GBA+ as the methodology reflects a default position of making this growth about gender, more specifically about "helping" women. The assumption is, "when women succeed, everyone benefits. That pillar, our gender equality pillar, has been a big driver for economic growth for us since we formed government" (Canada, 2019). The quotes below illustrate this point further:

- "When women have choices, when they have a voice, opportunity, and the right skills, when they have safety, and when they have role models and social safety nets, they move mountains. Every single one of us knows women in our lives - and those women are around this table as well - who are able to do big things because of those choices, opportunities and means" (provincial politician - legislative statement).
- If we are serious about gender equality, we have to integrate it into everything we do. That is why as government, we applied gender-based analysis plus to the decisions that Canadians have elected us to make. Equality between Canadian women and men will lead to greater prosperity, not just for women and their families, but for all Canadians. Gender equality is a principle that has guided this government in all our budgets. It has allowed us to take important steps to a more prosperous Canada. It is what drives the employment insurance parental sharing benefit. It is intended to support young families and encourage gender equality in the workplace and at home. This benefit helps to support a more equal distribution of home and work responsibilities (Badawey, 2020).

However, in the PDA of political documents where GBA+ or intersectionality is mentioned, there is no mention of the concrete actions that result from an IPA. There is no mention of the material effects that are to be expected in people's lives as a result of employing GBA+.

In the PDA of parliamentary proceedings, it is questionable whether IPA is supposed to bring forth action, and for whom, as the following quote illustrates. The Honourable Minister of

Women and Gender Equality Canada, Maryam Monsef, is asked why GBA+ was not conducted on programs rolled out during the pandemic, her response is:

> In the first week or two of the pandemic, [...] our job was to take into account the most vulnerable, to use what we knew and to rely on our public servants for their guidance to ensure that the most vulnerable were supported. The focus was on rapid response and ensuring that the most vulnerable were supported. Then, very quickly, we restored processes that were in place around GBA+ (Canada, 2020b).

This excerpt exemplifies the contradictory nature of what GBA+ is supposed to do once it moves into its (critical) praxis or action phase. In this account of what GBA+ can do, it is not able to support "rapid response" or "ensuring that the most vulnerable [are] supported."

GBA+ is often mentioned as being useful for providing language to discuss diversity or for the framing of an issue as "intersectional" but not about actions or discussions that move an agenda forward:

- *"GBA plus is only a small portion of understanding the language. That's only the language around it.* It leads to broader and much more important discussions as Canadians about how we function. How do we protect new girls and women coming into this country, into our province [emphasis added]?" (provincial level politician - legislative debate).
- "Some of our work [around GBA+/intersectionality] will include building relationships with cultural communities by celebrating cultural events, promoting existing proclamations, and participating in community events. We're also really focused on increasing access to government programs and services, translating

government resources into multiple languages" (provincial level politician - legislative debate).

These quotes show that GBA+ is seen as only useful in providing the language to frame an issue or to communicate with the "community." The "much more important discussions" happen after or beyond GBA+ and an intersectional framework.

The next excerpt includes a rare mention in the parliamentary and legislative proceedings of GBA+ as *not* contributing to economic growth but it still makes a connection between positive outcomes for women and economic growth:

- It [Bill C-69] requires that companies engage in ill-defined sociological debates about pipelines. For example, they would need to do a gender impact study [GBA+]. As far as I know, pipelines are genderless, but apparently the government believes that everything has to do with sociology and nothing has to do with economics. Liberals want a gender study on each natural resource project. Most people were scratching their heads to try to understand what this meant, until the Prime Minister explained it to them. He was in South America and he explained that male construction workers bring negative gender impacts to rural communities. In the period after he made these bizarre comments, rural women from across the country started to share the gender impacts they had experienced from having construction workers in their communities. They shared that they bring jobs and pay taxes to fund local schools and hospitals. They support families (Poilievre, 2019).

This quote also demonstrates that politicians use their personal understanding of GBA+ to advocate for a particular course of action. The GBA+ is not important; it is the *use* of GBA+ as a concept that anyone can use to further their personal analysis. This harkens back to the use of intersectionality in academia: intersectionality "promises feminist scholars of all identities, theoretical perspectives, and political persuasions, that they can 'have their cake and eat it, too" (Davis, 2008, p.72). If you replace "feminist scholars" with "politicians," then this statement holds true for the PDA conducted as part of this study.

In this comment, there is a real danger to this personal-driven gender analysis being seen as valid "data" in public bodies rather than an evidence-based (gender/intersectional) analysis. It is well-documented that resource extraction companies from Canada are implicated with labour exploitation, land dispossession, and gender-based violence (Altamirano-Jiménez, 2021). Altamirano-Jiménez's 2021 article about the violence of resource extraction in Oaxaca outlines how

> Minera Cuzcatlán, like other Canadian mining companies operating abroad, casts itself as blameless and represents violence as endemic to the places where they perform their activities (Butler, 2015). However, their method of operating includes the illegal appropriation of land, co-optation of state and local authorities, overexploitation of resources, ecological disasters produced by open pit mines, and intimidation of Indigenous women (Montemayor, 2008) (p. 219-220).

The dangerous narrative of this politician, where he claims, through his authoritative position of power as an official "agent of the state," that women who are affected by resource extraction in South America welcome and support this work silences the testimony of people who are resisting Canada's investment into "economics." "Sociology" is positioned as a fiction

whereas the “economy” is positioned as the “truth.” This indicates that GBA+ is being used as the *will to represent* a particular reality. It is the complete opposite of intersectionality being a means to incorporate the insights and frameworks for change from people who face the effects of structures such as colonialism and heteropatriarchy. The effect of this statement is a necropolitics (see Byrd, 2011, p. 228) that destroys life, both human and non-human, in order to concentrate wealth within the resource extractive metropole of Canada.

But the ways in which GBA+ does not work to “bring forth more life” is more subtle in most of the parliamentary and legislative debates. In the quote below, one can see how GBA+ also becomes self-referential; that is, the GBA+ action stops at, or refers back to, the analysis itself. And the analysis is a personal reflection of what the government/governmental body is to do, not a social or structural analysis.

> We spoke earlier about it being just a tool of analysis, so it's often a way in the door, a way of saying, Let's just find out what impact this policy might have. *We're not telling you to do one thing or another; you retain complete autonomy.* Here is a way of finding better analysis, some more customized and specialized tools [emphasis added] (provincial government politician - ruling party).

In the following excerpt, quoted at length, one can see how accountability is not about the success or failure of actions attributed to conducting a GBA+ but it refers back to doing the analysis itself. It seems to say, “if we engage in, and continue to engage in, GBA+, then we are being accountable.” Again, it is not about the (critical) praxis or action but about the analysis itself. The quote is a response to a request in a Standing Committee on the Status of Women (FEWO) meeting to highlight how the federal Liberal government uses GBA+, and the response

comes from Lisa Symlie, Director General, Communications and Public Affairs Branch, Research, Results and Delivery Branch, Department for Women and Gender Equality:

> I'll start by talking about what GBA+ is and what GBA+ is not. GBA+ is a tool that we use to take a look at how people are impacted by issues differently, how different groups are impacted differently, so that we can develop tailored, targeted policies, programs and other initiatives. It's also a tool we use to take a look at our programs for barriers or unintended negative impacts so that we can help mitigate them. GBA+ is not a once-and-done analysis. You don't do GBA+ at the beginning to develop a program and then forget about it. In fact, you do GBA+ throughout your implementation. You're constantly looking at your programs and monitoring them, and re-evaluating and pivoting your programs, to respond to different impacts. That is really important, because doing GBA+ on a program that exists, like the CERB, for example, once it's been implemented, is not an indicator of failure. It means we're doing GBA+ as we should be doing it.[...] Early in the pandemic, we took a look at gendered and intersectional impacts. We collected all of that evidence and we shared it with other federal departments so that they could use it in developing and tailoring their programs. We developed a set of tools to guide their GBA+. Then, as you pointed out, the GBA+s were published in the economic and fiscal update (Canada, 2020c).

