The Role of Social Work in Contemporary Colonial and Structurally Violent Processes: Speaking to Aboriginal Social Workers who had Child Welfare and/or Criminal Justice Involvement as Youth

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ABSTRACT

As a relatively recent phenomenon, the increasing overrepresentation of Aboriginal persons in both the child welfare and criminal justice systems is of critical importance to the field of social work. As social control systems, how do social workers contribute to or mitigate against overrepresentation as contemporary colonialism? What can social work professionals who themselves have been through these systems add to our social work discourse? A sample of fifteen Aboriginal social workers who had as youth been in either one or both of these systems were interviewed with respect to: what they found was helpful or unhelpful in their interactions as youth with social workers, why they subsequently chose social work as a career, the supports and barriers they encountered along their career path, and the difference their experiences had for their own professional practice. Using structural social work theory, overrepresentation as a contemporary colonializing process was re-conceptualised as structural violence. Institutional Ethnography (IE) and Hermeneutic Phenomenology were used to explore how these neo-liberal ruling relations are produced, maintained, and potentially deconstructed. The findings from this unique population have implications for decolonizing social work practice, education, and research.

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1 Big Numbers, so What?

What role does social work play in contemporary colonialism? How do social workers treat Aboriginal peoples? How does social work facilitate their entry into our profession? What additional contributions do former clients/now Aboriginal colleagues offer social work discourse? What can social work learn from rates of overrepresentation beyond their ever increasing numbers?

Aboriginal peoples in Canada are grossly overrepresented in child welfare and criminal justice systems and, consequently, experience detrimental effects because of their contact with these systems. I use the term *Aboriginal peoples* to refer to people who identify as First Nations, First Peoples, Métis, Inuit, Status, and non-Status Indian, or all people whose descendants, prior to European contact, were the inhabitants of the northern half of Turtle Island and what is currently known as Canada. Social workers, particularly in Western and Northern Canada, work with Aboriginal peoples and Aboriginal peoples form a large percentage of the people who receive social work services. The rationale for this study is to learn more about the contact Aboriginal peoples have with social workers arising from their own childhood involvement with child welfare and services affiliated with criminal justice systems, and what Aboriginal colleagues with this experience can add to our awareness. This study's purpose, therefore, is to explore the role social workers play in propelling or preventing Aboriginal peoples' contact with these two systems.

Realities of Overrepresentation

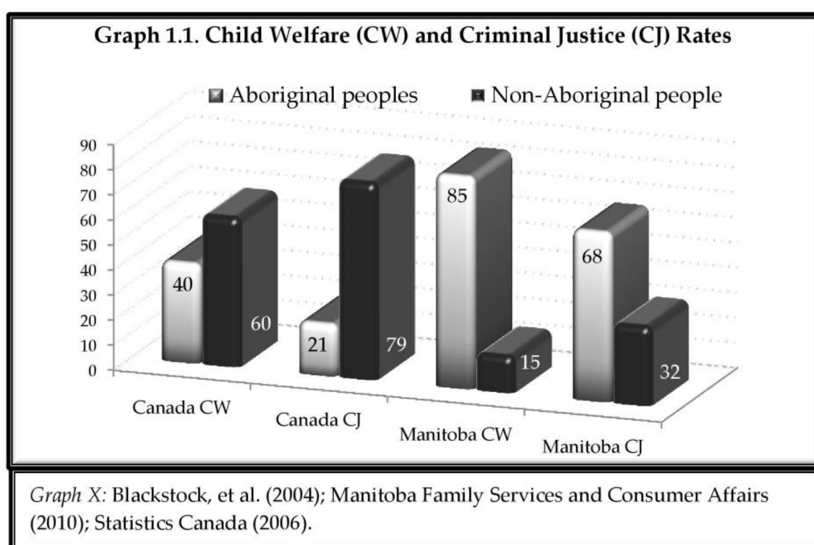
Current realities of overrepresentation of Aboriginal peoples within Canadian child welfare and criminal justice systems are both fairly recent and incongruent with the contemporary decline of non-Aboriginal child welfare and prison populations. Alarmingly,

the people who are under child welfare and criminal justice control experience dangerous health effects and compromised social wellbeing, effects that become even more dire for Aboriginal peoples. It is important to note that Aboriginal peoples are not the only groups overrepresented within these systems in Canada or globally. These systems draw in marginalized peoples. For example, child welfare systems in the United States, Australia, and the UK consistently have marginalized children overrepresented in their case loads (Barn, 2007; Courtney & Skyles, 2003; Fusco, Rauktis, McCrae, Cunningham & Bradley-King, 2010; Needell, Brookhart & Lee, 2003; Owen& Statham, 2009; Shaw, Putnam-Hornstein, Magruder & Needell, 2007; Tilbury, 2009). Similarly, criminal justice systems in Germany, Australia, Holland, Switzerland, Sweden, the United States, the UK, and France all have marginalized groups overrepresented within their prisons (Albrecht, 1997; Broadhurst, 1997; Junger-Tas, 1997; Martens, 1997; Sampson & Lauritsen, 1997; Smith, D., 1997; Tonry, 1997; Tournier, 1997). Nevertheless, Bracken, Deane, and Morrissette (2009) caution that while racism places a significant factor in these overrepresentation rates for visible minorities, the added realities of colonialism generate harms that are even more substantial for Aboriginal peoples.

The number of Aboriginal peoples in the child welfare system today exceeds that of any other time in history, including the height of the residential schooling system and Sixties Scoop[1] (Blackstock, 2003, 2011). As Graph 1.1 shows, even the most modest estimates from child welfare indicate Aboriginal children represent 40% of the 76,000 children and youth placed in the Canadian child welfare system (Blackstock, Trocmé & Bennett, 2004). In Manitoba during 2010, while Aboriginal children represent only 25% of all children zero to 14 years of age (Statistics Canada, 2010), they made up 85% of the 9,120 children in the child welfare system (Manitoba Family Services and Consumer Affairs, 2010). To compare

these rates across the Prairie Provinces, the National Council of Child Welfare (2007) reports that while Aboriginal children represent only 23% of all children (zero to 14 years of age) in Manitoba in 2006, they made up 85% of the then 6,629 children in the child welfare system. During the same year in Saskatchewan, Aboriginal children represented 25% of the all children in the province yet made up 70% of the 3,050 children in the child welfare system (National Council of Child Welfare, 2007).

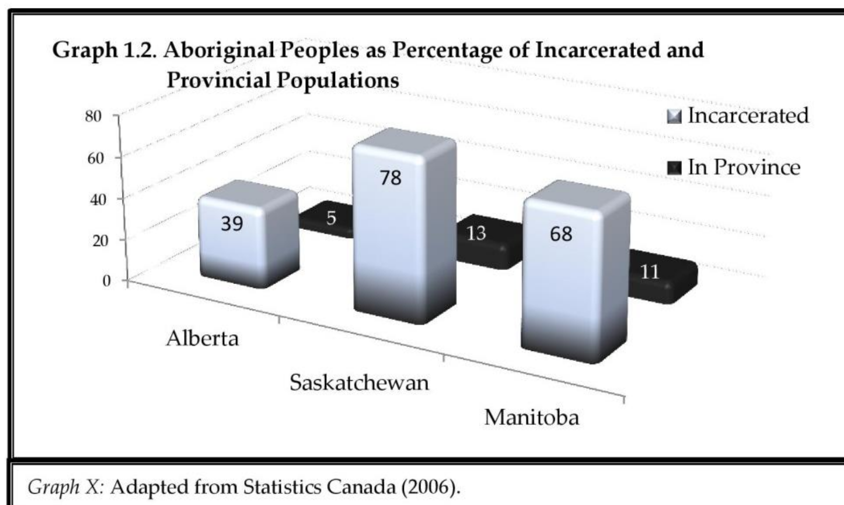
This overrepresentation is even more disturbing when one considers it is occurring at a time when rates for non-Aboriginal apprehensions, which may or may not result in care, are on the decline (Gough, 2007). The 2013 *Commission of Inquiry into the Circumstances of Death of Phoenix Sinclair*[2] found that "this dramatic over-representation is incontrovertable" and numbers in Manitoba "have been steadily increasing since 1997" (Hughes, 2013, p. 447). The Commission noted that not only are Manitoba children, and therefore Aboriginal children, more frequently removed into the child welfare system than most elsewhere in Canada, children in Canada are "taken into care at a rate far in excess of children in other countries" (p. 446).



Graph X: Blackstock, et al. (2004); Manitoba Family Services and Consumer Affairs (2010); Statistics Canada (2006).

Mirroring the massively disproportionate representation of Aboriginal children and youth in the child welfare system, more than 30 years of research into the Canadian criminal justice system has led scholars to conclude that the incarceration of Aboriginal peoples is out

of proportion to their representation in the general Canadian population (Dickson-Gilmore & La Prairie, 2005; Hylton, 1983; Jackson, 1988; Monture-Angus, 2000; Samuelson & Monture-Angus, 2002; Zimmerman, 1992). For example, while 2006 census data reported the Aboriginal population had surpassed the one-million mark and is the fastest growing population in Canada, Aboriginal peoples represent only 3.8% of the total Canadian population (Statistics Canada, 2008). Yet as Graph 1.1 demonstrates, modest estimates report that Aboriginal peoples represent 21% of the Canadian prison population nationwide (Statistics Canada, 2006) or 5.5 times their rate of national representation. In the Prairie Provinces, the representation of Aboriginal peoples in prisons is even more out of proportion to their representation in the provinces. As shown in Graph 1.2, in Manitoba Aboriginal adults represent 11% of the population yet make up 68% of those incarcerated. In Saskatchewan, where Aboriginal adults comprise 13 percent of the population, they represent 78 percent of those incarcerated (Statistics Canada, 2006).



Graph X: Adapted from Statistics Canada (2006).

These disturbing rates of overrepresentation within criminal justice systems may in fact be modest estimates. According to the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics (2005), Canadian police departments reported nearly half of people charged did not have their ethnic origin documented, and of those who did, the police often made discretionary determinations based on visual cues. As well, although Corrections Canada does record ethnic status,

individuals must self-identify as Aboriginal and may or may not self-identify due to fear of discrimination. The implications are disturbing: Aboriginal peoples in Canada are grossly overrepresented in our criminal justice system and the recorded numbers may well be estimates far below actual realities.

The immense overrepresentation rates within these two systems have not always been so—they are indeed a recent occurrence. Whereas Armitage (1993a) states that 1950 child welfare rates of Aboriginal children were so small that statistics were not kept, Johnston (1983) described that by 1955 in British Columbia only one percent of children in child welfare were Aboriginal children. Similarly, 1949 rates for Aboriginal men incarcerated in Manitoba at Headingley Institution[3] accounted for only 2.8% of the total inmate population (Singleton, 2001).

This colossal overrepresentation also occurs at a time when the incarceration rates of non-Aboriginal inmates have decreased (Office of the Correctional Investigator, 2006a). That is, while federal inmate populations in Canada declined 12.5% from 1996 to 2004, Aboriginal peoples incarcerated in federal institutions increased 21.7%; the rate of Aboriginal women incarcerated increased 74.2% during the same period (Office of the Correctional Investigator, 2006a). Although Aboriginal women account for only 3.8% of the federal inmate population (Office of the Correctional Investigator, 2006b), they are the fastest growing prison population in Canada[4] (Neve & Pate, 2005). In addition, Aboriginal peoples who are incarcerated at the federal level are younger than their non-Aboriginal counterparts (41.3% are under 26 years of age) and are jailed for longer periods than their non-Aboriginal cohorts (Office of the Correctional Investigator, 2006a). Put another way, although Canada has an overall incarceration rate of 110 per 100,000 (Statistics Canada, 2007), its overall incarceration rate for Aboriginal peoples is nearly ten-fold or 1,024 per 100,000 (Office of the Correctional Investigator, 2006b).

It is important to acknowledge that marginalized people's overrepresentation in child welfare and criminal justice systems exists beyond Canada`s experience. For example, De Giorgi (2010) found that in countries across the European Union (EU), new immigrants were incarcerated at 6.2 times the rate of EU citizens. This did not include the administrative detention or extra-penal incarceration that only immigrants are subject to. Correspondingly in child welfare in the United States, African American children represent 41% of all children in care yet make up only 15% of American children (Smith & Devore, 2004). And while marginalized people experience negative outcomes from both systems as well in Canada, the legacy of colonialism increases the extent for Aboriginal peoples.

Effects of Overrepresentation

Child welfare and criminal justice systems can result in detrimental effects for the individuals under their control. The harmful health, mortality, and wellbeing outcomes for both non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal children taken into the child welfare system, under the auspices of assuring the "best interests of the child",[5] have been well documented (Bennett, Sadrehashemi, Smith, Hehewerth, Sieniema, & Makolewski, 2009; Child and Youth Officer for British Colombia, 2006; Richardson & Nelson, 2007; Stein, 2006).

Health outcomes for *all children in care* are abysmal:

- 65% have mental health disorders;
- these children are four times more likely to have mental health disorders than non in care children;
- are prescribed psychotropic drugs 5.5 to 12 times the rate of children never having been in the system;
- are hospitalized 2 to 3.5 times more frequently and have higher mortality rates;
- are four times as likely to die of natural causes including Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and infectious diseases;
- are three times as likely to die of external causes while in care, including
    - homicide (4.6 times);
    - suicide (5.2 times); and
    - accidental poisoning (10 times);
- girls are four times more likely to become pregnant while in care; and

- young adults 19 to 25, having left care, die at 6.5 times the rate than children who have never been removed from their families (Child and Youth Officer for British Colombia, 2006).

In addition to detrimental health outcomes, *all children in and those aging out* of Canadian child welfare systems experience compromised social wellbeing, with:

- more frequent moves;
- much earlier independence from 'familial' or formal supports than children not removed (O'Brian, 2004);
- lower educational attainments;
- a 21% high school graduation rate;
- higher rates of homelessness, unemployment, and mental health issues;
- 65% population representation rate of youth who are homeless (Bennett et al., 2009);
- earlier and more frequent parenting (Stein, 2006); and
- a 75% population representation rate of children in the British Colombia youth justice system.

Despite the frightening health and social outcomes for all children taken into state care, outcomes for Aboriginal children are even more alarming. The detrimental grief, trauma, and dislocation have been consistently documented over the last forty years (Annett, 2001; Armitage, 1995; Chrisjohn, Young & Maraun, 1994; Fournier & Crey, 1997; Haig-Brown, 1988; McGillivray, 1997; Milloy, 1999; York, 1990). While Aboriginal children are taken into the child welfare system under the auspices of the "best interests of the child," in reality, they experience a new set of severe risk factors. Relative to their non-Aboriginal counterparts, *Aboriginal children taken into child welfare*:

- attain lower educational level completion;
- experience higher rates of suicide; homelessness; substance use; and re-entry into child welfare (Blackstock, Brown & Bennett, 2007);
- are 6-8 times more likely to be taken from their families (Blackstock, 2011);
- enter the child welfare system at a younger age;
- are more likely to be in continuing care rather than in temporary care;
- experience more multiple placements;
- are more frequently separated from their communities and culture;
- stay in the child welfare system longer; and

- are more likely to become involved in the criminal justice system than their non-Aboriginal counter-parts (Child and Youth Officer for British Colombia, 2006; Richardson & Nelson, 2007).

In addition to the increased risk of detrimental outcomes for survivors of the child welfare system, this cluster of risk factors, or "pipeline," moves Aboriginal children from child welfare and graduates them as young adults to the criminal justice system (O'Brian, 2004; Stein, 2006). While mainly invisible to the larger society, this pipeline is painfully apparent to those swept up and carried along its path, and as O'Brian (2004) notes, despite our professional rhetoric of denouncing social control, our social work activities build and continue to maintain this pipeline.

Echoing the harmful risks experienced by Aboriginal children who go into care, the effects of criminalization[6] for Aboriginal peoples are similarly daunting. In Saskatchewan, for example, a future that promises high school and post-secondary education for many non-Aboriginal young men is supplanted for young Aboriginal men with a prospect of imprisonment (Samuelson & Monture-Angus, 2002). Having a criminal record, in turn, decreases Aboriginal peoples' likelihood of securing employment (Boyd & Faith, 1999; Pager, 2003), and qualifying for subsidized housing (Boyd & Faith, 1999). Criminalization also elevates risk for experiencing police brutality (Comack, 2012), and increased likelihood for re-incarceration (Fitzgibbon, 2007a). As a result of imprisonment, Aboriginal peoples face higher rates of HIV and hepatitis C, forced institutional dependency and monitoring, degrading social stigma (Boyd & Faith, 1999), and increased likelihood of having their children apprehended by child welfare (Seymour, 1998). While these outcomes are not unique to Aboriginal peoples, the reality that so many Aboriginal peoples experience these barriers must be traced to their experience in child welfare, its colonial legacy, and to social work.

Overrepresentation as Contemporary Colonization

Why have we, in 60 years, gone from Aboriginal peoples rarely represented in criminal justice or child welfare systems to contemporary rates of overrepresentation? Jackson (1988) and Monture-Angus (2000) argue these current institutions have simply taken over from where the 1876 Indian Act left off, moving Aboriginal peoples from reserves to prisons and Aboriginal children from residential schools to the child welfare system (Samuelson & Monture-Angus, 2002). In essence, for Aboriginal peoples, child welfare and the criminal justice systems are the new "institutions of confinement" (Monture-Angus, 1995, p. 193), within a continuing colonial legacy.

Historically, colonialism was different from imperialism. Imperialism was domination from a distance, or the "practice, theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory"; colonialism, in contrast, is settling through occupation or the "implanting of settlements on a distant territory" (Said, 1993, p. 8). Today, imperialism imposes institutions and ideologies, with political and economic domination as a by-product. Colonialism, on the other hand, pushes economic exploitation and trade and the overlay of cultural values come as a result (Young, 2001). Postcolonial, in turn, is not only about the criticism and deconstruction of colonization and domination, but also about reconstruction and transformation, operating as a form of liberation from colonial imposition (Batisste, 2004).

More specifically, Osterhammel (2005) differentiates colonization from colonialism where "colonization designates a *process* of territorial acquisition … and colonialism a *system* of domination." (p. 4) As such, colonialism is:

> A relationship between an indigenous (or forcibly imported) majority and a minority of foreign invaders. The fundamental decisions affecting the lives of the colonized people are made and implemented by the colonial rulers in pursuit of interests that are often defined in a distant metropolis. Rejecting cultural compromises with the colonized

> population, the colonizers are convinced of their own superiority and their ordained mandate to rule. (p. 16)

As Hart (2002) explains, “colonialism is driven by a worldview and processes that embrace domination, self-righteousness, and greed and affects all levels of Indigenous peoples’ lives.” (p. 26-27) The essence and outcomes of contemporary colonization that Hart (2008) describes are the compromised decision–making spheres that Aboriginal peoples face:

> It is when we, as a peoples of this land, are stopped, hindered, cajoled, and/or manipulated from making decisions about our lives, individually and as a group, because of being a person of the peoples of this land. Colonization is about power, specifically, it is the power you hold over my life and life of my sons and the generations to come. (PowerPoint presentation)

Bracken et al. (2009) maintain that two forms of colonialism in Canada are important to consider when contextualizing Aboriginal peoples and the criminal justice system: structural and cultural colonialism. Structural colonialism refers to the formal institutional arrangements resulting in the exercise of power and domination over Aboriginal peoples. The authors suggest that while many of the laws and regulations controlling Aboriginal peoples’ movement, social arrangements/customs, and reserve land ownership may no longer exist, a colonial legacy remains. Cultural colonialism, in contrast, refers to the less formal processes of condemning the cultural mores of Aboriginal peoples and replacing them with those of the colonizer. For example, the childrearing practices imposed through both formal and informal processes on Aboriginal peoples, and resulting in overrepresentation rates in both child welfare and criminal justice systems, are forms of contemporary structural and cultural colonialism.

In addition, colonialism is not just a historical reality in Canada; its processes and structures continue and are active today (Adams, 1989, 1999; Frideres & Gadacz, 2012; Hart, 2008, 2009; Smith, G, 2000; Wilson &Yellow Bird, 2005). Unlike realities of historical colonization utilizing military and settler invasion, contemporary colonialism is manifested in

and reinvented by "formal and informal methods," including economies, ideologies, institutions, policies, and behaviours (Wilson &Yellow Bird, 2005, p. 2). As Graham Hingangaroa Smith (2000) states:

> I do not believe for an instant that we are in a postcolonial period. I do not think we have seen the last of colonization; on the contrary, it is very much alive and well. What has happened in recent years is the creation of an illusion that colonization is no longer practiced—that somehow the "white" world now understands this phenomenon and is able to desist from it. This, of course, is a myth… What has happened is that the processes of colonization have been reformed in different and more subtle ways. Many of these new formations are insidious, and many of them have yet to be fully exposed. (p. 215)

In particular, the Canadian colonial reality was and is one of settler colonialism. Cavanagh and Veracini (2013) define settler colonialism as distinct from colonialism, calling it a "global and transnational phenomenon, and as much a thing of the past as a thing of the present:"

> There is no such thing as neo-settler colonialism or post-settler colonialism because settler colonialism is a resilient formation that rarely ends…. And settler colonialism is not colonialism: settlers want Indigenous people to vanish.… Sometimes settler colonial forms operate within colonial ones, sometimes they subvert them, sometimes they replace them. But even if colonialism and settler colonialism interpenetrate and overlap, they remain separate as they co-define each other. (p. 1)

Veracini (2010) adds settler colonialism is distinct from colonialism through migration in that "migrants move to *another* country … settlers … move… to *their* country." (p. 3) In addition, settler colonialism occurred through conquest and not simply migration and, as such, the settlers, unlike most people who immigrate, were political founders who carried sovereignty and inherent rights. As stated by Stevenson (1999) of Aboriginal peoples' experiences with settlers: "mercantilists wanted our furs, missionaries wanted our souls, colonial governments, and later, Canada, wanted our lands." (p. 26). I would add, "and now social systems want our bodies." Wolfe (1999) argues that unlike colonialism, in settler colonialism there is not a master/slave domination relying on the indispensability of colonized populations. Rather, it relies fundamentally on the dispensability of Indigenous peoples. In other words, settler

colonization is “at base a winner-take-all project whose dominant feature is not exploitation but replacement.” (p. 163) I am hesitant with Wolfe’s claim and its application to rates of overrepresentation—Aboriginal peoples are not dispensable to Manitoba’s criminal justice or child welfare systems.

Youngblood Henderson (2000) states plainly that colonialism created a “massive hemorrhage” and a “traumatic legacy” for Aboriginal peoples in Canada (p. 17). Canada’s long and recorded history of racism, colonization, brutalization, institutionalized violence, and assimilation policies is evident in residential schools, child welfare and criminal justice systems, and the theft and exploitation of Canada’s First peoples’ land and resources (Alyward, 1999; McIvor & Nahanee, 1998). Colonization limits self-determination and results in structural issues such as poverty, family violence, substance dependence, suicide, ill health (Wilson &Yellow Bird, 2005), exclusion, marginalization,[7] and appropriation (Hart, 2009). While the goal of colonization is to have full control over Aboriginal peoples, the “ultimate consequence of colonization is a reduction in the resistance of Aboriginal people to a point at which they can be controlled and will disappear as a people through assimilation or elimination” (Frideres & Gadacz, 2012, p. 10). One way to achieve this is through how Indian Status is legislated. Blood quantum criteria is predicted to ensure that there will be no remaining Status Indians in 200 years, and consequently, no remaining federal land claim obligations (Blackstock, 2011).

Frideres and Gadacz (2012) list seven dimensions of a colonization process, of which the last two points have particular relevance for the maintenance of overrepresentation rates. These dimensions are:

- forced entry into a geographical place;
- racialization;
- segregation;
- Aboriginal dependence;

- social and cultural destruction: political, economic, spiritual, familial, community;
- external political control; and
- low quality social services for Indigenous peoples.

Building from the last two points, Blackstock (2011) laments that Canada is one of the few countries in the world with race-based legislation, the Indian Act. The 1876 Indian Act confined Status Indians to reserves,[8] decreed that their children attend residential schools and be made wards of the state, and criminalized cultural practices[9] (Milloy, 1999; Neu & Therrien, 2003; Samuelson & Monture-Angus, 2002). The Indian Act ensures that the federal government maintains control over 1) which Aboriginal persons are acknowledged as having Status and 2) the lands reserved for them. This has many contemporary implications, including:

- Aboriginal peoples' identity is not their own but imposed, legislated, prone to change, and predicted to cease;
- Status identity determines who has access to treaty claims and reserve land; and
- First Nations people may live on reserve lands but the government maintains control over First Nations governments, owns reserve land, controls its use, and determines reserve boundaries (Blackstock, 2011).

Because the federal government has control over reserve communities, it also determines the level of social services available on reserves. Blackstock (2011) cites a wealth of sources demonstrating that First Nations, in comparison to other Canadians, receive low quality social, education, and health services. Federal and provincial political decisions resulting in unequal funding crises have been longstanding. Children on reserve receive less than 80% of child welfare funding afforded to other children, elementary schools on reserve only 60%, and high schools a mere 30%. Whereas Canadians off reserve receive community supports amounting to $2400/capita or $67 billion annually, many First Nations Canadians receive zero funding, resulting in no reserve services for abuse, mental health, social housing, parenting programs, or food banks. In addition, this imposed inequity is often part of the

reason Aboriginal children are removed from families and taken into state systems. As such, Adams (1989) warns that contemporary colonialism is maintained through attitudes, culture, social services, and governing:

> We are told that the enemy, colonization, is the historical oppressor. But we must make no mistake that our oppression is in the forms and institutions of colonization, and its manifestation, such as racial stereotypes, Indian bureaucracies, welfare, prisons.... (p. 186)

It ought to be noted here that overrepresentation also carries out the traditional functions of colonialism that were part of the residential school system, the Indian Act of 1876, and the establishment of the reserve system. Paternalism, lack of autonomy, control over peoples' lives, expropriation of resources, and undermining and appropriation of Aboriginal cultural values are all part of the colonial mentality and process. These are now being aided and abetted in the overrepresentation of Aboriginal peoples in the criminal justice and child welfare systems. As Armitage (1993a) states: "[the]residential school nest prepared its graduates for other institutional communities, particularly jails and mental hospitals, to which a disproportionate number of the former students, their friends, and peers appeared to have gone." (p. 143)

The overrepresentation rates of Aboriginal peoples in both criminal justice and child welfare systems have been described as forms of contemporary colonization (Alyward, 1999; Blackstock, 2011; McIvor & Nahanee, 1998; McKenzie & Hudson, 1985; Monture, 1989-1990; Razack, 2002; Richardson & Nelson, 2007). Razack (2002) identifies the criminal justice system as a point of colonization by "white settlers" of Aboriginal peoples:

> There are perhaps no better indicators of continuing colonization and its accompanying spatial strategies of containment than the policing and incarceration of Aboriginal people.... Over-policed and incarcerated at one of the highest rates in the world, their encounters with white settlers have principally remained encounters in prostitution, policing, and the criminal justice system. (p. 133, 127)

Hamilton and Sinclair (1991) noted that the roots of the overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in the criminal justice system are two pronged. While Aboriginal people have higher crime rates as a result of their marginalization, poverty, and social exclusion, they are additionally overrepresented because “the current justice system, in many ways, is culturally inappropriate and discriminatory in its treatment of Aboriginal people” (Introduction, section Conclusion, para. 2) The massive overrepresentation of Aboriginal peoples in the criminal justice system has recent roots in racist charging, incarceration, and sentencing practices (Alyward, 1999). Hamilton and Sinclair (1991) found Aboriginal people are less likely to obtain bail, to spend more in remand awaiting trial, to face multiple charges, to have less time with their lawyers, and are more likely to be incarcerated than their non-Aboriginal counterparts. For example, overrepresentation in sentencing was evidenced by Hylton (1983) in his landmark study where he found that a woman of Treaty status was 131 times more likely to be sentenced to jail than a non-Aboriginal woman. Aboriginal peoples are at increased risk for incarceration due to the structurally reduced likelihood of successfully avoiding and maneuvering the legal system. Zimmerman (1992) noted numerous factors correlated to marginalization that affect Aboriginal peoples in terms of overrepresentation in sentencing, including:

- previous legal involvement,
- previous incarceration,
- reduced access to legal representation,
- increased guilty pleas to hasten court proceedings and decreased understanding of those proceedings,
- cross cultural differences,
- intimidation,
- pathologizing in pre-sentence reports,
- overuse of incarceration as a sentencing option,
- reduced access to non-custodial options such as bail, payment of fines, and probation (due to reduced stable employment, fixed address, proximity of probation offices, previous record of reporting, previous incarceration).

As Monture-Angus (2002) bemoans, criminologists still tend to be non-Aboriginal and underestimate the historic relations of colonization in conceptualizing the over-representation of Aboriginal peoples in systems of confinement. Monture-Angus urges scholars to move beyond the superficial and incomplete focus of overrepresentation rates, beyond recommendations to "help" Aboriginal peoples understand and access legal representation, and focus instead on the much needed questioning of the structures that bring Aboriginal peoples to the point of contact with these systems of confinement in the first place. Instead of fixating on individual pathology, criminologists need to look at colonizing policies and the genocidal impact of legislation (Samuelson & Monture-Angus, 2002).

Overrepresentation has, in addition, far deeper roots in the colonization, marginalization, and assimilation policies and practices of colonial Canada (Jackson, 1988; Zimmerman, 1992). Monture (1989-1990) states: "the over-representation of First Nations people within *institutions of confinement*—be they child welfare institutions, provincial jails or federal prisons," are attempts to manage resistance to colonization (p. 4). Adams (1999) explains that Aboriginal peoples' resistance[10] to colonization has too often been met with incarceration as political prisoners.[11] The use of coercion and terror of "police, courts, criminal codes, and the judicial system in general" has been a consistent effort of political control[12] over Aboriginal peoples (p. 140).

Another form of political control of Aboriginal peoples is through the removal and threat of removal of children from families and communities. Forced assimilation of Aboriginal children and subsequently their children was effected through both the residential school and child welfare systems:

> the child welfare system had become the successor to the residential school system as an alternative care system for Indian children. It was most active in those regions of Canada where the residential schools were most often used. It was introduced to accomplish some of the same purposes as the residential schools and it has been subject

> to some of the same types of internal child abuse problems as the residential school.[13] (Armitage, 1993a, p. 150)

The Sixties Scoop left a profound effect on Aboriginal communities. One in four children with Status spent some time outside the care of their families during the Sixties Scoop (Armitage, 1993a). Rates for Aboriginal children within the British Columbia child welfare system jumped from one percent in 1955 to 34% by 1964 (Johnston, 1983). Moreover, in 1981, 45% of Aboriginal children within the child welfare system were taken from their home provinces, and in many cases, from Canada (McKenzie & Hudson, 1985).

Thirty-five years later Grand Council Chief John Beaucage described the current overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in child welfare as the "Millennium Scoop" (Canadian Press, 2011). The numbers now far exceed those of the Sixties Scoop or those at the height of the residential school systems (Blackstock, 2003, 2011) and are "rooted in a pervasive history of discrimination and colonization" (Blackstock & Trocmé, 2005, p. 34).

Today in Manitoba, delegation processes transferring Aboriginal child welfare services to Aboriginal child welfare agencies is a first, but not final, step in rectifying the colonizing effect of child welfare (Blackstock et al., 2007). As of 2003, although 125 First Nations child welfare agencies operated in Canada (Bennett, n.d.), only the Spallumcheen Band[14] in British Columbia has had, since 1980, autonomous control over its child welfare legislation. All other First Nations child and family service agencies operate within the delegation of authority by tri-partite agreements between band, provincial, and federal jurisdictions, where the provinces maintain legislated control of child welfare policy and practice, and the federal government maintains jurisdiction over funding. The delegation of authority is seen as a significant step toward operating Aboriginal child welfare services for Aboriginal peoples—this step, however, is accepted only "as an interim arrangement until such time as specific First Nations legislation is developed and enacted by First Nations

through the self-government process" (p. 7). Bennett suggests that this interim agreement has not changed the legacy of child welfare services for Aboriginal children and "supports the need to explore and support culturally based jurisdictional models" (p. 5). The delegation of child welfare administration to Aboriginal authorities, without culturally based jurisdictional models and without final jurisdictional authority, is still rooted in dominant colonial relations and legislative control over child welfare still resides within the centralized provincial/federal colonial jurisdiction (McKenzie and Hudson, 1985). As Alfred (1999) states:

> Our reserves are still poor, our governments are still divided and powerless, and our people still suffer. The state has shown great skill in shedding the most onerous responsibilities of its rule while still holding fast to the lands and authorities that are the foundations of its power…what does it matter if the reserve is run by Indians, so long as they behave like bureaucrats and carry out the same old policies? Refined and reworded, the 'new' relationship still abuses indigenous people, albeit more subtly. (p. xiii)

The Role of Social Work

Social work is not exempt from this colonial legacy. Aboriginal peoples in Canada have had far too frequent and traumatizing contact with social workers and subsequently, social work has been identified as an arm of colonization (Baskin, 2003; Battiste and Youngblood Henderson, 2000; Blackstock, 2009; Blackstock et al., 2007; Carniol, 2005, Hart, 2002; Walmsley, 2005; Waterfall, 2006). As Sinclair (2004) states, many Aboriginal peoples have had negative experiences with social workers "synonymous with the theft of children, the destruction of families, and the deliberate oppression of Aboriginal communities" (p. 49-50). For example, under the mandate of the federal government, social workers and Indian agents went onto reserves and removed Aboriginal children from their families and communities and delivered them to residential schools (Regan, 2010; Sinclair, 2004). Social workers were also instrumental in removing children during the Sixties Scoop before and after child welfare services were transferred largely to provincial jurisdiction. While often well meaning, removing children for education and assimilation, or for their own

good, their actions still resulted in immeasurable pain and trauma and occurred within larger ideologies, networks of policies, and legislation of colonial violence (Regan, 2010).