This is an example of how the scope of GBA+/IPA is limited to those in government. They control the intersectional frameworks to understand what the impacts of a social policy are, how they are dealt with, and what "good" GBA+ consists of. The *public* does not have to be active in this process. They are the passive recipients of the GBA+ process.

The exchange that follows, from politicians in a provincial legislative debate, also shows that the political understanding of GBA+ is about something *other* than strengthening the lenses that come from engaging with communities that experience vulnerability or marginality. It is about applying an analysis that seems to be self-referential. The "norm" that GBA+ is producing is to keep engaging with itself and this defers any real engagement with the public, especially people who are made vulnerable or jeopardized through social policy.

> MLA 1: That leads into my next question, which was actually about the status of GBA plus. You've mentioned it multiple times, but there's no reference to GBA plus. It could be a semantic thing, perhaps not, but you refer to gender and intersectional analysis multiple times. GBA plus: as we know, the feds have done a lot with it as well, and we know that many civil servants have been trained in GBA plus. Is GBA plus being fully – like, you're saying that it's completed, that it's done. The program around GBA plus is not . . .
>
> Minister of Status of Women: The work that was done by the ministry: that work as a whole in creating GBA plus was done. The applications into the centres of excellence are continuing. It's just a matter of it being there as part of policy discussions. It's a matter of having that lens at all times. It's not an entity that comes and goes. It was implemented. It stays. It continues. It is honoured and respected and seen as a very important part of how we look at policy and legislation.
>
> That lens is on everything, and the department, in fact, is reprofiling that program to look into multiculturalism because it's such an important part of what we're doing in that ministry. You take that information, this huge piece of information that has been a lens in government, and you reprofile it to make sure that new ministries, like mine, that come

online have access and make sure that we have those lenses and that we're looking through that. It's actually a very important method of intersectional analysis that is imperative in this government to who we are and what we're trying to accomplish.

MLA 1: Right. Again, you know, I took GBA plus. I know a lot about it, but I don't know exactly what is clearly meant by gender and intersectional analysis. Do you know if that's available somewhere publicly so that we can see that? What I gather from you is that you're still using that language.

Minister of Status of Women: Of course.

MLA 1: I imagine that you're having conversations with your cabinet colleagues and whatnot about taking an intersectional approach to the policies that they develop.

Minister of Status of Women: GBA plus, as you know, is a global phenomenon. It's a global movement, actually. Any government, any group of people that are looking to understand – lookit, in Canada we are unbelievably blessed to be in a country that sees this as a priority. You know, our global partners also see this, but we have a lot of work to do, especially even outside of our borders. We have so much that's going on. When we talk about gender-based violence, I think the tendency is to sometimes think insularly about what's going on only in our province or in our space. We have issues of child marriage. We have issues of female genital cutting. We have issues all over the world where we have to be leaders. Gender-based violence is not something that we can deviate from ever, ever, ever.

MLA 1: Absolutely, and I don't dispute that.

> Minister of Status of Women: GBA plus is only a small portion of understanding the language. That's only the language around it. It leads to broader and much more important discussions as Canadians about how we function. How do we protect new girls and women coming into this country, into our province?
>
> MLA 1: Okay. I appreciate that.
>
> Minister of Status of Women: This is so much of a larger issue under Status of Women, the collaboration with all genders, with every single person to make sure that – I was saying this earlier, when the other member was asking me about having a safe and caring space in sports. That's ludicrous. It should be safe and caring, absolutely, but it's beyond that. That harassment or any sort of violence could be acceptable by any government, especially in a country like ours, is not okay.

In all of the documents reviewed, there was one clear excerpt that connected GBA+/IPA to action on the personal and structural levels. The following quote is a statement from a provincial politician about the Transgender Day of Remembrance:

> For over two decades it [the Transgender Day of Remembrance] has served as a day to come together and support each other, but it is a day about so much more than just words. It's about more than a nice statement from the minister, more than a quiet raising of a flag. The trans day of remembrance is about action. It's about justice. It's about committing to fight so that no other trans person loses their life because of who they are. But I don't see that action coming from this government. Action would mean recognizing that everyone deserves respect. Action would mean that everyone deserves access to health care, and that would mean addressing the trans health crisis. Action would mean

> housing for all. Action would mean recognizing intersectionality instead of dismissing it as a kooky theory.
>
> Yet we see the opposite from this government: attacks on gaystraight alliances, a refusal to ban conversion therapy, rolling back an inclusive curriculum grounded in multiple perspectives, and attacks on crucial public services. We see these attacks when we know that lives are at stake, especially right now in 2020.

Although intersectionality is still positioned more as a "theory" than as the mechanism through which structural oppressions might be dismantled, this quote stands out as it is a rare mention of how social policies are interconnected and create multiple jeopardies for people, based on their positionality.

When we examine the actions that are taken as a result of the integration of IPA within governments and governmental bodies in Canada, we see that it is unclear what IPA is supposed to do, for whom, and what the material benefits might be. GBA+ is wielded as a query in political spaces "are you being accountable?/are you doing GBA+?" But the dialogue does not move to a substantive space. There is no way to see whether GBA+ "brings forth more life" or "prevents someone from dying." Rather than applying GBA+ as critical analysis and/or critical praxis, we see politicians using GBA+ as a tool of personal or politically-driven analysis that they can use to help make their course of action prevail over the course of action promoted by other politicians. GBA+ has been "weaponized" to protect the status quo.

Conclusion: Practitioners, Influencers, Politicians, and Power

This chapter described the adoption of GBA+/IPA as a policy within governments and governmental bodies in Canada in the years 2019 and 2020. It provides a rich picture of what

happens with intersectionality as it enters public bodies from the perspective of practitioners, influencers, politicians, and documents.

Sara Ahmed observes, in her study of diversity and equality practitioners in universities, that "Practitioners tend to inhabit this gap between what organizations say they do and what they 'do do'" (2007, p. 141). The same statement seems to hold true for the practitioners in this study. Governments *say* they are doing intersectionality but the practitioners in this study have a difficult time convincing their colleagues, specifically those with institutional power, that they should do *intersectional* things to align with that mandate.

When intersectionality/IPA moves to its action phase within governments, the scope of what it can do narrows even further until it becomes unclear whether IPA accomplishes anything at all. Sara Ahmed's 2007 study is again a useful parallel to evoke:

> The more a document [Ahmed is referring to equity policies but it is instructive to think of the parallel of GBA+ policy in this study] circulates, we might assume, the more it will do. But the circulation of the document can become *what it is doing*. Diversity work becomes moving documents around. If the movement becomes the action, or even the aim, then moving the document might be what stops us from seeing what documents are not doing. If the success of the document is presumed to reside in how much it is passed around, this success might "work" by concealing the failure of that document to do anything (p. 97).

There is definitely a strong element of non-performativity in the way that GBA+ is "hailed" by all political parties at the provincial and federal levels but not used in a substantive fashion. However, there *is* a strong *performative* action to GBA+ when we turn the lens up to see what

evoking GBA+ can do for politicians. GBA+ is used to legitimize the personal testimony of these politicians and the *idea* of GBA+ (that is, the aesthetic experience of GBA+, or the will to represent a particular reality through GBA+) is enough to ensure their version of truth is beyond reproach. Furthermore, if we think of policy as both a course of action or a course or inaction, then *the non-performativity of GBA+/IPA can be seen as a choice* of how the policy of intersectionality will be adopted by governments and governmental bodies. The result of this policy position is the maintenance of the existing social/economic/cultural order – an order within which it has been endlessly documented that racism, sexism, colonialism, and other forms of oppression exist.

The next chapter continues with the analysis of data to examine the contradictions that emerge when a liberal democratic state such as Canada adopts a policy that is meant to bring about social transformation.

CHAPTER 5

INTERSECTIONALITY, SOCIAL POLICY, AND LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENTS

This chapter addresses the third objective of this thesis, to describe alignment and contradictions between intersectionality's intentions, objectives, theory, and practice within governments and governmental bodies. I focus on how the data provides insights into the last two of my methodological queries:

> 4. What is the alignment or contradiction between the description/representation of intersectional policy analysis and the actions that ensue from it?
>
> 5. How do the actions associated with IPA/GBA+ contribute to the maintenance or dismantling of historical and social structures of oppression?

The technique of "turning the lens up" and using a critical decolonial feminist framework to analyze the data provides key insights into liberal democratic governments and understanding how they use frameworks of "social justice" for policy-making. As stated earlier, in using a critical decolonial feminist framework, I am hypothesizing that there is a need for critique and transformation of the state/state actors under study and that the adoption of a social justice/social transformation project such as intersectionality is likely to be integrated in a less than adequate fashion. This chapter explores those tensions and inadequacies in detail.

I am looking at what led to the adoption of IPA by governments as a *policy* as well as a method/ology for policy-making. Therefore, I am revisiting the definition of social policy that I offered earlier in this thesis:

Social policies are decisions made on behalf of people (usually named as "citizens") who are recognized by and visible to state or organizational structures, in order to move society toward a particular political view of health, safety, and wellbeing. Social policy is also driven by transnational structures, such as capitalism, colonialism, neoliberalism, and racialization that influence the direction of society from the micro to the macro levels. Those who make a decision (that is, choose a course of action or inaction) about a policy direction may or may not be aware of these transnational structures as an influence on their policy-making or that there are policy effects on those who are unrecognized or invisible within the policy universe (i.e. "non-citizens") as well as those who are formally "considered" within policy.

This definition is intentionally "voiced" through the perspective of those who currently stand outside of governmental social policy-making and implementation and makes it clear that policy-making and enactment are sites of contestation. It highlights the tensions between constraint and agency of policy actors (Ball, 1993, pp. 13-14); making people either invisible or visible through policy (Cannella & Swadener, 2006; George, Maier & Robson, 2020; Corus, Saatcioglu, Kaufman-Scarborough, Upadhyaya & Appau, 2016; Johnston, 2012); policy as a tool of colonial/state control through enacting citizenship (Johnston, 2012); and social policy as a non-performative (George, et al, 2016; Ahmed, 2006; Ball, 2015, p. 311). In the analysis that follows, these tensions of policy-making are apparent in the way that the *policy* of intersectionality is adopted by governments.

I am using the perspective of the *public* to understand what liberal democratic governments do with intersectionality and social policy. And specifically, within that *public*, I am centering the perspectives of people who experience racialization and/or colonization and who have never seen themselves as one and the same as the *government*. For example, how can a

representative democracy/liberal democratic state be seen to represent you if you only "received" the right to vote from "your government" in 1960, in the case of people whom the *Canada Elections Act* deems "registered Indians" (see Elections Canada, 2018) or 1947 in the case of Canadians of Chinese descent (just to name a few groups that have been intentionally kept separate from both municipal, provincial, and federal levels of government). When racialized and colonized groups in Canada are finally "given" the right to vote and to (supposedly) participate in determining the direction of the country through liberal democratic political means, many of these groups have a small proportion of the electorate in ridings and are not able to exert political influence through their "vote." The structure of the country has been determined before they can exert their agency. For many people in Canada, the idea that the government and the people are quite separate is obvious from their perspective, and this distance has been intentionally maintained by the state, despite recent policy positions such as the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* and GBA+ that posit the state as the means and guarantor of inclusion.

In terms of what is accomplished through intersectional policy analysis via state actors and public bodies, this chapter outlines the complicated interplay between structure and agency. It explores how structures either empower or disempower certain actors within government. The assumption is that everyone has agency within the government system – everyone is a "public servant" – but the transnational structures of capitalism, colonialism, neoliberalism, and racialization, combined with the historical formation of the "government" as a structure, determine how power operates from the micro to the macro level, and influences which actors actually have agency within public bodies. Furthermore, the structure of the liberal democratic government itself functions to limit the agency of the electorate or *public* as key actors in social

policy-making processes. However, there are powerful narratives at work within governments that invite us to believe that "we" all have agency, that we are all legitimate actors.

Through a critical decolonial (intersectional) feminist analysis of the government's adoption and enactment of intersectionality (that is, by using the very tool under question to dismantle the question itself), we see three key features of liberal democratic governments when it comes to social policy-making:

(1) performative accountability is used to drive non-performativity,

(2) governments adopt intersectionality/social transformation frameworks as a theory but without adopting the associated identity politics, and

(3) the "truth about stories" (see King, 2003) in liberal democratic governments is that they work to obscure the *social/ontological construction* (structural considerations) of social policies and instead create a narrative that the vision of health, safety, and wellbeing that they work toward is the result of a "natural" teleological process, driven by the will of the "people," and things are unfolding "as they should."

Related to this last point is that contesting an "official" government social policy, such as GBA+, positions you as questioning all of the assumptions that provide the basis for the way the government operates – its history, its culture, its structure. I believe that the insights from this chapter can be generalized beyond analyzing the adoption of intersectionality as a social policy position to examine what happens when any social/radical justice project is adopted by the Canadian state, such as anti-racism or reconciliation.

Rather than judging the actions of the government through the things they say about themselves (that they exist to bring about "equality," "justice," "freedom," and "full

participation"), I will evaluate the promise of intersectional policy analysis to drive social change through the features of decolonial intersectional policy-making framework outlined in Chapter 2:

- Looking at the intersectional effect of different epistemological/ontological lenses combined together, including the intersectional effect of different frames within different points in time, and the memory of historical events that are experienced as cyclical as well as teleological.
- Examining whether both critical analysis and critical praxis (Collins & Bilge, 2016) are incorporated into IPA and if it is functioning as a resistant knowledge project. The "critical" qualifier indicates that agents of intersectionality are trying to bring about change, and so, in some way, are attempting to change the world as we know it and experience it. As noted earlier, it is not about people doing things with intersectionality but that people are doing *intersectional* things – which means working to dismantle the interstructure of oppressions.
- Focusing on axiology and accountability as key features of intersectional practice. Is the ethical stance of those "using" intersectionality explicit and open for scrutiny? In addition, who or what are people accountable to? Is it stated clearly so it can form an evaluative framework for understanding whether there is alignment between intersectionality's intentions/objectives and theory and practice?

It is hoped that by using this framework for analysis, that we might centre the perspectives of people who experience racialization, colonization and other forms of oppression. This chapter is organized as a series of lessons gleaned through this study about how social policy frameworks are adopted and enacted by Canadian public bodies. The intended audience is

people who are working for social transformation and are considering what meaningful changes can be made through social policy-making and intersectionality from within governments or without them.

Liberal Democratic Policy-Making – Lesson #1: Performative Accountability is Used to Further Non-Performativity of Intersectionality

As stated in the previous chapter, we see the *policy* of GBA+ function through the personal and political-driven analyses of politicians and this "personal GBA+" is positioned as an equivalence for social action. Although there are many policy effects from this approach to IPA, one strong feature that emerges is a performative accountability that serves to ensure the non-performativity of GBA+/IPA as a social transformation or resistant knowledge project.

One of the contradictions that emerges between intersectionality intentions, objectives, theory, and practice is that GBA+/IPA is supposed to be about expanding what "we" know about policy issues but the only people trained or tasked with conducting the analysis are within the government/governmental body itself. This means that accountability for "doing" IPA is already limited to people who are selected to work within governments. The structure of the jobs related to implementing IPA are also determined from within governments. One of my personal observations is that the job design of IPA practitioners would look very different if those outside the government were able to influence how government work should be designed and delivered to enact an intersectional approach to policy-making.

Although IPA/GBA+ is described by practitioners as a method to understand others' experiences, to be more responsive to specific needs, to be inclusive and barrier free, to make the invisible visible, to generate different conclusions, and to think about things differently; the

"epistemic pool" that governments and governmental bodies draw from to do this work is from within the public service itself. The assumption is that it is the institution that can "know better" rather than the public itself that might "know better."