Rationale for the Study

There is by now considerable evidence that Aboriginal peoples are overrepresented in both the child welfare and criminal justice systems in Canada, systems that have been acknowledged by many researchers as collaborators of contemporary colonization. In addition, there is evidence that social work plays a contributing factor in funnelling Aboriginal peoples into these systems. What has not been explored, however, is the role social work may play in the contemporary colonization of Aboriginal peoples in Canada through our engagement with *both* systems.

My interest in this area has been 20 years in the making. My clinical training during my Bachelors and Masters of Social Work degrees did not prepare me for the extent of marginalization and oppression many of the women and men I met experienced. As a recent MSW graduate, I worked for a community organization that served primarily criminalized women, many of whom identified as Aboriginal. It was because of their stories and the experiences they shared with me that I developed a critical awareness of systemic inequities, of contemporary colonization processes, and of the often-traumatic experiences they had had with social workers. I am fortunate for the ten years I spent with this community organization whose staff worked so diligently and so successfully at deconstructing barriers, equalizing power differentials, and giving me a professional experience of structural social work in action.

My twelve years working directly in service delivery and four subsequent years as an administrator gave me the impetus to return to university to pursue my PhD. My intention was to engage in research aimed at reducing marginalization processes and facilitating an anti-oppressive awareness for new generations of social workers. It was during my PhD

studies that I learned that my ‘subversive’ social work practice actually had a name (Structural Social Work) and was based on a rich body of critical literature supporting it.

As a structural social worker, I am interested in deconstructing the systemic structures and processes that create rates of overrepresentation and I am interested in the role social work can play in this process. As social workers, we are actively employed as child welfare workers and, therefore, are front-line actors in the production of overrepresentation rates. While we may not as frequently be employed as parole or probation officers or prison programming staff, we do work in the treatment centres and mental health and life skills programs that Aboriginal people attend before, during, and after serving their sentences.

In my own experience, Aboriginal women and men have shared with me the detrimental effect of policies that continue to push them into the gaze of public scrutiny and criminalization. Women have told me about going to get their social assistance cheques and having to submit to a surprise urinalysis test to determine if they were using drugs during their pregnancy. Ironically, people have also explained their frustration at not being able to access court-ordered drug treatment concurrent with their court/probation involvement, explaining that treatment workers will not tolerate any interruptions to 28-day stay programs. And, I have been told by shelter staff that police and child welfare are automatically called when a woman with children shows up escaping violence from her partner. She often faces charges for failing to provide a safe environment for her children and her children are frequently taken by child welfare.

I have been informed by Aboriginal individuals that they were turned away from community mental health, abuse, and basic needs services because of their criminal justice history. These women and men spoke about repeatedly losing their residence, possessions, and personal identification documents because of imprisonment. People spoke about deciding not to volunteer, apply for training, or further their education because of risking a criminal

record check. I listened many times to Aboriginal women and men who wanted to become social workers, to give back and make a difference, only to decide not to once they learned criminal record checks were part of the application process.

I am ever grateful to the women and men who shared with me their stories, who taught me how to be a different kind of social worker, different from the ones they had encountered who had often created havoc in their lives. I am honoured because as a non-Aboriginal person, I am a "white woman social worker," or as a friend taught me in Oji-Cree, *Mooniyaakwe obinoojii ogimaa.* My friend added that "social worker," in Oji-Cree means *child boss*. It is because of this double colonial legacy (first, because I am a second-generation German immigrant, and second, because I am a social worker) that I am grateful to work as an ally to reduce contemporary colonizing processes.

Purpose of the Study

The primary research question this study addresses is: what role does social work play in swelling or shrinking the rates of overrepresentation Aboriginal peoples experience in Canadian child welfare and criminal justice systems? While the phenomenon of overrepresentation has been described within the literature as a process of contemporary colonization, this study adds the lens of structural violence as a tool to enhance this understanding and re-conceptualize the relevant literature. Applying the lens of structural violence to our awareness of overrepresentation as a process of contemporary colonization can add a mindfulness of immediacy and magnitude for social work to respond. In particular, what can we as social workers do to reduce the structural violence Aboriginal peoples experience because of their overrepresentation in both child welfare and criminal justice systems?

'Structural violence' is a striking term. Even if one is not familiar with its ontology, the term sounds like something to be noted, something to which consideration should be paid.

'Violence' grabs our attention; it is the lure used by media and the collective call to take heed, be careful, and band together to either execute or avoid. Social work should be alarmed by the rates of overrepresentation that Aboriginal peoples experience. We can learn from our Aboriginal colleagues' unique experiences as "clients" of social workers *and* social work professionals themselves. Moreover, we can do more of what we do well and work together to do so much better.

Overview

For this dissertation, I chose a structural social work theoretical framework with which to understand overrepresentation as not only a form of contemporary colonization but also as a process of structural violence. Similarly, I used critical qualitative research methodologies with which to gather and analyze data. I interviewed 15 Aboriginal social workers who themselves were involved with child welfare and/or criminal justice systems as children or youth and who had contact with social workers. Because of their experience, I inquired about their interactions with social workers when they were youth, the barriers and supports they encountered in their professional path, and the effect their lived systems experience had on their own professional practice. Despite its limitations associated with a small sample size and the recollection of events occurring recently and not so recently, this study offers implications for contemporary social work practice, education, and research.

This thesis began with an overview of the fairly recent realities and devastating implications of overrepresentation of Aboriginal peoples in two Canadian systems of contemporary colonialism, the child welfare and criminal justice systems. Chapter Two outlines the relevance of overrepresentation rates for social work and the structural social work framework I use to re-examine these contemporary colonizing processes as structural violence. As a profession, we are well suited to be actively engaged in considering, discussing, and evaluating our role in the continuation of these processes. And yet, despite

our social justice mandate, conventional praxis has often resulted in the enhanced marginalization of those we are mandated to serve. As the numbers of Aboriginal peoples who move from marginalization to criminalization and further marginalization increase, we have an ethical responsibility to examine reflexively our role in this process. Despite a number of social work authors undertaking a reflexive examination of social work as a discipline, the role of social work in contemporary colonization processes of *both* child welfare and criminal justice has not yet occurred. This chapter, therefore, presents the critical theoretical framework underlying this examination and introduces structural violence as a useful tool for re-conceptualizing overrepresentation as a manifestation of contemporary colonialism.

Chapter Three applies this structural violence lens to relevant literature describing how and why overrepresentation of Aboriginal peoples in child welfare and criminal justice systems occurs and the role of social work in those processes. Using the lens of structural violence, the structures and processes facilitating overrepresentation are reframed as harms, the social machinery of oppression, Othering, and social control through structures of domination. By synthesizing and filtering contributions from multiple bodies of critical literature, the nebulous concept of *overrepresentation* becomes understandable as manageable and amendable processes.

Chapter Four presents the critical research methodology I implemented for this study: Institution Ethnography to look at social work processes and Hermeneutic Phenomenology to apply reflexivity to my analysis. In this chapter I also describe my sample and the reasons they gave for participating in this study.

Chapters Five, Six and Seven present the data I gathered from interviews with 15 Aboriginal social workers who as children and youth had child welfare and/or criminal justice lived experience. Chapter Five presents their experiences as children and youth with

social workers. Chapter Six lays out the reasons participants chose social work for their career and the supports and barriers they encountered because of their childhood experience during this path. Chapter Seven depicts the influence their lived experience with colonializing systems has had on their professional practice in terms of their clinical skills, their overriding approach, their analysis of systemic issues, and their unsolicited recommendations.

Chapter Eight presents a discussion of the findings in relation to the literature and Chapter Nine describes the limitations and the resulting implications for social work practice, education, and research. The participants of this study are what make the findings particularly interesting. Not only do they offer relatively rare feedback of the effect social work has for them as Aboriginal clients, they offer this through the lens of being our contemporary colleagues. As such, the study affirms much of what the literature already states, and when seen through the added awareness of structural violence, our role in contemporary colonization processes.

Theoretical Foundations: More than *just* Numbers

How can we as social workers understand the reprehensible overrepresentation rates of Aboriginal peoples in Canadian child welfare and criminal justice systems as more than just numbers? How do we make sense of the ensuing harms Aboriginal children experience when "cared for" by the state? Moreover, how do we comprehend that the effects of our child saving system ensure there is a steady stream of Aboriginal peoples who, once criminalized, will fill Canadian probation offices and prisons? This chapter provides a literature review of the foremost theoretical foundations upon which this study is based. In other words, this chapter underscores the importance rates of overrepresentation should have for social work.

While much conventional research has directed our gaze toward the individuals with system involvement and their behaviours as a potential explanation, I focus here on the structures that facilitate and maintain rates of overrepresentation. In other words, I do not delve into the considerable body of research that looks at clinical and micro differences inherent to Aboriginal individuals in explaining overrepresentation rates. By situating overrepresentation rates only within micro frameworks, we risk perpetuating social *in*justice by believing that Aboriginal peoples involved with these two systems are there because they act fundamentally different from us—the *us* not caught by either of these systems. Similarly, we err in assuming that Aboriginal peoples are expelled by these systems when they adopt the behaviours and attitudes expected by their workers. Such a micro focus is not only incongruent with a commitment to social justice, it also adds to the often already depressing and abundant public discourse of blaming and Othering. Indeed, focusing only on clinical explanations of individual behaviours as both the source of and the solution to Aboriginal

peoples' child welfare or criminal justice involvement, could mistakenly lead us to believe that the numbers of Aboriginal peoples in criminal justice and child welfare systems could, in fact, be *just*.

Instead, I hold the premise that these overrepresentation rates are in fact *not* just—that there is much more than merely numbers to this issue. In this chapter, I present the relevance to social work of Aboriginal overrepresentation rates in *both* child welfare and criminal justice systems and how this form of contemporary colonization has not yet been explored through social work scholarship. I then describe my rationale for using Structural Social Work as my theoretical framework, in particular one of its key concepts, Structural Violence, to re-conceptualize overrepresentation rates as more than just numbers.

Relevance to Social Work

> Human service work has always had political dimensions:
> It either supports a societal status quo, or it challenges it;
> it either validates the dominant ideology
> by blaming victims for their social problems,
> or it helps people discover the roots of their problems
> in the prevailing social order;
> it either pacifies frustrated people,
> or it helps them organize against oppressive conditions. (Gil, 1984, p. 308)

Considering the shuttle of Aboriginal peoples from child welfare to criminal justice systems in Canada, the next decades pose alarming concerns for Aboriginal peoples. Recent Canadian get-tough crime politics have resulted in increasing numbers of people with criminal justice involvement (Aglias, 2004), punitive public and political sentiments, increased sentencing, surges in prison populations, and decreased ability for people to obtain parole (Hutton, 2011; Snider, 1998). And yet, is this of particular significance to social work? Should we keep our focus on child welfare and avoid criminal justice because criminology is already a well-established discipline? Should we simply graduate the next generation of child welfare workers without examining why these workers are in ever-

increasing demand? Have we accepted overrepresentation rates as problematic givens—at best, either too big to think about, or at worst, accepting notions of poor parenting and criminal inclinations as Indigenous peoples' culturally inherent traits? Mullaly (2010) describes the irony of a helping professional that stays relatively mute on the sources of social problems: "unlike the sociological literature, the social work literature contains a dearth of discussion or explanation of the nature and causes of social problems" and tends "to accept social ills as an inherently problematic given" (p. 6).

Many of our social work interventions shift our focus from the sources of social problems to their symptoms; we too often concentrate only on improving life skills and providing tangible and referred resources. Nevertheless, sources and processes of overrepresentation, colonization, and social injustice should be of central importance to social work. Our areas of practice and work with marginalized populations automatically require social work to reconsider its role not only in the processes leading to the child welfarization[15] and criminalization processes but also in the prevention of those processes for Aboriginal peoples. In essence, by looking at the sources of and outcomes of overrepresentation rates, instead of the personal characteristics of those trapped within its web, we realign ourselves with our mandate for social justice.

One of our defining features as a profession is our unique[16] mandate for social justice (Figueira-McDonough, 1993; Swenson, 1998; Van Soest, 1995; Wakefield, 1988a, 1988b). In particular, the concept of social justice is reflected in the practice statement of the Canadian Association of Social Workers:

> The profession of social work is uniquely founded on altruistic values respecting the inherent dignity of every individual and the obligation of societal systems to provide equitable structural resources for all their members; (Canadian Association of Social Workers, 2000, para. 1)

in the Code of Ethics:

> The social work profession is dedicated to the welfare and self-realization of all people; … and the achievement of social justice for all. The profession has a particular interest in the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and/or living in poverty (Canadian Association of Social Workers, 2006, p. 3)

and within the mission statement of the Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work (1994):

> The Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work stands with populations which experience poverty, exploitation, and domination, and which engage with us to promote change and achieve equity and social justice through social work education, scholarship, and collective action. (para. 4)

Unfortunately, our mandate directing our professional practice and professional education has been afforded more lip service than demonstrated attention. Our profession, with its dual mandate of social justice and the well-being of individuals, particularly those who are marginalized, has been noted[17] as not living up to its rhetoric of promoting social justice. Abramovitz (1998) asserts that social justice is silenced in the literature and O'Brien (2010) contends that social justice is still seen as distinct from direct practice. Mullaly (2006) laments the liberalizing slide the 2005 Code of Ethics has taken away from its more progressive 1994 version, and both Anastas and Congress (1999)[18] and Longres and Scanlon (2001)[19] argue social justice is sparse as a focus in social work research.[20] Karger and Hernandez (2004) warn that social work's unique mission is waning[21] from one endorsing social justice to that of one promoting a vocational standardization of clinical skills. Social work education too frequently maintains an illusion of neutrality, minimizes critical examination of systems that affect individuals (Abramovitz, 1993; Figueira-McDonough, 1993; Fisher, 1995; Karger & Hernandez, 2004), and focuses instead on depoliticized theories, micro methods, and organizational management practices (Fisher, 1995). Professionally, the desire to enhance our status has resulted in projecting an image of conservatism (Abramovitz, 1993, 1998; Figueira-McDonough, 1993). And practically, amidst inherent tensions of carrying out dual roles of control agent and change catalyst, social

work's professional structural positioning has confounded its pursuit of social justice (Abramovitz, 1993, 1998).

This apparent incongruence between our professional mandate and its operationalization and application in social work research and education could explain, at least in part, why the role of social work in contemporary colonizing processes has not been explored as fully as it might. Another missing piece has been social work's relative disconnect from the discourse of criminal justice and criminalization.

A critical understanding of the effect of the criminal justice system on marginalized populations is lacking within social work literature (Aglias, 2004; Christie, 1994; Cloward & Piven, 1977; Hannah-Moffat & Shaw, 2000; Monture-Angus, 2000; Reamer, 2004). Reamer (2004) reminds us that social work, once married to the criminal justice field, is now estranged from it. Although many social workers are employed in criminal justice areas such as probation, parole, and contracted treatment services, few students enter into social work with criminal justice in mind, and criminal justice is largely overlooked within social work education, in social work conferences, and in scholarship. Bracken, McNeill and Clarke (2010), citing a 2005 study, note that while nearly one in five probation officers in Canada in 1996 were social workers, the only Canadian social work academic journal published just two articles on social work criminal justice within a recent 20 year period. In essence, an understanding of criminalization has been marginalized within social work.

Social work has skirted its obligation to participate actively in the discourse of criminal justice even though criminalization affects the most marginalized people (Reamer, 2004). As social workers, we work primarily with those who are most marginalized due to poverty, oppression, racism, and exclusion (Bisman, 2004; Reamer, 2004), and as many scholars have noted, it is the most marginalized people who are at greatest risk for criminalization (Christie,

1994; Hannah-Moffat & Shaw, 2000; Jackson, 1988; Monture-Angus, 2000; Pollack, 2004; Reamer, 2004).

Social work is in a pivotal position to understand how marginalization and oppression affect people's behaviour, and how the social construction of those behaviours leads to criminalization (Pollack, 2004). For example, resistance to abuse may be construed as assault; resistance to Eurocentric parenting may be interpreted as neglect; resistance to poverty, as theft; resistance to police harassment, as resisting arrest; and resistance to oppression, as paranoia, depression, or aggression.[22] It is precisely on this practical level that social workers are in key positions to work to ameliorate the issues that criminalized people face, including poverty and pathologizing, and sexism, racism, discrimination, and oppression (Aglias, 2004).

Client Informed Praxis

Dominelli (2004) maintains that the inclusion of service users'[23] knowledge is central to building emancipatory social work theory. As a small but growing area of research (Ribner & Knei-Paz, 2002), clients' personal and combined experiences offer a much needed understanding of how policy and organizational practices affect individuals who use social work services (Beresford, 2000). Just as how social workers understand, assess, and intervene is influenced by their social location (Trevithick, 2008), clients' knowledge and theories are vital for social work theory-building by challenging mainstream notions about clients as 'Other'(Beresford, 2000). As Beresford states: "service users who are on the receiving end of social work theory and practice which directly relates to them are likely to be better placed to generate critical questions and knowledge claims about them than outside academics or practitioners"(p. 499).

The commitment the service user movement[24] made to provide feedback arose in reaction to their experiences of being judged and labelled and their desire to increase the

quality and efficacy of help and support services being offered. As stated by one service user interviewed by Parker and Merrylees (2002), the motivation was obvious, "to get rid of crap social workers and to take simple steps to make a difference" (p. 111).

In response to the negative interactions that many service users experienced from both professionals and social service systems, Beresford (2000) claims social work has been leading in research that gathers client narratives. Despite leading this field in social science research, client narratives about their experiences with social workers is a relatively under researched area. This is particularly true in the areas of child welfare and criminal justice (Alpert, 2005; Baker, 2007; Chapman, Gibbons, Barth & McCrae, 2003; Festinger, 1983; Ribner & Knei-Paz, 2002; Ylvisaker, 2013). While research with former foster care youth is more common, providing social services feedback is perceived by many clients as risking retribution from current or future workers and providing few benefits (Baker, 2007). As such, this study offers not only relatively rare feedback from clients about social workers, it also offers feedback from Aboriginal social workers who once were clients.

Reflexive Social Work Discourse

While Mullaly (2010) identified the irony of our profession maintaining a mandate for social justice while simultaneously staying relatively silent on the sources of social injustice, I have wondered about why our profession is also reflexively relatively mute. In particular, I was curious as to why there has not yet been a reflexive inquiry into the role the social work profession plays in contemporary colonization processes of Aboriginal peoples.

As a critical approach, reflexivity is used to question how understanding is constructed and influenced by power and structural relations (D'Cruz, Gillingham & Melendez, 2007; White, 2001). It is a "problematization of the taken-for granted knowledge" (White, 2001, p. 102) that looks at the many interactions between professional knowledge and power (D'Cruz et al., 2007; Parton & O'Byrne, 2000), and practice knowledge and theory (Healy, 2005). A

recent critical review of the literature discusses reflexivity for clients, practitioners, and researchers (D'Cruz et al., 2007) but did not mention reflexivity within social work as a field of discourse. Given that we value reflexivity in research and direct practice, I was curious how we direct that powerful gaze back onto ourselves as a profession, and, adopting Foucault's (1972) concept of discourse, onto not only the texts we produce but also the archeology of our knowledge production.

A number of authors have called to task social work's record of focusing on service over welfare, individual change over social responsibility, complicity in reproducing systems of oppression, and relative silence over our involvement in colonizing processes. Gilbert and Specht (1974) described social work as an incomplete profession focusing on services but not welfare. Bailey and Brake's (1975) *Radical Social Work* followed by calling social workers to task to begin to help rather than continue to hound clients. Popple (1985) argued that while most social workers are employees of social control[25] organizations and not autonomous practitioners, they in effect control dependency[26] as "minions of the elite, help to keep the masses in line so they do not challenge existing institutions" (p. 572). And Leslie Margolin's (1997) *Under the Cover of Kindness* looked at how power and language are used within social work practice with malevolent results shrouded under benevolent rhetoric.

Specht and Courtney's influential work (1994) *Unfaithful Angels* urged social work to return to its mission of social responsibility and synthesize its competency in practice, policy, organizational, and community development. De Montigny`s (1995) *Social Working: An Ethnography of Front-Line Practice* looked at how social workers, through their daily practice, superimpose, for the benefit of maintaining the ruling relations, institutionalized realities on client experiences. Fisher and Karger (1997) maintained that foundational theories of mainstream social work discourse, namely empowerment and ecological models, focus on individualism and overlook those structural barriers that marginalize people

accessing social work services. Schneider and Netting (1999) contend that schools of social work need to offer students balanced curricula in *both* clinical and policy activism competencies to facilitate an active influence over policy informed by clients' lived realities. Mullaly's (2002, 2010) *Challenging Oppression* urged a critical understanding of oppression that precludes any notions that social work is an apolitical activity and prescribes scrutiny of the Eurocentric partiality of social work practice and structural causes of social problems.

Razack and Jeffery (2002) contend that social work has demonstrated little evidence acknowledging its complicity in reproducing racialized systems of oppression and control. Buckley (2000) contends that child welfare is an unreflexive practice where practitioners rarely considered critically the ideological and cultural biases of why they do what they do, focusing rather on the goal of following bureaucratic directives and pursued proficiency over professional practice. Similarly Swift (1995) suggested notions of neglect are not ontologically questioned within child welfare and that "much of what we teach in social work operates not to illuminate reality for workers but to *hide* its character" (p. 190). Webb (2006) and Swift and Callahan (2009) explored the language of risk and its relatively unquestioned status in social work. And Reamer (2004) described social work's divorce from the criminal justice field.

Finally, Blackstock and her colleagues (2007) argue that the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in child welfare for the last 50 years calls not only child welfare to task but social work as a profession as well, and questions how the profession can maintain a silence on its culpability.[27] While Blackstock et al., (2007), Walmsley (2005), and Waterfall (2006) do identify the role of social work in Aboriginal child welfare as an agent of colonization, they do not link the involvement in child welfare with the pattern of progression into the criminal justice system. In essence, despite a select group of social work academics who have directed a reflexive gaze back onto the profession and discourse of social work, the

role of social work in the contemporary colonization of Aboriginal peoples through our mutual involvement with both child welfare and criminal justice systems has not yet been examined.

Beyond the social work literature, there is also a dearth of Canadian scholarship examining the role of social work in these overrepresentation rates. For example, while Kimelman (1985) drew our attention to the pattern of progression from child welfare into the criminal justice system for many Aboriginal peoples, his focus on the system of provincial child welfare precluded an analysis of how social work and individual social workers might have, as previously discussed, contributed to this process. Similarly, Hamilton and Sinclair (1991) point to the understanding of the paternalistic and colonial system of child welfare being "interconnected and interwoven" with the criminal justice system, but do not provide a detailed analysis of how social work contributes to the process in which child welfare 'clients' become 'clients' of the criminal justice system (p. 510).

In short, the overrepresentation of Aboriginal peoples in both child welfare and criminal justice systems—an overrepresentation that is not in accordance with non-Aboriginal rates and results in detrimental outcomes—has been recognized in the literature. Nevertheless, the role of social work in this process of colonization has not been interrogated. To undertake such an investigation requires the adoption of a critical approach.

Structural Social Work

While there are other possible critical social work frameworks with which to approach overrepresentation rates, including feminist, radical, anti-oppressive, or post-colonial social work, I have chosen structural social work because of its particular focus on structural relations of oppression and its usefulness for looking at child welfare and criminal justice systems. Structural social work[28] explores transformations of capitalism, its processes of

governing and neo-liberal politics, and the positioning of the state (Mullaly, 2007; Weinberg, 2008).

Neo-liberalism[29] refers to an ideology favouring decreased government regulation of the economy and increased distancing from the welfare state (Green, 1996). This includes reduced restrictions for privileged classes with the increased regulation of marginalized groups (Peck, 2003). Neo-liberalism espouses diminished governmental regulations for the environment, labour, the market, and social justice and equity commitments (Green, 1996). Neo-liberalism promotes individualized responsibility (Culpitt, 1999; Parton, 1996b), self-reliance (Webb, 2006), and citizenship through prudent consumption (Green, 1996, Kemshall, 2003) and economic production (Green, 1996).

This reduced regulation, however, does not result in a shrinking neo-liberal state but, rather, a different one—decentralized (Beckett & Western, 2001)—endorsing fiscal responsibility (Green 1996) and governing through contracting (Garland, 2001; Rose, 1999; Webb, 2006). Neo-liberalism upholds a crime control agenda (Fitzgibbon 2007b) defending criminal justice systems as crucial institutions (Peck, 2003). Its activities involve promoting security through enhanced surveillance (Parton, 1996b), risk thinking (Parton, 1996b), and risk management (Culpitt, 1999).

Structural social work also engages in a reflexive gaze at social work's role in neo-liberal processes that not only maintains professional privilege and power but also oppresses and exploits (Weinberg, 2008). As a helping profession under neo-liberalism, structural social work encourages practitioners to challenge the very cutbacks that limit their professional service and be astute to the "political choice and will in maintaining insufficiency"(para. 19). As such, Weinberg argues that structural social work broadens conventional notions of ethics from interactions with clients to the participation of social

work professionals within larger systems and the "paradoxes of fundamental social arrangements that wide groups of providers and services users confront" (para. 25).

In addition to examining social work's role in neo-liberal processes, structural social work contends that social workers need to reflexively evaluate their own privilege. Mullaly (2010) explains that social workers frequently come from privileged groups and that privilege is "an issue for social workers personally and professionally and for social work organizations" (p. 309). If left unexamined, their privilege can result in barriers to empathy and non-judgemental assumptions. These barriers occur, as Mullaly explains, because a worker's unexamined privilege is invisible to them and, as a result, are likely to prejudge others against their own assumed similarity of experience—if the social worker has never had child welfare investigate their parenting, then the reason their client has, is because the client must not be a good parent.

Privilege in social work also has historical roots. One of social work's origins is the late nineteenth century North American Charity Organization Society (COS). The COS, staffed largely by privileged white women volunteers, investigated and supervised marginalized and often immigrant families for charity. These social workers saw poverty to be a result of poor morals and an underdeveloped character and their role was to reform and manage poor families rather than change the social conditions of industrial cities (Mullaly, 2010). As such, services and advice, rather than direct relief, were generally provided (Heinonen & Spearman, 2010).

Mullaly (2010) contends that the United Way is the contemporary version of the COS. Instead of physically reforming the dangerous classes through "friendly visiting," privileged philanthropic groups can now direct social workers to manage marginalized peoples by way of financial donations and board directorships. The state expands this monitoring function of families through child welfare and class and race control (Armitage,

1993b; Costin et al., 1996; O'Brian, 2004; Pelton, 1989; Swift, 1995; Swift & Callahan, 2009). Social workers, in turn, monitor marginalized people on behalf of the state and intervene with these families through an offering of "helpfulness."

The structural approach to social work is subsequently both a critical theory and political activity. Mullaly (2010) explains that critical social theory[30] provides both a critical analysis of mainstream social theory and alternative accessible strategies for the purpose of emancipation of oppressed peoples.[31] "Critical social theory is a macro theory that examines social structures, institutions, policies, practices, and processes with respect to how they treat all groups in society; it contains an explanation for social problems and a political practice to deal with them." (p. 16) Unlike conventional social theories based largely on the tenets of scientific inquiry and the advancement of knowledge, critical social theories are focused on knowledge for human liberation. Critical theory,[32] concerned with social justice and the emancipation of oppressed peoples, offers "a critique of dominance and a theory of liberation" (Kellner, 1989, p. 1). Critical theory is able to give relevant socio/political context to current conditions and endorses new theory development to understand existing along with up-and-coming social issues. While critical theorists certainly advance knowledge, their reason for doing this is not for knowledge sake, but rather, for reducing oppression. In doing so, critical theory not only evaluates conventional theory for who is excluded and how conventional theory may add to oppression and social injustice, it also offers practical change alternatives. In other words, critical theory is overtly political:

> A critical theory of society is understood by its advocates as playing a crucial role in changing society. In this, the link between social theory and political practice is perhaps the defining characteristic of critical theory, for a critical theory without a practical dimension would be bankrupt on its own terms. (Leonard cited in Mullaly, 2010, p. 17)

As a critical theory, structural social work describes the intersectionality among systems of oppression and people's activities of resistance, and as a political activity, it

prescribes the amelioration of social, political, and economic domination and inequity (Mullaly, 2007). Developed in response to conventional social work and its theoretical foundations favouring individuals as the source and solutions of personal troubles, structural social work focuses on the shared aspects of social problems (Murray & Hick, 2010) and on opportunities for structural change (Mullaly, 2007).

Structural social work incorporates a conflict perspective of society where structures represent competing interests resulting in unequal power dynamics. Conventional social work, in contrast, maintains an order perspective of society where structures represent

Table 2.1. Progressive and Conventional Social Work Approaches

Progressive conflict/change-based		**Conventional** consensus/order-based	
fundamental social change	• structural • feminist • Marxist • anti-oppressive • Indigenous • post-colonial • critical post modern	personal change	• cognitive behavioural • client-centered • psycho-social • clinical • families therapies • casework
		person-in-environment	• general systems • ecological • problem-solving

Table X. Progressive approaches may augment their practice with elements of conventional approaches, but conventional approaches are highly unlikely to enhance their practice with progressive contributions. Adapted from Mullaly (2010) p. 21.

attempts to re-establish stability (Murray & Hick, 2010). For example, and as presented in Table 2.1, conventional social work, a predominant approach in North America, focuses on theories and practice that identify systems as essentially benevolent and responsive. When people experience criminal justice or child welfare involvement, conventional practitioners might refer a life-skills program to help people to modify their behaviours/attitudes that led them to experience these personal difficulties. In contrast, critical forms of social work, including structural approaches, view systems and the resulting social order as oppressive and the source of people's difficulties. Despite a cultural rhetoric of systems being fair, such as

"justice is blind" or "*wel*fare," structural social work views systems as neither meeting the needs of large segments of the population nor being designed with that purpose in mind. As such, a structural social worker might interface with sentencing judges to increase their awareness, improve their cultural competency, and broaden their non-custody sentencing options. This does not mean, however, that structural social workers do not work directly with individuals. They do, but instead of attending only to micro level interventions, they also include a macro analysis and political change strategy. In other words, with simultaneous micro/macro goals, structural social work can provide "practical, humanitarian care to the victims and casualties of our patriarchal, liberal capitalist society, and… restructure society along socialist lines" (Mullaly, 2007, p. 288).

Structural social work maintains the analysis of power as its central concern along with a critique of dominating systems, a goal for societal transformation, and a focus on person-structure dialectics (Murray & Hick, 2010). As Mullaly (2007) states, structural social work is "based on a reconstituted socialist ideology, located within the radical social work camp,[33] grounded in critical theory, and operating from a social change view of society" (p. 244). Social relations are produced by social institutions, which in turn, are formulated by the dominant ideology (Mullaly, 2007). In this fashion, structures including the criminal justice and child welfare, education, legal, and economic systems protect the ruling relations, and act to maintain their dominance and exploitation of the marginalized classes (Murray & Hick, 2010). In understanding how structures oppress, Murray and Hick (2010) identified underlying premises of structural social work:

- all forms of oppression and all groups who are oppressed are important;
- everything is related, particularly power and knowledge;
- epistemology is a construction of many fragmented and sometimes conflicting parts;
- ideological beliefs have the power to overrule lived experience and consequently, institutions are used to regulate and correct;

- dialectic relations connect individual agency and social structures—both affect and are affected by the other;
- tension and conflict are the foundations of change and change is continual, “gradual, incremental and cumulative” (p. 11) and can occur both within and outside structures;
- efficiency has become an organizing structural value;
- reflexivity, the awareness of one’s social location and its effect on one’s behaviour and analysis, is essential; and
- we all have choice not to oppress, and, we consciously have to resist those structural forces that encourage our oppressive choices.

Murray and Hick (2012) provide an overview of the critiques and challenges identified in the literature of structural social work. These critiques and challenges include:

- a need for more theoretical differentiation from other critical social work approaches, including radical and anti-oppressive social work;
- overlooking influences of personal agency affecting people`s behaviours and focusing too heavily on structural determinants;
- more detailed and tangible descriptions of opportunities and interventions for social change; and
- weighing in too casually on issues of race and experiences of Aboriginal peoples.

In light of Baskin`s (2003) and George, Coleman, and Barnoff`s (2007) call for structural social work to address Aboriginal peoples’ issues, Murray and Hick (2012) claim that because structural social work looks at the “interconnectedness of structural relations of oppression” (p. 117), this puts structural social work in a prime location to address issues of colonialism. Similarly, the authors add that structural social work`s dialectical considerations of power enhance people`s awareness of their own personal agency. Rather than rigidly allocating people as oppressors, a dialectical analysis of power situates people with privilege as having choice to oppress or not, *and* being simultaneously encouraged by structural influences to maintain their oppressive behaviours.