The investments made to introduce and implement GBA+ within public bodies, as demonstrated by the portfolios of the practitioners/influencers in this study, are also about making those *with power* feel comfortable to use that power differently. We see a parallel of "trickle-down economics" – reinvesting wealth/knowledge into the elite and hoping that they will "do the right thing" by distributing benefits "fairly" to others rather than looking at the investments that would be required to systemically shift to a more "just" society. An impact of this approach is that change moves at the pace of those with the most power. It is their epistemology, axiology, and notions of accountability that determine which actions are invested in and implemented. They have both epistemic power and material power.

Furthermore, when research is produced to understand the experiences of others, it usually comes from "official" channels (such as published literature, Statistics Canada data, etc.) Some practitioners did encourage public service workers to consult more directly with the community they are designing policies for, but, in general, there were no participatory research practices in place to ensure the goals of "thinking about things differently" and "generating different conclusions (i.e. generating alternative policy options)" were met.

The assumption that you can "do better" if you "know better" is a closed loop where knowledge is only generated or legitimized by the government or governmental body that is implementing GBA+. The government ends up "performing" accountability back to itself.

Where do these limitations on political participation come from? A short history of liberal democracy.

The roots of our modern democracy do not go back to ancient Athens (a place we usually associate with the *demos* and the *polis*) but to European feudalism and the desire for the *lordship* to free themselves from the monarchy. The Anglo-American roots of our current (Canadian) liberal democratic system were not developed to facilitate the free and equal participation of all people but to ensure that the propertied classes were able to protect their interests from those who were seen to be encroaching on them. The American (United States') Federalist contribution to democracy was to extend democratic citizenship to all socio-economic classes (and eventually to women, People of Colour, etc.) but also to curtail political power of the masses by instituting *representative democracy*, which bolstered the power of the federal government. Although Americans "did not invent representation, [they] can be credited with establishing an essential constitutive idea of a modern democracy: its identification with the alienation of power" (Wood, 1995, p. 217). Furthermore, this alienation of power was based on the assumption that the *demos* was politically incompetent. The American form of democracy, which is the precursor to our own, can be described as "civilized democracy with a touch of oligarchy" (Wood, 1995, p. 217); that is, a democracy that is more formal than it is substantive.

However, with the growth of mass schooling in the nineteenth century and the corresponding increase in the electorate who (potentially) could fully participate in the democratic process, came the problem of trying to maintain the oligarchical/capitalist interests *without* articulating its underlying assumptions -- that the common rabble could not be trusted. The "solution" was to "shift the focus of 'democracy' away from the active exercise of popular power to the passive enjoyment of constitutional and procedural safeguards and rights, and away

from the collective power of the subordinate classes to the privacy and isolation of the individual citizen" (Wood, 1995, p. 227). Essentially, the dominant classes needed to ensure that the economic sphere was not dependent on political or juridical privileges; the market had to remain a place of "freedom" and "choice." The "propertied classes" exerted ideological pressures on the concept of democracy until they almost completely replaced democracy with the tenets of *liberalism*; this is the ideological trick that we have missed or forgotten when we think about democracy. The *demos* now enjoy democracy through "passive enjoyment" where collective power is not required and the entitlement to participation is through an individual, unalienable, vote *for a representative*. Simultaneously, the *demos* finds its active expression through liberalism, represented as "small" government, freedom of speech, toleration of differences, rights to individuality, and the impartial administration of justice.

Liberal democracy makes all citizens equal in politics and before the law but erases histories (and realities) by making it seem that equality is something that has already been achieved. Capitalism, as the economic mode accompanying liberal democracy, makes this "ideological trick" possible because workers are abstracted from their social relations into individual wage labourers. It is now up to each individual to invest in themself and take accountability for their actions; "society" is no longer necessary. In this history of liberal democracy, we see the underpinnings of Human Capital Theory as well as the current drive to "make the economy presentable" and how those roots were made illusory by those who benefit from the current system. [For more on the entire preceding section on the development of liberal democracy, see Wood, 1995, pp. 204-237.]

By bringing intersectionality and social policy-making into its historical context, we see that the rich description of what happens with IPA within governments in Chapter 4 is situated

within a history of alienation of the public from social policy. The policy of intersectionality within governments is not only a "non-performative" but a strategy to maintain material and epistemic power in the hands of the government/public elite. I want to be clear that this "non-performativity" is not neutral in its effects but continues to have damaging effects on those who do not have the power to drive the decisions that affect their lives. In the next section, we see how the distance between the people in Canada and the government of Canada is obscured by the way the government adopts social justice/transformation frameworks such as intersectionality.

Liberal Democratic Policy-Making – Lesson #2: We Want Your Theory but not Your Identity Politics

When social policy and IPA are realigned with their origins within a liberal democratic political system, we can see that IPA/GBA+, as practiced in governments and governmental bodies in Canada, is functioning exactly as it should be expected to function: giving people a semblance of free speech, toleration of differences, rights to individuality, and the impartial administration of justice (a feeling that you and others are getting what you/they deserve) without providing avenues to actually dismantle the current class/social or settler colonial structure. When we re-read the purpose of GBA+ through this lens of liberal democracy, the language used in the description of what GBA+ can do is brought into focus as working to maintain structures of oppression; it functions as a technology of distraction.

In Women and Gender Equality Canada's Gender-Based Analysis Plus online course, GBA+ is described as:

> an intersectional analytical process for examining how various intersecting identity factors impact the *effectiveness of government initiatives* [emphasis added]. It involves

> *examining* disaggregated data and research, and *considering* social, economic, and cultural conditions and norms. Using GBA+ means taking a gender- and diversity-*sensitive approach* to your work. *Considering* all intersecting identity factors as part of GBA+ – not only sex and gender – is a Government of Canada commitment [emphases added] (para 1, https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/gbaplus-course-cours-acsplus/eng/mod03/mod03_02_01.html, accessed August 30, 2021).

If we unpack this quote by looking at social policy and IPA as a non-performative that is embedded in liberal democracy, then we see that there is no action orientation to IPA/GBA+ or place for contestation of the current social order included in this description of GBA+ -- this description serves to neutralize/immobilize people who are advocating for social transformation through an intersectional methodology. The key words that imply this are emphasized in the quote above: "considering," "sensitive approach," and "effectiveness of government initiatives." By only evaluating the effectiveness of government initiatives through a predetermined, government-designed evaluation framework, as demonstrated in the Budget 2019 *Gender Report*, the government ensures that the loop of participation is closed off. By "considering all intersecting identity factors," the government signals that considerations of race, class, ability, and other social identities is "taken care of." GBA+ becomes the answer to the "diversity problem;" it signals, "we will use your theory (intersectionality) but not your identity politics" therefore keeping the existing social, economic, and political order intact while placating "diverse"/dissenting voices. The emphases on "considering" and "being sensitive" supports the idea of toleration of differences but not the transformation of the differences that produce difference in the first place.

The ways in which intersectionality and IPA are incorporated by governments and governmental bodies in Canada serve to maintain historical and social structures of oppression. There is only a "consideration" of diversity within GBA+, not a dismantling of racism, patriarchy, colonialism, or (neo-)liberal democracy. There is not even space to seriously consider what gender looks like outside of a men-women binary let alone a discussion of what an economic system that integrates the wellbeing, wisdom, and knowledge of racialized and colonized people looks like.

Crenshaw (1990) implores us to examine "what difference does difference make?" (p. 1299). This means looking at the social and material consequences of categorization and not only the process of categorization itself. This is a key part of an intersectional methodology that ensures those who are marginalized can engage in *meaningful* identity politics and that communities are accountable back to themselves (and not only accountable to the state as the guarantor of "good" social policy). This accountability back to the communities that GBA+/IPA is supposedly "designed for" is very different from the government's positioning of accountability as engaging in (sometimes only naming) GBA+ as a tool for accountability. In that case, GBA+ is only accountable back to GBA+ and this "analysis paralysis" (to say it colloquially) only serves to maintain the status quo.

In terms of the features related to the practice of GBA+/IPA in governments/governmental bodies mentioned above,

- personal and political-driven analyses,
- no *critical* analysis or praxis,
- limiting the scope of analysis to "women" and the "economy,"

- investing in building a "better" version of GBA+/IPA for the government/governmental body itself, which focuses primarily on training or preparing people for GBA+/IPA, and
- developing a "norm" where being accountable is to engage in, and to continue to engage in, GBA+/IPA,

these actions are limited by the epistemology and ontology of a very elite group within governments and governmental bodies. The process of categorization this elite group engages in includes determining the "scope" and limits of social identities (e.g. a default position of gender being seen as binary, or women being defined through a default, unstated norm of a White, middle class, cis-gendered, heterosexual woman). It also includes utilizing unstated norms they have adopted at the transnational/macro level in their processes of categorization (e.g. defining the economy as capitalism, growth, and "progress"). These limitations then influence the other categories connected to that concept. This means that the *government* wants the theory of intersectionality as *they* would like to understand it (or are capable of understanding it). Just as the colonial practice of the re-naming of land functioned as the means to claim ownership of the land, the government practice of intersectionality provides a way of naming diversity that feels comfortable, competent, and confident for those that have the power to name groups – not messy, diverse, generative, emergent, coalitional community control of the names that confer power or disempowerment.

In order to successfully adopt this particular theory of intersectionality within governments and governmental bodies, there needs to be an "official story," a powerful narrative, about how the individual agency of people can influence structures through social policy – and people need to believe in that story. The section below looks at IPA as a technology and an aesthetic experience that accomplishes this goal.

Liberal Democratic Policy-Making – Lesson #3: The Truth About Stories is That They Must Protect the (Settler Colonial) Nation

"We live by stories, but we also live in them… If we change the stories we live by, quite possibly, we change our lives" (Okri in King, 2003, p. 154).

"Stories are wondrous things. And they are dangerous" (King, 2003, p. 154).

"I will never apologize for the United States. I don't care what the facts are" (George Bush senior in Roy, 2004, p. 12).

In 2013, the Government of Alberta developed a social policy framework. The definition of social policy they used included the following:

> Social policy determines the kind of society that Albertans want for themselves, their families, and their communities. It expresses how we care for (and about) one another, and it influences our development as people and a society. As a result, social policy extends beyond a narrow definition of social services and supports: it is about how we work, live, and spend our time, and it helps determine how we come together to meet human needs like housing, employment, education, recreation, leisure, health, safety, and the care of children (p. 4).

In this definition, policy functions as a story about our lives – the kind of community we want to work, live, and play within. But what if that story is not built on facts, lived experiences, or knowledge of health, safety, and wellbeing? When the government controls the definition, actions, and evaluation of IPA, each of these aspects of IPA works to create an overall narrative about what IPA can do and whom it benefits. Examining these stories tells us about alignment or

contradictions between intersectionality's intentions and its practice as well as whether IPA contributes to the dismantling or maintenance of historical structures of oppression.

A story about "better results" for Canadians

Although all political parties referenced GBA+ as a means to improve the lives of people, especially the lives of "women," it is unclear what is done to achieve this when it comes to the development of social policies.

In the public service practitioner/influencer interviews, most of the actions that accompanied IPA were related to better access to information (e.g. ensuring information was mailed out if people did not have internet access), translating government documents into multiple languages, promoting existing proclamations (e.g. Black History Month), and celebrating cultural events. Some efforts resulted in more equitable internal policies (e.g. a revamped dress code policy, improvements to manage bias in the promotional process, reviewing training that frontline workers receive so they are working more inclusively and equitably with the communities they serve). Although these policies and actions improve the lives of individual workers or citizens, they were not at the scope of transforming the institution to address oppression in a systematic manner.

In terms of analyzing the impact of GBA+ on social policies, the 160 page GBA+ Annex to the Federal Government's Budget 2019 *Gender Report* is instructive – it provides the official story about what GBA+ is about and what it accomplishes through the highest level of government. 198 policies are analyzed and a scale is included to show the impact on income distribution (does the policy benefit high income people or low income people?), gender (does the policy benefit/target predominantly men or predominantly women?), and intergenerational

impacts (does the policy benefit primarily youth, children, and/or future generations or primarily benefit the baby boom generation or seniors?). A three-point scale is used to show generational impacts while a five-point scale is used to display income distribution and gender impacts (see Government of Canada, pp. 2-3).

Although 198 policies are individually reported on through a GBA+ lens in the *Gender Report*, there is no summation or analysis of the overall impact of the "policy universe" that is constructed when these policies operate as a whole on the lives of Canadians. In my own summation, I see that out of 198 policies, the Government indicates that 132 (or 67% of the policies) are neutral in terms of their impact on income redistribution. 10 policies (5% of the total) are slightly regressive or benefit high income earners and only 11 (6% of policies) benefit low-income earners. The remainder of the policies (23%) are deemed "slightly progressive" which includes, for example, "a government-funded program that provides equal per capita benefits to all Canadians" (Government of Canada, 2019, p. 2). We may be able to surmise that the overall impact of GBA+ on the design of social policies is to maintain the status quo when it comes to income redistribution. The corollary question? Who benefits from the maintenance of the status quo? Furthermore, the "status quo" is not neutral but is a system for consolidating wealth and income for the highest income earners. So the status quo means maintaining a system of growing inequality. It can be misleading for some people to look at the data and correlate neutrality with equality.

In terms of the overall gender impact, most policies (73% of the total policies) are reported to be "gender neutral" in their effect. In 19 policies (10% of the total policies) where the policy was described as primarily benefiting women, the corresponding effect on income redistribution was neutral in 42% of the policies, slightly progressive in 26% of the policies, and

clearly benefiting low income earners in only 32% of the policies. So it is unclear whether GBA+ is effective in "getting women into the economy." Perhaps women have more *access* to the "economy" but they are not necessarily benefiting from that greater access.

Since the Government of Canada sets up a gender binary in their analysis (i.e. only indicating whether the gender composition of the benefitting group is primarily men or women), it is also insightful to look at how the government indicates that policies will benefit men in comparison to women.

17% of the total policies are indicated as benefitting men (in comparison to 10% for women). Out of these 34 policies, only two (or 6% of the total for men) were clearly recognized as benefitting low-income earners. 15% of the policies "benefitting men" were slightly regressive in income redistribution or benefitted high income earners. 68% of the policies were indicated as "neutral" as it relates to income distribution.

I *do* want to acknowledge the importance of a tool such as GBA+ in making the lives of individuals and groups of people better when it results in policies such as a higher minimum wage or greater affordability of child care. But, the story of GBA+ is more complicated when we look at the overall effects. GBA+ is not operating as a method/ology that will transform the systems of oppression that affect the construction and operation of the constellation of social policies that collectively determine, to a large extent, the health and wellbeing of the population. Furthermore, the Government of Canada's GBA+ method – the story that they are telling through the GBA+ process, is incommensurable with decolonization and continues to imply that a system of social "health" is equivalent to creating a system of inclusion into an extractive settler state where the goal is posited as owning land, labour, and capital, rather than to imagine a future that does not protect settler futurity (see Tuck & Yang, 2012).

In this story about "better results" for Canadians, the characters are limited to "men" and "women" and the plot line is limited to existing ideas about wealth and how it should be consolidated in the hands of individuals. If this overall process of categorization, across the micro, meso, and macro levels of policy, is viewed as a *will to represent* a particular reality, and that reality does not include the analysis of the social and material effects of this categorization, or include the perspectives of communities that experience marginalization, then intersectional policy analysis cannot function as a liberatory ("social justice" or radical justice) project. Axiology and accountability as key features of IPA enable us to inquire about whose story of intersectionality prevails within governments and governmental bodies and how that story has real, material effects on people. Policy-making through an IPA lens might then include the evidence of how we came up with the answers to the questions used in policy analysis in addition to "who and what we are" (see da Silva, 2015, p. 104), and what the effects of the policy are.