Structural social work theory and practice works not only for the emancipation of the people we work for and with, but also for social work’s emancipation from reproducing the very discourses and praxis that maintain structures of domination. In doing so, structural social work draws upon several key postmodern[34] contributions. Mullaly (2007) maintains

that critical and specifically structural social work has been enriched by incorporating critical postmodern contributions. These contributions include a deeper comprehension of the multiple realities of oppression and solidarity work and an attentiveness to the language and discourse of social work to reflect and include the voices of marginalized groups.

Mullaly (2010) cautions that the *post* in postmodernism does not indicate a temporal 'after' or break with modernity, but rather a process of "presencing" modernity (p. 23)— a self-awareness and reflection whether the self be colonialism, modernity, or structuralism. Although not all forms of postmodernism are social and/or critical (including those forms criticized[35] for ambivalence and relativism such as art, architecture, or deconstruction fetishism), Agger (2006) proposes that postmodern ideas offer useful insights for critical theory:

- the myth of progress or that technology leads only to constructive outcomes,
- the power of the media to construct and replace social relationships,
- the deconstruction of meaning making,
- the multiplicity of difference and ways of knowing, and
- an acceptance of modernity's benefits and critique of its limitations.

As a way of thinking, postmodern contributions all tend to be critical of positivism, or that there is *an* objective social science methodology that can discover *the* truth or *a* universal human or social essence. In addition, these contributions contest that there are discrete social dichotomies, any unbiased discourse, or a singular fixed location of social power (Mullaly, 2007). Key conceptualizations include Jameson's (1991) portrait of the cultural logic of late capitalism, Derrida's (1978) understanding of subjective meaning, and Lyotard's (1989) analysis of the objectified Other.

Two important critical postmodern contributions to structural social work are the construction of knowledge and the Other. Both are important to consider as they each elucidate the exploitation and oppression of the Indigenous peoples today (Bosworth &

Flavin, 2007). The first is the symbiotic relationship between power, knowledge, and ideology. Foucault (1980) originally suggested that not all narratives were equal—the powerful construct 'truth' through the gate keeping of knowledge and the silencing of those who are disempowered. This silencing of disempowered peoples is what Spivak (1988) refers to as *subjugated knowledge* or the "whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naive knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity" (p. 281). Subjugated knowledges, or the stories told by a group about itself, have been replaced with superimposed discourses or myth-making stories about that group from outsiders. "Colonizers continue and further develop their dominion" through the rewriting of histories and imposition of colonizers knowledge making systems (Hart, 2002, p. 26).

Discourse, as Foucault (1972) emphasized, is more than the products of our knowledge, our language, and texts; it is also the processes of how that knowledge was created, constructed, and produced. Discourse, or the outcome of the interplay of knowledge and power (Razack, 1991), results in an epistemology, and what Pratt (1992) calls, the "*colonial gaze*" (p. 33). This colonial gaze results in the 'production' of the dehumanized colonial subject or what Césaire (1972) named *thingification*. While originally referring to the distinction between the 'Orient' and the 'Occident,' Said's (1979) concept of *Orientalism* is the process of thingification, or the "mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines" (p. 2), that create 'truth' or myth making within academic disciplines and the more widely accepted ensuing ontology, epistemology, and axiology of this construction.

From a structural social work perspective, this construction of truth is maintained through what Gramsci (1971) articulated as *hegemony*. Gramsci argued that hegemony is the ability of a dominant class to rule by coerced consent through the moral and intellectual

culture, or the ideology it constructs and maintains. As "any consistent set of social, economic, and political assumptions, beliefs, values, and ideals," ideology is subtly and overtly propagated as truth through cultural forms such as education and media (Mullaly, 2010, p. 29). In terms of criminology, cultural criminologists have interestingly argued that cultural institutions have replaced academic disciplines in terms of shaping public and legislative notions of crime and criminality. The media are particularly influential in creating both a demand for, and a source of, the fear mongering and mythologizing of 'dangerous' people (Ferrell & Sanders, 1995). Media echo and inform political agendas calling for increased policing and tougher sentences and depict a legitimately fearful society, hiding the complexity of underlying issues (Aglias, 2004).

Dominant discourse is constructed as authoritative while marginalized discourse is often subjugated, overlooked, or invalidated. This results in what Lukacs (1971) called *reification*, or the process where social relations are transformed to things or ontological realities that obscure the construction and epistemology behind them. I would argue that the reification of the numbers of Aboriginal peoples within child welfare and the criminal justice systems today is rarely questioned outside of critical scholarship, and instead, is accepted based on the Othering processes Aboriginal peoples have experienced.

The second contribution to structural social work made by critical post modernism is *Othering*. As coined by Gayatri Spivak (1985), Othering refers to the way the dominant discourse produces its subjects and, in a dialectic process, produces itself (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tifflin, 2000). By describing what the *Other* is (criminal, dangerous, lazy, immoral), standards of who *we* are serve to unite and establish expectations of behaviour among the ruled classes or those perceived to be law abiding, trustworthy, hardworking, and morally upright (Girard, 1986).

Girard's (1986) notion of the *scapegoat* is linked to Othering. During times of crisis, the scapegoat serves to unite the group by diverting attention away from the crisis and onto the common goal of the eradication/punishment of the scapegoat—an arbitrary, vulnerable and nearby target.

> Since at least the eighteenth century, the political imaginations of most European countries have been haunted by a secession of figures that seem to condense in their person, their name, their image, all that is disorder, danger, threat to civility; the vagrant, the pauper, the degenerate, the unemployable, the residuum, the social problem group. (Rose, 2000, p. 330)

Foucault (1977) illustrated that the leper originally served the function of the scapegoat and Othering, and in turn, the construction of the *criminalized Other* has replaced the role of the leper:

> Poor vagabonds, criminal, and the "deranged minds" would take the part of the leper….With an altogether meaning and in a very different culture, the forms would remain—essentially that major form of a rigorous division which is social exclusion but spiritual reintegration. (Foucault, 1965, p. 7)

In my own work as a social worker, I have encountered an incongruence between the narratives told to me by people who have been criminalized, and the discourse most prevalently used by my mainstream professional colleagues—a discourse that all too frequently discounts and pathologizes those involved in a seemingly 'benevolent' and 'just' systems. Postmodern contributions into the multiplicity and hierarchy of 'truths' and those truths we accept as valid offers an invaluable insight in understanding this incongruence. From this position of a multiplicity of truths, I include my ambivalence over the term "client" to refer to the people social workers provide services to.

While Mullaly (2010) bemoans the term "client" and prefers the term "service user," I am not convinced. Mullaly argues that "client" infers a "relationship of inequality" (p. 276) between the social worker and the person for which they are providing service. I agree and in my experience, that inequality is substantive. Whether social workers actually make critical

decisions affecting Aboriginal families, or whether they are only perceived as such, the power difference is real. Whereas structural social workers should work to be as anti-oppressive as possible, and for similar reasons that Mullaly proposes, I also use the term "the people we are mandated to serve." But I also use "client" as a reminder of the real power I have and my ongoing responsibility to deconstruct it. For that reason, the term "service user" does not appeal to me.

Service user implies that Aboriginal people use our services voluntarily, without coercion, and are free to decline or terminate at will. Much as I am a service user of the Internet, I can unplug without my Internet provider apprehending my cat. For too many Aboriginal people who interact with social workers, however, their choices to terminate or decline our services are not so easy and, too frequently, do result in apprehensions— of their children. Secondly, the level of racism facing Aboriginal peoples is evident in bus stop eavesdropping and online news comments when I hear or read, "they get everything for free." Being described as a user, albeit a service user, leaves me uncomfortably uncertain if this might feed this form of hate speech. As a structural social worker, I use the term client not to reinforce unequal or colonial relations, but rather as acknowledgment of its existence and my commitment to work to deconstruct it, little by little, every day.

In short, structural social work incorporates many features of other critical theories in order to simultaneously meet human needs and challenge structures of domination. Postmodern and post-colonial contributions to structural social work explain why some knowledge and people are accepted, and why certain knowledge and people are silenced and Othered. These are particularly relevant to understanding Aboriginal peoples' overrepresentation in child welfare and criminal justice systems. Structural social work can help us to shift our gaze from one of scrutinizing individuals to one of examining societal structures; it can assist us in rejecting a judgment of individual pathology and adopt instead a

critical understanding of the oppressions experienced under capitalism and other forms of oppression such as racism, patriarchy, heterosexism, ableism, and ageism. A structural social work analysis can facilitate our moving away from a positivist notion of ontology to embracing a critical epistemological questioning of discourse and power. It is within this approach to social work that we can reflect on overrepresentation rates as more than just quantified indicators of 'misspent lives' and instead view the rates and outcomes as evidence of structural violence. Rather than responding to rates of overrepresentation as the impetus for cultivating corrective clinical interventions as the solution (such as cognitive or behaviour therapies, parenting, self-esteem, and budgeting classes), we can shift our gaze to the structures of dominations whose residuals of structural violence are the rates of overrepresentation and harmful outcomes for those under state control.

Structural Violence

> The most visible indicators of structural violence are the differential rates of mortality, morbidity, and incarceration rates among groups in the same society. (James et al., 2003, p. 130)

In his classic article, *Violence, Peace, and Peace Research*, sociologist Johan Galtung (1969) originally framed the concept of *structural violence* to mean the number of avoidable deaths or constraints to human potential caused by economic, social, and political systems. As one of the founders of Peace and Conflict Studies, Galtung was keenly interested in the relations between power and violence within the milieu of poverty[36] and political repression (Parsons, 2007).

Structural violence is closely linked to social injustice (Farmer, Nizeye, Stulac & Keshavjee, 2006; Galtung, 1969; Hoivik, 1977; Parsons, 2007). The discourse of structural violence is concerned with oppression and social injustice and the barriers that limit choice and self-determination (Christie, 1997), including racism and gender inequality (Confortini, 2006). In other words, structural violence is "an umbrella concept for other forms of

injustice—oppression, marginalization, inequality, exploitation, domination, and repression" (Parsons, 2007, pp. 175-176).

Structural violence is inherently linked to unequal power[37] within society (Galtung, 1969). How well people can meet their needs[38] and develop their potential depends largely on their social power, their access to economic, social, and political resources, and their life circumstances (Gil, 1996). When groups of people are unable to develop their potential, structural violence, rather than individual agency, is seen as the source of the disparity between the "potential and the actual" (Galtung, 1969, p. 168). Structural violence is the gap between "what could have been and what is" (Parsons, 2007, p. 175) and the loss of life years (Galtung & Hoivik, 1971; Hoivik, 1977). Structural violence exists when a group's life expectancy and quality of life is correlated to that group's social position[39] (Galtung & Hoivik, 1971). For example, in addition to the rates of overrepresentation in the criminal justice and child welfare systems, Macdonald and Wilson (2013) argue that current levels of poverty experienced by Aboriginal children in Canada (62% of First Nations children in Manitoba live below the poverty line) limit not only their potential but also threaten their survival:

> Indigenous children trail the rest of Canada's children on practically every measure of wellbeing: family income, educational attainment, poor water quality, infant mortality, health, suicide, crowding, and homelessness. For example, Status First Nations children living in poverty are three times more likely to live in a house that requires major repairs compared to the non-Indigenous children of families with similar income levels, and five times more likely to live in an overcrowded house. The failure of ongoing policies is clear. The link between the denial of basic human rights for Indigenous children and their poverty is equally clear. Failure to act will result in a more difficult, less productive, and shorter life for Indigenous children. (p. 7)

Anglin (1998) asserts that the combined processes of exploitation and social and cultural Othering limits well-being, puts people in the path of assault, and causes them to experience peril resulting in poor health and death. As a "slow but intentional killing"

Table 2.2. Descriptions of Violence—Direct, Structural, and Cultural

Type		Description
Violence		• "Violence is present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are **below their potential** realizations …Violence is here defined as the cause of the **difference between the potential and the actual**" (Galtung, 1969, p. 168). • "**Avoidable insults to basic human needs**, and more generally to life, lowering the real level of needs satisfaction below what is potentially possible. Threats of violence are also violence" (Galtung, 1990, p. 292).
Direct	Inter-personal	• **Violence between and among individuals** (James et al., 2003).
	Intra-personal	• Violence **directed toward the self**: substance misuse, suicide attempts (James et al., 2003).
Structural	Socio/ economic/ political/	• **Harming, malnutrition, disease, maiming, violence, killing, genocide, extermination, threats** (Anglin, 1998; Galtung, 1990; Hoivik, 1977; Kent, 2000; Kohler & Alcock, 1976); • **Deprivation or misdistribution of material and/or non-material resources,** including homelessness; separation from family; denial of freedoms and human rights; unequal access to resources, political power, education, health care, or legal standing; lack of information, guidance, or advice (Anglin, 1998; Farmer et al., 2006; James et al., 2003; Kent, 2000; Kohler & Alcock, 1976; Winter & Leighton, 2001); • **Exploitation** (Galtung, 1990; Hoivik, 1977); • **Repression**: ▪ **alienation or cultural de- and re-socialization and spiritual death** (Galtung, 1990); ▪ **denied political representation or voice** (Christie, 1997; Farmer et al., 2006; James et al., 2003; Winter & Leighton, 2001); ▪ **detention, expulsion** (Galtung, 1990; Kent, 2000); ▪ **discrimination** (Hoivik, 1977); ▪ **fragmentation or diminished collective identity and action** (Galtung, 1990; Winter & Leighton, 2001); ▪ **hyper-surveillance,** involvement with the state agencies (James et al., 2003); ▪ **marginalization,** institutional and systemic inequities in law, media, education, religion, cultural, political and work systems that limit reaching full potential (Farmer et al., 2006; Galtung, 1990; James et al., 2003); • **penetration, internalized oppression** (Galtung, 1990; James et al., 2003; Oliver, 2001); ▪ **segmentation or false consciousness** (Galtung, 1990).
Cultural		• **cultural imperialism, cultural racism**[40] including culture, religion, language, art, positivist science (Galtung, 1990; James et al., 2003; Oliver, 2001); • **ideology that legitimizes inequity** (Kent, 2000); • **ideology that legitimizes both direct and structural violence**: includes media (Confortini, 2006).

(Galtung, 1990, p. 293), “structural violence produces suffering and death as often as direct violence does, though the damage is slower, more subtle, more common, and more difficult to repair” (Winter & Leighton, 2001, p. 1). As the late Senator Robert F. Kennedy poignantly explained:

> For there is another kind of violence slower, but just as deadly, destructive as the shot of the bomb in the night…. This is the violence of institutions; indifference and inaction and slow decay. This is the violence that afflicts the poor, that poisons relations between men because their skin has different colors. This is the slow destruction of a child by hunger, and schools without books, and homes without heat in the winter. When you teach a man to hate and fear his brother, when you teach that he is a lesser man because of his color or his beliefs or the policies he pursues, when you teach that those who differ from you threaten your freedom or your job or your family, then you also learn to confront others not as fellow citizens but as enemies-to be met not with cooperation but with conquest, to be subjugated and mastered. (Steel, 1992, p. 17)

The analysis of structural violence includes examining the social machinery of oppression (Farmer, 2004; Farmer et al., 2006) and structures of domination (Anglin, 1998). Structural violence is built into the structure of society based on the social machinery of policy, customs, and traditions that favour one group unequally over another (James et al., 2003). This machinery privileges certain groups and marginalizes and excludes others (Parsons, 2007), and produces subsequent undemocratic political institutions and structures of domination that are coercive and structurally violent. Gil (1996) contends that contemporary political, religious, economic, legal, and social institutions originate from imperial and colonial cultures of invasion, domination, and exploitation used by groups of people to access and have control of resources and people.

It is the exploitation or the confiscation of crucial economic and non-material resources (Anglin, 1998; Confortini, 2006) that is at the core of structural violence. Galtung (1990) contends that it is the “topdogs,” or those in power, who reap the benefits while “underdogs,” or those dominated, experience exploitation resulting not only in death and in chronic

suffering, and in the process of Othering.[41] Structural violence also acts as deterrence or "blueprint" that can "threaten people into subordination" (Galtung, 1969, p. 172). It does so not only for those people who have been Othered, but also for those groups of people who, if they do not continue to comply with the existing structures, *could* be Othered.

As depicted in Table 2.2, the different levels[42] of violence (direct, structural, and cultural) have been articulated within the structural violence literature and demonstrate an increasingly comprehensiveness of the concepts and theoretically noteworthy dimensions and scope. Within the broad concept of violence, actual *or* threatened, direct, structural, and cultural violence depict different levels of "insults" or harms, resulting in a lived experience below that which is an expected potential (Galtung, 1990). Direct violence can take the form of inter-personal (violence between and among individuals) and intrapersonal (violence directed toward the self, including substance misuse or suicide attempts) (James et al., 2003). Structural violence at the meso level is the harm caused by institutional and systemic inequities (James et al., 2003) and is caused by economic, political, legal, religious, and cultural structures that inhibit individuals, groups, and societies from reaching their full potential through harming, deprivation, exploitation, and repression (Farmer et al., 2006; James et al, 2003).

At the macro or the broadest level, cultural violence[43] is the ideology, culture, and collective conscience creates, incubates, and legitimates inequity and all other forms of violence. Cultural violence is "those aspects of culture, the symbolic sphere of our existence—exemplified by religion and ideology, language and art, empirical science and formal science (logic, mathematics)—that can be used to justify or legitimize direct or structural violence" (Galtung, 1990, p. 291).

The erasure or editing of history and historical accounts is a common form of cultural violence and is used to maintain hegemonic frameworks (Farmer, 2004). And in contrast,

people and groups whose knowledge is subjugated use silence as a form of resistance when the risk of not being heard is omnipresent, and instead, wait for receptive conditions to occur to be heard (Dossa, 2003). The recent civilian movements in Egypt and Libya are examples where the mass voices of long repressed dissenters utilized social media to collectivize and make audible their resistance. Despite being more covert that direct violence, cultural violence is no less harmful in its effects:

> The imposition of racialized, gender-, and/or class based social hierarchies, the curtailment of life chances, and the routinization of dominant discourses can also be recognized as forms of violence that, if covert are no less egregious in their effects (Anglin, 1998, p. 146).

In addition to differentiating between levels of violence, an ontological comparison of the different levels of violence on issues of intentionality, epistemology, inflicted harms, and constitution is evidenced in the literature and summarized in Table 2.3. Whereas direct violence is intentional, structural violence can be non-intentional and result in unintended consequences. The outcome is that which matters and is definitional, not whether the outcome was foreseen (Galtung, 1969, 1998). Levels of violence also vary in terms of whether the inflicted harms have an identifiable subject: while direct violence has direct harm inflicted upon a subject, structural and cultural violence is indirect without a specified subject

Table 2.3. Comparison of Levels of Violence

Quality	Direct Violence (DV)	Structural Violence (SV)	Cultural Violence (CV)	Author
Intentionality	Intentional	Non-intentional		Galtung (1998)
Epistemology	Event	Process	Permanence	Galtung (1990)
	Identifiable event, time and perpetrator(s)	Process, patterned effects		Kent (2000)
	Acts, individuals	Social conditions, groups, cohorts		Hoivik (1977)
		Initiated and maintained by existing systems		James et al., (2003)
	Actor	No actor		Galtung (1969)
Harm inflicted	Subject	No subject		Confortini (2006)
	Direct	Indirect		Kent (2000)
Constitution	Feeds SV and CV	Feeds DV and CV	Feeds SV and DV	Galtung (1990)
	Interacts with SV	Interacts with DV		Confortini (2006)

(Confortini, 2006; Kent, 2000). Epistemologically, direct violence is identifiable as an event with observable acts, specific times, and particular actors (Galtung, 1969, 1990; Hoivik, 1977; James et al,, 2003; Kent, 2000). Structural violence, in contrast, is a process, identified instead by patterned results affecting the social conditions of groups and cohorts, and initiated and maintained by existing systems (Galtung, 1990; Hoivik, 1977; James et al,, 2003; Kent, 2000). Subsequently, cultural violence, rather than an event or process is an invariant or permanence (Galtung, 1990)—without a paradigm shift, cultural violence transcends borders, decades, and social movements.

The three levels of violence also interact with one another but differ in terms of their visibility. As Figure 2.1 depicts, all three levels are constitutive (Galtung, 1990)— direct, structural, and cultural violence all feed and interact[44] with each other (Confortini, 2006; Galtung, 1996; Gil, 1984; Pilisuk, 1998). They differ, however, in terms of their ease of detection and recognition (Galtung, 1990). Direct violence is the most described and ascribed as violence, while structural and cultural violence operate primarily behind a hegemonic veil. As Galtung explains:

> The culture preaches, teaches, admonishes, eggs on, and dulls us into seeing exploitation and/or repression as normal and natural, or not seeing them (particularly not exploitation) at all. Then comes the eruption, the efforts to use direct violence to get out of the structural iron cage… and counter-violence to keep the cage intact. (p. 295)

In other words, societal roots of violence are minimized and hidden by those who benefit from the existing structures of domination choosing instead to frame

Figure 2.1. Scope, Visibility, and Interaction between Levels of Violence

Figure X. Direct, structural, and cultural violence are interrelated, but often only direct violence is visible and recognized as violence. Cultural violence has the largest scope and creates the framework for the policies and practices generating structural violence.

violence as discrete events rather than multidimensional processes (Gil, 1996).

Consequently, societal structures take on a hegemonic nature—the power relations within them appear so ordinary, automatic, and consistent that the structural violence they create is often seen as normal, natural, subtle, submerged, or invisible (Farmer et al., 2006; Gil, 1984; James et al., 2003; Pilisuk, 1998; Winter & Leighton, 2001). As Winter and Leighton (2001) state: "Direct violence is horrific, but its brutality usually gets our attention: we notice it, and often respond to it. Structural violence, however, is almost always invisible, embedded in ubiquitous social structures, normalized by stable institutions and regular experience" (p. 1). This invisibility is sustained by power relations operating from "innumerable points" (James et al., 2003, p. 130). Galtung believed it is precisely the reification of these social relations that create structural violence: "if there were reasons to believe that inequality, injustice, exploitation, penetration, fragmentation and marginalization were something given by nature, something forever beyond the power of man to counteract, then I would not speak of violence." (cited in Parsons, 2007, p. 176)

Structural Violence and Social Work

Galtung's concept of structural violence has salient applications for social work and, according to Mullaly (2007), is a key feature of structural social work. In that structural violence informs the study of social injustice and the subsequent harms experienced by oppressed populations, this would seem to have significant relevance for our profession and our mandate to work for social justice with those most marginalized. In addition, one of the principles within our Code of Ethics states: "Social workers uphold the right of every person to be free from violence and threat of violence. (Canadian Association of Social Workers, 2005, p. 5). This is directly pertaining to our first professional value "Respect for the Inherent Dignity and Worth of Persons" (p. 5).

The discourse of structural violence provides an innovative framework to begin to understand how overrepresentation rates of Aboriginal peoples in both child welfare and criminal justice systems are more than just numbers and are instead the result of the social machinery of oppressive policy and ideology manifested in legal, economic, and social structures of domination. It reframes the detrimental outcomes that Aboriginal people experience because of encountering either system as structural violence rather than unfortunate circumstance and offers a critical analysis of the limiting of Aboriginal's political, economic, and social potential and continued colonization processes.

Table 2.4. Search for Terms (in all fields) for all Years Available

	Academic Search Premier[45] January 31, 2011	Academic Search Complete[46] June 30, 2013	Social Sciences Full Text[47] February 23, 2012
"structural violence"	692	290	72
"structural violence" and "social work"	6 (1%)	11 (4%)	2 (3%)

And yet, while social workers Stryker (2013), Banerjee, Daly, Armstrong, Szebehely, Armstrong, and Lefrance (2012), Garcia-Reid (2008), Mullaly (2007), and Gil (1996, 1999) write about structural violence, their voices appear to be isolated within the larger social work discourse. Table 2.4 displays the results from a recent multiple database search[48] that I conducted. I found that less than four percent of social work articles published contained "structural violence" in all fields. It appears, based on this brief inquiry, that the concept of structural violence is a rarely used concept within the social work literature. This is puzzling as structural violence and social work are both intrinsically concerned with social injustice and violence. In addition, a cursory review of articles discussing structural violence showed an exploration of this concept in areas that are relevant to social work:

- children who are violent (Stryker, 2013);
- cultural racism for African Americans (Oliver, 2001);
- drug misuse (Beckerleg & Hundt, 2005; James, Johnson & Raghaven, 2004);

- elder residential care (Banerjee et al., 2012);
- educational identities of Hispanic adolescents (Garcia-Reid, 2008);
- farm labour camps (Benson, 2008);
- health, disease and illness inequalities (Farmer et al., 2006; Lane, Rubinstein, Keefe, Webster, Cibula, Rosenthal et al., 2004; Scott-Samuel, Stanistreet & Crawshaw, 2009);
- health issues for people who are LGBTTQ (Padilla, del Aguila & Parker, 2007);
- Indigenous peoples within academia (Walker, 2003);
- men who have sex with men (Chakrapani, Newman, Shunmugam, McLuckie & Melwin, 2007);
- neo-liberal globalization (Gills, 2004; Reitan, 2005);
- policing of people who use drugs (Sarang, Rhodes, Sheon, & Page, 2010);
- poverty and stigma (Cassiman, 2006);
- pregnancy (Ellison, 2003; Lane, Keefe, Rubinstein, Levandowski, Webster, Cibula et al., 2008);
- schooling and exclusion (Osler, 2006);
- sex trade work (Argento, Reza-Paul, Lorway, Jain, Bhagya, Fathima et al., 2011; Seshia, 2010; Shannon, Kerr, Allinott, Chettiar, Shoveller & Tyndall, 2008);
- spirituality (Sivaraksa & Bhikkhu, 1997);
- systems of care for persons with severe personality disorders (Adlam & Scanlon, 2009);
- the 1992 Los Angeles Civil Disturbance (Farrell & Johnson, 2001);
- theater as social work (Ranta-Tyrkko, 2010);
- Uganda's political and economic policies (Wolf, 2009); and
- women with disabilities (Barile, 2002).

In addition, many of the above-explored issues have direct relevance for social work explorations into overrepresentation rates, including issues of cultural racism, neo-liberal globalization, systems of care, policing, and behaviours of resistance. Analyses of structural violence, it seems, are a logical fit with social work's mandate to work for social justice. While exploring why this key concept has not been readily explored within the social work literature since Galtung's conceptualization over 40 years ago is beyond the scope of this research, this fit does open the door to apply this reframing of overrepresentation to the existing literature.

Conclusion

The rates of overrepresentation of Aboriginal peoples in both child welfare and criminal justice systems are particularly relevant for social work. While these processes are more conventionally referred to as rates of overrepresentation with percentages, they are in fact, more than mere, or just, numbers. They represent unjust outcomes and contemporary colonizing processes affecting Aboriginal peoples.

As part of our political landscape since 2006, and despite 30 years of declining crime rates, our current Canadian government has won two elections largely based on an American crime control platform. Because of our social work mandate for social justice, and because this platform affects Aboriginal people so profoundly, this is a critical area for social work. As a profession, we have a mandate not only to provide service to individuals presenting the effects of inequality but also to reduce the social injustice created and maintained by structures.

Unfortunately, a substantive attention to social justice has been largely lost in social work research, education, and scholarship. Similarly, unlike the rates of overrepresentation in child welfare—that serves as a criminal justice pipeline for Aboriginal peoples—issues related to criminalization and overrepresentation have been only scantily covered. Since our mandate also addresses our responsibility to the most marginalized of populations and Aboriginal peoples experience enhanced oppression from these colonial systems often staffed by social workers, this should be of prime importance to social work. Unfortunately, our role in the perpetuation of these colonizing processes has received little attention to date.

Some of the answer as to why social work has not more fundamentally looked at its role in these colonizing processes is that as a profession we are rarely reflexive. While there is important scholarship that has evaluated how well our profession lives up to its social justice rhetoric, it is grossly outnumbered by the swell of conventional scholarship

concentrating on micro interventions and ignoring its colonial control. As a result, I base my theoretical framework on the critical theory of structural social work and its goal of social justice.

As a critical theory, structural social work is especially adept at looking how structures add to Aboriginal peoples' overrepresentation rates. As a theory and political practice, structural social work takes a reflexive stance in viewing where processes of governing, the state, neo-liberalism, and social work come together. With a goal of social transformation, structural social work incorporates critical postmodern contributions such as the interplay of discourse, power, knowledge, ideology, and how Othering is created and maintained. One of the features of structural social work is its inclusion of structural violence or how harms produced by policy and practice result in violence.

Galtung's conceptualization of structural violence is a useful framework to begin to develop a richer understanding of overrepresentation rates for Aboriginal peoples. The harmful outcomes and Othering and exploitive processes used by structures of domination and maintained through ideology result in violence that is structural. Structural violence is helpful in understanding the complex interrelated and stratified processes involved in realities of overrepresentation. This framework is also relatively unexplored within social work discourse and absent from our understanding of why so many Aboriginal peoples end up in criminal justice and child welfare systems. Using structural violence as an overarching conceptualization, the next chapter will present a rethinking of selected critical discourse accounting for overrepresentation rates.

3 Re-conceptualizing Overrepresentation: Contemporary Colonialism as Structural Violence

In my experience as a practicing social worker and now more recently as a university instructor, I have observed that awareness of colonialization processes varies considerably. As a non-Aboriginal social worker, I served a predominantly Aboriginal client population in Calgary, Canada. Although the Aboriginal women and men I served spoke often about their experiences in residential schools and colonization as a historical process, it was a topic I gathered was deemed relevant among only a small circle of professional colleagues. My impression was that colonization was still seen in the larger social work community as a 'crutch' used by Aboriginal persons and on many occasions, I heard it described as such.

My move to Winnipeg was a transformation. I encountered many professional peers who spoke not only about the legacy of colonization as a historical process but also of its contemporary manifestations. In part, I believe this to be because I encountered more Aboriginal social workers and Aboriginal academics whose contributions were now being incorporated into course curricula and organizational mandates. While Manitoba is home to the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry[49] and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission[50] and I was surprised with the climate of increased awareness, I also realized that there is still so much work to do, particularly among my non-Aboriginal colleagues and peers. Aboriginal colleagues shared with me their frustration that this awareness is not translating into action far enough or fast enough—and that this awareness reverberates slowly beyond a select academic and social work community of allies. When describing my dissertation area, non-Aboriginal social workers often replied with either, "Wow, I didn`t know *you* were Aboriginal," or, "Why are *you* interested in this area"? Many Aboriginal peers replied with

“Super, it’s about time!” and too many non-Aboriginal non-social work people would just look at me blankly. Mostly I replied with, “I am interested because I am a social worker, because if I am not, then I am perpetuating the problem.” My concerns are that colonization processes are still largely unacknowledged and misunderstood, are seen as historical manifestations, are perceived to have pertain*ed* to Aboriginal peoples only and, therefore, are irrelevant to non-Aboriginal Canadians.

And yet, through my professional capacity as a Faculty Liaison[51] with social work supervisors in child welfare and criminal justice settings, their experience as workers, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, has been summarized as consistently high caseloads, increased documentation requirements, case plans determined by risk assessments, compartmentalized service provision by multiple workers per client, increased client monitoring, and limited services going primarily to only the highest risk clients.

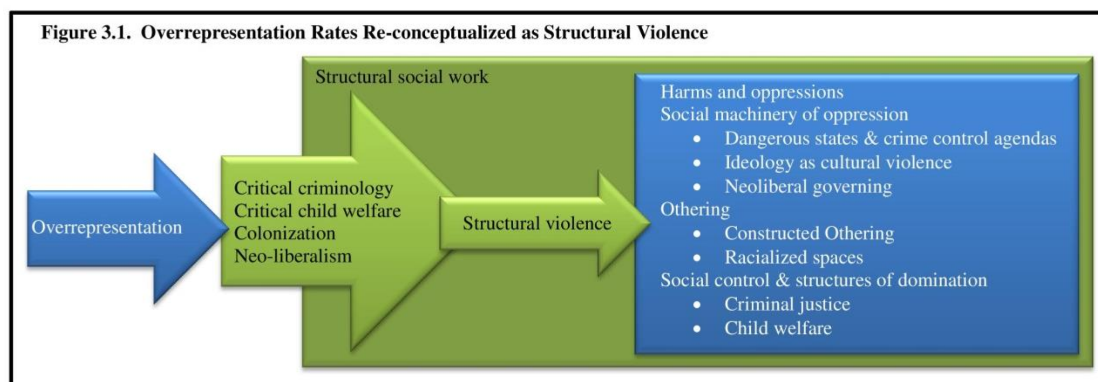
By augmenting the awareness of contemporary colonizing processes as manifestations of structural violence, this lens can add a layer of understanding to demystify contemporary colonizing processes and humanize their harmful outcomes. It can offer a catalyst to comprehending the crux of colonization—violence. Structural violence can offer a reframing of policy and processes that has a more immediate and universal acknowledgement of harm; it is blunt, bare bones, and difficult to blur. Violence hurts. Violence harms. Violence kills. Colonization, on the other hand, is less definitive, more open to interpretation and, therefore, risks a greater likelihood of dismissal. I am *not*, however, suggesting that the reality identified as colonization be replaced by ‘structural violence’; rather, the understanding of colonization can be augmented and enhanced by the added reframing of structural violence as this concept of structural violence adds a political charge demanding action.