An intersectional analysis based on axiology and accountability, would not, for example, evaluate the relationship between "investing in women" and "economic growth." Rather, it would reconstruct the historical events by which "capitalism has fallen in love with difference" (Bilge, 2017) in order to fully understand the categories that we are working with in an IPA, and then would catalogue the material and social effects/consequences of women and the economy being linked together within this historical context. And then this IPA would further consider whether this "version of reality" contributes to the dismantling or maintenance of historical and social structures of oppression and would determine the policies that need to be aligned with a radical justice, or decolonial, project.

The actions of IPA within public bodies, as outlined in Chapter 4, severely limits the participation of those actors who might unsettle the practice of intersectionality -- actors who might tell a different story about intersectionality or challenge what counts as a plausible story about what IPA is doing and is supposed to be doing. Even when those actors are directly tasked with implementing IPA -- public service influencers and practitioners -- they often describe their work as "doing a sneaky project" or they adopt a strategy of reinforcing the current organizational power dynamics ("it can be empowering for you to have privilege"), in turn reinforcing the actions of GBA+/IPA as about "personal and political-driven analyses."

Separation of People and Government in Social Policy-Making

By "turning the lens up" we see that the divide between the *sarkar* and *public* in Canada is wide and is intentionally maintained. But the ideological trick of liberalism is to see the *sarkar* and *public* as closely tied together. Arundhati Roy notes that in the United States, this perceived closeness between the *sarkar* and *public* is maintained through fear (2004, p. 8). I have struggled to locate what this current study posits as the fulcrum through which the *sarkar* and *public* live in perceived harmony in Canada.

My analysis is that the perceived closeness in Canada is maintained through a need to belong, to be "Canadian," to be absorbed into the state as homeland. Whereas the fear that binds the *sarkar* to the *public* in the United States results in a manifest destiny, a "zombie imperialism… [a] necropolitics – where death belongs more to racialized and gendered multitudes and killing becomes 'precisely targeted'" (Byrd, 2011, p. 228); the need to belong in Canada results in a settler colonial system where diversity is increasingly acknowledged yet constantly deferred and "racialization replaces colonization as the site of critique, and the structuring logics of dispossession are displaced onto settlers and arrivants who substitute for and

as indigenous in order to consolidate control and borders at that site of differentiation" (Byrd, 2011, p. 221). And of course, the effect of the citizenship machine in Canada is still necropolitical as it is in the United States – precisely targeting racialized and colonized bodies for elimination and justifying the theft of Indigenous lands.

Following this logic we might ask, how does the almost singular focus on (binary) gender within GBA+ elide racialization by subsuming it under gendered identity? Gender becomes the site of critique and erases both the workings of colonization and racialization. Furthermore, the gender binary within GBA+ erases the functioning of heteropatriarchy by subsuming all other gender identities. As Altamirano-Jiménez (2018) has noticed, the strategy of positioning dispossession as a basic issue of gender equality and women's rights rather than a strategy of settler-colonial and neoliberal extraction has also been used by previous governments in Canada (see pp. 43-52 and specifically p. 48 for a description of the Harper government's tactics of dispossession in the name of gender equality).

So what are "we" doing with diversity and intersectionality within governments? When everything is stripped away and we focus on what those with the power to define intersectionality are focused on, we see one theme emerge: the "economy." To "belong" to Canada therefore means to be absorbed into the economy of Canada. As one respondent stated, "they've [public service elite] been very clear that their bottom line is that they are running a business and not a service." The goal of GBA+ as enacted by governments and governmental bodies is to remake people who are "distant" from the state into pieces of human capital that can be invested into the business of Canada. The "homeland" is an economic system. Nationalism then becomes adherence to the economic system, a system that is already predicated on the settler-native-slave triad (see Tuck & Yang, 2012 for how the settler-native-slave triad functions

to maintain the settler colonial system) . Elimination and absorption of Indigenous people and their lands and the exploitation and extraction of the labour of Black people and other racialized bodies are essential to this system. Intersectionality that is sanctioned by the nation-state of Canada will also always already be predicated on these elements because without them, the state would cease to exist as we know it.

GBA+/IPA within governments and governmental bodies, perhaps the entire practice of social policy itself, becomes a technology. It produces a policy ontology that is used to understand the physical ontology we live in. We see, through the example of GBA+, that "politics" or "representative democracy" is mediated through a technology/tool of policy analysis rather than a representative. This is why politicians and the public service elite can say to each other in parliamentary or legislative debates or within discussions of government strategies and initiatives, "are you being accountable to GBA+?" rather than "are you being accountable to the electorate or the *public*?" And furthermore, the data in this study shows that being accountable to GBA+ means being accountable to the "economy."

The underlying logic driving social policy analysis in Canada is the need to *make the economy presentable* (see Sassen, 2012, p. 36). To make something presentable is a question of *aesthetics*, and so when we interrogate the empirical evidence to see if there is a correlation or causation between economic growth and GBA+, as politicians seem to claim, there are no certainties; what we see is not a question of science (this is not "evidence-based " political decision making) but aesthetics (the will to represent a particular "reality") employed in the service of political life. And, it is important to make clear, the effects of these aesthetics are as important to examine as the modes and means of the aesthetics themselves.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This thesis has sought to answer two questions as it relates to the adoption of intersectionality as a framework and intersectional policy analysis as a tool/technology within governments and governmental bodies: (1) what led to the adoption of intersectional frameworks as a tool for policy analysis?, and (2) what does intersectional policy analysis/GBA+ accomplish through state actors/governments/governmental bodies?

It seems that what led to the adoption of IPA within governments is intersectionality's "spectacular success story;" as one politician stated, it's a "global phenomenon." However, similar to previous frameworks for "diversity management," such as multiculturalism that Canada has adopted and integrated into all levels of government in the past, it seems that intersectionality is "hailed" and "failed" at the same time. It is "hailed" as the most recent state-sponsored solution to the "problem" of Canadian diversity. It *is* successful in enabling state power to shift its tactics in the project of Canadian nation-building from discourses of elimination, assimilation, displacement, and confinement and their accompanying physical, visibly repressive practices, to a modern discourse that has positive and generative capacity and works "to create a series of management problems for which solutions must be found" (Day, 2002, p. 41) increasingly through professionalized programs of rational-bureaucratic tutelage and legalistic interventions. Multiculturalism was failing as a solution to Canadian diversity and a replacement needed to be found to keep Canada's nation-building project intact. Intersectionality was the answer.

This insight is implicit in the data. When public service practitioners and influencers were asked, "What were the circumstances that led your organization to adopt an intersectional framework for policy development and analysis?" They responded, depending on their positionality as municipal, provincial, or federal, that the level of government above them was doing it, and they needed to align with the approach, leading all the way back up to the federal government. This is how the Government of Canada's GBA+ online course becomes the motherhood approach or "textbook" for all other models of GBA+ and IPA. But when we look at intersectionality's definition within governments and governmental bodies, we see that it changes according to the understandings of the political party in power and not from a refinement of intersectionality that emerges from the academy, popular discourse, activist spaces/local practice, or other sources. As one practitioner/influencer described it, a new political party is in power and now they are using intersectionality "to rationalize the shitty decisions they're making." Intersectionality seems to function as a floating signifier within governments; it is a "name" that can be linked up with various concrete projects for those with political power. My critical decolonial feminist project then was to examine the forces that allow it to float or that empty it of meaning and what the impacts are of that "floating signifier."

Day (2002) explains that the *post*-modern discourse on Canadian diversity (which begins with the shift to a multicultural approach and I would argue continues on with the government adoption of GBA+ and intersectionality) hides the "terrain of the original violence" of Canadian political/social relations (p. 17) by creating the concept of *citizenship.* "Citizenship" now works as a disciplinary mechanism to produce a meta-category of universal similarity, shifting the semiotic axis of "belonging" from possession of official identity to official *recognition* of possession of identity – whether official or not (p. 198). The structure of colonization provides

government/political agents with reasons for action and helps to explain the courses of action or inaction chosen through IPA. As stated in chapter two of this thesis, a decolonial IPA would insist on "disrupt[ing] the elisions of multicultural liberal democracy that seeks to rationalize the originary historical traumas that birthed settler colonialism through inclusion" (Byrd, 2011, p. xii). This policy of intersectionality would look very different than using the GBA+ model of intersecting identities (see below) to "check off" whether the "lenses" that come from those fixed positions of identity have been considered.