Chapter One presented the direct negative outcomes Aboriginal peoples experience as a result of their child welfare and/or criminal justice involvement. This chapter links those

identified outcomes with their corresponding structural violence subtypes and then explains how those contextualizations can be re-examined as structural violence. More specifically, using a lens of structural violence, the subsequent sections will filter relevant literature from critical criminology, critical child welfare, colonization, and neo-liberalism discourses to examine the role social workers play in overrepresentation rates. Using key concepts from structural violence discourse, the literature will then be reframed as harms, the social machinery of oppression, Othering, and social control through structures of domination. Specifically, the negative outcomes that Aboriginal people experience from their overrepresentation in child welfare and/or criminal justice systems will be framed as harms and oppression. In turn, these outcomes are produced by the social machineries of oppression activated when dangerous states: 1) push crime control agendas, 2) promote cultural violence as ideology, and 3) utilize neo-liberal processes of governing. As a result, these social machineries of oppression, often maintained and reproduced by conventional multi-disciplinary discourses, Others Aboriginal peoples through constructed and systematic processes and racialized spaces. And, subsequently, the contemporary colonization and social control of Othered populations are maintained through criminal justice and child welfare structures of domination, their embraced risk-thinking frameworks, and social work's precarious adoption of risk discourse and its structural violent processes and outcomes.

Figure 3.1 depicts my rationale and vision for rethinking overrepresentation rates as structural violence. Using a structural social work framework and a structural violence lens to examine explanations for overrepresentation rates in the afore mentioned literature, what was an abstract, conglomerated, and difficult-to-grasp phenomenon becomes manageable and enables concrete processes to be understood and dismantled. In other words, if we understand overrepresentation rates as structural violence, we can challenge and change those structures, policies, and practices that currently result in violent outcomes for Aboriginal peoples.

Figure 3.1. Overrepresentation Rates Re-conceptualized as Structural Violence



Outcomes as Harms and Oppression

The negative health and social outcomes of criminal justice and child welfare interventions identified in Chapter One clearly fit structural violence subtypes of physical harm, deprivation, and repression (see Table 3.1). Illness, violence, and death pose physical harm for Aboriginal peoples' involvement in either system. Aboriginal young people also experience deprivation of material and non-material resources because of their earlier emancipation from foster supports, low education or employment attainments, and elevated risks of becoming homeless. In addition, they experience oppression, in its multiple forms, because of their earlier and longer system involvement, their separation from family and community, and their elevated likelihood of dual system involvement.

The structural violence inherent in oppression and the forced expulsion[52] and/or detention of individuals (Galtung 1990, Kent, 2000) is evidenced in the forced removal of large percentages of Aboriginal peoples, particularly in the child welfare system. While not named as such, Waterfall (2006) has described the Sixties Scoop as state sanctioned kidnapping and terror. This kidnapping and terror could today be described as the structurally violent process of human trafficking, or more accurately, state sanctioned and legislated human trafficking. Nevertheless, the forcible removal of children is not unique to colonization processes; it is also one of the defining features of attempted genocide (UN General Assembly, 1948; Van Krieken, 2004) and a key form of structural violence.

Table 3.1. Harmful Child Welfare (CW) and Criminal Justice (CJ) Involvement Outcomes (experienced by Aboriginal peoples) and their Structural Violence Subtypes Categorization

Structural violence subtypes*	Outcomes**
Physical harming, malnutrition, disease, maiming, violence, killing, genocide, extermination	• mental health disorders • disease (HIV, Hepatitis C, substance misuse) • homicide, suicide, illness resulting in death • teen pregnancy • police brutality
Deprivation or misdistribution of material and/or non-material resources	• earlier emancipation • lower educational attainments, 20% high school graduation • homelessness • unemployment • CW/CJ over representation
Exploitation	
Repression alienation or cultural de- and re-socialization and spiritual death	• separation from community and culture • social stigma
detention, expulsion	• frequent moves, multiple placements • earlier apprehensions, • longer CW involvement • earlier emancipation • hospitalization
discrimination	• CW/CJ overrepresentation
fragmentation or diminished collective identity and action	• separation from community and culture
hyper-surveillance, involvement with the state agencies	• concurrent involvement with CW and youth CJ • pipeline from CW to adult CJ • frequent re-entry into systems
marginalization, institutional/systemic inequities	• CW/CJ overrepresentation
penetration, internalized oppression	• CW/CJ overrepresentation
segmentation or false consciousness	• CW/CJ overrepresentation

* (Anglin, 1998; Christie, 1997; Confortini, 2006; Farmer et al., 2006; Galtung, 1990; Hoivik, 1977; James et al., 2003; Kent, 2000; Kohler & Alcock, 1976; McKenzie & Hudson, 1985; Oliver, 2001; Razack, 2002; Winter & Leighton, 2001).
** (Bennett, et al., 2009; Blackstock et al., 2007; Boyd & Faith, 1999; Child and Youth Officer for British Colombia, 2006; Comack, 2012; O'Brian, 2004; Richardson & Nelson, 2007; Stein, 2006).

In addition to the physical removal and relocation, this expulsion results in alienation or cultural de-socialization and re-socialization and spiritual death (Galtung, 1990). Armitage (1993a) argues that Aboriginal children are more vulnerable within the child welfare system than their parents were within the residential school system before. Children do not have an annual reunification with their siblings, parents, or communities, and experience a socialization process dissimilar to that of their parents.

Children in child welfare systems continue to be isolated within non-Aboriginal families. Citing Cindy Blackstock, a social worker and expert on Aboriginal child welfare in Canada, Farris-Manning and Zandstra (2003) note that only 2.5% of Aboriginal children in care in British Colombia were placed in Aboriginal foster homes despite statutory requirements for prioritization. They add that data documenting Aboriginal children being placed in Aboriginal foster homes are not consistently gathered across provinces. If this marginal percentage of cultural matches in BC is an indicator for Canada, then of the over 30,000[53] Aboriginal children in Canadian child welfare, only 750 are foster parented in Aboriginal homes.

The resulting implications of child welfare practice and policy is a “colonial and racial objective of shaping the next generation of Indian people for a Christian civilization of assimilation into mainstream society” (Armitage, 1993a, p. 152). Since most Aboriginal children attempt to return to their birth families after leaving care, Richardson and Nelson (2007) ask, “as we move from interning children in the prisons called residential schools to foster homes, are we merely changing the residence of Aboriginal assimilation” (p. 75)? They suggest that the severing of ties, often done in the best interests of the child, is actually in the best interests of expediting the adoption-out process and the separation and removal of Aboriginal children from families and communities.

Not only extracted from family and community, when people are removed and detained, they experience oppression through increased hyper-surveillance (James et al., 2003). Kimelman (1985) and Hamilton and Sinclair (1991) have highlighted the stark lines of continuity between Aboriginal peoples’ involvement in the child welfare and criminal justice systems: “‘Clients’ of one system frequently become ‘clients’ of the other system. It would be impossible to present a complete picture of the criminal justice system, and the youth

justice system, without also analyzing the field of child and family services." (Hamilton & Sinclair, 1991, Child Welfare section, para. 8)

For Aboriginal peoples, the removal of children from families into the child welfare system often results in an eventual adult sentence of incarceration and criminal justice involvement. In other words, they are more likely to be moved into the public gaze of system involvement at an earlier age and, therefore, that public scrutiny elevates their risk for criminalization (Monture, 1989-1990). As Monture states:

> I am deliberately connecting child "welfare" law with the criminal "justice" system. From the perspective of a traditional First Nations woman, I see the child welfare systems as being on a continuum with the criminal justice system. Both institutions remove citizens from their communities…both the child welfare system and the criminal justice system are exercised through the use of punishment, force, and coercion. (p. 5)

Researchers have pointed out that two-thirds of Aboriginal peoples who were incarcerated also experienced child welfare removal from the family home—almost double the rate of their non-Aboriginal counterparts (Trevethan, Auger, Moore, MacDonald, & Sinclair, 2002; Trevethan, Moore, Naqitarvik, Watson, & Saunders, 2004).
This almost seamless cycle from child welfare into the criminal justice system continues when Aboriginal children, whose parent(s) are incarcerated, are taken into the child welfare system (Seymour, 1998) and the social machinery of oppression.

Social Machinery of Oppression

Situating social phenomena within their respective contexts is a key consideration in both structural social work and structural violence; as such, tracing overrepresentation rates back only to their respective child welfare or criminal justice systems would, therefore, fall short of a structural analysis. Instead, these rates need to be located within the social machinery of oppression and the structures of dominance—the integral foundation and building blocks of structural violence. Even beyond state systems, such as the child welfare

and the criminal justice systems, states themselves can be understood as structurally violent by way of their oppressive policies and ideology.

Dangerous States Push Crime Control Agendas

Barak (1991) defines crimes of the state as those political decisions which, in order to gain access to natural resources or labour, result in surveillance, harassment, murder, cover-up, fraud, violation of human rights, imprisonment, colonialism, racism, war on drugs, and crimes of omission. Similarly, Henry (1991) holds state crime is the "material or physical harm on its citizens, a subgroup of citizens, or citizens of other nations resulting from the actions or consequences of government policy, mediated through the practice of state agencies, whether these harms are intentional or unintentional" (p. 256). These state crimes can be crimes of commission, such as tax laws that maintain economic disparity but present as equalizing, or crimes of omission such as non-provision of basic needs or denial of basic needs. When state policies deny people from accessing their earned share of the wealth created by their citizenship and force them instead into illegal activities to survive, these are state crimes, as are, as Hazelhurst (1991) contends, the resulting Aboriginal deaths in custody, overrepresentation rates of incarceration for Aboriginal peoples, and police harassment.

Christie (2000) builds on the concept of state crime with *dangerous states*, or those states that commit crimes against their most marginalized groups through their penal policies. In identifying dangerous states and citing the United States as a prime example,[54] Christie proposes four criteria: the percent of the general population and specific populations controlled or removed from society; the effect on families and communities of removed segments of the population; the size of the penal system in terms of expended resources allocated to it compared to resources dedicated to social service institutions such as health and education; and the degree of depersonalization, disenfranchisement, and life and health qualities of people endangered as a result of imprisonment. Applying these criteria to

Canada's criminalization of Aboriginal peoples, Canada can be seen as a dangerous state: the incarceration rate for Aboriginal peoples is nearly ten times that of the overall incarceration rate (Office of the Correctional Investigator, 2006b); the effects on Aboriginal individuals, families and communities are brutalizing (Boyd & Faith, 1999; Comack, 2012; Pager, 2003; Samuelson & Monture-Angus, 2002; Seymour, 1998); and the budget attached to Canada's tough-on-crime agenda is burgeoning[55] (MacKrael, 2013; Mallea, 2010).

Christie (1994) warns that dangerous states are also active in the "social production of moral indifference" (p. 163), or as Bauman (1989) initially proposed, when segments of state activities[56] are beyond the evaluation of standards of decency. This can also be understood as cultural violence, or the ideology facilitating structural violence (Confortini, 2006). Whereas hindsight makes the moral indifference and cultural violence of the Canadian residential school system hard to refute, Hallett (2006) argues the contemporary American political economy and mirage of `crime control'[57] are less identifiable as dangerous policy and the exploitation of marginalized populations.

In essence, Knepper (2007) argues that crime control has resulted in the *criminalization of social policy* where "social welfare issues become redefined as crime problems" and crime control policies[58] take precedence over health care, housing, and employment (p. 139). Understood through a lens of structural violence, criminalization takes precedence over welfare[59] provision resulting in both detention and deprivation. Crime control ideology ensures social policy becomes criminalized when social welfare alternatives are viewed only as a means to reduce crime rather than as a foundation for sustaining a minimum standard of civility. A minimum standard of civility should include the absence of structural violence but as MacKinnon (2012) laments, the recent irony of a public apology from the Canadian government to Aboriginal peoples for the residential school system, followed rapidly by

Omnibus bills that are “essentially creating a new form of residential school” (p. 2), falls seriously short of that standard.

While we in Canada have not yet adopted the American prison-for-profit industry, our tough-on-crime agenda is mapping a disquietingly similar path (Snider, 1998; Webster & Doob, 2007). As Snider cautions, get tough crime politics have resulted in increased sentencing, a surge in prison populations, more punitive measures (including the use of chain gangs in Alberta and Ontario), and decreased granting of parole. Canadian criminologists anticipate a for-profit prison boom in Canada following disturbing trends that include the elimination of mandatory minimum sentencing, the approval of three strikes legislation, and the adoption of indeterminate sentencing by the current conservative government (Bailey, 2006). For example, twelve days after Steven Harper was initially sworn in as Prime Minister of Canada in February 2006, his conservative government announced the intended extra expenditure of five to 11.5 billion dollars to build 23 new federal prisons in Canada over the next ten years (Tibbetts, 2006). This policy would have increased the current number of federal institutions from 52 (Correctional Service Canada, 2005) to 75, or an increase of 44%. While this has not yet come to fruition, the passing of increasingly punitive crime control Omnibus bills in Canada appears to be building up to the Conservative government’s original stated intentions.

Hamilton and Sinclair (1991) note that the criminalization of poverty has had increasingly negative repercussions for Aboriginal peoples, including particular acts deemed illegal such as public intoxication and vagrancy. In particular, Canadian municipalities seem to be adopting criminalization policies where municipal bylaw legislation targeting marginalized groups of people often acts as a butterfly net to fill prisons. For instance, Winnipeg passed anti-panhandling bylaws (Dyck, 2005), while Calgary criminalized spitting in public (Walton, 2006) and putting one’s feet on a public bench or planter (Ferguson, 2008).

And while this tough-on-crime agenda is not explicitly stated to target Aboriginal peoples, MacKinnon (2012) cautions that the implications for Aboriginal people cannot be ignored (p. 2).

Why are we in Canada adopting an American crime control approach? In addition to our political and economic dependence on the United States, it has, since the early 1990s, become a chief global exporter of policy ideologies (Wacquant, 1999) and punishment strategies *(*Bosworth & Flavin, 2007; Davis, 2000). These chief exports include "carceralization," where within neo-liberalism, the prison system forms one of the "epicentral institutions" (Peck, 2003, p. 226), and class-based penality, or the meshing of punishment, politics, and ideology resulting in the governance and ideological repression of the 'dangerous classes'[60] (Garland, 1990). With a fixation on the 'dangerous classes', and those largely marginalized from social and economic participation, Feeley and Simon (1992) argue this new penology[61] moved away from punishing or rehabilitating individuals and toward managing and identifying aggregate population types through surveillance and custody. Essentially, the prison net replaces the social welfare net, crime control moves to the center of neo-liberal agendas, and criminal justice systems fill the space left by the erosion of the welfare state (Fitzgibbon, 2007b).

Along with adopting neo-liberal ideology and penal policy due to our political and economic ties with the United States, Canadians have also been sold a bill of goods by the current conservative government that crime control is good for Canada (MacKrael, 2013). Webster and Doob (2007) argue that since 2006, Canada's tough on crime political climate was manufactured strategically from timely media coverage on violent crime to surmount the obstacles of a minority government. The authors forewarn that Canada's 40-year-long stable incarceration rate is precarious and likely, despite a diminishing crime rate, to change for the worse:

> The possibility clearly exists that the public's perception that crime is out of control may increase pressure toward harsher criminal justice responses. Further, an unstable (Conservative) hard-right minority government, coupled with a decline in the recognition and reliance of experts as an informed and moderating voice in criminal justice policy, may be less effective in shielding Canadians from the broader forces compelling countries toward more punitive measures. (p. 360)

Instead of challenging montages of moral indifference and constructions of criminalization, Hartjen (1973) holds that the general public believes this mirage because the state is effective in producing legitimizing examples. These legitimizing examples are artefacts of hegemonic ideological constructions and cultural violence (Galtung, 1990).

Ideology As Cultural Violence

By keeping a carefully constructed definition of crime and criminal acts, political leaders rationalize increased surveillance and policing in communities that suffer the greatest in economic inequity. This construction produces an unquestionable faith in a justice system that the people it criminalizes are in fact the people who deserve punishment as the only people breaking the law (Hartjen, 1973). The reporting of personal crime is elevated within the media above all other social issues (e.g. poverty, education): it selectively focuses on street crime while ignoring corporate crime, offers an increased tough-on-crime criminal justice response as the only option, and legitimizes its assertions by primarily citing "expert" crime control industry sources (Welch, Fenwick & Roberts, 1998). From creating moral panics and facilitating crime myths, to informing policy such as get-tough-on-crime legislation, the products of mass media reflect and reinforce dominant ideology (Potter & Kappeler, 2006).

While the vast majority of people with privilege will likely never experience being the victim of stranger-perpetrated personal crime, the media's portrayal of crime invokes a strong emotional response and serves as a repetitive influence on public opinion (Potter & Kappeler, 2006). The general public is lulled into accepting the brutality of prisons resulting in not only

a film genre and a for-profit industry but also a source of entertainment and macabre fascination[62] with the brutalization of "dangerous" people (Davis, 2003). In effect, dangerous states market crime control as responsible governing and marginalized peoples are exploited in order to maintain dominant interests. As Edward Bernays (1928) wrote about the role of propaganda in the manipulation of public opinion:

> Those who manipulate this unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country....We are governed, our minds are molded, our tastes formed, our ideas suggested, largely by men we have never heard of.... In almost every act of our daily lives, whether in the sphere of politics or business, in our social conduct or our ethical thinking, we are dominated by the relatively small number of persons...who understand the mental processes and social patterns of the masses. It is they who pull the wires which control the public mind. (p. 10)

The challenge under neo-liberalism of "reducing" government while maintaining crime control can be observed not only through the manipulation of public opinion but also through the less visible but still pervasive social machinery of governing.

The Social Machinery Of Governing

While neo-liberalism is the shift to individualized responsibility, risk thinking, and security through surveillance (Parton, 1996b), Beckett and Western (2001) argue that this does not result in a shrinking neo-liberal state but, rather, a different one. This different neo-liberal state shifts from welfarist to punitive—the deregulation of the privileged and the increased regulation of marginalized groups (Peck, 2003). Wacquant (2009) maintains there is a structural connection between penal policies and neo-liberal governance. Workers finding themselves facing increasing economic hardship are controlled through the punitive regulation of the most marginalized. In other words, the political economy of punishment argues that " the historical emergence, the consolidation, and the ongoing transformations of modern penal practices reflect the capitalistic need to carve a docile and laborious workforce

out of the unruly, undisciplined, and sometimes riotous 'dangerous classes' constantly generated by capital itself...." (De Giorgi, 2010, p. 129)

Deregulation of privileged groups does not mean less social control. Rather, it is social control through self-control (McCorkel, 2003), normalized primarily through education, media, and consumerism or "freedom as discipline" (Rose, 1999, p. 69). Privileged individuals become complicit in their own social control by internalizing governing values. In exchange for adopting those values, for that self-discipline, we are granted "freedom" from state agencies tangibly interfering in our lives. In essence, individuals under neo-liberalism are made responsible for their own experiences, their prudent consumerism, their own successful self-management, and in turn, any risks they may encounter (Kemshall, 2003), making the social welfare net redundant. Through these "technologies of citizenship" (Ciccarelli, 2008, p. 319), prudent citizens are made to believe their own narrow escape from needing the ever-shrinking welfare net is due to their own prowess, initiative, and effort.

In contrast, there is an increased regulation of marginalized groups, or those deemed unsuccessful in their own self-management (Peck, 2003). In child welfare for example, Aboriginal families are more likely to be investigated for neglect due to poverty rather than abuse (Blackstock et al., 2004; Blackstock & Trocmé (2005). Similarly, Hamilton and Sinclair (1991) attribute much of Aboriginal criminal behaviours to poverty and Comack, Deane, Morrissette and Silver (2013) found Aboriginal street gang membership as a form of resistance to colonialism.

Under neo-liberalism and its ever-thinning social welfare net, this increased regulation by a decentralizing government is done through the contracting[63] of a multitude of private and public actors to take on matters of social control *or governing at a distance*[64] to (Garland, 2001; Rigakos, 1999; Rose, 1999; Webb, 2006). For example, whereas probation and child welfare still fall under provincial jurisdiction in Canada, reduced budgets and

increased caseloads have resulted in case managers now doing much less of the direct service provision. For Aboriginal peoples in the child welfare or criminal justices systems, this means they are often also assessed by a much wider net of social control[65] agents, including school social workers, subsidized housing managers, treatment workers, group facilitators, or counsellors who may or may not have social work degrees but whom all participate in this scrutiny.

This governing at a distance creates the structurally violent potential for Aboriginal peoples to experience hyper-surveillance, much more so than had they only been working with one welfare or one criminal justice worker. Instead of providing for those unable to provide for themselves, neo-liberal governing scrutinizes, removes, and exploits—processes that are also used in structural violence. Control is no longer merely a matter of repression or containment; it is also about the generation of information about the limits of acceptable risk, and the creations of circuits of economic and social inclusion[66] (based on being a responsible and prudent consumer) and exclusion (Rose, 1999).

People who are excluded are perceived as dangerous and risky (Garland, 2001). These 'flawed consumers,' or those individuals outside of the market race or less able to participate within it, are prone to increased "ghettoization and criminalization," scrutiny, and brutalization (Bauman, 1997). Rose (1999) effectively summarizes these circuits of exclusion as the dominions of managing the marginalized:

> Upon this territory of the marginalized, expertise is integrated in an ambivalent manner into technologies of government that are increasingly punitive. The marginalized, excluded from the regimes of choice, no longer embraced within the social politics of solidarity, are allocated a new range of para-government agencies—charities, voluntary organizations supported by grants and foundations. A new territory opens up 'on the margins'—advice bureaux, groups of experts offering services to specific problematic groups, day centers and drop-in centers. (p. 89)

According to Foucault (1977), experts from the '*psy professions'* (psychiatry, psychology, and social work) and para-governmental organizations, develop expert

knowledge through the surveillance, gathering, and assessment[67] of the Other on the margins. Social workers are active in monitoring those individuals within the circuits of exclusion. It is precisely our work as human managers that begs the question of our culpability in forms of structural violence. We are active in the scrutiny of marginalized groups and our interventions (i.e. child welfare, income / housing security, criminal justice) often result in people having to survive with less than what is needed for physical, emotional, and social wellbeing.

Working with people who are thrust into forced self-reliance (Green, 2007), we have developed a dual role—helping those who need help, while simultaneously monitoring their activities (Donzelot, 1979; Parton, 1996a). Social work is thus the mediator between the state and people who are marginalized (Parton, 1996a). As 'translators' (Pollack, 2010) and negotiators (Green, 2007), our mediation is, however, rather one way—our social justice roots are effectively pruned through our dependency on government contracts and increasingly constricted budgets (Pollack, 2010). In essence, social workers have become the "*petty engineers of human conduct*" (Rose, 1999, p. 92). Rather than locating marginalization in the nature of social relations, this engineering serves both the interests of the state as well as the helping professions (Donzelot, 1979).

Othering in Structural Violence

Othering is a central issue within structural violence discourse—groups are Othered in order to rationalize their exploitation by dominant groups (Galtung, 1990). Whereas the previous section described how the social machinery of oppression operates, this section reveals how marginalized groups become Othered and how their Othering, in turn, maintains their oppression.

Constructed Othering

Informed by Marxist theories,[68] the rich and diverse body of critical criminological discourse[69] shifted the conventional focus of blaming and taming the criminal to questioning who was criminalized and how crime was constructed (Heidensohn, 1985; Lilly, Cullen & Ball, 1989; Pollack, 2004). Critical criminologists argued that their mainstream colleagues were informants for the maintenance of the status quo: conventional criminologists offered unexamined assumptions of the ontology and epistemological nature[70] of crime and produced crime rates that were politically constructed to reflect only that which they sought to illuminate. As Quinney (1975) explains:

> The law that defines behaviour as criminal services the social, economic, and political order, and is used by the state and those who control it to preserve the capitalist system. The underclass, in turn, is defined as criminal as it attempts to survive under that system's oppression. (p. 279)

Labelling and the static categorization of people into those who commit crime and those who do not is thus the political process of maintaining structural relations of dominance (Taylor, Walton & Young, 1973). Current forms of labelling include public sex offender registries, media releases when high profile persons are released into the community, risk categorization, and referring to people as "offenders,"' "criminals," or "addicts." These categorizations are packaged under neo-liberalism as effective strategies to maintaining public safety (Klein & Van Ness, 2002). This has direct implications of structural violence. Rather than promoting public safety, labelling instead increases criminal behaviour by inferring a master criminal status on already marginalized peoples that supersedes all other roles (Lilly et al., 1989) as citizen, partner, co-worker, neighbour, or friend, resulting in scrutiny, discrimination, exclusion, and alienation. The purposeful messaging that the poor and marginalized are responsible for the greatest harm to society detracts from the negative effects caused by corporate decisions and policy that result in far reaching environmental,

economic, and social harms. Instead of maintaining public safety, the criminal justice system maintains class control by labelling and monitoring the behaviours of marginalized peoples while conventional criminology largely overlooks the behaviours of the state (Reiman, 2004). Acts that result in structural violence such as large-scale pension/investment theft, environmental/ occupational illness or death, unsafe drinking water, or the murder and rape committed by state sanctioned residential school contractors, fly under the radar of reported crime rates even though they cause greater harm to more people than the acts committed by those who are poor and marginalized. In essence, the population who we define as criminals is only a small percentage of people who break the law, and what we define as criminal behaviour is only a fraction of illegal acts and an even smaller fraction of acts that are structurally violent. If we were to label all people who have broken the law as criminals, then most of us—our family, co-workers, and friends—would need to report in as habitual offenders. In reality, only a small percentage of people who do not adhere to legal norms are criminalized.

Criminalized people are duly constructed as the antithesis of healthy norms where symptoms of personal dysfunction are highlighted to silence reactions to poverty, racism, and sexism, and objectified and displayed as projects of moral redemption or rehabilitation (Vodde & Gallant, 2002). Criminalization results in the increased monitoring of civil constraints, zero-tolerance policies, and control of those who are deemed unsettling or trying to the maintenance of public order (Fitzgibbon, 2007b). In other words, criminalization occurs when individuals are moved from the private, or obscurity, into the realm of public and state scrutiny (Inglis, 2002). This criminalizing process is accelerated further when involvement with one system creates an elevated risk for multi-system involvement, and for Aboriginal peoples, into racialized spaces.

Racialized Spaces As Repression

Critical Race[71] and Critical Indigenous theorists conceptualize the overrepresentation rates of Aboriginal peoples within child welfare and criminal justice system as racialized space, resistance to colonization, and ongoing contemporary colonization processes (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Hartjen, 1973; Razack, 2002). Relocation and detainment have resulted in "racialized space… and the spatial containment of Aboriginal peoples to marginalized areas" (Razack, 2002, p. 129). For Aboriginal peoples, both assimilation and exclusion[72] have resulted in their relocation to racialized spaces: prisons, foster homes, residential schools, reserves, homeless shelters, treatment facilities, police stations, and inner city streets. These racialized spaces become a prime percolator for increased scrutiny, criminalization, and marginalization (Hartjen, 1973) and according to La Prairie (1987) alienation from culture.

La Prairie (1987) suggests that while colonization, imprisonment, and the reserve system have produced a "culture of poverty," racialized spaces have also paralleled an imposed "poverty of culture" on Aboriginal peoples (p. 126). The systems that expelled and detained Aboriginal peoples, because of being constructed as Other, not only separated people from their communities, but also attempted to assimilate Aboriginal peoples by depriving them of their culture. Residential schools and child welfare systems separated children from their communities and damaged ties to traditional teachings and language. With such a large percentage of Aboriginal foster children still not placed in Aboriginal homes (Farris-Manning & Zandstra, 2003), this poverty of culture within the racialized space of child welfare is concerning.

An understanding of racialized space offers an integral analysis of who is contained and why. Layering structural violence onto the concept of racialized space does not require any stretch of the imagination. Processes of Othering, expulsion, marginalization, scrutiny, criminalization, and alienation are already identified. What is gained from this supplementary

analysis is the understanding of the detrimental harms and outcomes inherent within racialized space when the stratum of structural violence is added.

Social Control and Structures of Domination

The criminal justice and child welfare systems act as social control and share between them a common risk-thinking paradigm. Both these systems act as structures of domination and exploitation for marginalized populations while effectively also enacting social control of the rest of the population. The criminal justice system not only ensures that people caught in the system blame themselves and not their marginalization, but the scapegoating of criminalized peoples acts as a pressure value to appease the non-criminalized but still oppressed groups. Similarly, the state has never lived up to its rhetoric of intervening in the best interests of the child, but rather utilizes child welfare systems and social workers to monitor marginalized populations to protect dominant interests. A common neo-liberal risk-thinking logic connects these two systems with structurally violent outcomes for clients and questionable practice for social work.

Criminal Justice System

The criminal justice system, including the legal and corrections systems, act as structures of class, race, gender, and social control to protect the interests of the dominant class by regulating the poor[73]—the dangerous classes—through intensive policing, monitoring, and punitive responses (Christie, 1994; DeGiorgi, 2010; Hannah-Moffat & Shaw, 2000; Klein & Van Ness, 2002; Leps, 1992; Lynch & Mitchell, 1995; Monture-Angus, 2000; Pollack, 2004; Reiman, 2004; Ryan 1976; Wacquant, 2009).

The criminal justice system can, therefore, quite easily be re-conceptualized as a structure of domination. Aside from the harms, deprivation, alienation, detention, discrimination, hyper-surveillance, and marginalization this structure of domination frequently causes to the many individuals who have passed through its doors, the criminal

justice system also uses penetration and segmentation for social control. The criminal justice system controls not only people who are criminalized, charged, convicted, sentenced, monitored, incarcerated, or released, but also all those who are not, through segmentation or false consciousness. As a structure of domination, an individual`s criminal acts are reduced to rational choices, minimizing the role of structural inequities, and inmates are reprogrammed to believe their criminality is about poor decision-making. In essence, this is what Galtung (1990) referred to as repression through penetration and within structural social work, as internalized oppression (Mullaly, 2010). Simultaneously, the public is controlled through their macabre fascination with criminals diverting their attention from their own inequities and lulled into a state of false consciousness (Fromm, 2000) or what Galtung (1990) referred to as segmentation.

Garland (1996) argues crime control within late modern penality is a "dualistic, ambivalent, and often contradictory pattern" comprising of a 'criminology of the self' and a 'criminology of the other' (p. 446): "One is invoked to routinize crime, to allay disproportionate fears and to promote preventative action. The other is concerned to demonize the criminal, to excite popular fears and hostilities, and to promote support for state punishment." (p. 461) Garland's concise typology of neo-liberal crime control could also describe the former as "it's all about you" and the latter as " it's all about them".

"It's All About You"

Under a paradigm of 'crime as normal,' a *criminology of the self* adopts rational choice theory-based interventions (Garland, 1997) and assumes notions of the rational criminal, one who is seen as being just like us, only poorly socialized and lacking social regulation (Garland, 1996). Rational choice theory contends people make decisions by strategic thinking and logical deduction (De Haan & Vos, 2003), by weighing the costs and benefits prior to acting (Howe, 1996). As such, cognitive behavioural interventions promote rational decision

makers and reduce criminality to appropriate decision making rather than structural inequities (Hannah-Moffat, 2005).

Andrews and Bonta (1998) assert rational choice theory directs and is integral for Canadian cognitive behavioural prison programming and warn against getting "trapped in arguments with primary prevention advocates who believe a society-wide focus on unemployment, sexism or racism will eliminate crime" (Andrews & Bonta, 1998, as cited in Pollack, 2005, p. 84). Rather, Andrews and Bonta argue, "crime is a result of criminal personalities that transcend gender, class, ethnicity, and race" (Pollack, 2005, p. 84). In other words, Canadian prison programming is essentially telling prisoners "It's all about you." As a result, Garland (1997) warns that prisoners who internalize their need to make responsible choices, "take part in the government of their own confinement" (p. 192). In addition, as McCorkel (2003) so aptly states, the programs inserted "into the minds of inmates are not only institutional norms guiding conduct and behaviour but institutional claims about gender and subjectivity" (p. 73). In addition, Hannah-Moffat (2000) cautions that whereas the prison was seen to have rehabilitative responsibility, this new regime of 'empowerment' has shifted that responsibility[74] or rehabilitation for past, current, and future behaviour onto the prisoner themselves. While I am in no way suggesting that prisoners have no agency or input in the trajectory of their lives, a system that deals primarily with the most marginalized of individuals, and yet programs them into believing "It *is* all about you, your marginalization is an aside," appears to optimize penetration and internalized oppression as social control.

"It's All About Them"

Criminology of the other, in contrast, refers to the 'penal complex' (Garland, 1985), the 'commodification' of the Other (Haney, 2004) and "trades in images, archetypes, and anxieties, rather than in careful analysis and research findings" (Garland, 1996, p. 461). In a culture of hyper-vigilance for self-protection and a surreal construction of the scope of

victimization, the populace is left feeling afraid and bitter toward the plight of the accused (Garland, 2000). This lack of empathy and often hatred for the accused provide even greater populace support for incarceration as the preferred method[75] of public protection (Feeley & Simon, 1992; Garland, 2001).

The array of legitimizing examples of the rightness of a crime control approach as portrayed by the media and by politicians can also be understood by what Galtung (1969) described as a `blue print` for social control. The crime control message legitimizes the exploitation, repression, and deprivation of marginalized groups and at the same time maintains more privileged dominated groups lulled into continued compliance. Social psychologist Erich Fromm (2000) believed the macabre fascination of the brutalization of the poor and racialized serves an ideological function as well. Fromm believed that the constructed 'criminal' provides "the masses with a form of gratification of their sadistic impulses" (p. 126) and serves to divert people's anger away from their own exploitation and oppression under capitalism and the state. In other words, believing "it's all about them" and watching 'criminals' suffer gives the populace "an alienated form of gratification" (Anderson, 2000, p. 112). By diverting attention away from the exploitive conditions of capitalism and structural inequities due to racism, sexism, and all other forms of discrimination, this fascination allows oppressed workers to feel better about enduring their own poverty without themselves resorting to criminal activity, or at least not being caught.

In addition to serving as a pressure valve, Fromm (2000) suggests Othering processes by the criminal justice system serve a psychological function in binding or attaching the *entire* population to the state. Through the punishment of criminals and the occasional mercy to the repenting, the criminal justice system provides a sense of protection for the community as a whole. Mercy, clemency, and the granting of intermittent reprieve allow the state to absolve both its responsibility for addressing inherent structural inequities, as well as

articulate its omnipotent power and threat of malice. The power to grant parole is also the power to revoke it, the power to determine innocence is also the power to deem guilt, and the power to sanction leniently is also the power to sanction punitively (Strange, 1996). Although Fromm's contributions to the Frankfurt School's critique of criminology have largely been left unacknowledged (Anderson, 2000), his articulation of the psychological function of the criminal justice system is profound. Fromm conveys that the fundamental purpose of the criminal justice system is its control of all people not caught by the criminal justice system—those caught are merely smoke and mirrors. As an overarching paternal protectorate in the maintenance of class control and the use of criminals as fodder to feed the criminal justice system, its professed purpose of and failed ability for crime reduction and correction is secondary.

When framed as structural violence, Fromm's analysis of the function of the criminal justice system and the exploitation of criminals for ideological and psychological ends is even more alarming. Dangerous states use ever-expanding prison systems as ways to maintain class control of the more privileged dominated classes (working and middle classes), or those who have enfranchisement, the power of the vote, and participation in the economy as consumers. By using the most marginalized classes as criminalized fodder, the state and the dominant classes obtain political support from the working and middle classes by professing to be the guardians of safe communities and in Canada, the platform for the current government. For Aboriginal peoples in Canada, their sacrifice results in the deprivation of basic resources as budgets shift federal dollars from welfare programs to departments of corrections, expulsion from families and communities, detention in prisons, segmentation or reduced political efficacy, and physical and non-physical harm.

Child Welfare System

The continued oppression of those at the fringe is also preserved by systems of child welfare and, akin to the criminal justice system, the child welfare system in Canada[76] has similarly been described as a system of both class, race, and gender control (Armitage, 1993b; Costin, Karger & Stoesz, 1996; O'Brian, 2004; Pelton, 1989; Swift, 1995; Swift & Callahan, 2009). Social workers often act as the enablers of this dominating structure by monitoring marginalized peoples on behalf of the state and engaging with these families through an offering of "helpfulness." Through a lens of structural violence, the state exploits marginal populations it monitors through its "best interests of the child" mantra to protect and maintain its own interests, resulting in repression, expulsion, and alienation for the children it claims to protect.

Rarely presented as repressive, but rather as occurring in the best interests of the child, O'Brian (2004) argues the state, under the legal doctrine Parens Patriae,[77] is intervening only to defend its own interest. Child welfare is about "reproducing and preserving the status quo" and *not* about social transformation or facilitating the "full development of children in their care" (Gil, 1984, p. 307). This blaming the victim and scapegoating under the guise of benefiting children serves several functions, including: the reinforcement of middle class values, a supply of adoptable children, regulating the poor,[78] and diverting attention from structural conditions such as poverty and marginalization (Callahan, 1993; Pelton, 1989; Swift, 1995).

O'Brian (2004) claims the child welfare system is a "labyrinth that defies easy description by neophyte social workers, clients, and even experienced social workers, managers, and attorneys" (p. 275). As in Weber's concept and metaphor of the *iron cage*, child welfare in Canada is largely bureaucratized and hierarchical**,** bound by policy and procedures, and increasingly specialized (Lefrance & Bastien, 2007). It is increasingly

focused on investigation, while disposing of the majority of cases (Armitage, 1993b), and results in a highly fragmented part of a web of organizations (O'Brian, 2004; Swift, 1995). Additionally, Pelton (1989) suggests that the child welfare system has never lived up to its professed mandate of family preservation, instead it has consistently[79] only resulted in child removal and the profound intrusion of the state into the lives of families.

Social workers, therefore, intervene on behalf of the state when, as C. Wright Mills (1959) coined, "personal troubles" become "public issues" and:

> as private behaviour becomes visible publicly, the boundaries separating and maintaining private and public space dissolve for individuals. … The behaviour, even though it was either intended to be private or believed to be private, becomes public as it is ferreted out by social workers or police." (O'Brian, 2004, p. 217)

By intervening on behalf of the state and operating within the host setting of the legal system (O'Brian, 2004), child welfare workers are often caught within the complexities of a dual role of investigation/ coercion/ control and support/ persuasion/ assistance (O'Brian, 2004; Pelton, 1989; Swift, 1995). Child welfare workers are thusly in a paradoxal position[80]—gaining the trust of clients in order to help them, while carrying out an investigative role that can ultimately separate and decimate the family (O'Brian, 2004).

The construction of neglect and abuse has resulted in what Costin et al. (1996) describe as the *Child Abuse Industry*[81]. This industry is comprised of a wealth of professionals from the psychotherapeutic, legal, social service, non-governmental, and governmental communities, who, adhering to risk discourse, collect data, and create:

> a kind of fetish, or obsession with an idea or concept of abuse or neglect or 'fetishized' system of reembedded values. In child welfare, we see the construction of this fetish as the substantiation and accumulation of statistics on cases of child abuse or neglect. As we add these to our national calculations, it contributes to the reification of the idea of the child welfare system as protecting or saving children from the abuse or neglect of their parents or caretakers. (O'Brian, 2004, p. 23-24)

Risk Thinking Ideology

Risk thinking is prevalent in both criminal justice and child welfare systems in Canada. While popular[82] and widely used, it reflects neo-liberal tools[83] of social control and Othering. The structural violence of the risk-thinking paradigm maintains a culturally violent belief system that artificially blames vulnerable groups and absolves the state of perpetuating oppression. Social work, despite adopting risk discourse and risk assessments, has done so with little critical reflection, resulting in not only enhancing the marginalization of vulnerable populations but also threatening its own ethical integrity.

'Risk thinking' (Rose, 2000), the 'logic of risk' (Ericson & Haggerty, 1997), and risk discourse as a model of functioning are most evident in criminal justice and child welfare settings[84] (Kemshall, 2002; Kemshall, Parton, Walsh & Waterson, 1997; Parton, 1996b; Shaw & Shaw, 2001). Risk discourse is concerned with risk management and focusing on categories of people (Webb, 2006). As Dean (1999) effectively states:

> Risk techniques are closely allied to the use of case management in social security, social work, policing, and the sphere of criminal justice. Those judged 'at risk' of being a danger to the wider community are subject to a range of therapeutic (e.g. counselling, self-help groups, support groups), sovereign (prisons, detention centers) and disciplinary (training and retraining) [interventions] in an effort to either eliminate them completely from communal spaces….or to lower the dangers posed by their risk…. (p. 189)

Risk assessments, however, have been strongly criticized as being more about neo-liberalism than they are about reliability, validity, or rigour,[85] and risk discourse,[86]under the rhetoric of actuarial objectivity, as laden with questionable methodology that reflects and sustains neo-liberal ideology.

Risk Thinking As Cultural Violence

It is not so much the risk assessment that poses the threat, according to Rose (2000), the threat is instead in the risk-thinking paradigm[87]. As with cultural violence that creates and

maintains the climate for structural violence to thrive, risk literature tends to focus on risks that are attached to individuals, ignoring structural and systemic harms (Andrade, Austin & Benton, 2008; Myers, 2007; Tanner, 1998).

Risk constructions not only reflect ideological foundations (Pollack, 2010), they persist and are largely unchallenged because they fuse so seamlessly with the dominant ideology[88] (Hannah-Moffat, 2004b). Risk discourse has the "potential to entrench oppressive relations[89] of gender, race, and class" (Krane & Davis, 2000, p. 35). As Rigakos (1999) cautions: "We must pay careful attention not to misread risk systems as operating on a separate or detached logic from 'unscientific' impulses[90] such as racism, heterosexism, classism, etc." (p. 146)

This ideological framework is neo-liberal and uses the discourse of individualism instead of collectivism, and the goal of risk management instead of social justice (Culpitt, 1999). The neo-liberal ideological space needed for risk thinking to occur can be itself understood as cultural violence—of the hegemony that promotes inclusion and exclusion, responsible and risky citizens (Parsloe, 1999).

Who is assessed is especially problematic as only selective populations[91] are identified as being at risk (Hannah-Moffat, 2004a); namely, those who are oppressed and marginalized (Parsloe, 1999). To be deemed high risk, Castel (1991) and Silver (2000) argue one does not have to demonstrate a dangerous behaviour, just a sufficient set[92] of risk characteristics associated with a group aggregate. Silver suggests that this poses a very fundamental issue of ethical practice[93] when individuals are prejudged and assessed based on their group membership. For Aboriginal peoples, their higher likelihood of experiencing marginalization would automatically inflate their perceived risk.

Social Work's Precarious Adoption of Risk Discourse

Whereas concerns raised about risk discourse are voiced within the sociological literature, the social work literature, on the contrary, reveals sporadic discussion[94] on the

discourse of risk (Ferguson, 2004; Parsloe, 1999; Parton, 1996a, 1996b; Pollack, 2010; Schwalbe, 2008; Shaw & Shaw, 2001; Webb, 2006). Risk is a dominating factor in social work practice, and informs how social workers conceptualize themselves and how they are conceptualized by others (Green, 2007; Kemshall, 2002; Parton, 1996b, 1998; Shaw & Shaw, 2001; Stalker, 2003; Webb, 2006).

Despite the lack of a collective and critical social work analysis of risk discourse and in response to a growing insecurity about professional expertise and policy expectations to predict uncertainties, social work has adopted risk[95] and audit[96] systems. Howe (1996) warns, that how social work concerns itself with risk is a reflection of the direction of social work practice and its "increasingly shallow practice"[97] (p. 92).

In addition to a risk of increasing shallow practice, social workers are now open to greater scrutiny[98] (Beck, 1992; Goddard, Saunders, Stanley & Tucci, 1999), resulting in what Haney (2004) describes as a "war on discretion" (p. 340). In an environment of increased blame and scrutiny, risk avoidance encourages workers to make defensive decisions[99] (Parton, 1996b). The defensive, not the right decision (Parton, 1998), results in paper trails of protection (Webb, 2006), an increased tendency to conservatize decisions (Green, 2007), case files constructed for audit for ethics (Power 1997), and a difficulty in identifying who the primary focus of protection is—the client or the social worker (Green, 2007).

> Classifying a case as low risk might come to be recognized as a high risk activity for child protection workers. Thus a new form of defensive practice may develop, in which all cases are labeled high risk in order to protect the worker from real or perceived fears of increased liability. (Goddard et al., 1999, p. 259)

In an atmosphere of fear and blame, social workers' diminished determination to take case management risks can result in greater peril[100] for the service receiver (Parton, 1996b), and increase again when workers fear coming forward with mistakes or near misses (Littlechild, 2008). In turn, a climate of individual scapegoating is created rather than

organizational responsibility (Kemshall et al., 1997), resulting in heightened workers' anxiety and caution (Parton, 1996).

Social work too frequently is focused on predicting future risk of individuals or marginalized groups, marginalized due to neo-liberal politics of self-reliance (Webb, 2006). Neo-liberal risk discourse has concerning implications for social work as this epistemology conflicts with social work mandates of social justice and structural analyses of personal difficulties (Kemshall, 2002; Krane & Davies, 2000; Webb, 2006). This caution is important for social work as the very processes that we subject our 'clients' to, clients report are the same processes that bring about further alienation and marginalization. There is, therefore, potential risk and inherent harm not only to the individuals assessed, but also beyond individuals, namely, to the harm of 'social working'[101] for social justice and reducing marginalization. If we as a profession are anxious about our ability to work for social justice and reduce oppression, if we are concerned about our culpability in processes of contemporary colonization and structural violence, this then is a concerning detail of inconsistency.

> Neo-liberal social work not only challenges those who wish to employ more collective, structural approaches but also undermines the value base and the practice base of traditional social work. The domination of social work by budgets, the commodification of every aspect of the social work task, negates basic social work values, such as respect for people. (Ferguson & Lavalette, 2006, p. 313)

Conclusion

Whereas Chapter Two outlined a theoretical framework from which to understand rates of overrepresentation as contemporary colonization, this chapter presented structural violence as a tool with which to re-conceptualize contemporary colonial outcomes and processes. By adding a lens of structural violence through which to review the effects that too many Aboriginal peoples experience, threats to social, physical, economic, and political wellbeing were reframed as physical harm, deprivation of resources, spiritual death, denied

political representation, diminished collective identity, hyper-state surveillance, internalized oppression, and false consciousness. In other words, by re-presenting the effects that individuals experience as forms of structural violence, the nebulous phenomena of overrepresentation gains clarity and a political charge as identifiable forms of violence. This reframe is an important addition to our understanding of Aboriginal people's experiences with child welfare and criminal justice systems. Too frequently reoccurring negative outcomes run the risk of being accepted as unfortunate incidentals or by-products when they need, instead, to be understood as preventable violence.

Equally important, however, is the awareness of how the social machinery of oppression reproduces these preventable forms of violence. States pushing crime control agendas should be seen as dangerous and structurally violent for criminalizing not only their social policy but also large segments of their population. In particular, American neo-conservative ideology underlying crime control agendas and promoted through the media is seeping into Canada and social workers have been co-opted into this social machinery of neo-liberal governing.

This understanding of how social workers act as the eyes and ears of the state is a concerning commentary for a profession with a social justice mandate. In particular, who is Othered, namely, the most marginalized groups and individuals, is socially constructed through labelling and criminalization. Urban spaces and social systems in turn contain and reproduce these Othering discourses as racialized spaces, spaces that concentrate the continued colonization, institutionalized violence, and deterrence to self-determination and political efficacy affecting Aboriginal peoples.

While overrepresentation rates are produced by social machineries of oppression and constructed Othering, they are most directly produced by the criminal justice and child welfare systems under neo-liberalism. Both systems have adopted risk thinking , which as a

form of cultural violence combined with social work's precarious, premature, and ethically concerning adoption of risk discourse is now paving a dangerous course for Aboriginal peoples.

Our participation as social workers in these structures of domination and our adoption of risk thinking in child welfare and criminal justice settings put us in inconsistent and contradictory roles of helper and potential harmer, facilitators of empowerment and agents of control, and workers for social justice and guardians of oppression. Where do we fall along this spectrum? Where do we intend to place ourselves? What is our role in the perpetuation of contemporary colonizing processes and structural violence? To help answer these questions, I used critical methodologies to ask Aboriginal social workers who have both a client experience of interacting with social workers and a professional understanding of what social work constitutes.

4 Research Methodology

In order to better understand the role social work plays in the contemporary colonizing and structurally violent processes affecting Aboriginal peoples, I was interested in hearing what Aboriginal social workers and Aboriginal social work students had to say about the social workers they encountered during their own experience(s) into, during, and out of child welfare and/or criminal justice systems—were they helpful, harmful… indifferent? I was also interested in understanding why participants chose to become social workers; the barriers and supports they encountered in their professional journeys as a result of these experiences; and the difference their experience(s) might have on their professional practice. Given that participants had the distinctive experience of receiving social work services and, because of their professional training, knew what social work services should entail, I sought their insight in what we do well and what we might do differently to our part in contemporary colonizing processes and structural violence.

My exploratory qualitative research methodology has been informed by Institutional Ethnography (IE) and Hermeneutic Phenomenology. IE was used to explicate those social work relations of ruling that frame social work practice and discourse and Hermeneutic Phenomenology in order to understand how I understand my participants' narratives. In short, since I am interested in understanding how social work engages in contemporary colonizing processes, I have chosen to use research methodologies that explore constructions of understanding and professional processes instead of using methods that examine people.

Critical Research

Within this study, my critical framework lends itself to using a critical research methodology.[102] Peirce (1995) maintains that theory and methodology are intimately linked. This intimate relationship formulates the types of questions and assumptions made, it influences the methods and approaches used, and frames the results achieved.

Critical research methodologies espouse a number of common tenets: the aim of critical research is to explore the relationship between structural/macro forces and human agency for the purpose of social change; marginalization is produced and maintained by unequal power relations; individuals' lived experience is a primary source of data; research must be located within historical context; and no research can claim to be objective[103] (Peirce, 1995).

These tenets fit well with my research area. I am interested in how macro/structural forces shape social work interventions, and the critical literature supports the perspective that marginalization is produced and maintained to perpetuate existing political/economic interests. I am interested in interviewing people with lived child welfare and/or criminal justice involvement as informants about contemporary social work processes, and I do not intend that my research will have any claims of objectivity—it will be framed within a clearly defined critical ethnographic framework. Within a Marxist tradition, critical ethnographies including feminist and institutional, render visual those sites of marginalization, exploitation, and oppression as the everyday outcome of social relations under capitalism. As such, critical ethnography aims not just to investigate, but also to communicate methods that research participants can themselves use to further their own awareness and action (Jordan & Yeomans, 1995). This study, which frames lived experience as a professional asset, not only validates participants' experience, but also has the potential to centre their knowledge as a much needed reference informing social work discourse.

Common features of critical ethnographies include an emphasis on lived experience, discourse, reflexivity, and social justice change. According to Thomas (1993), critical ethnographies originate with a starting point from empirically grounded evidence of social conditions and who is interviewed is determined by who can provide the best insider knowledge of those conditions. Discourse, as a central focus for inquiry, is examined in order to unlock privileged meanings and access the "netherworld of mundane life to unblock alternative metaphors and meanings" (p. 46).

Correspondingly, reflexivity is used to elucidate how the researcher's values influenced the study, to effectively predict potentially excluded counter- interpretations, and to demythologize how results were arrived at. In other words, reflexivity is not only about producing authentic results but also about being clear about the process of their production (Thomas, 1993). As such, reflexivity maintains not only that the researcher's location be considered, but that this location delegitimizes any claim of objectivity (Walby, 2007), making space consequently for the premise of multiple truths. Finally, results are evaluated by their implications for social justice. As critical ethnography views knowledge as a tool for new ways of thinking, valid results should open up new avenues for awareness and new possibilities for alternative action for change (Thomas, 1993).

My research falls well within this area of critical ethnography. It relies on understanding peoples' lived experience with social workers and how their lived experience influences their own professional practice, the implications their experience has for social work discourse, and on my own reflexive stance[104] in being transparent about how I heard and understood their narratives for the purpose of social change. Since I am interested in understanding social work practice from the perspective of individuals who can tell me about their experience, it makes sense for me to look to Institutional Ethnography as both a theory

and method. As a critical ethnography, Institutional Ethnography forms a cornerstone for my methodological framework.

Institutional Ethnography

Canadian sociologist Dorothy Smith formulated Institutional Ethnography (IE) with her 1987 classic work *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology*. While often described as a methodology, Smith D (2005, 2007) postulates IE instead as a form of sociological epistemology and ontology that explores the *local*, where people are at, to discover how the *extra-local,* or institutional processes and texts beyond people's immediate awareness, shape peoples' everyday experience.

Foundations

IE has a unique ontological and epistemological foundation. Beginning as a sociology for women, Institutional Ethnography's evolution into a critical sociology for people did not betray its feminist roots.[105] Institutional Ethnography maintains a commitment to the politics of conscious-raising, a critique of alienating conceptual methodologies, an adoption of standpoint forms of inquiry, and the central tenet that people are "subjects of knowledge rather than the objects of study" (Smith D, 2007, p. 409).

Ontologically, Smith views the world as "materially constituted in the practices and activities of people as these are known and organized reflexively and recursively through time [and] proposes to investigate social life in terms of how it is actually organized" (Smith D, 1990, pp. 630-631). Institutional ethnographers are "interested in the particular conditions under which experiences arise and are lived by someone" (Campbell & Gregor, 2004, p. 59). Consistent with a critical social theory approach, Smith D (2007) draws upon Marx and Engel's notion of a social science grounded not in "theory, concepts, speculation or imagination but in actual people's activities and the conditions of those activities" (p. 411). IE starts at the local with people as the experts of their own experiences and explicates extra-

local processes of how local expertise is omitted from traditional sociological accounts and processes of power (Walby, 2007).

Drawing on feminist theory, IE conceptualizes standpoint as perspective; from their perspectives, people are the experts of their life conditions (Smith D, 2005). Smith suggests that our location or standpoint frames our understanding or perception. While mainstream research posits the researcher as unbiased, Smith argues all knowledge is constructed out of location and power. As such Smith argues that researchers cannot stand apart—their epistemology or embodied knowing is created from the world and in turn creates the world they inhabit (Campbell & Gregor, 2004).

A key feature of IE is to explore how knowledge and lived experience are socially organized and to illuminate for people how they are complicit in these social relations even when it is not within their awareness. As such, IE is a sociology *for* people, rather than *about* them and affords opportunities to transcend objectification trends of traditional social sciences. It is a sociology for people to understand[106] these organizing forces so that they can begin to dismantle them (Campbell & Gregor, 2004). IE's intention is not to scrutinize the informant but rather to learn from the informant's lived experience about relations of ruling (Walby, 2007). In essence, IE is about situating individuals in relation to each other and to institutions (Walby, 2005).

Key Conceptualizations

Key conceptualizations that Institutional Ethnography relies upon include the social organization of social relations, relations of ruling through ideology and discourse, explication, the social relations of capital, bifurcation of consciousness, the problematic, and textual mediation.

Campbell and Gregor (2004) maintain that Smith refers to the *social organization of social relations* as the purposeful arrangement and interplay of peoples' everyday activities.

IE looks to uncover the puzzle or problematic of these arrangements and to challenge the reification of unchallenged social ontologies. In other words, IE works to demystify[107] processes of marginalization. An example used by the authors to highlight this is the actual occurrence of using a bus pass. While bus passengers would be familiar with the practice of showing their pass to the driver, an outsider might be perplexed at the accepted practice of some people gaining passage without payment in the form of cash. Institutional Ethnography explores seemly accepted social relations at the local (people's experience of boarding with a bus pass) and at the extra local social organization levels (the texts or policies that create acquisition and use of bus passes) to discover relations of ruling (Campbell & Gregor, 2004).

Relations of ruling refer to those seemingly concealed and mystifying power dynamics behind all social relations; the relations that bind and connect individuals often without their actual meeting. Relations of ruling are more that the regulation of rules; these relations require a competence and compliance to proceed in the encoded conduct (Campbell & Gregor, 2004). "Smith's view is that it is through their active participation and in contributing their own knowledge of how to go about things that people are brought in line with ruling relations" (p. 41). Institutional Ethnography tries to discover, investigate, and explain how "people's everyday lives may be organized without their explicit awareness but still with their active involvement" and how those ruling relations dominate the actions of individuals at the local level (p. 43).

To elucidate ruling relation processes, Smith D (1987) traces the role of ideology and discourse. She defines ideology not just as a set of beliefs but rather as a method of organization—it is socially constructed to systematize the way people think about their own and neighbouring societies. Similarly, Smith argues that ideological concepts need to be challenged and questioned in order to identify their underlying expressions of social relations. Smith also suggests that Foucault's notion of discourse is integral to understanding ideology

and ruling relations; however, her own notion of discourse expands upon that of Foucault's. While Foucault conceptualized discourse as a macro construction, such as the discourse of social work, Smith emphasizes that discourse is done by active and creative people. Actual people activate texts or policies on the micro level in their doings of text/policy production, text/policy use, and text/policy conceptualization (Campbell & Gregor, 2004).

Explicating[108] ideological and discursive relations of ruling refers to the process of revealing the "dynamic ways in which the complex web of professional and institutional practices that organize modern capitalist society (such as government, education, business, and the law) contribute to ongoing struggle and oppression in many peoples' lives" (Brown, 2006, p. 355). For example, when a child welfare worker visits a foster parent at home, the meeting, process, urgency, necessity, conversation, and purpose are predetermined by centrally produced policy and protocols. In essence, IE assumes that all human activity is choreographed not only by the individuals involved but also by the relations of ruling (Brown, 2006). Furthermore, relations of ruling and organizational forms of governance are included in people's speech acts and their descriptions of their experiences (Walby, 2007). For example, when a person says that they were 'apprehended as a child,' the child welfare practice of removing a child from their family and into a foster care placement is subsumed into the person's description of their experience of being taken away from their family.

Ruling relations is rooted in Marx and Engels' assertion that while people's awareness is intricately linked to their experience, capitalism requires a separation between consciousness and experience (Smith D, 1999). Smith argues the "social relations of capitalism have the particular character of dissolving the particular and the concrete in abstracted and generalized forms" (p. 77), resulting in objectified forms of ruling that deny individuality, coordinate the mass's activities and form false consciousness. In other words, while people form their own awareness as a result of their experience, they are confronted

with an alternate awareness that cautions how they should think and act, resulting in a *bifurcation of consciousness.* Smith argues that the most marginalized people experience the greatest bifurcation and rupture of consciousness and the greatest disconnect between the knowledge they have of their lived experience and the discourse about them used by institutions and organizing structures (Smith D, 2005). This bifurcation of consciousness becomes the problematic in IE, or the dilemma that while people are the experts of their everyday lives, they are often unaware of their experience of and involvement in the regulation by extra-local institutions (Smith D, 2007).

Smith D (1987) identifies the *problematic* as a "set of possible questions that may not have been posed or a set of puzzles that do not yet exist in the form of puzzles but are 'latent' in the actualities of the experienced world" (p. 91). The term problematic is also used in referring to how language is used to organize peoples' activities, specifically how objectifying discourse of organizations and systems override the subjective knowledge of people's everyday experiences (Smith G, 1990). In accordance with Smith's theory of social knowledge, all knowledge is biased in terms of the location of the knower and since IE serves to challenge oppression, the problematic is researched from the perspective of the people with the lived experience of the problematic (Campbell & Gregor, 2004).

Smith D (1987) argues that the problematic, and social and ruling relations are *textually mediated* through established procedures and required documentation.[109] In other words, professional practices are prescribed by guidelines and policies, management is delineated through organizational chart structures and chains of command, and organizational priorities follow government legislation. While organizational text analysis is an important aspect of IE, I chose not to include text analysis for this study because as an exploratory study, the organizations with which participants had interactions were diverse, making textual analysis prematurely complicated. Rather I hope that future researchers can use my

findings to launch targeted text analyses and utilize Smith D's (1999) understanding of texts objectifying both client and worker,[110] and Walby's (2005) analysis of texts producing "truth"[111] and maintaining surveillance processes. [112]

IE as Method

IE is both a critique of conventional ethnography[113] as well as a method for inquiry that is tied to IE's theoretical framework (Walby, 2005). Institutional Ethnography offers an avenue to map how things occur in the everyday world and how they are connected reveals conceptualizations such as power, knowledge, hierarchy, and policy. These conceptualizations and their texts in turn organize everyday occurrences and this dialectic refers to Smith's notion of the *social organization of knowledge*. The methodology of IE moves Smith's social organization of knowledge, or a theorized way of seeing and knowing that refamiliarizes people in their everyday world, into a research practice (Campbell & Gregor, 2004).

The Problematic, Research Questions, And Data Collection

Smith D (2007) summarizes IE as beginning with the standpoint of the problematic or people's experience of a problem as a result of institutional involvement. In addition to identifying the problematic, the researcher needs to identify her/his own position or location in terms of the problematic. How did the researcher arrive at this? What experience(s) did the researcher have that led to these questions (Smith D, 1987)? Institutional Ethnography requires not just reflections on the researcher's lived experience in order to develop the problematic, it also requires that the researcher is familiar with relevant literature in order to offer new insights into what is already known, to identify her/his own conceptual framework, and to identify the contested terrain of knowing (p. 51).

The *contested terrain of knowing* is what Smith maintains as the dissonance between the lived experience of marginalized peoples and mainstream scholarship—a scholarship that

has often alienated and oppressed. A review of the literature is not just to state what is known, but rather to "analyze the literature's social organization" (Smith D, 1987, p. 52), an organization that is often implied to be objective. Smith argues that institutional ethnographers aim to be neither objective nor subjective, but rather to "identify how the researcher-writer is located, the purpose for which the particular account is written and what activities this particular account supports—or, alternatively, makes invisible" (p. 53). As such, the institutional ethnographer needs to articulate her/his own stance vis-à-vis the literature (Campbell & Gregor, 2004).

Once the problematic, or latent puzzle, has been identified, key informants are interviewed. The purpose of interviewing is not to garner information about the informants themselves, but rather about ruling relations as played out in everyday occurrences. The IE research process is ongoing and unfolding, responding to each new discovery with new questions (Walby, 2007). Questions often arise out of the research process; each informant offers new information. The research does not study the informants, rather it gathers information about the problematic from the informants. As such there is often no set interview guide, rather each informant's story offers new layers to be explored with the next informant (Campbell & Gregor, 2004).

When interviewing informants, rather than theorize about possible assumptions (such as lingo or expressions) it is important to hear the expertise they describe about their experience: what exactly occurred, what was said, how did these events unfold, in which ways did that affect them, and how were their circumstances altered? For instance, if an informant states that they were 'apprehended,' the researcher would ask for specific descriptions of what that actually looked like or how that actually transpired rather than rely on 'apprehension' as a shared conceptualization and imagining (Campbell & Gregor, 2004).

Data Analysis

Researchers transcribe interviews and analyze data by looking for themes, topics, or reoccurring words. Unlike other qualitative traditions, the data must be analyzed in context and not cut up and sorted. A guiding question to analysis is "what does this tell me about how this setting or event happens as it does?" (Campbell & Gregor, 2004, p. 85).This recursivity for institutional ethnographers reveals patterns about social organization. These data are used to "discover material connections between what actually happened" to informants and what activated those specific events (p. 70).

Analysis within IE also means allowing the data to speak without excluding what does not necessarily fit. In order to make it accessible both for social justice change and to marginalized peoples, the results should be free of exclusionary jargon. The results should remain true to the data, to demonstrated evidence, and not move to a "wild orgy of verbal bloodletting in which the researcher moves from interpretation to yelling 'revolution' from the rooftop in the dark" (Thomas, 1993, p. 63-4)! It should demonstrate a clear and transparent flow from the data to the results, illustrating relations of ruling rather than simply making assertions, and writing with the intention of providing transformational strategies for social justice rather than simply offering declarations of oppression. It requires that the researcher is fluent in the languages of the informants, the research methodology, and the intended audience. Since its goal is emancipation of people who are marginalized, the "analytic discourse aims to unshackle comfortable ways of viewing the world" (p. 67).

The transcript is analyzed not by interpreting the meanings through a theoretical framework, but rather by explicating the ruling relations that are imbedded but not necessarily explicit (Smith D, 2005). Interpretation is thus a "defamiliarization process" where we take a seemingly unquestioned conceptualization and reframe and identify alternative interpretations (Thomas, 1993, p. 43). For example, when we defamiliarize,

"stairwells are no longer just avenues for moving between floors, but may be gender battlefields where women protect their space, bodies, composure, status and identity" (p. 44).

Data analysis strives to explicate how people's actual activities are organized by ruling ideas and practices (Campbell & Gregor, 2004). In addition, data analysis does not attempt to generalize the local. Rather, informants' local experiences give rise to the problematic and provide a vantage point from which to study institutional processes. The local and extra local are not seen as separate but as co-constitutive, providing an opportunity to challenge the reification of seemingly static concepts (Smith D, 2005).

Maps are produced as a way of conceptualizing the linkages between people's everyday experiences and institutional processes so that the researcher can then better visualize and, therefore, explain those linkages (Walby, 2007). In addition, conceptual maps can be produced for informants so they can increase their knowledge about their everyday world or so they can better make sense of their everyday world as organized by influential but hidden ruling apparatus (Smith D, 2007).

Rigour

Attention to rigour within the IE literature is sparse and has been identified as a concern (Walby, 2007). The literature does, however, make mention of validity and reliability. While institutional ethnographers do not head into interviews with a structured questionnaire, IE methodology stands up to standards of rigour of qualitative research by "employing the techniques in ways that explicate ruling relations" (Campbell, 2002, p. 4). Specifically, validity is determined by how well researchers demonstrate that their procedures for arriving at their results align with their stated methodology (Campbell & Gregor, 2004) and by being transparent with the goals, purpose, assumptions, principles, and processes guiding the research. Instead of relying on the researcher's 'authority,' this transparency places accountability on the researcher in terms of the reliability of the results (Mauthner &

Doucet, 2003; Walby, 2007). In essence, the institutional ethnographer attends to rigour by being transparent and true to the methodology.

Critique

The brief attention to issues of rigour or being long on theory but short on method is identified as a critique of Institutional Ethnography. Walby (2007) maintains that while important in terms of explicating relations of ruling, IE has been less concerned and less reflexive with explicating its own relations of research (data collection, analysis, or writing the results). As such, the researcher still maintains a high degree of influence as to how the informant's experience will be presented, how the data will be interpreted, and how the results will be written. Further, if rigour is attained once the researcher is able to explicate ruling relations, Walby argues this logic is based on flawed circular logic.