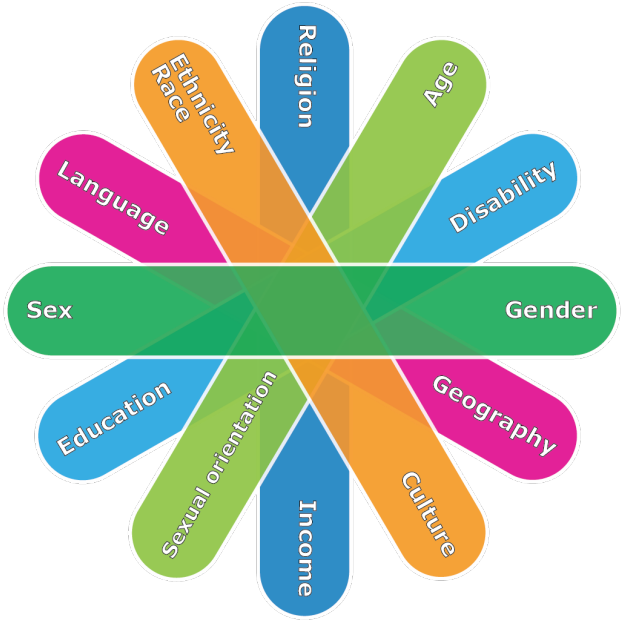

Figure 1, Women and Gender Equality, Government of Canada, Model of Intersectionality, https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/en/gender-based-analysis-plus/government-approach.html

Furthermore, Day proposes that as the discourses of citizenship and multiculturalism become entangled, *integration* can now be construed as a melding of diversity and unity that is

"based on a history of respect and fair dealings" (p. 175). This revisionist history, coupled with the "citizenship machine" shifts the state's project from civilizing Others to citizenizing them (p. 166) and does not require the state to "recognize the value or equality of all 'communities'" (p. 198) but to simply recognize that they *exist*.

We can see how intersectionality functions as a "find and replace" of multiculturalism. The Canadian state recognizes your "belonging" through intersectionality – and now you can define yourself however you want – and through GBA+, there is room for you to be "considered" and your government will be "sensitive" to your needs. Once you make it into the official research channels, they will also examine "disaggregated data and research" about you. All this requires is your passive acceptance of the GBA+ technology. Whereas multiculturalism was a policy, GBA+ is a tool/technology and a lens. As McLuhan (1962) writes,

> Any technology tends to create a new human environment. Script and papyrus created the social environment we think of in connection with the empires of the ancient world. The stirrup and the wheel created unique environments of enormous scope. Technological environments are not merely passive containers of people but are active processes that reshape people and other technologies alike (p. 7).

When GBA+ = good social policy = good government, as we have seen outlined in the previous chapter, it is functioning as a technology, creating a social environment through which we are hailed to construct and understand ourselves, our communities, and our histories. IPA is positioned as being run by technocrats in government and contributes to the myth of government as an overall technocracy in ways that multiculturalism and anti-racism initiatives have not been able to parallel. It makes the gap between the *sarkar* and the *public* bigger through emphasizing this technological/expert model. And this makes it more imperative than ever to understand from

whose history and from whose understanding is intersectionality operating in governments in Canada? Where does the "expertise" for GBA+/IPA within governments come from? If the expertise for IPA work traces back to a shared lineage with Crenshaw, as many levels of government claim in their documents, then how is the axiology and accountability of intersectionality, and other features of intersectional work as described by Crenshaw such as coalitional identity politics, clearly outlined in the government approach? How does intersectionality "bring forth more life" through the policy alternatives that are developed and chosen for enactment? How does intersectionality provide alternatives to necropolitics and the continuation of the theft and occupation of Indigenous lands? Or are governments just "mouthing the words" of intersectionality? How could an evaluative/accountability framework be built into IPA so the policy effects of intersectionality/IPA would be clear?

But there is one other line of reasoning to examine around the policy drivers for adopting this *policy* of intersectionality within governments. This study has also revealed that the government/technocracy has one goal when it comes to managing the "problem" of Canadian diversity through GBA+/IPA – to make the economy presentable – or to remake identities into the singular *homo oeconomicus*.

If we examine *homo oeconomicus*' by "turning the lens up," then we might ask, "what kind of system is *inclusive* of him, removes barriers for *him*, is sensitive to *his* needs?"… What might we find if we examine the disaggregated data and research about *his* life? IPA, now focused on the *foundation* (i.e. "the economy", which is not neutral but predicated on systems of settler colonialism and racism) from which all other "official" social identities are born, becomes about the *intersectionality of issues* that homo oeconomicus' life produces and reveals that a policy solution to the problems that produce racialization and colonization in the first place is

beyond a nation-state and involves dismantling and rebuilding the *referent-we* (see Wynter, 2015, p. 24) of our current age. Wynter (2015) writes:

> What at once becomes clear is this: rather than positing that 'we humans have a poverty problem or a habitat problem, or an energy problem, or a trade problem, or a population problem, or an atmosphere problem, or a waste problem or a resource problem,' these, on a planetary scale, are understood, together, as 'inter-connected problems.' Thus, thinking globally, what 'we really have is a poverty-hunger-habitat-energy-trade-population-atmosphere-waste-resource problem,' none of whose separate parts can be solved on their own (p. 44).

The IPA query following this line of thinking, then becomes, "How might IPA, deployed from the viewpoint of the colonial difference, dismantle the historical and social structures of oppression that limit the courses of action of inaction that we see as reasonable from government and governmental bodies?" We see the policy drivers for adopting a policy of intersectionality within governments become inverted as we move from colonial logics to decolonial logics; that is, a shift from protecting the economy to dismantling oppression *and* colonization, colonization being the space from which oppressions are delineated and defined. The "economy" is now seen as the *effect* of the "inextricable connections between white possessive logics, race, and the founding of nation-states" (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, p. xiii) and not as a natural or teleological development of the state that has to be protected as the source of health, safety, and wellbeing.

This leads us to a discussion of the second research question: what does intersectional policy analysis/GBA+ accomplish through state actors/governments/governmental bodies? From a reformist perspective and looking at what can be accomplished through the current structures of government, the answer that emerges from this study is inconclusive. All the public service

practitioners and influencers interviewed indicated that they were in the early stages of evaluation of their efforts. And when we look at the Government of Canada's data in their *Gender Report*, it is unclear what the overall impact of GBA+ is as integrated within the federal government's policy development process.

The "GBA+ Responsive Approach" outlined in the *Gender Report* consists of small reformist modifications to the overall approach for individual policy development; for example, here is the explanation of the "GBA+ Responsive Approach" for a policy on stem cell research, "The Stem Cell Network seeks to minimize potential gender bias in the allocation of research funding by ensuring there is a fair representation of women on selection committees, and by providing visibility to leading women at conferences and events" (2019, p. 51). In the "GBA+ Responsive Approach" for the policy on "A New Anti-Racism Strategy" (p. 82), even though it says GBA+ was performed "early in the idea development phase," the "GBA+ Responsive Approach" simply states:

> While mainly focusing on visible minority communities, religious minorities and indigenous peoples, taking intersectionality into account, the Anti-Racism Strategy touches on issues that affect various groups differently across Canada. As such GBA+ will be integrated in the selection of grants and contributions project funding (p. 82).

It seems that the "GBA+ Responsive Approach" across all the policies consists of "asking questions," "consulting," and "looking at research and data," (see Government of Canada, *Gender Report*, 2019) but it doesn't seem to *do* much.