> The constitutive hermeneutics of the IE interview ensure that the institutional ethnographer hears an implicit account of social organization and ruling relations, because the frame of institutional ethnographic discourse conditions the exchange toward particular articulations and the satisfaction of what it conceives of as real. (p. 1022)

As a result, Walby suggests that the lack of transparent and clear IE data analysis methods result in this approach, in essence, being "virtually indistinguishable from purportedly objectivist methods" (p. 1023). While its theoretical eclecticism (Jordan, & Yeomans, 1995) and comprehensiveness are well developed, Walby (2007) cautions that "more attention should be paid to the constitutive hermeneutics of interviewing and the production of subjects in data analysis" (p. 1014). In order to address this critique, I have chosen to augment IE with Hermeneutic Phenomenology to deepen my awareness about the science of understanding lived experience.

Hermeneutic Phenomenology

Hermeneutic Phenomenology forms the other cornerstone for my methodological framework. In addition to Walby's (2007) caution that IE needs to pay closer attention to the

constitutive hermeneutics of interviewing, Hermeneutic Phenomenology offers both a useful theoretical foundation of the science of understanding the human experience (Thomas, 1993), as well as a more defined method for interviewing and interpretation.

As part of the qualitative tradition, Hermeneutic Phenomenology offers an approach of understanding through dialogue, description, and interpretation of lived experience.[114] As a process of inquiry, it offers an opportunity to gain critical insights into the lived experience of people who encounter social workers. In addition, since Hermeneutic Phenomenology is based on premises of the equality of discourse and the relational construction of knowledge, this approach offers an opportunity to make audible the voices of those who have been silenced and attaches visibility and meaning to a lived experience of social work intervention that for too long has been ignored. As Struthers and Peden-McAlpine (2005) suggest, phenomenological research is compatible with Indigenous oral tradition in recording the essence of experience and coming to a mutual understanding in a holistic and culturally accepted way where context and experience are integral to knowledge.

What Is Meant By Hermeneutic Phenomenology?

Phenomenology, as the investigation of everyday lived experience (Heidegger, 1982), comes from a “philosophical tradition and is designed to describe psychological realities by uncovering the essential meaning of lived experience” (Baker, Wuest and Stern, 1992, p. 1357). Similarly, Sokolowski (2000) states, “phenomenology is the study of human experience and of the way things present themselves to us in and through such experience” (p. 2) and Van Manen (1997) explains, “phenomenology is the systematic attempt to uncover and describe the structures and the internal meaning of structures of lived experience” (p. 10). While phenomenology is the description of lived experience, hermeneutics is the theory and practice of interpretation (Paterson and Higgs, 2005; Smith J, 1993). In other words, phenomenology attempts to understand and describe human experience and hermeneutics

attempts to explore the process of understanding through interpretation. While denoting two traditions, van Manen (1997) suggests Hermeneutic Phenomenology involves focusing on a phenomenon and exploring and reflecting on the lived experience.

As Hermeneutic Phenomenology arises from two traditions, I will highlight key concepts and their underlying progression as a distinct branch of phenomenology. As a complex tradition (Gearing, 2004), phenomenology is both a philosophy as well as a method (Baillie, 1996). As a social research method, many researchers, however, do not identify the philosophical tradition informing their phenomenological work (Turner, 2003). Turner explains that this may be due to researchers having difficulty translating philosophy into research strategies. While I agree that the various philosophies behind this tradition are complex, its intent, however, is to describe an authentic and trustworthy rendition of lived experience. By definition of this tradition, a transparency is required not only of the researcher's biases and theoretical frameworks, but also of the methodology's philosophical orientation. In the spirit of transparency and hopes of demystification, the following is my brief description and interpretation of the key concepts and philosophical origins that inform hermeneutic phenomenological research.

Key Concepts and Philosophical Foundations

Rooted in philosophy, Hermeneutic Phenomenology developed in the early twentieth century from a purely descriptive retort to positivism to one where the role of interpretation is paramount in understanding lived experience (van Manen, 2002). Key concepts include intentionality, bracketing, Dasein/Being, pre-suppositions, reflexivity, hermeneutic circle, fusion of horizons, and dialogic inquiry.

In contrast to the customary notion of science that recognized and observed only the tangible, German philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), often considered to be the founder of phenomenology, developed "a rigorous descriptive science of consciousness"

(Baker et al., 1992, p. 1356). Husserl responded to the nineteenth century tradition of positivism whereby science was limited to the "unphilosophical study of mere facts" (Spiegelberg, 1982, p. 74).

Husserl suggested intentionality, by way of reduction and bracketing, could create descriptions or common meanings of the essence of phenomena (Baker et al., 1992; Husserl, 1970; Koch, 1995). He referred to the concept of *intentionality* as a conscientious or methodological focus on a phenomenon (Sokolowski, 2000). This intentionality on phenomena illuminates both visually descriptive characteristics of experience as well as the innate essence comprised of memory and subjective meaning (Creswell, 1998). As Koch (1995) and Zahavi (2003) explain, Husserl was interested in exploring life-world or the lived experience in order to examine its essence and meaning. In order to "get to the things themselves" or "zu den Sachen" (Gearing, 2004), Husserl explained that descriptions of life experience needed to be considered through an uncluttered lens, clear of theoretical frameworks, pre-suppositions or biases. The researcher needs to filter out, epoch, or *bracket* their pre-conceptions or pre-understandings about the phenomena and use creative imagining[115] for reduction to get to the essence (Baker et al., 1992). For Husserl, this form of reduction and bracketing one's pre-understandings could allow the researcher to discover the essence of phenomena. Heidegger, a follower of Husserl's ideas, developed them further in Hermeneutic Phenomenology.

As a student of Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) developed Hermeneutic Phenomenology (Spiegelberg, 1982). As an approach of understanding and interpreting in order to conceptualize *Dasein* or Being, Heidegger looked at the ontology of the theory of Being as comprised of the past, the present, and the new possibilities of the future (Paterson & Higgs, 2005). While Husserl believed it was possible to bracket or

suspend our pre-judgments, Heidegger believed we needed a frame of reference in order to understand.

Heidegger thought it was precisely our *pre-suppositions* or our understanding of our context in the world, that allowed us to comprehend anything. Instead of attempting to deny our biases, Koch maintains Heidegger believed we need to thoroughly examine our pre-suppositions to understand how they affect our interpretation (Koch, 1995). For Heidegger, bracketing then involved identifying the researcher's epistemological, ontological, axiological, and methodological framework, rendering them explicit and critically analyzing their effect on the research (Gearing, 2004). Heidegger's emphasis on understanding the pre-conceptions that inform and influence our interpretation has led to *reflexive* researchers who openly acknowledge their biases, as well as frequently consider the effect or influence their bias has on their research. This reflexivity creates the opportunity for researchers to intentionally become open to new understandings.

For Heidegger, an intentional openness to understanding was termed *Bildung*. By employing a conscious awareness or Bildung, Heidegger felt we could correct and modify our pre-suppositions within the *hermeneutic circle* (Turner, 2003). Heidegger referred to the hermeneutic circle as the dialectical movement between the parts and the whole of the phenomena. The researcher becomes part of the circle, moving between interpretations of parts of the text and interpretations of the whole of the text. While the parts help to define the whole, the whole gives context to and helps illuminate the parts (Paterson & Higgs, 2005). Wallace, Ross, and Davies (2003) describe the paradoxical nature of the hermeneutic circle—the parts can never be understood without the context of the whole and yet the whole is comprised of the parts. The circle is formed through the process of reduction to the parts and reconstitution to the whole. This dialectical concept was later advanced by Heidegger's student Hans-Georg Gadamer.

Gadamer saw conversation or dialogue as the playing field for the hermeneutic circle, and as "a process of coming to an understanding" (Gadamer, 2000, p. 385). "The task of hermeneutics is to clarify this miracle of understanding, which is not a mysterious communion of souls, but a sharing in common meaning" (p. 292). Gadamer believed we can only understand phenomena through our cultural, historical, and temporal pre-cognitions, and rather than being an obstacle, our pre-cognitions allowed a fusion of understanding between Others and ourselves (Smith B, 1998). As Gadamer (2000) explains:

> It is not so much our judgments as our prejudices that constitute our being …. Prejudices are not necessarily unjustified and erroneous, so that they inevitably distort truth. In fact, the historicity of our existence entails that prejudices, in the literal sense of the word, constitute the initial directedness of our whole ability to experience. Prejudices are biases of our openness to the world. They are simply conditions whereby we experience something. (p. 9)

Gadamer saw the *fusion of horizons* as the shared understanding of interpretations of phenomena. This understanding or knowledge is produced through *dialogic inquiry* with the text, returning again and again for increased meaning. For Gadamer, the hermeneutic circle is never static or closed and always evolving through the fusion of horizons (Paterson & Higgs, 2005). As Turner (2003) explains:

> Understanding takes place not from the position of a neutral observer, who is detached or removed from the immediacy of the experience, but through the intimacy of understanding that occurs as a part of the hermeneutic circle. Within this context, understanding occurs because we circle from the whole to the parts and back to the whole again, constantly forming and continually revising our understandings or projections about the whole as more parts of it come into view. During this process, prejudices are formed and reformed, and it is important at this point to remember that prejudices are not false judgments. Rather, they are conditions of understanding. Thus, instead of eliminating our prejudices, we discriminate among them; constantly questioning our beliefs and our understanding as we become prepared for the phenomenon we are exploring to say something new to us. (p. 19)

Gadamer's (2000) dialectic approach to conversation emphasizes the coming together with another person through dialogue, the equality of those discourses, and the attempt to co-interpret those understandings. In essence, early hermeneutics transformed Husserl's purely

descriptive phenomenology to embrace both Heidegger's suggestion that all description is in fact interpretive as well as Gadamer's examination of the role of language used in interpretation and the influence of prejudgments, history, and tradition in the understanding of lived experience. This approach is particularly appealing for me as a social worker interested in engaging in research that premises equality, respect, reciprocity, and co-authored relational knowledge.

Strategies for Data Collection and Analysis

Creswell (1998) suggests the format of a phenomenological study includes an introduction to the essence of the phenomena, a solid understanding of the philosophical perspective framing the methodology, research participants who have experienced the phenomena, the researchers' ability to identify, bracket, and describe how their own experiences affect the study, and a description of the data analysis methods.

Baker et al. (1992) identify specific data source, sampling, data collection, and analysis strategies. The hermeneutic phenomenological researcher requires verbal or written narratives or artistic representations (drawings, poetry) from people who have lived the experience. The researcher "borrows" these descriptions to gain a deeper understanding, usually in the form of semi-or unstructured interviews. Because participants must have the lived experience and be willing to offer rich descriptions, non-probability, purposeful sampling with a small sample size is recommended. The researcher uses broad open-ended questions and bracketing to avoid influencing the descriptions. After detailed transcription, transcripts are read and reread to create an understanding of the whole. Meaning units are formed to represent implicit or explicit meanings, which when combined, form a general interpretation of the phenomena. Similarly, Heidegger (1962) and Colaizzi (1978) describe a phenomenological method that includes reading all the transcripts multiple times until a general understanding is obtained. Significant phrases are identified that pertain to the

phenomena and meanings and themes are drawn that lead to the overall understanding of the phenomena. Smith B (1998) and Colaizzi (1978) recommend that the themes and general understandings are presented back to the participants for validation.

Critique and Rationale for Dual Methodologies

Hermeneutic Phenomenology or the understanding of lived experience is by its essence concerned with individual experience and not with research for the purpose of the emancipation of marginalized peoples. It is, however, based upon critical features including the questioning of ontology and the premise that interpretation is contingent on the knower's pre-suppositions and co-constructed understandings. By itself, however, Hermeneutic Phenomenology would result more in a description of people's lived experience and less in the explication of the structural forces influencing and framing that experience. Together with Institutional Ethnography, however, Hermeneutic Phenomenology has the potential to understand people's lived experience for the purpose of structural change. In short, while Institutional Ethnography provides both a theory and method for explicating those ruling relations social workers with a lived experience of child welfare and/or criminal justice involvement experience in their interactions with social work practice and discourse, Hermeneutic Phenomenology provides both theory and method of the science of understanding lived experience. These two cornerstones guiding my own research will provide both a solid understanding of why I am doing what I am doing, as well as provide rigour for how I do it.

My Methodology

> Research is always carried out by an individual with a life and a lifeworld… a personality, a social context… all of which affect the research…. (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p. 4)

Envisioning a Research Need from my Social Location

Consistent with both Institutional Ethnography's criteria for the researcher to identify their position (Smith, D. 2007) and Hermeneutic Phenomenology's principle of the researcher being reflexive (Turner, 2007), my methodology begins with an awareness of my presuppositions going into this endeavour. My intention as a researcher is to engage in inquiry that is beneficial, in terms of its methodology as well as its implications for policy, in aiding in the struggle for social justice; specifically, to affect the alarming trends of systemic control of Aboriginal peoples. My motivation has been informed initially and foundationally by the conversations I have had with numerous Aboriginal women and men during my practice career as a self-identified non-Aboriginal feminist social worker. These women and men spoke with me about their experiences prior to, during, and after having had the criminal justice system affect their lives as well as their experience of living with that effect. The conversations I had with these women and men occurred both in prison and in the community, in my office, on the street, and in their homes when they had one. Often I spoke with some individuals only once; many times, I spoke with others over months and years.

I also had many opportunities to dialogue with colleagues who have worked with Aboriginal peoples who have been or were at risk of criminalization, and often, who worked with the same individuals with whom I spoke. These colleagues worked within a spectrum of both clinical and macro settings: probation/parole, child welfare, mental health, substance use, basic needs, community development, administrations, and policy analysis. At times, their insights offered valuable additions to my awareness, more often, however, their discourse revealed a disturbing tendency towards discrimination and pathology. I was dismayed at the seemingly pervasive attitude of victim blaming shared by many of my colleagues despite the fact that we shared not only mandates with common threads of empowerment and client centered approaches, but also that we were to a large extent social

workers by training. As disturbing as these encounters were, the blaming discourse echoed the stories many clients shared with me when they described their experiences with social service workers.

Consistent with IE's requirement that the researcher become familiar with the literature (Smith, D. (1987), my interest during my doctoral course work in understanding more about the experiences that individuals have had living with criminalization led me to the literature primarily in sociology, criminology, and social work with a focus on critical theories. My path of understanding led me to look also at the role of child welfare interaction, an occurrence most of the individuals I encountered shared, and to specifically focus on the experiences of Aboriginal peoples, as their shared social locations seemed to include multiple system involvement, control, and marginalization. In addition, I looked to Indigenous scholarship to get a better understanding of the role of social work within contemporary colonization practices. As so many of the individuals spoke about having numerous social workers in their lives, I also oriented myself to literature to understand the mechanics of neo-liberal social control.

As a social worker, I am alarmed by the ever-increasing trend in Canada to respond to the social conditions facing many Aboriginal peoples with increased child welfare apprehensions and criminalization processes. As a member of a profession that has a mandate for social justice and to work with groups who experience marginalization, I am greatly concerned with neo-liberal and neo-conservative policies and approaches that continue to unravel the fabric of social welfare only to reweave those threads into an increasingly dense net of punitive crime control responses. As social programs are cut, Aboriginal peoples face not only an ever growing risk for social exclusion and poverty, but concurrently an increasing risk for being ensnared by child welfare and criminal justice systems. Yet, throughout these journeys of marginalization, Aboriginal peoples continue to encounter social workers along

the way. I wondered, what role do social workers play along these journeys? What do we as a profession do well? What do we need to be doing differently?

The Problematic and Research Questions

The problematic and the area of research of this study is the role of social work in contemporary colonizing processes. Specifically, what is the role we play in contributing to or reducing overrepresentation rates of Aboriginal peoples in child welfare and criminal justice systems? What would Aboriginal people have to say about the social workers they encountered over the course of their experiences with child welfare and criminal justice systems—were social workers helpful, harmful … indifferent? Given our professional commitment to empowerment and social justice, would the stories of blame and pathology I heard during my professional practice be echoed in the stories of my research participants? Having once been clients and being social workers today, what would Aboriginal individuals say social work does well and what do we need to do differently to reduce overrepresentation rates?

The questions I developed are consistent with Hermeneutic Phenomenology's use of semi-structured interviews (Baker et al., 1992). In addition, while IE often does not use an interview guide, the four general questions are consistent with IE's intention of gathering information from participants acting as informants (Campbell & Gregor, 2004). As such, the interviews for this exploratory qualitative study flowed from four overriding questions.

1. Please tell me about your experience with social workers during or as a result of your child welfare/criminal justice involvement. Prompting questions included:
    a. In which ways did social workers intervene with you?
    b. Please describe the outcomes of these interventions.
    c. What difference did social workers make in your life?

2. Can you tell me why you decided to become a social worker? Prompting questions included:
    a. Why did you choose this profession?
    b. What do you hope to accomplish as a social worker?

c. Did your own lived experience of having social workers involved with you in the past influence your decision to pursue social work? If so, how?
d. Did your own lived experience with child welfare or criminal justice systems influence your goal to become a social worker? If so, how?

3. Given your lived experience of child welfare/criminal justice involvement, please describe what it was like for you to pursue your career as a social worker. Prompting questions included:
    a. Please describe any barriers and/or supports you encountered in pursuing your career as a social worker.
    b. Please describe any supportive or inhibitive processes you encountered once you decided you wanted to become a social worker?
    c. Please describe any barriers or supports you encountered in integrating your lived experience with your professional career?

4. Given your lived experience of child welfare/criminal justice involvement, please describe any effect this has on your social work practice or how you do social work? Prompting questions included:
    a. In which ways does your insider knowledge and lived experience of child welfare and/or criminal justice processes influence your own social work practice?
    b. In which ways does your insider knowledge influence your effectiveness as a social worker?

In short, these four questions were intended to better comprehend the role social work plays in contemporary colonizing processes of Aboriginal peoples by understanding:

- the effects social workers have on Aboriginal clients,
- why Aboriginal clients and former clients want to become social workers,
- what social work does to support or challenge the professional development of Aboriginal social work students and practitioners who were once clients, and
- the difference having an Aboriginal insider client understanding has for social work practice.

Ethics Approval, Recruitment, and Sample Selection

Prior to my recruitment process, and in formulating my research proposal for the University of Manitoba's Ethics Review Board, I created my research tools (see Appendix A to N), which included:

- introduction letters for Aboriginal agencies in Winnipeg and Manitoba and the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Manitoba;
- a recruitment poster;
- a list of counselling resources for participants;
- a list of Aboriginal agencies to contact;

- initial and follow-up interview scripts and questions;
- a participant demographic information form;
- scripts for recruitment, for soliciting feedback on transcript and initial findings, and debriefing; and
- consent forms for initial and follow-up interviews.

After incorporating feedback from the Ethics Board, I received my ethics approval certificate, which allowed me to proceed with recruiting participants for my study.

Consistent with Hermeneutic Phenomenology, my recruitment and sample selection strategy was non-probability purposeful sampling with a small sample size (Baker et al., 1992). As such, recruitment initially posed a concern for me as I had the sense that I would be trying to find a hidden population. Based on my previous conversations with community social workers over the years, I have had a number of individuals disclose to me their prior child welfare and/or criminal justice involvement. While these conversations occurred during discussions regarding other issues, it was perhaps my own perspective and the language I used that gave them a reason to believe such a disclosure would be respected. Nonetheless, they communicated that despite their experience being integral to both their reasons for going into social work and playing a significant role in their efficacy in their professional roles, that this was a disclosure that they made selectively. As a result, I expected that this might be a hidden population and could be difficult to find and so I planned my research design to accommodate this challenge.

In order to recruit and interview Aboriginal social workers who had child/youth experience with child welfare and/or criminal justice systems, I emailed the directors of over 30 Aboriginal agencies within Winnipeg and Manitoba. In my email, I requested that the directors print and post my attached pdf poster in a central location for their staff to see and/or forward the email to their staff and collaterals. Because I sent emails to organizations, I had no way of knowing how many directors forwarded my email to their staff and/or

contacts. I also requested that the Dean of the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Manitoba forward my email to a listserv of all faculty, staff, and students. In addition to the main University of Manitoba campus, the Social Work Faculty also offers BSW programs with large numbers of Aboriginal students at campuses in the inner city of Winnipeg, in Thompson, a northern Manitoba community, as well as a number of sites in the province where cohort programs are operated by the faculty. Since I was myself on the faculty listserv, I knew that my email had been forwarded but again did not know to whom listserv members may have forwarded my email onto.

Despite having prior knowledge of Aboriginal social workers and students who would fit my research criteria, I did not approach or invite anyone directly to participate. While this strategy risked potential participants not receiving notice of my research recruitment call, it did ensure that I avoided any coercive recruitment strategies. Instead, I relied on interested participants contacting me (this resulted in only one person who I had known previously who would fit the criteria responding to my recruitment call). In the end, through this purposeful sampling strategy, I was able to recruit and complete interviews with 15 participants with surprisingly little difficulty. Since this was an exploratory qualitative study and given potential participants were likely difficult to find, 15 informants[116] provided a good beginning for exploration and explication of ruling relations and allowed for rich and thick[117] descriptions.

Description of Sample

The fifteen participants in this study represented collectively considerable diversity. Thirteen women and two men participated in the study and all identified as Aboriginal persons. I chose against asking participants to detail their Aboriginal identity for the following reasons. As discussed earlier, Aboriginal identity markers including Status/ non-Status Indian and Metis are not Indigenous but imposed, legislated, and prone to change

(Blackstock, 2011). I subsequently chose also not to ask about participants' Nation(s) (such as Peguis First Nation) or their cultural group (such as Cree or Anishinaabe) as child welfare involvement often interrupts or impedes connections to birth parents and/or communities. Since this study was exploratory, I chose instead to ask participants to self-identify both their gender and their Aboriginal ethnicity and did not ask for further subcategories.

As indicated in Table 4.1, ten individuals had Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degrees, of which two were currently enrolled in a Master of Social Work (MSW) program, four were BSW students, and one was a pre-BSW student taking social work courses as an unregistered student . Their ages ranged from 23 to 58 years with a mean age of 39.9 and median age of 36.5 years. All participants had lived experiences with either the child welfare or criminal justice systems as children, youth, and/or as adults. Eleven participants had child welfare involvement, ranging from two to 20 years with a cumulative total of 67 years of experience

Table 4.1. Participant Demographics

	Name	Gender	Age	System Involvement	Years in system	# Social Workers	Education
1	Trouble	Female	36	Child Welfare	4	3	MSW (student) BSW
2	Doreen	Female	40	Child Welfare	3	1	MSW (student) BSW
3	Lenora	Female	58	Child Welfare	11	4	BSW
4	Thunder56	Male	53	Criminal Justice	0.25	0	BSW
5	Adrian	Female	23	Child Welfare Criminal Justice	3 3	4 2	BSW (student)
6	Geri	Female	37	Criminal Justice	6.5	3	BSW (student)
7	Rosalinda	Female	33	Child Welfare	8	5	BSW
8	Eliza	Female	55	Child Welfare Criminal Justice	? 2	5 2	BSW
9	Nettie	Female	32	Child Welfare Criminal Justice	2 1	2 0	BSW
10	Liz	Female	33	Child Welfare	6	6	BSW (student)
11	Alex	Female	42	Child Welfare Criminal Justice	? 10	3 4	Pre-BSW (student)
12	Leo	Male	27	Criminal Justice	3	3	BSW
13	Mina	Female	35	Child Welfare	20	5	BSW (student)
14	Daniella	Female	54	Criminal Justice	3	4	BSW
15	Amie	Female	41	Child Welfare	10	4	BSW
15	Total	13Women 2 Men		11 Child Welfare 8 Criminal Justice 4 Both	67 27.75	42 18	1 Pre-BSW (student) 4 BSW (student) 8 BSW 2 MSW (student) BSW

(mean = 7.4, median = 5) and interaction with 42 social workers (range = 1 to 6, mean = 3.8, median = 4). Eight participants had criminal justice involvement, ranging from 0.25 to 10 years with a collective total of 28.75 years (mean = 3.6, median = 3) and contact with 18 social workers (range = 0 to 4, mean = 3, median = 3). Four participants had involvement in both systems. In short, 15 participants represented almost 95 years of systemic involvement with 60 social workers.

Table 4.2. Participant Professional Experience

Years in Social Work Role Current Role Previous Role	Trouble	Doreen	Lenora	Thunder56	Adrian	Geri	Rosalinda	Eliza	Nettie	Liz	Alex	Leo	Mina	Daniella	Amie
Total years of social work service	12.5	3	23	14.5	7*	1*	4	24	5.3	3*	1*	4	1*	19	15
Direct Service	12	3	23	14	5 2	1	2	14 10	0.3 5	3	1	1 3	1	19	15
Management	0.5						2								
Policy/Researcher				14											
University Educator	1			0.5											
Community : General			23	14	2	1		14							6
Basic Needs	12		23	14				14			1				6
Substance Use	12		23	14	2			14	0.3		1	3			6
Mental Health	12		23	14				14	0.3		1				6
Abuse	12		23	14				14	0.3		1				6
Community Building	12		23	14	2			3	0.3						6
Parenting			23		5								1	10	
Aboriginal Community				14											
Counselling	12							4							
Activist						1									1.5
Government: Child Welfare	12	3					2	11		3		1			
Criminal Justice								11	5						
Hospital				1											7.5
Home Care								6							
Professional Association					2										

* Participant was in the process of completing their BSW education in contrast to participants who had their BSW degrees.

Similarly, as shown in Table 4.2, the participants collectively represented a wealth of practice experience. Cumulatively, the participants embodied 137.3 years of experience, with a mean of 9.15 years (median = 4.7). Individually, participants' length of professional experience ranged from one to 24 years. Of the five participants who were taking their BSW education, three had one year work experience and the other two had three and seven years social work[118] experience respectively. All described their experience as direct service; three had additional experience in management, in policy/research, and as a university educator. As displayed in Table 4.3, participants embodied experience working with a variety of issues: substance use (60%), mental health, domestic abuse and community building (each 47%), basic needs (33%), and parenting (27%). One participant worked specifically with Aboriginal communities, two in counselling, one in activism, and one in a professional association.

Table 4.3. Professional Social Work Experience

	#	%
Direct Service	15	100
Management	2	13
University Education	2	13
Policy/Research	1	7
Community Services	**12**	**80**
Substance Use	9	60
Mental Health	7	47
Domestic Abuse	7	47
Community Building	7	47
General	6	40
Basic Needs	5	33
Parenting	4	27
Counselling	2	13
Aboriginal Community	1	7
Activism	1	7
Government Services	**9**	**60**
Child Welfare	6	40
Criminal Justice	2	13
Hospital	2	13
Home Care	1	7
Professional Association	1	7

*Percentages do not add up to 100 as participants offered multiple answers

Data Collection and Transcription

I interviewed each participant at a location and time of their choice: two interviews were conducted at the participants' homes, five interviews occurred at restaurants or cafes, and eight interviews took place at an office of their choosing. Each interview was between 60 minutes to 200 minutes, with most lasting 120 minutes. At the beginning of the interview I offered tobacco as a thank you and as a way to honour their stories (some declined) and gave each participant a thank you card with a 20 dollar coffee gift card. Each participant then

read and signed an informed consent form and agreed to have the interview digitally recorded. I also asked each participant to complete a form for basic demographic information: a fictitious first name by which they can be referred to; their age and gender; length of child welfare and/or criminal justice involvement and number of social workers they had involvement with; and type and duration of current and previous social work experience they had (i.e. student, child welfare worker). After the demographic information was collected, I gave each participant a copy of the questions in which I was interested and added that any additional information that they deemed relevant was certainly welcome. Since the recruitment poster included a concise list of the questions, the copy of questions presented provided no surprises and instead offered participants with simply more detail and probes. After asking if they had any questions or comments about the intended interview process (two asked about housekeeping issues such as parking and some commented that they appreciated having the questions on paper in front of them), I started the recording and interviews.

As expected with both IE and Hermeneutic Phenomenology, participants gave detailed and considered answers. These interviews resulted in complex narratives with descriptions rich in specific examples and thick with layered meanings and repercussions. In large part, the interviews flowed easily, moving from one question area to another and back again. Other times the flow was facilitated through active listening and probing on my part. My conscientious intent on remaining open to understanding through Hermeneutic Phenomenology's notion of Bildung (Turner, 2003) and developing a conscious awareness was facilitated through my own activities such as note taking or jotting key phrases down in order to ask for clarification and to become more conscious of my pre-understandings. While my pre-understandings were informed by critical literature and my previous practice experience, I jotted key phrases down as they arose during the interviews in order to bracket

out, set aside, and return to the participant's meaning. For example, during one interview, a participant said that her social worker 'kinda looked out for her.' I jotted down the words looked out to cue me to question further about what actually happened in order to bracket out my own conceptual map of what 'looked out for someone' meant. In other words, rather than theorize about possible assumptions, it was important to elicit clear descriptions of her experience: what exactly occurred, what was said, how did these events unfold, in which ways did that affect her, and how were her circumstances altered?

Since an IE research process is ongoing and unfolding (Campbell & Gregor, 2004), new questions arose out of completed interviews and each participant's story offered new layers to be explored with the next participant. Because the research did not study the informants, per se, the arising questions pertained to social work interventions and processes. Examples of the evolvement of new questions include one participant sharing his vision for the social work profession with the recent increase in Aboriginal social work practitioners and another talking about why she responded to the recruitment poster. Following these stories, I included in subsequent interviews questions about what difference the participant anticipated more Aboriginal social workers with lived experience would make for the social work profession as well as inquiring about why participants wanted to be involved in this particular research project.

Once I completed my first two interviews, I began transcription (the fifteen interviews eventually resulted in over 25 hours of recordings and 490 pages of transcripts). Since I used a digital recorder, I was able to use the accompanying software program[119] that allowed continuous feedback loops of selected segments of the recording. In other words, I was able to define the segment I wanted to transcribe and then listen to that segment as many times as I needed (usually four to five times) in order to complete the transcription, before moving on to the next interview bite. Using this method, I was able to capture the nuances of

the interviews, including the pauses, indicated in the transcripts with ———-. I also at this time removed any identifiers and replaced those with *XXX* and inserted a participant's fictitious name for those instances where they stated their real name.

Once I completed the transcription of an interview and consistent with Hermeneutic Phenomenology's fusion of horizons (Paterson & Higgs, 2005), I then read the entire transcript several times noting initial themes, potential quotes, and areas requiring clarification. I used Padgett's (1998) notion of analytic triangulation and I asked a third party[120] to review a transcript and my initial findings as a trial run. The feedback I received directed my subsequent interviews and analysis. It was suggested to me that I needed to ask for further elaboration from participants when they recalled their experiences, which I then did. I did not receive any comments about my concept map other than it appeared 'on track.' While analytic triangulation was helpful, it was done with caution as Institutional Ethnography maintains that the researcher's location is an instrumental lens within the research process and different locations result in different interpretations. Never-the-less, I felt confident that my interviewing style and initial analysis of emerging themes was, based on a third-party review, consistent with my methodology and intent.

After receiving positive feedback from a third party and again in line with Hermeneutic Phenomenology's dialectic approach and IE (Colaizzi, 1978; Gadamer, 2000; Smith, B. 1998), I also used member checking. I returned the transcripts and my preliminary interpretations to the respective participant (participants only received the transcripts and initial concept map from their own interview) for their review to ensure I had arrived at meanings and understandings consistent with the essence of their lived experience. A second interview was offered if a participant had additional insights to share. Since I returned each participant's transcript back to them for review, I used this opportunity to highlight any clarification I was hoping they could elaborate on. Through Hermeneutic Phenomenology

and a fusion of horizons between me and each participant, these conversations had the potential to facilitate a dialogical process of understanding. Since a goal of IE is not generalizability but rather explicating the ruling relations within a particular setting, I hoped that by returning my initial findings to each informant, that they too could make better sense of the hidden ruling relations active within their own experiences, and experience an enhanced awareness for accessible change. My intention was that the people who spoke with me would be able to recognize their voices in the text and would find the explications meaningful and the results constructive for transformational change and continued rethinking. The purpose of returning their transcript(s) was also to provide them with an opportunity to edit, delete, or add and if they chose not to respond to my request for clarification, I needed to respect this non response. Although there were participants who, when I returned their transcript and concept map, I would have liked to have had clarification on a few points, because they did not reply I did not pursue or contact them again. As it turned out, only three of the fifteen participants responded and all three stated they were happy with the transcript and map and had no revisions or additions.

After ten interviews I detected that a repetition in the themes was emerging and since the remaining five interviews were already booked, they were completed and a saturation of themes became apparent. Saturation within qualitative research is achieved when the research question(s) is answered or no new themes appear (Marshall, 1996; Padgett, 1998). For IE, data collection is complete once the linkages between the two levels of data, local and extra-local, are explicated. This was a little more difficult as the institutional processes I was interested in explicating were not from a singular organization such as *a* child welfare agency. Instead, participants came from a variety of settings, where they are professionally active as social workers. Additionally, participants had had a variety of social workers intervene with them during their prior life experience. As such, the ruling relations I was

interested in explicating were those aspects of contemporary social work practice that were evident within my participants' experiences. In other words, instead of explicating the ruling relations of a particular setting, I was interested in discovering the ruling relations within everyday social work practice. The process of explicating could have continued with each new participant and each new social work context; however, because no new themes were emerging within my existing sample, I decided to complete my data collection.

Data Analysis

In doing my own transcription, I was able to garner information not just in verbal form but from my memory of the nuances that occurred in voice tonality and reflection, pauses, looks, and body language. As Mauthner and Doucet (2003) suggest, a reflexive response to transcripts is to be aware of my social, emotional and intellectual reactions. These responses influenced which quotes I included, which I excluded, and the space and position I gave them in the text. My interpretation was dependent on being present for the conversations, the transcription, and the data analysis.

Because of my need to be present for all aspects of the analysis, I decided against using data analysis software. As I engaged in research exploring people's experiences, I saw those stories as being alive (the telling of the story is influenced by the relationship, and in turn affects the relationship as well as the people involved). If I as researcher was the instrument and carrier of tacit knowledge then I was not convinced as to how using a finite tool such as software could help build a rich analysis.

I also chose not to do a gender analysis of the data. In part, this was because my research sample reflected my population closely in terms of gender. While approximately 80% of social workers identify as female (National Association of Social Workers, 2006), my sample had 86% self-identified women. The primary reason, however, was that I was

interested in an exploratory inquiry into Aboriginal participants' lived experience as former clients and current social workers and chose to leave a gender analysis for future research.

Using the hermeneutic circle as metaphor, I repeatedly engaged with the parts and the whole of the transcripts to draw out meanings, themes, topics, or recurring words to uncover patterns of social organization, ruling relations, and what actually happened to informants and what activated those specific events. I used a research journal to keep track of my observations, questions, ideas, and processing. Referring back and forth between the transcripts, my journal, and my initial concept maps I was able to summarize themes arising out of each interview and then as well compare and contrast themes across interviews. Concept mapping, a method of analysis used in IE (Walby, 2007), was facilitated by the use of Cmap Tools software.[121]

Cmap Tools is a free software program that allows the creation of mobile textboxes that can be colour coded. These text boxes can be moved or dragged and copied into new concept maps. The software does not do any analysis but rather offers the electronic equivalent of having a large post-it note covered wall. Additionally, the software allows for easier organization of numerous concepts and quotes, and enables the saving of evolving versions.

The first cluster of concept maps I created was labelled "participant transcripts." These 15 concept maps, one for each transcript, organized participant responses according to research question. Participant responses were captured by a short quote from their respective transcripts. Sometimes this quote was a word or two, sometimes it was as long as a sentence. For the purpose of the concept map, I included only as much text as I needed to capture the essence of their response. Each participant's concept map was assigned a unique textbox appearance (shape, outline weight, and fill colour) in order to track who said what.

A second series of concept maps was then developed where all participants' responses for each particular question were displayed. This series was labelled "Questions." For example, Question One asked participants about their experiences with social workers and so the first concept map in this series had all responses to this question according to participant. Because each transcript has its own unique coding, I was able to see not only how many responses I had for each question, but I was also able to track who had said what. In the subsequent drafts for this concept map series, I started organizing responses according to emerging themes; for example, social worker interactions that were helpful or harmful. As I was able to refine themes with each subsequent version of a concept map, I referred back to the original quotes that I had pulled from each transcript.

In reading each transcript, I highlighted particular quotes that articulated a participant's experiences, practices, and emerging themes. These quotes were then organized according to the question they referred to producing a series of word documents titled Quotes Question 1, Quotes Question 2, and so forth. Each quote was identified by the participant's fictitious name and then colour coded according to emerging themes identified in the concept maps. Using the conceptual maps and themed quotes, I was able to formulate my findings.

As particular themes arose, I chose to display the prevalence of emerging themes in tables. I identified the number as well as the corresponding percentage of participants who articulated a particular theme. For example, 12 of the 15 participants, or 80%, talked about experiencing helpful relationships with social workers. Because I asked very general questions (*Please tell me about your experience with social workers…)*, this meant that the remaining three participants did not describe experiencing helpful relationships. Had I asked specifically about particular themes such as helpful relationships, however, it is possible those remaining three participants would have also described experiencing them. In addition, because this was exploratory research, I chose to include all themes in my findings described

by the participants. I did this because any theme, if asked specifically about, might likely have been more prevalent and would then be worthwhile to note for future research.

Trustworthiness and Rigour

Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe rigour within qualitative research as achieved when findings are noteworthy and sound credible to the participants. In turn, Paterson and Higgs (2005) recommend that the descriptions authentically reflect the experience of the people that lived and shared their stories of the phenomena. They suggest the credibility of phenomenological research relies on the authenticity (the meanings arrived through open-ended questions to gather as much of the description as possible), the plausibility (the fit of the themes with the direct quotes), and the trustworthiness of the analysis (the checks and balances obtained through bracketing, checking with participants, and going back to the data).

Qualitative researchers have maintained that applying quantitative constructs of validity and reliability to qualitative research is inappropriate. As Leininger (1994) explains:

> The first principle to uphold is that quantitative and qualitative paradigms have different philosophical premises, purposes, and epistemic roots that must be understood, respected, and maintained for credible and sound research outcomes. Both qualitative and quantitative paradigms have entirely different philosophic assumptions and purposes that lead to different goals, different uses of research methods, and the need for different criteria to fit with each paradigm. (p. 101)

Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that trustworthiness, instead, is the qualitative equivalent to quantitative rigour to determine if the findings are credible and authentic. Trustworthiness is based on four features: credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability. Credibility corresponds with internal validity or how well do the participants' views fit with the research findings. This is determined by practices of triangulation, prolonged engagement, and member checks. Here I used analytic triangulation and member checking to ensure that both my transcripts and interpretations authentically represented the views of the

participants. I also had prolonged engagement with the participants by interviewing them initially and then soliciting feedback regarding my interpretations. In addition, I have chosen to include many quotes. I have done this not only because it fits with my theoretical premise of providing space for previously subjugated knowledge, but also to increase trustworthiness. By providing rich quotes, the reader is better able to discern that the research findings are grounded in the data but equally important, that the stories themselves require the space in print to be heard.

The second measure is transferability or how well the findings from one context could fit with a second similar context. This posed a problem as the goal of Institutional Ethnography is to explicate the relations of ruling from a particular lived experience; its goal is not to generalize. This speaks also to potential participant bias where two people experiencing the same situation offer different perceptions of the event. While it was highly unlikely that I would encounter two such participants, there was no way to control for a particular participant's bias meaning how they perceive the event as based on their location, their experience, their subjectivity. What I did, however, was ask about actual occurrences rather than rely on shared misunderstandings.

Dependability, as the third measure, refers to the auditability of the research process or how well the researcher provides an audit trail. Here I have the transcripts from the interviews, my research process notes, as well as my concept maps. Through "audible authorship" (Charmaz & Mitchell, 1997, p. 194) and transparency, I hope that the results I produced are purposeful and clear and leave readers with a sense that the research was a worthwhile and meaningful endeavour and does not desert the people who spoke with me. As Wolcott (2001) cautions:

> Researchers typically desert their subjects at the last minute, leaving folks and findings to fend for themselves, seemingly untainted by human hands and most certainly untouched by human hearts. One of the opportunities —and challenges—

> posed by qualitative approaches is to treat fellow humans as people rather than objects of study, to regard ourselves as humans who conduct research *among* rather than *on* them. (p. 20)

In other words, trustworthiness is a key concern in assessing rigour in qualitative research (Padgett, 1998) and similarly, the research process and discussion are credible when the people who were interviewed would approve (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Finally, confirmability refers to how connected the findings are to the participants, to their contexts, and to the research project and not to a figment of the researcher's imagination. Again, my use of detailed process notes, abundant quotes, member checking, and analytic triangulation provided the anchoring of my findings to the data. These measures or standards of rigour within qualitative research fit well for me and speak to my need for ethical accountability in the methodology with which I am engaged. As Davies and Dodd suggest:

> Ethics are an essential part of rigorous research.… Understanding ethics to involve trustworthiness, openness, honesty, respectfulness, carefulness, and constant attentiveness means ethics are not treated as a separate part of our research.… Ethics are integral to how we think about rigor and are entwined in our approach to research, in the way we ask questions, how we respond to answers, and the way we reflect on the material. (p. 281)

In order to meet standards of rigour within IE, I needed to demonstrate that my procedures for explicating relations of ruling are congruent with institutional ethnographic methodology. The validity and reliability of the results needed to be demonstrated by my transparency with my goals, purpose, assumptions, principles, and processes guiding my research (Mauther & Doucet, 2003). This means that I needed to take careful ongoing notes about my research process and write a clear description of the actual methods and processes I used in gathering and analyzing data to provide an accountability trail that can be measured against the methodology. In other words, in order to meet IE standards, I needed to detail what I actually did and how I did it in order to stand the test of rigour.

Poster Call

While asking participants why they answered the call was not one of my original questions, after one participant volunteered this information, I then included it in my remaining six interviews. All seven said it was important to them to talk about their experiences in the hopes of bringing about positive change for Aboriginal peoples. By sharing their encounters with social workers and their stories of successes and challenges, participants articulated their belief in the importance they held of adding their experience to the building of social work knowledge. Lenore* was not alone when she said she needed to voice all the negative experiences she went through at the hands of social workers:

> When you came, when you're doing your study and you go, (gasp) "oh, this sounds interesting. This is my interest!" ... With my involvement with being in Children's Aid, I can, I have to be honest with them and there was victimization.... You know, there's two dirty words in the Aboriginal community—social worker and...

In contrast, Amie stated she wanted to share her story of success and her pride in being a social worker:

> I also like to share my story because I am proud of what I've overcome. I'm proud of bringing in a new generation, like with my children.... My siblings and I, we've broken, we chose not to perpetuate what we grew up with and just trying our best to raise a better generation. And out of that, I just thought, you know what, I am proud that I'm a social worker, I'm proud that I went to university. I was the first one in my family to go to university. I was actually the first one to, out of my siblings, to finish, actually even high school. So it's like all these firsts, new pivotal things that just kinda took my life in a different direction.

Similarly, Daniella wanted to share her experience as a child in the child welfare system who made it out so more children can be successful:

> I wanted to say that I hope, if anything else, you can show that there's value in people ... who have overcome and who have experienced very difficult living situations ... and because their story is so important too.... It is a power that they have because some people can rise above and do it and what was it that made them not cave and give up hope?

Liz answered the poster because she wanted to share her experience and affect change:

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* All participants are identified by pseudonyms of their own choosing.

> You can't change anything if you just sit around bitching about it unless you actually tell the right people… and I just think it's important to share, like share your perspective in a productive situation and, you know, I don't know why. It seemed like I should. I don't know. The Creator bosses me around all the time and sometimes I try and argue but it never works!

Likewise, Leo and Nettie wanted to contribute to the building of knowledge and education:

> Because I understand that it's important to study. I mean it's education building on education right? … We see more Native people becoming professionals. So, it's important to get that insight, you know.… So I just would definitely like to contribute my experience or knowledge to, to this. You know, 'cause it's so important.… So yeah, it is definitely contributing whatever knowledge I can for a study. (Leo)

> I was thinking to myself, you know what? I think this would be really good for me. I think it would be really good for me and I think that the more knowledge that I can give to researchers about kids that are in Child Welfare that make it and become social workers that successfully make it out of the system and I think their stories should be heard and so that we can learn from them and how, what changes need to happen so that there could be more success stories like mine. *(*Nettie)

Similarly, Amie wanted to increase awareness and participate in the research to highlight the hardships children who age out of the child welfare system experience:

> I wanna share this story about being in the Child Welfare system and what it meant for me.... I chose to do things in despite of growing up in the system ... even when I graduated, as I put in quotations "from the Child Welfare system," I mean even today, it's like the same things are happening. As soon as the person turns 18, you get your last cheque and "See ya" but it's like, well what are they doing to support these young people? They should be doing something, you know, even starting as young as 15, 16, putting along these mentors to help them get, help them make it once they get to independent living or once they turn the age of majority. 'Cause once they become the age of majority, it's like what is there? If they're not in school, they don't have a job, what're the possibilities?

Finally, Daniella wanted to use this opportunity to emphasize the valuable contribution workers with lived systems experience make to the social work profession:

> And maybe, this might be able to get some people to wrap their head around experiential workers ... who have gone to get their education to be a social worker. They're the ones who can understand these kids. They are the ones who might be able to get that connectedness, because their skin's the same colour. Their experiences are the same. They might be able to reach them.... You know, like all this stuff is so important to remember in social work.

Conclusion

Institutional Ethnography and Hermeneutic Phenomenology are both theories and methods that guide my dissertation research. Given my desire to speak with social workers who, themselves, experienced social work interventions, and whose own lived experience is likely marginalized within our profession, I was interested in explicating those social work relations of ruling that play out in everyday interactions. As such, I looked to contemporary Aboriginal social work practitioners and students to act as informants about the role social work plays in contemporary colonization processes and structural violence for Aboriginal peoples. While Institutional Ethnography offers a direction for investigating processes and not people, Hermeneutic Phenomenology offers a rich understanding and established method for hearing and understanding those stories of lived experience. The combination of these methods addressed issues of trustworthiness and rigour both as a qualitative researcher and a structural social worker.

The 13 Aboriginal women and two men who participated in this study represented a wealth of both lived and professional experience. Cumulatively, they represented over 135 years of professional practice experience with almost 95 years of systems involvement with 60 social workers. The participants stated they participated because they wanted to affect change, to tell their stories of hardship and success, and to ensure the experience of Aboriginal social workers with systems involvement was heard.

The next three chapters present my findings. Chapter Five presents the themes arising from their encounters with social workers as a result of their own lived experience as children, youth, and adults within the child welfare and criminal justice systems. Chapter Six then presents the reasons participants chose to become social workers and the barriers and supports they encountered along their career path because of their lived systems experience.

Chapter Seven connects how participants described their lived experience as influencing their professional practice.

5 Findings—
Experiences with Social Workers

How did social workers intervene with participants? What outcomes arose as a result of those interventions? What difference did those interventions make in participants' lives? Participants were asked about their experience with social workers as a result of their child welfare/criminal justice involvement. They shared experiencing both helpful and unhelpful interactions with social workers.

Participants used both "social worker" and "worker" in referring to experiences with social workers, a pattern which I mirrored. Similarly, a person not remembered as a social worker but acting in a social service capacity was identified specifically such as 'foster parent' or 'teacher.' Participants reported experiencing both helpful and unhelpful relationships with and supports from their workers and coping with the resulting interactions.

Helpful Relationships

Most participants recalled having positive interactions with social workers. As Table 5.1 displays, participants referred to two primary attributes of helpful social workers: workers who were invested and workers who were empowering. Invested workers were characterized as those who heard their clients, demonstrated caring and understanding, gave participants hope, established rapport, and explored issues. Participants who felt

Table 5.1. Helpful Relationships/Supports

	Number of participants	(%)*
Helpful relationships	**12**	**(80%)**
Invested	**12**	**(80%)**
Heard	6	(40%)
Caring	5	(33%)
Understanding	5	(33%)
Hope	5	(33%)
Rapport	4	(27%)
Explored issues	4	(27%)
Empowered	**12**	**(80%)**
Self-efficacy	6	(40%)
Role modeled	5	(33%)
Collaborative	4	(27%)
Non-judgmental	3	(20%)
Truthful	3	(20%)
Helpful supports	**7**	**(47%)**
Services	6	(40%)
Referrals	4	(27%)

*Percentages do not add up to 100 as participants offered multiple answers

empowered by their workers portrayed their workers as focused on building skills of self-efficacy, who acted as positive role models, who worked collaboratively with clients, and who engaged in non-judgmental and truthful interactions.

Invested

The issue of investment comprised a number of themes. For participants who recalled their workers as invested in them, they described feeling heard, being cared for and understood, experiencing a sense of hope, having rapport, and feeling that important issues were explored.

Heard

Being heard was noted as the most frequent quality of an invested worker and this sense of being heard left participants with a positive and lasting impression. Participants illustrated the importance of having a worker who expressed interest in listening, who let them talk but at the same time did not force them to talk. As Daniella described, she recalled her social worker as being helpful because she was "listening to me, letting me talk it out and then by validating." Nettie described how her counsellor listened to her at a pace she needed:

> What she did was, she basically *gave me a chance to speak for the first time* (emphasis added) and those social workers had not given me the chance to speak. I felt, like um, when I started talking to her, um, I couldn't go back and talk about my childhood experiences. I was just talking about anything that I was going through at that time. But she wanted to go further and *she would just be so patient with me* (emphasis added) and when I was ready, she was there to listen and I could talk about anything and she would still be there to listen but um, eventually it came to the point where I started talking about some of the things that I went through and it was so painful at first and afterwards, when I had divulged all that information to her I was so embarrassed that I hid from her for two weeks and then I came back. And then I would talk about my experiences again and then go away for a week and then come back but I would always keep on, I would come back because she wasn't the type of person where she forced me to talk. She's very trusting. I could trust her. There's something about her. And I went to counsellors before. But this was the first one that really helped me and then I found out my sister was diagnosed with cancer and then I had to um, take a leave and she continued to see me throughout that time and then after my sister passed away.

Caring

As the second most frequent theme, participants felt their social workers cared for them. Lenore remembered the healing power of touch while Amie emphasized the significance of going on outings with her worker, a worker who seemed genuinely interested in what Amie had to say:

> But with her it seemed that I heard her and she made me talk. It's her way of talking with me that caught my attention … *really caring about what was happening in my life* (emphasis added) ... she met me at my level. Like she did not go above me.... She sat me down and talked with me and had me listen to her … she touched my hand. (Lenore)

> When I was about 15, I did get this young worker, she was actually someone that I felt that I could actually talk to a little bit more.... There was something different about her…. She was more laid back.... I actually felt like *she was really interested in what I had to say* (emphasis added). And she encouraged me to talk. Like she would take me out. We would go for a little ride. We'd pick up an ice cream. We would go sit at the park. She took me out of the group home to kind of talk and I appreciated that because I was always worried if you're talking in the group home, you can't talk bad about the group home, you can't talk bad about anybody 'cause if somebody overhears you, then you've got a problem after. You know, it just gets perceived as something else so, it was like I really appreciated that she took me out of it and we would go sit. I remember actually sitting with her, I can't remember what park, actually I do remember what park it was, but we went and we sat on the bleachers and we just went and talked. You know, she asked me how home was, how school was, how, you know, what was going on and, you know, like she really, I felt with her that she really was interested and wanted to hear what I had to say. So I did feel very supported by her. (Amie)

Understanding

Invested workers were also described as demonstrating compassion and understanding. The workers' own experience as clients, disclosed in varying degrees, gave participants a sense that they could relate to their worker and that there was a connection and sense of acceptance. Adrian recalled having a substance use counsellor who had experienced substance dependence himself and, therefore, understood Adrian's struggle with ceasing intravenous drug use. Similarly, Geri remembered having two workers who gave her a sense of acceptance and respect because of their understanding of her reality:

> We kind of related.... I understood and they know what it's like to be homeless and they know what it's like to spend all their money on an addiction. They know what it's like to struggle and going from food bank to food bank or go to jail and stuff like that or you know ... just doing criminal activity to survive and wow, they made it! ... *I felt accepted by them, respected* (emphasis added).

Hope

Invested workers also facilitated hope. This hope was manifested by giving encouragement and instilling pride, and by nurturing a sense of faith in the participants' own abilities and acknowledging their potential. Nettie remembered getting this sense of hope most from her instructors:

> Teachers were the ones that helped me the most. My teachers, ... they really saw potential in me and they really wanted to help me because I would go to school every day. I wouldn't miss a day. Even if there was blizzards. I would still hop the bus with my child and go to school and try really, really hard and so they recognized that. They thought, wow, here's this girl that's trying and she has, they always told me that I had potential so they basically guided me. Um, they took me in. I remember there was a few women teachers that just took me in and just talked to me and just supported me and *every time I wanted to give up, they would just encourage me to go on* (emphasis added).

Geri recalled developing hope in her abilities, a hope she garnered from the faith her workers had in her:

> The social workers that I had that were good, that's the ones that sat down and got to know me as who I was, and that's the ones that did the most help. They put faith. *They had faith in me even when I was broken down* (emphasis added) and I was homeless.... Those are the ones that helped, supported me and once they could see that they had faith in me, like yeah "I believe in you Geri!" then, that's when I felt that ... yeah, that's when I felt I could do it.

Correspondingly, Leo appreciated the long lasting effect a single comment from his counsellor made:

> She was the counsellor at XXX, the youth program, that I thought she, at least validated a few things in me. Um, like, like some responsibility or like some um, independent thought. She seen those things in me. She told me, "you strike me as that kind of person" and that was really great to hear from an adult who understood. Um, so that's you know, encouragement and *makes me feel proud, when people feel pride they like to protect that* (emphasis added), so you know, that, just that little interaction, you know, that small meaning moment like that, her saying that, went a long way, a really long way 'cause, you know, teenage boys or girls crave

> those kinds of things you know and she gave it to me and it was great.... It just, exactly, less than 10 seconds for her to say something like that and Yeah! And I still remember it up until now and that was 10 years ago.

Rapport

Participants spoke about the sense of rapport they had with their invested social worker. They characterized these workers as having a laid back and friendly approach, a positive and supportive attitude, and who facilitated a trusting relationship that allowed participants to make mistakes. Nettie recalled the trusting relationship she had with her counsellor:

> My counsellor, she was in my situation at one time. She lived some of my experiences and you know what? I didn't know that and I opened up to her. It was the way she worked with me that, she understood me and she heard my voice and I was like, wow, like somebody finally gets me! After when we established that trusting relationship, she told me bits and pieces about her life, and that's like, similar to mine and that's where we have that connection and she, from her experiences, she knew what I needed. She knew that I needed time. She knew that she had to be patient with me.

Explored Issues

Lastly, social workers who explored important issues were remembered by participants as being both invested and helpful. Eliza remembered that her counsellor did not tell her what to do but rather helped her to reflect upon her issues:

> What she said to me was that, "I'm not gonna tell you what to do, I'm not gonna solve your problems for you. What I'm doing is, *I'm gonna walk with you through your life and we'll look at it together"* (emphasis added). So, the image that I got was that we were walking in a forest, and all the trees are lined up, the grass all over and her and I are walking.... Well, when we were talking about stuff, you know, something came up, she'd ask me a question and make me think about it and look at it in a different way and then I'd go, "oh, I never thought of it that way."

Similarly, Adrian recalled that her counsellor helped her to explore her reasons and triggers behind her substance use:

> I would do just one-on-one sessions with him just talking about my drug use and why I felt I had to use, kinda like what are my triggers and like that kinda stuff.

Empowered

In addition to describing helpful workers as invested, most participants recalled feeling empowered by their social workers. Participants noted empowerment was facilitated through self-efficacy, acting as a role model, working in a collaborative fashion, maintaining a non-judgmental approach, and being truthful.

Self-efficacy

Participants explained empowering social workers facilitated a sense of self-efficacy, or participants' belief in their own capabilities to achieve goals. This self-efficacy was enabled by encouraging participants to discover new supports, by informing them of their rights, by letting them proceed at a pace that worked for them, by offering choices, and by offering skills and support to make informed decisions. Nettie, for example, remembered how her counsellor helped her to develop the skills and confidence to think for herself:

> I'm just trying to think why I kept on going to her at the beginning because the beginning was the toughest. It was, it was really hard for her and myself because I stopped going for a while and I kept on coming back and the reason I kept on coming back was because *she made me realize things on my own* (emphasis added) and she would explore things that I would say and never, she would never give me, I could say anything to her and she would never give me any suggestions. She would just listen and just explore that with me and then it was up to me to come up to my own decision. *She gave me the skills to finally think for myself* (emphasis added) what I wanted. She really empowered me that way. And she, and there are a lot of counsellors that make that mistake and say, "Well maybe you should try this and maybe you should try that," but she'd never do that. And that's one thing I think, 'cause as a kid growing up, we're always told what to do, always, and we never had, we could never think for ourselves. When we went to school we just froze 'cause we didn't know how to be and she gave me that power to finally think for myself what I wanted and so, and now I can think for myself.

Role Modelled

Participants also remembered their workers being empowering when they acted as positive role models. Daniella recalled having workers who modelled positive life choices:

> She was ... the role model that I never really had in life ... and she still thought that I

> was a great person.... She was a single parent, so she had experience. She told me her stories. So she, she helped as much as she could because she needed help as well back then and didn't have any so she said, "That ain't gonna happen. You know, I'm a worker. I'm gonna help you."

Acting as a positive role model, Nettie noted her counsellor empowered her and exemplified the very attributes, skills, boundaries, and attitudes that they explored together in Nettie's counselling sessions, counselling sessions that focused on Nettie's developing personal and professional identities:

> You can't just be from lived experience because if you're from lived experience, sometimes you're not, you may overstep maybe your boundaries…. My counsellor was so good at doing that because with her relationship between me and her, she didn't talk about herself, but when I asked her, that's when she talked about herself and she only gave me just a little bit of information and that was enough for me to know that I could trust her. But she still continued her social work role. She wouldn't be my friend, 'cause no, she's never gonna be my friend. At the beginning I thought, I really trusted her and ... I looked at her as a mom but she still kept her position as a social worker and then at times I was kind of hurt because, you know, there was times when I wanted to see her but, like I thought she'd just take me in like that but she said, "no, you have to make an appointment with me," and so, and then I knew, okay, she is just my counsellor so she just, but then, it was hard to explain. She was a good teacher, a good teacher.

Similarly, Mina emphasized an empowering instructor who acted as a role model for her in developing her practice approach:

> I had this one instructor, I just love him so much, I just love him! He's so amazing and he's out there with the youth all the time…. Just the way he talks. Like I get a lot of my, how I talk, from him 'cause *he talks how I feel inside my heart* (emphasis added), where I just wanna look past all the behaviours and all the shit that's going on there and just work with the person.... Yeah, he's so amazing. I love him so much. *He is an awesome role model* (emphasis added).

Collaborative

Participants recalled empowering social workers were those who worked in collaboration with them in terms of making plans, setting goals, and facilitating choices. Both Geri and Amie stressed the positive impression their workers made on them when they worked together on making decisions:

> There was some good Aboriginal social workers and I noticed that with their own

> intervention with me and my kids, when they actually established a relationship and *we actually sat down together and we wrote out a plan* (emphasis added) and they understood where I was coming from and they understood exactly what I went through and my experiences . And ok we sat down, "What do you wanna to do?" and it seemed that everything went okay when they listened. *(*Geri)

> I had heard about independent living and I asked her about it and the thing I liked about her is that she didn't tell me "no." She told me like, "You know what, let's look at that ... let's explore that a little bit more".... Actually giving me a choice ... giving me some hope that I'm not just gonna have to be a foster kid 'til I'm 18 or I'm not gonna just have to be living in a group home 'til I'm 18. (Amie)

Non-judgmental

Participants also shared stories of empowering social workers who maintained a non-judgmental approach with them:

> They weren't judgmental. They didn't judge me. You know, like they knew what I did and everybody else made me feel bad for what I was doing. (Adrian)

> The social workers there were a lot more, I think, used to working with like punk rock kids or like street kids and they tended to be a lot more supportive. Um, like, or a lot less judgmental. (Liz)

> I was getting help but I was also learning you know, from them how I should be, especially when I really liked them and the compassion and understanding that they showed me and not judging me, you know? And they really did care. You know, when someone is pretentious you can feel it right away. (Eliza)

Truthful

Social workers being truthful in terms of what they (the workers) could and could not do and what the consequences of their actions (client's and worker's) may be was recalled as being empowering. Trouble remembered that her worker was honest about what information she could and could not share with her regarding her father:

> With my dad ——— like they were always truthful with me about what was going on…. *I never felt like I was being lied to, I never felt like I didn't know what was going* (emphasis added). Um, they would even say to me ... "You know what, there's things I don't want to tell you because they're gonna be very upsetting and I don't think there a point to telling you about it"…. Uh ha! Being honest with kids, they're not stupid, and I do that in my own practice as a social worker. I'm honest with them and if I can't tell them stuff, I tell them "you know what, I can't tell you and ... I know you're feeling uneasy but I also need to look out for you and I need to look out for your best interests."

Helpful Supports

As displayed in Table 5.1, nearly half of all participants recalled that workers whom they found helpful told participants about resources in the community, gave participants tangible services, and encouraged participants to access additional community supports. Daniella remembered a welfare worker who helped her to find daycare and housing and told her about the BSW program at the Inner City Campus,[122] also known as WEC. Alex shared how her school social workers helped her family get new housing and Amie recalled her worker helping her find an apartment. Lenore commented that her workers took her to medical appointments and Adrian remembered her worker gave her the opportunity do public speaking and give back to the community. Mina spoke about how her child welfare worker helped her to get her house inspected to attain permanent guardianship of her niece:

> We went to court. Um, I didn't feel like she was, you know, on one side or this side. She was there to make sure it was balanced or whatever.... She supported me.... She got my home inspected…. She was the one that told me that after I get guardianship, that I have every right to ensure that he [biological father of her child] is a safe person. So, and I didn't know that, because the social worker, the social workers didn't tell me that.

In a similar fashion, Liz explained how her worker gave her meal tickets and a hotel voucher, helped pay for her school books, and told her about an employment opportunity to write for a street youth magazine:

> My social worker always was really supportive of me going to school. I always stayed in school. I graduated when I was 16 from a street youth school in Vancouver, like an alternative school, so you work at your own pace and they fed you there too and I know my social worker paid for me to go there. She paid for all my school books. My social worker's really, like, a supportive lady.... The other thing that my social worker did that was really helpful is get me connected with [an] arts studio where you could get paid to go do art.... It was in like the Downtown East Side kind of area and also got me connected through street youth services with a magazine called The XXXX. Like we started with a magazine for life about street youth and you could get paid for like writing or drawing pictures or whatever. It wasn't lots, but still a way to make money and I used to panhandle lots 'cause it was a really good way to make money in Vancouver. So in a way they were helpful in the sense that they weren't judgmental of me and they were like pretty supportive of me

> and really supported my whole educational pursuit 'cause I really focused on school.

Table 5.2. Unhelpful Relationships/Supports and Implications

	Number of participants	(%)*
Unhelpful Relationships	**13**	**(87%)**
Not Invested	**13**	**(87%)**
Disinterested	10	(67%)
No exploration	7	(47%)
Talked over	7	(47%)
No debriefing	5	(33%)
Did not listen	5	(33%)
Infrequent contact	4	(27%)
Unreturned calls	3	(20%)
Controlled	**10**	**(67%)**
Lectured	5	(33%)
Judged	5	(33%)
Abused	5	(33%)
Coerced	3	(20%)
Demanded/threatened	3	(20%)
Unhelpful Supports	**13**	**(87%)**
None/substandard	12	(80%)
Threatened	3	(20%)
Implications	**12**	**(80%)**
Distress	**12**	**(80%)**
Isolation/separation	8	(53%)
Delayed processes	7	(47%)
Fear	6	(40%)
Demoralized	5	(33%)
Coping strategies	**9**	**(60%)**
Substance use	4	(27%)
Fortitude	4	(27%)
Running away	3	(20%)
Faith	1	(7%)

*Percentages do not add up to 100 as participants offered multiple answers

Unhelpful Relationships

In contrast to experiencing helpful workers, most participants also shared stories of their encounters with social workers whom they described as unhelpful. Unhelpful relationships with social workers, as depicted in Table 5.2, were characterized by two primary themes: a lack of investment and a controlling manner.

Not Invested

Social workers, remembered as being not invested, appeared disinterested, did not explore participants' realities, talked over participants, did not provide debriefing to traumatic events, did not listen to concerns, made infrequent contact with participants, and did not return phone calls.

Disinterested

Participants recalled their workers as being disinterested and not invested in them. This resulted in participants feeling frustrated in encountering only non-Aboriginal workers and feeling processed and like an imposition. Most participants remembered that the social workers they encountered were white and the fact that they were non-Aboriginal workers was interpreted as explaining the lack of investment:

> I wish I could have had someone that was helping me that was Aboriginal, that spoke my language. It seemed that it was back then, a *pure white world* (emphasis added). (Lenore)

> I remember like I was with these two social workers. They were both Caucasian and young. I think they were maybe straight out of school. (Adrian)

> So I remember um, that day, I remember two social workers coming down to the home, a male and a female, and of course Caucasian, no Aboriginal social workers. (Nettie)

> I started thinking back about the kind of social workers that I had and the only thing that I was able to come up with right away is of course, they were all Caucasian. They were all pretty much middle class. (Amie)

Having a worker who appeared not invested left several participants feeling processed. Amie's experience of feeling like a number or just another case and then later feeling discarded was not unique:

> Growing up in the system, I did not feel respected. I was just a number. I was a case and, you know, aside from the few people that I can pick out of that experience that meant something to me.... It was just day to day survival, like you just got up and did what you needed to do and you didn't think about it. You just did it.... It's like you go on auto pilot. Overall if someone had said to me, 'you know, like "What's your history with social workers been? Helpful or influential in any way?" I mean they influenced it but they influenced it the other way. It was certainly not from the way that you would think normally.… I was older and I guess they were struggling in finding a foster home placement for me. So that was why I went into the group home. And from my experience ... all I knew was that it was for the 'bad' girls, so it was like, I was very angry at the worker. It was, to me it was like, "You're telling me that this is, this is it?' ... It was very hard 'cause to me at that point in time, it was like *even she gave up on me* (emphasis added), you know. And then so shortly after that, then I became a permanent ward and to me at that time it was like, "Okay, now my family's given up on me. Now nobody wants me."... I went to court.... I understand what they were doing but, at the same time it was like, "Now that's really confirmed to me, I'm useless. I'm not good for anything." ... I was about 13 years old, I still have the court papers actually ... *I was just thrown away* (emphasis added).

Correspondingly, Geri recollected feeling as though she was imposing on her workers and their annoyance stood out for her:

> They were exasperated, like you could just hear it in their voice…. I was scared to say anything because then, oh my God, you know, I screwed up, you know, they didn't make me feel confident in telling them that I screwed up.