In the examination of action related to GBA+/IPA within governments, I am also looking at action through a critical decolonial feminist lens as *critical praxis*, that is, how are agents

attempting to (materially, radically) change the world? But I am also looking at how the actions of intersectionality/IPA mentioned in the previous chapter are locked into an ontological prior where intersectionality always already is situated in existing structures of oppression. The categories of race, class, gender, and other social identities used in intersectional analyses in governments are produced through the structure of colonization and any action that elides colonization as the root of not only vertical structures of power but horizontal ones, enmeshes people in a horizontal intersectionality of oppressions at the "bottom" where we maintain the liberal democratic hierarchy by seeking inclusion by the State rather than asking, "what makes the state possible?" (see Byrd, 2011, p. xxxv) and how might we transform it, remake it anew, or construct other political communities?

Implications and Areas for Further Research

This research project highlights a number of other areas that could be explored to further understand the adoption/co-option of intersectionality and IPA within governments and governmental bodies and the opportunities or constraints of adopting social justice/decolonial projects into public policy-making. These research areas include continuing to reconstruct intersectionality's history; examining the categories of identity that emerge in intersectional analysis *and* the material consequences of that identification through a critical decolonial feminist lens; examining the effectiveness of organizational learning/training through a critical decolonial feminist lens; supporting progressive, radical social "policy" that comes from the *sarkar*, and evaluating policy analysis as both critical analysis *and* critical praxis.

The implications are largely reformist as this study was an institutional analysis and many of the implications reflect back on to governments and governmental bodies. I hope that these further areas of research might enable new pathways of resistance to form within

institutions or provide new ideas for engagement among those who are interested in radical justice. However, as I have demonstrated through the application of a critical decolonial feminist lens to IPA throughout this thesis, the analysis has also made clear that institutional intersectionality cannot have a decolonizing ontology. "Bringing forth more life" is happening *outside* institutions and this is another area to explore that is beyond the scope of this thesis. "Turning the lens up" was the project at hand, and there is value in capturing and describing what happened within public bodies as they adopted IPA, but there is much to learn from place-based resistance, land defenders, abolitionist projects, and others who are truly thinking in different ways about being "human" (McKittrick, explicating Sylvia Wynter's ideas, 2015) and unsettling what we think of as being a citizen, a government, a nation-state, living in a democracy, and the concept of social policy itself.

This study provides new insights into *why* there is a knowledge-to-action gap in the practice of intersectionality/IPA as it is adopted by public bodies in Canada. It is hoped that these insights provide new ways of thinking about *how* to address this gap. It also shows how intersectionality can function as a resistant knowledge project when it functions as an interpretive framework, epistemology, and methodology in the analysis of social issues *and* when it is grounded in its Black feminist origins and brought into conversation with decoloniality, Indigenous feminisms, and decolonization. Although it is beyond the scope of this thesis to explore alternative methods of developing social policy through an intersectional lens, I hope that the description of what happens when governments and governmental bodies in Canada adopt intersectionality, and the comparison with the features of intersectionality that carry liberatory potential, can contribute to new ways of imagining how we might think of "policy."

Relocating Myself

Resistant knowledge projects should always result in a re-evaluation of where we stand in relation to the topic and to each other. This research project has made me rethink my own relationship with social policy – how I am complicit in its status quo – and how I might work in messy coalitional spaces where colonization, racialization, and heteropatriarchy are dismantled and we might understand more about our relations with each other. I also think about the things that we are not "intersecting" and how my relations could be expanded to include land, non-human creatures, and the journeys of my family through different points in time to expand my understanding of alternatives to social policy. It reaffirms that axiology and accountability need to be key features in my own work, grounded in a collective identity politics that offers new visions for health, safety, and wellbeing.

Conclusion

This thesis has sought to unify theories of intersectionality used by governments and governmental bodies in Canada by reconstructing intersectionality's history through multiple perspectives and identifying the key features that position intersectionality as a social justice or radical justice project. With this conceptual clarity in place, the research then described what happens in governments and governmental bodies when intersectionality is adopted as a policy position and a policy method/ology. One of the main conclusions is that not much happens as it relates to the promise of intersectionality to drive social change through politicians and the public service. But I hope that in reading this account there are many ideas of how those roles could have space for refusal and skepticism rather than maintaining the status quo.

In addition, it is hoped that the data and analysis from this project can contribute to the analyses of how various social transformation frameworks have been adopted by or are being

adopted by public bodies in Canada. Do they fit within the pattern of performative accountability and non-performativity described in this study? And if so, how does that point to finding new questions and coming up with new ways to answer the questions that make a difference when it comes to changing the context, experiences, and realities for people who are made vulnerable or multiply jeopardized? Promising areas of research in exploring alternatives to policy include local and place-based resistance, knowledge production, and political resurgence, as outlined in Caouette & Kapoor's 2015 collection, *Beyond Colonialism, Development, and Globalization* and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson's book *As We Have Always Done* (2017), to name a few starting places.

Although this study did not employ a critical decolonial (intersectional) feminist method of research, I hope that the alignment of intersectionality theory (as outlined in Chapter 2), methodology, and criteria for research evaluation used within this thesis also contributes to accountability for researchers who employ intersectionality in their work.

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Appendix A

Interview Script

Study Title: Transforming Systems of Oppression: Examining the Promise of Intersectional Policy Analysis to Drive Social Change

Research Investigator:

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I am conducting this research as part of my Master's thesis in Educational Policy Studies.

The purpose of this research is two-fold:

- to examine what lead to the adoption of GBA+ or other intersectional frameworks as a tool for policy analysis within governments or governmental bodies, and
- to explore what GBA+ or other intersectional frameworks enable public bodies to do differently as a result of adopting this approach.

I hope that the results of this study might:

- provide institutions with information and insights to improve policy-making when using intersectional frameworks
- unify varied understandings of intersectionality within and between public bodies
- provide insights that inform the knowledge-to-action gap when it comes to using intersectional policy analysis for social change

Please review the Information Letter and Consent form for further details about the study.

Please confirm:

- you are in a position in your organization where you are tasked with the review, implementation or adoption of intersectional policy frameworks (such as GBA+) or you are in a position of accountability for intersectional policy adoption or implementation.

Before we start our conversation:

- I will be audio recording our interview and may take written notes, but will not use your name in the research study unless you would like me to.
- I am the only one who will see any of the raw data.
- At any time, you can choose not to answer a question or to stop participating in the discussion.
- You will have the opportunity to review a full transcript of our interview and to ask questions, to indicate you would like to withdraw from the study, or to withdraw your data in a particular section.
- If you have any questions about the your participation in this research, you can contact me at any time (see Information Letter and Consent Form for contact details).

Do you have any questions about this interview?

Do we have your consent to proceed with the interview? (Ensure consent form is signed before beginning interview)

1. Please describe the framework your organization uses for intersectional policy analysis (for example. GBA+).
2. What is your organization's understanding of intersectionality?
3. What is your understanding of intersectionality (if different)?
4. Please describe your role in intersectional policy analysis within your organization.
5. What were the circumstances that led your organization to adopt an intersectional framework for policy development and analysis?
6. What does your organization hope to achieve by adopting an intersectional framework?
7. What were some of the benefits or hindrances of previous frameworks such as diversity and inclusion, multiculturalism, cultural competency, anti-racism or similar frameworks that your organization may have been using? [How does the "blending" of categories produce something different – something that is more likely to get you to the aims described above?]

8. What changes (positive or negative) have you seen as a result of adopting an intersectional approach to policy development, analysis, and implementation? [Follow-up questions: What changes have you seen in your organization? In what ways does it work differently as a result of adopting an intersectional framework? What impact has there been on the community you serve as a result of your organization's adoption of an intersectional approach to policy development, analysis and implementation? What

impact has there been on the greater society as a result of your organization's adoption of an intersectional approach?]

9. Please describe any training you, or others responsible or accountable for intersectional policy development, analysis and implementation, have received to prepare you for your role(s). [Follow-up question: would you be able to share any internal training documents or descriptions of this training with me?]
10. What are your (personal) hopes for using an intersectional framework for policy development, analysis and implementation?
11. What are your (personal) fears when it comes to using an intersectional framework for policy development, analysis and implementation?

Thank-you for your time. If you have any questions or concerns about our interview or the research study, you can contact me anytime at asumaru@ualberta.ca