Leo recalled that his worker, rather than expressing annoyance, seemed more focused on himself and his own life story rather than Leo's reality:

> There was another one that I went to for individual counselling, individual substance abuse counselling and he really just reflected a lot on his own personal experience and for some people that may be a great thing. For me, it's not. I really don't, I'm not interested in hearing what your personal experience is, I'm here for me. So, I would always kinda skip board and, you know, that's your life, not my life.

Liz relayed her social worker told her she was too difficult to bother with:

> And I remember they called my social worker in Winnipeg, and my social worker was like, "Yeah, I don't want her." I remember sitting in the office with the guy that was like, "Do you want me to send her back to Winnipeg?" and she was like, "No, she's difficult," and I remember him, he was like on speaker phone.

No Exploration

Not-invested workers were less likely to explore issues with the participants. Participants commented that they experienced social workers who, in their interactions with them, did not explore or ask them how they were, how things were going for them, or how they were feeling about or coping with their circumstances. Geri explained that her worker seemed only interested in laying out case plan expectations while Leo shared that his worker seemed only interested in small talk despite Leo's serious situation:

> She really didn't wanna get to know me or anything or find out anything about who I was as a person or where I came from. It was just like, boom, "You're my case. This is what you gotta do. You don't do it, you're going back to jail." *She didn't try to ask me anything about my family, my kids* (emphasis added) or, you know, kind of try to establish a relationship with me or anything like that so and then when I look at some of my classes that I do now, that's one of the main things that they want you to do and that's one of the things that I do as a Social Work student is that I establish relationships with community members and people. (Geri)

> Maybe that was his way of going about it, trying to create a casual setting to generate some comfort from me and open up more but that's not what I was there for. I wanted someone to take some direction and ... explore what the reasons were.... It was just a little bit too relaxing, comfortable, where it didn't feel serious and it was serious! I mean my life could have gotten a lot worse…. You could go to jail! You know, if you keep doing these things you could be in Stony Mountain or Headingley [prisons]... I didn't really feel like there was any orientation to our meetings, like what are we moving towards here? "What is it that you wanna do and how can I help you get there?" There wasn't really any of that.... There was no discussion about those kinds of things. Like who you're hanging around with in your life? ... The education piece wasn't there, which is so vital…. Luckily, yeah, you know I was in school. You know, I went to school.... I could understand things but *no one took the time to discuss things* (emphasis added). You know, and to nurture

> and foster, some responsibility in my head and some critical thinking. None of that. (Leo)

Talked Over

The experience of being excluded from conversations or being 'talked over' was frequently mentioned when remembering workers who did not appear invested in the participants. Participants remembered their social workers talking to other workers, hospital staff, and foster parents while they were either sent out of the room, expected to sit quietly and passively, or when consulted, were expected to recite a memorized script. Nettie described her social worker coming once to check up on her foster situation with her grandmother. Despite her experiencing abuse at the hands of her grandmother, she remembered not being spoken with:

> *It was the abuse too that we suffered in the home and there was nobody checking up on that* (emphasis added)…. Now I think there was maybe one social worker that when we were placed into my gramma's care after foster care, they were there. They drove us there and they just talked to my gramma for a bit. But we were never in the room. We were never allowed in the room.... They would never talk to us.

Similarly, Doreen recalled being prepped by her foster parent to recite a script for when her social worker came and her frustration that the social worker never spoke to her alone:

> It wasn't a good home so before she would come over, I would be scripted on what I had to say.… When I did sit down and talk to the social worker, the foster parents were always there so I didn't have any opportunity to have meetings with the social worker on my own.… I didn't want to be where I was, but then how do you voice that when you're not allowed to? You can't say anything 'cause the foster parents are there all the time…. I just didn't like it.... Everything was scripted. *I was told what to say and it was just awful* (emphasis added). So like, my bedroom all of a sudden became 'very nice'. It was like, that ain't my room. I'm sleeping in the basement in the corner over there with a mattress on the ground. THAT'S my bed.

Alex described wanting to tell her social worker about the abuse she was experiencing but was afraid she would get into trouble. She remembered wondering why her worker took only the word of her foster parent and never pushed or reassured her to speak candidly:

> When I was younger ... they mostly talked to the people I stayed with. I was taken away from my mom when I was at a young age. I was like four so of course I'm young but I still knew what was going on…. They just asked me, "Are you happy here?" and all that type of stuff and of course ... I wasn't gonna tell them that I was because I wanted to get back with my mom but ... there was like stuff going on in the houses.... It was kinda like in an abusive manner and then they would treat me differently…. So I never really felt, I never really said that to any of the workers …. I should have. I thought it was like I shouldn't tell or I'd get in trouble or, you know, ... they would tell the parents and they would treat me bad sort of thing…. And they had children, so yeah, their children would treat me worse or things, and I just wanted to fit in sort of thing.... *They never said, 'Hey you can tell us anything you want, um, we're not gonna um, you won't get in trouble'*(emphasis added), they just kinda put me where I was, let me be.... I couldn't really get a sense that they were really involved. They just wanted to make sure that I was placed.... I guess they thought I was too young to know anything …. I think they thought I was young and I would forget about it. So they didn't wanna push on it but I remember everything since I was like two. You know, I mean I don't know if that's because it was in such a horrid place that I just remember all the bad stuff and I don't hardly remember any good times…. So, you know, two years kind of just rolled into one big fog without really getting any briefing or counselling or, I mean at that age I think they think you're gonna forget or you're expected to or that you don't know anything but I think they should have asked more questions and sat down with me and seen if I knew anything, you know, instead of taking the word of the adults.

Amie shared that her repeated experiences of not being listened to or consulted on matters pertaining to her future resulted in her giving up and resigning and deciding to 'lay low' until the day she would encounter a receptive listener:

> That was the attitude he had. Like even if I would say, "Well I don't like this, I didn't like this particular home." "Well you don't have a choice. You're here, you're gonna stay here."... So even if I tried to speak up, I didn't feel that I was being listened to or heard. They always sided with the foster parents…. You know, there was always choices made for me and not really necessarily with me ... after a while, *I just gave up* (emphasis added) and just became a follower and just, whatever you wanna do with me. I didn't fight it anymore…. *I was more afraid that if I fought it, I would be placed somewhere worse* (emphasis added).... In a sense, I started to not fight the system so much ... but I gave in with the intention of not becoming a victim of the system but of kind of laying low under the radar 'til I can maybe eventually have a voice or have someone listen to me.

No Debriefing

In addition to experiencing the frustration of having not-invested workers who were not receptive to listening to or exploring their realities, participants reported experiencing workers who were not willing to debrief with them the traumatic events they had just

experienced. Nettie described a supervised visit with her mother where despite having a devastating ending, she and her siblings received no words of comfort afterwards:

> And so we had supervised visits with my mom afterwards when we were in my gramma's care and I remember going down to one of the CFS offices and there was a supervised visit scheduled and we all made birthday presents for her because it happened to be her birthday that day.... She walked there and she was so overwhelmed when she saw us three that the moment she sat down, 'cause I said, "Mom, I just wanna go home. Take us home, take us home!" and I wouldn't leave her alone and she just stood up and she left and, well, this was devastating for all three of us and we were all just so upset, but again, there was no, *nobody really comforted us* (emphasis added). Like, there was nobody that said, "It's okay," it's, they basically just, we waited there. I remember waiting there for my homemaker to come and pick us up.... And we internalized that again as, we did something wrong and it must be our fault and so when we went back to the home that we were staying in with the homemaker, um, she, she acted as if nothing happened.

Similarly, Mina remembered the trauma of being apprehended and being separated from her mother and sisters and receiving no explanation or acknowledgement of the incident from the workers:

> Well, they didn't talk to us.… So, up until 15. I could do the cooking, I was doing the grocery shopping. That's when I started, when I was 13. She [her mom] would give me three or four hundred dollars and I would go to Extra Foods there on Main Street and go shopping. Yeah, and it was so funny because people would stare at me and I didn't know why til later 'cause you know, I'm a kid, shopping, so, but yeah, but anyways, we got in contact with a worker. I'm not too sure how that happened but she just started coming around.... She was talking to my mom.... I just remember coming home from school and, you know, doing the supper thing and whatever and they came outside and it was the worker and a few of the people and, and I just said, "*Okay girls, pack your stuff. Pack your stuff, we're going … I know that we were getting taken away,"* 'cause you know, you hear so many stories about how it happens and all that stuff and I just knew. So I went to my bedroom and I started packing my garbage bag and all my stuff and I'm telling my sisters, "Pack your stuff, you guys, we're going," you know, um but they were just standing there and my mom starts crying and I'm like "Oh yeah, yeah, we're going for sure." So then the worker comes in and we're talking and I was doing the like "Why me?" You know, "How many pads do I need?" you know and stuff like that and my sisters they were crying and everyone's crying and I'm just, I'm just ready to go.... It was so, like, upsetting that day. To watch my mom cry, like really cry. I never heard her cry like that before, you know. Yeah. So anyways, I guess they took us to an office somewhere and we're all sitting in the reception area and I'm telling my sisters, you know, "We might get separated" and you know, like "Just to stay wherever they put us and hopefully we can all stay together".... So we were all sitting there and, and I knew we were getting separated but I didn't know, oh, ——————————- I knew that we'd get separated. I didn't know if I was going to see them again and I

> tried to tell myself, you know, be calm, like I have to do this and *I didn't know which sister I was gonna lose or which one I was gonna stay with or, or what. I didn't know what was going on* (emphasis added).

By the same token, Nettie also remembered the trauma of her apprehension and the memory of her mother crying uncontrollably and receiving no explanation from the workers:

> I remember two social workers coming down to the home, a male and a female, and of course Caucasian, no Aboriginal social workers. Um, I remember she was sitting in the middle of the living room and basically at that time when they did the apprehension, they pretty much focused on us, getting us out of the home. I remember one social worker going up to my mom. She was sitting in the living room. She was balling, crying. She really had a hard time giving her children up but she felt like at that time there was nothing else she could do and she wanted to provide us with a better life…. She was sitting down and the social worker ... was standing up, and asked her, "Are you sure you want to do this?" And she said "Yes" and so I remember they pretty much said, "You gotta go and get your things." They called us by our names 'cause they knew our names and said "Okay pack your things. We're going." They really didn't tell us where we were going. We were confused as children. *So we saw our mother crying and then these people were coming to take us away* (emphasis added). And so they did and what they did was they placed us in care right away with a homemaker.... No understanding. They really didn't give us too much information. *They didn't even sit us down as children and describe the whole situation* (emphasis added). They didn't say to us, 'this is the reason why we came to the house. This is the reason why'. They didn't say 'your mom is not well now, maybe we have to take you away.' They could have said 'you know, maybe when your mom gets better, maybe we'll take you home.' But nothing like that.

Adrian and Lenore remembered the long car rides from their homes to their foster placements, car rides where they languished in silence alone in the backseat, unacknowledged by the workers in the front seat:

> They really didn't say much to me. I just sat in the back and I was kinda crying and I was all scared and they didn't say much until we actually got to the home.... Both of them were in the front and I was in the back by myself and.... I heard them talking about ... their job and co-workers and stuff like that and stuff they have to do. Like, they were talking, like, I could hear them right? I was in the car with them but they weren't saying anything to me. They weren't asking me questions and like *they totally just ignored me on the whole ride there* (emphasis added). I remember that it felt like two hours. It didn't feel like 45 minutes.... Yeah. I think I was in shock kinda like 'cause my gramma threatened to do this to me but I never thought that she actually would.... When we got to the house, like the foster house, it was like night and day. As soon as we walked in there they started being super nice again, like they were in front of my gramma. (Adrian)

> I was not allowed to talk.… They wouldn't answer me. They said "No, don't talk." …

> I remember one time, I was travelling, I was sitting in the front seat.… Somebody was in the front seat, the driver, me and that person at the back.... I was scared of him....*They just pushed me back, "behave yourself!"* (emphasis added) and I'd see another vehicle coming and I still didn't, I didn't get the hug or the care. I didn't.... *I was maybe five or six years old* (emphasis added) … Yeah. I always think about that. Always. *I'll never forget it* (emphasis added). (Lenore)

Alex and Nettie shared that their experience of unacknowledged traumatic events extended well into their adulthood—Alex experienced a worker who did not recognize the trauma of having a child taken away by the child welfare system and Nettie encountered hospital social workers ill prepared for a grieving family experiencing the death of a sister, a young mother, and daughter:

> I raised him 'til like two-and-a-half and carried him for nine months and like I went into a depression over it like for six months because I was crying, I couldn't sleep and yeah, she didn't acknowledge any of that. Like, I think after, she was just playing hard ball with me. (Alex)

> But before my sister died ... she started talking about the abuse 'cause she just shut it all out of her life but then all this stuff started coming up and she said, you know, "We went through this and we went through that" and she started crying and then I started crying and then after her death, I remember all the abuse started coming and all of the memories and when we were going through this whole ordeal in palliative care when, as a young mom that's dying that has children, social workers were involved but again, they were not involved too so that was just another experience but in a different kind of setting. *It was in a hospital setting this time so we had in Child Welfare, we had it in the schools, now we were faced with this once again in the hospital. The social workers, they didn't know how to deal, they didn't even try* (emphasis added) to, they didn't ——————- How can I put it? She was a mom, she was, she was dying and she had children so she didn't even talk. The social workers didn't really work with her family and the primary caregivers, which were myself and her husband. They just basically, what they did was just get all the health services that they could provide to her in the hospital and later on in her home. Um, they didn't prepare us for the grief. They didn't prepare us for her death. Afterwards, when she died, again, they didn't follow up on the children and on myself and I had to call them and say "Look, you know, we just lost a mother and her children are going through this, her husband is grieving and I'm the only closest person to the family and I'm stressed out to the max and I can't help them. Can you please help us?" So they made one visit, one follow-up visit and of course my sister's husband said "I'm okay, I'm okay" and they left it at that. And this was just two years ago. (Nettie)

Did Not Listen

Participants also talked about experiencing not-invested social workers who would

not listen to the concerns they had about their foster placements. These concerns ranged from bullying to physical safety and sexual abuse. As Adrian shared, her concerns about her foster parent's narcolepsy and persistence with driving and smoking were not heard:

> This foster home they put me in, she was like one of those people who fall asleep, are they like narcoleptic or something? They just fall asleep. Well she smoked in her house and she would fall asleep smoking and there were burns all over the rug and the couch where she slept.… And *she lit the freakin' house on fire and I said I don't wanna be here anymore* (emphasis added).… And they wouldn't move me … because I didn't listen to them 'cause I didn't you know, stop drinking and doing drugs. They wouldn't move me and I'm like "Well look, she's lighting the house on fire. It's not like me just not liking it here. It's that she's lighting the house on fire."... And I couldn't believe they kept her, I mean they were low for foster parents but I couldn't believe that they kept her as a foster parent and even when she was, like, driving, I was scared she was gonna fall asleep driving and, like, yeah, it was pretty scary in that place.… Yeah. I ended up just running away. I just ran away. I was just like "Okay, if you're not moving me, I'm moving myself."

Conversely, Alex recalled her experience as an adult of trying to tell her social worker about the concerns she had over her estranged mother and her son's father having visiting rights to her son in his foster home:

> This is the really kicker is that I went and talked to the social worker and she was like, "Okay, well we'll let you have visits", but my ex had gotten visits and I don't see how he even got this. He was, like, wanted and they didn't even do a background check. Like, they don't even see if he's wanted for anything and, he's on probation and I'm, like, "Oh my God!" They just let him see him like that with no, and my parents, like she was still wanted in Ontario for 30, like 30 years ago, she has a trafficking charge. Like, if you don't check to see where my child goes, and yet they're keeping me away from him where I did my time? I've gone to school. I've done my courses and then straightened from the past 15 years and I can't see my kid? You know what I mean? It just didn't make sense.

Infrequent Contact

Infrequent contact by not-invested social workers was frequently mentioned. Amie described her contact with her social workers as "ships that passed in the night" while Lenore remembered her workers only as the people who drove her as a little girl from one foster home to another:

> When I look back on the workers that I've had, there was very little involvement with them.... There was times that I'd have workers, I would lose a worker and not know it,

> and then all of a sudden, it's like, "Well here, this is your worker now." And would have maybe an initial introduction and then never see them again.… *Our relationship was just like ships that passed in the night and you didn't attach yourself to your workers* (emphasis added). You just didn't. (Amie)

> They were not um, they were not there. Unless I had an appointment to go someplace or from a foster home to another foster home.… I didn't know how to pick up a phone to talk to anybody. (Lenore)

Unreturned Calls

Not-invested workers were noted for not returning messages. As Liz and Adrian stated, their attempts to reach out to their social workers over the serious safety concerns they had in their respective foster placements were not successful:

> They just ignored me. Like I would tell them and then they wouldn't even respond. *They would just act like I didn't say anything* (emphasis added).... I used to go down there and sit there until they had to talk to me.... That [foster] dad was all creepy and he wasn't just to me, it was to other girls too and I tried to get them to come with me but they were like, "Oh no, they won't believe us, blah, blah, blah." And I went. I sat in that reception area for a long time. Finally the social worker seen me and I told her and then she was acting like I didn't, she just ignored me and acted like I didn't do anything so I got mad. I think I might have said a few inappropriate words and then I left. *(*Liz)

> The social workers wouldn't call me back and then the one time that they did call back, I was in school and they left a message. *(*Adrian)

Controlled

In a seemingly opposite trend of encountering not-invested workers, two-thirds of participants talked about feeling controlled by the social workers they encountered (see Table 5.5). These feelings of being controlled manifested in being lectured to, judged, abused, coerced, and demanded of or threatened.

Lectured

Participants described feeling controlled when told repeatedly what they had to do and being excluded in the planning process. Doreen and Eliza remembered their interactions with their social workers as their personal lecture times:

> I don't remember seeing her very often but when I did see her, that was the only

> time that I got the big lecture.… *"This is what you gotta do, this is what you gotta say"* (emphasis added). So I had to be on my best behaviour. I couldn't do anything and I had to make sure I only said certain things to the social worker but the foster parent was always there. (Doreen)

> The ones I had in boarding school were just like the nuns. They would call us into their office, and talked to us and you know, all the time that I was sitting there, I would have my hands down like this and my head down and was more or less like, just being spoken to and that was it. So, I wasn't asked any questions, like, "How are you doing?" or "What do you wanna do about this?" like people do now.... None of that happened. They're just like, *"You gotta do this, you gotta do that. You mustn't do this, you mustn't do that"* (emphasis added)…. They weren't really there to do any kind of counselling, to ask us if there was anything we needed in school or if we were having any kind of problems or if we were feeling sad, ... It was more or less like*, I was going for my personal lecture time … I was the one being planned about but I wasn't part of the plan* (emphasis added).… I don't know if it's like that for all people but I know for myself when I was growing up, it was just a routine, like, we'd get up, we'd be fed then we'd go out and play all day, you know. But we weren't allowed, we only had our perimeters of where we could go. And then you're fed, you're clothed, you're, all that stuff. Our basic needs are all met, but we didn't have the emotional stuff or anything, so we, when we went out somewhere to do something, we didn't know how to do it and nobody told us what we had to do. It was just more or less survive, survive, survive, survive! So, live, and just to live every day. That's all there was. There was nothing really like, okay, you need to do this over there or you need to go to town and buy yourself a pair of shoes, or you need to make a doctor's appointment. Some people didn't even know how to make a doctor's appointment. (Eliza)

Amie recalled that after repeatedly being told what to do and reminded that she had no choice, she vowed one day to be free from the control and sense of entrapment she experienced in her group home:

> You don't wanna feel like you're trapped inside of a group home. So I kind of, I, bottom line is I abided by the rules of the group home and did what I needed to do to make it better for me … it was almost like you have no choice. Like you, *all your choices are taken away from you* (emphasis added).… I was about 15.... It was almost like a light went off on me ... it was almost like an epiphany.... I just thought you know what? I'm so tired of being a pawn to something else. I wanted to take something back for me. Like instead of being told what to do, being told where to go to school, told when to come in, told when to eat or what you're gonna eat, or how you're supposed to dress or, you know, just everything, every aspect of your life.

Geri and Adrian remembered the shame and sense of failure they felt after struggling with plans that were made *about* them and not *with* them:

> But when they were thought they knew what was right, nothing worked right? And it

> seemed like ... the biggest feeling that you go through is the shame and everything. Like, you're trying to please someone of authority and when you're not, you're just brought back to that same of being ashamed, like, "Oh, I let them down. Darn." (Geri)

> *You feel like you're worthless, you're nothing* (emphasis added) and if you know, even if you were, if they would have brought me into the whole decision making process like, "What's your plan, let's make a plan together." Rather than them like "This is what you're doing, you know, you're gonna be in this place and for this long" and, you know, *they totally didn't ask me anything* (emphasis added). I think if they would have brought me into it I would have been more prone to wanting to complete it because I was part of it, right? Now I think I'm gonna use that when I'm a social worker (both laughing). It's good stuff. (Adrian)

Judged

Participants relayed their feelings of being controlled as manifested in feeling judged and being told by their social worker that they were a lost cause. Amie described the sense of worthlessness she felt when her worker did not look at her when she approached her:

> When I think of even the welfare system, because of my own experience, having to walk in there and apply for assistance. When you have somebody at that desk that doesn't even look up at you, you are nothing, you know. It's like the attitude is as if you're asking for money out of their pocket.... It's the same thing with the nurses ... like, it's coming out of their own pocket? ... Where is the humanity in any of this?

Adrian remembered the shame and sense of futility she felt when her worker essentialized her self based on her behaviours:

> I think that if they're judged they're going to just give up and, you know, like, this person is just seeing me as only this, and, like, I'm just trying to think about my past too, when people were judging me. It made me feel bad and it made me wanna go back to what I was doing. It didn't make me wanna come out of it. It made me feel horrible and I felt guilty and shameful and, you know, *they're judging me and, you know, you're never gonna be anything* (emphasis added) and I started believing that, like "Oh, whatever, I'm just always gonna be like this" and when people aren't judging you, it makes you feel like you do have hope, you know, that's not all I am. I'm not just you know, some junkie. You know, I'm not just a hooker. It's like when someone doesn't judge you, it's like, I'm a person, you know, and I can do other things so I think it totally makes a huge difference when people don't judge and if people judge, I think that it has really negative effects on people and a lot of people just take that super personal and that's not good.

Similarly, Geri described her frustration in encountering workers who stereotyped her and rendered her individuality invisible:

> When you go to people for help they have the best intentions but as soon as you screw up once or twice, it's just like *"Well you're just a waste of my time. Why do I even try and help you?"* (emphasis added) and that's the things that I got from a lot of people … you can hear the desperation in their voice, eh. Like the people, like *"Why can't they just give me a chance?"* (emphasis added) I noticed some people, yeah they've given this woman so many chances. Well, this is a different person. Why are you still, like, you're lumping them all the same? I don't understand. Because they get that one woman who screwed it up or screwed it up for herself or whatever, so they figure the next person is going to do the same thing and the next person and the next person after that ... because we're all Aboriginal women so we all think alike? … Where did she get her training from? Where did she lose her values and her beliefs? Who took those away from her? Was it just too many people screwing her around ... too many people and she was burning out.... When you're starting to get like that in your job, it's time to change jobs or, you know, take a break or something where you're just, you know, lifting your hands up and saying, "Oh just another one here!"

Liz recalled the effect a worker had in telling her that she would never amount to anything:

> Just thinking on being judgmental, I had one social worker that said to me, "I don't know why I bother with you. Nothing's ever gonna come of you anyway." And like, when I get my degree, I'm gonna find out where that worker works and I'm gonna photocopy it and I'm gonna photocopy the title of my house and I'm gonna photocopy pictures of my amazing kids who have A pluses in school, with this, I mean like, *you said I wasn't gonna make anything of myself? Well guess what!* (emphasis added)

Abused

Participants also shared their stories of abuse experienced at the hands of controlling foster parents and workers. The abuse ranged from experiencing foster parents who threatened their physical safety by repeatedly falling asleep while smoking and eventually burning down the house, to foster fathers' sexual assaults. Participants also experienced emotional abuse from foster parents who were cold and distant and child welfare social workers who swore and yelled. Mina remembered feeling devastated when her social worker told her that her mother did not want her anymore. Years later, when she ran into her, she recalled the worker saying it was not about her mother after all, rather she the worker didn't know what she was doing at the time:

> I don't remember if she said it to my sisters, but to me, she said my mother didn't want me anymore.... And that hurt. Yeah. That really hurt.… I wanted to go and talk to her. I went up to her and said "Is your name you know," and she said "Yes." I said "Oh I'd like to speak with you privately over there please." And yeah, so I felt a little funny about that. I was like, oh, you know. But I didn't feel anger towards her anymore. I just wanted to talk to her. So we went outside and as we were walking and she goes, "You know, I think I know you" and I said "Yes, you do know me." So we went outside and the second we got outside I just started balling, 'cause it really hurt. *And I told her, I said "You apprehended me from my mother. You took me away and then you said my mother didn't want me anymore"* (emphasis added) and she just looked at me and she said, "Oh I'm so sorry" so we talked for a little bit and, yeah.… She said at that time, you know, because I asked her why did she do that to us, you know, and she said, at that time, she was angry. She was angry at all the mothers that weren't taking care of their children. And at that time she didn't know what she was doing.

Participants also described the emotional abuse they experienced in terms of feeling captive to the emotional whims of their workers. Mina recalled feeling torn between wanting to protect her sister and wanting to protect herself and Geri remembered "walking on eggshells" around social workers who were quick to diminish their clients:

> She's my sister and this male worker is on top of her, trying to restrain her and I knew that if I helped, I would just get in trouble too and that was so hard, so I called my worker, because you know, like who do I go to, you know? (Mina)

> You know, you go to these places and they call you and they wanna help you and you walk in there broken and no confidence, you know, some women and they go in these places, some with their kids and some without and they look at these people because they're people of authority and people that are saying "We wanna help you." And then you go in there and you get put in, just as you feel good about yourself, you know, you're doing something, you're going to treatment or you're doing a program and you know you're feeling good, and then there's always that one, somebody who puts you down, you know, and makes you feel like shit back again, just as you just got a little bit of self-confidence. I was in places like that and I see women and I see how they struggle and it just tears me up that, you know, they want help but when they go to places and I've like I'm doing my own thing right now, research thing, because I've, and it's not bitterness or anything, it's just that I've experienced it, like, relatives have experienced it. I've known other ladies that have experienced it that have been in these places and they say that it's, *"Why go to that place if I'm just gonna be ashamed, shamed anyways?"* (emphasis added) ... There's a few good places out there....They know what they want and they know their needs and they know they're struggling and being Aboriginal too, we are very proud people and a lot of us, it takes a lot of us, from us to ask for help. And not only that, some don't know how to ask for help right? 'Cause, and so um, when you go to these places, you're like, "Okay I'm going to ask for help" and in a way you get some help and all of a sudden somebody decides that they wanna put you down a

> notch again because you're getting a little bit too cocky or your ego's getting a little too big, you know, but you don't know what, what that, what ego is or what cockiness is because you're not into that high of feeling good and then people think that it's arrogance or you know, the people of authority are like, you know, you're acting arrogant and you're like, "Well I don't know what the hell arrogant means," you know, like I was called that too. It's like when you're starting to get your strength eh? And to me, I looked at it as people just trying to put you back so they can um, keep you where you are, so it's just a continuing thing and it's just, so yeah, I was, I don't understand that. If people are there for help, why do they make you feel, why do they get you to a point and they just put you back down there again? (Geri)

Coerced

Participants shared their experiences of feeling coerced and manipulated into compliance by workers who were controlling. Amie described having accidentally cut her finger and was grounded for ten days. She remembered feeling angry and punished:

> I remember one time in the group home, I had actually accidentally cut my finger and they right away assumed that I tried to harm myself. Well I don't know how you're gonna harm yourself by cutting your finger, but they grounded me 'til it healed. Oh my goodness! So I could not go out and that was for about a good 10 days 'cause they took it ... that I was trying to harm myself and it's like, it's my finger! If I was gonna harm myself it would be other places ... but it was like, it's my finger. Like, was I thinking I'd bleed to death? But I remember just being so angry with the staff and of course everything you do, they call your worker and again, it's a worker that doesn't know you.

Eliza recalled her experience of being manipulated as more subtle. She described how her home support worker ensured Eliza's compliance by reminding Eliza of the power difference between the two of them, through the way she dressed and through her seemingly benevolent support. In remembering the experience, Eliza realized she complied because the worker seemed so nice and at the same time sensing that the worker had the power to have her children taken away from her:

> But yeah, there was never really any "How are you feeling, are you scared, are you this?" Nothing like that. And, you know, she was always dressed really glamorous.… You know how social workers just dress every day, like every day today, she was always dressed like fancy, like dresses, outfits, always her hair done up or make up, uh, high heels … Yeah. And when I was at the other office, that's how she was dressed too … she's way up here and I'm down here. Um hm. She was way above me … She was really, and I think I was just really blinded by her niceness. I told her stuff. But she never ever asked me what I wanted or what I

> needed for the family. What she told me was that I couldn't be with my husband anymore and I'd have to leave the home because he was putting the kids at risk. So then he left but because she was in my life though, he was really careful about what he did because he knew she was there and that she could do something. … I was a lot of times really agreeable, you know, 'cause I thought, "Oh this woman's so nice, she's coming to help me," you know, and I agreed with everything that she was saying … *But you're being really nice to them, at the same time you're taking away their, their human rights* (emphasis added).

Geri recalled feeling victimized by her worker who coerced Geri into doing what her worker expected through fluctuating kind and cutting words:

> Um, the feeling of being victimized I think it is and just like, "I'm up here, you're down here, looking down," when it should be, "We're gonna walk this path together and I'm going to hold your hand." You know, "I'm gonna put my arm around you and say, okay, let's do it together. Not like I'm up here, and you're following me or something like that." It, that's the way it felt, you know and "If I don't like what you're doing, and I'm gonna knock you down some more." You know, and "If I like what you're doing, and then maybe I'll get a kind word" or something like that.

Demanded/threatened

Dealing with unreasonable demands from controlling workers was also mentioned. These demands were backed by stated and unstated threats—threats of being sent back to prison, threats of having children removed or not returned, and threats of discontinued services. Geri recalled a client she knew who was controlled by facing ever increasing compliance stipulations—her worker demanded she take one program after another:

> It's where a social worker intervenes like that and then they do that but then there's always stipulations and there's always something in there. "I know you finished your treatment and oh well you displayed a little bit of anger, I want you to do this you know, you displayed emotion or something like this and why don't you go do this" and *it's like holy shit! I was just gonna go to treatment, now all of a sudden I got five other things I'm supposed to do* (emphasis added). Like, okay, so you go do those five other things and you get a little bit frustrated and again you raise your voice and they want you to do another in-depth anger management. *It's like, how much more do you want me to do?* (emphasis added) I've met a girl and she's programmed out after three years. She was burned out…. And then they told her she was depressed. Like, for three years, man, she was in programs, you know, and it was just never ending so…. She said that she couldn't, she had done all the programs in the city that they had offered, just about every one of them, every treatment program, three or four different parenting and she said "And where am I supposed to go and get programs?" she says, "You know, there's no more programs left for me to do!" Like she says, "You want me to go out of town?" Then she was just like, okay, "Now

you're depressed and now you have to go get treatment for depression."

Nettie remembered the struggle she experienced in maintaining custody of her son after her social assistance worker demanded she contact her son's father despite him being abusive to her:

> So when I got pregnant, well, I wasn't with anyone so the first thing my gramma said to me is, "You adopt this baby out" and I said, "No I'm not going to." So the only option was, "Well, I can't count on my family. They're not gonna help me." So I went to Social Assistance and the first thing they say, "Well do you have family that can help you?" and I said "No, I don't have family that can help me" and they basically didn't treat me as a human being. They treated me like, you know, a number.... Well, when I became pregnant, a single mom, that's when I flashed back to my mom and how she was single with three kids and then that's when I became aware of what she, she went through because I am going through the same thing. I'm actually repeating the cycle. Um, even when I applied for social assistance, I felt like my life and my child's life is gonna end up, well my child's life is going to end up like mine, even just applying for assistance and, and you can get that feel from the workers; you're just another statistic that's basically kind of, that's how I felt…. I remember it was a male social worker, EIA worker, and uh, all they cared about was the baby's father, but at that time, the baby's father was um, *well my son's father was very angry that I chose to have my son and I was scared of him and they wanted me to contact him* (emphasis added) because ... they wanted him to provide. But I told them "I can't contact him. I'm afraid of him" and they pushed it and they pushed it and they pushed it.... They didn't care. Nope. They didn't care. They really didn't care so I felt pressured. I felt really pressured because they said that if I don't contact him, then you will not receive your regular benefits. They will be cut.... Then I was scared. I was like "Well, I guess I have to contact him." And that led to a whole bunch of issues after that.... After I contacted my son's dad, he took me to court and uh, was trying to get primary custody and I was in shock. I couldn't believe it. And he hired a really good lawyer and I had a Legal Aid lawyer.

Unhelpful Supports

In addition to encountering unhelpful workers who were either not invested or too controlling, most participants described encountering social workers who either provided them with no referrals or services, services that were substandard, or supports used as leverage to control participants' behaviour (see Table 5.2). For participants who were in the child welfare system, they remembered not being checked up on in their foster homes, not having any arranged visits with their siblings, and not receiving any supports when they were reunited with family members. As Amie recalled:

> I'd have to say through all the time, the years and my involvement with Child Welfare and even for the different reasons that I was brought into Child Welfare*, there was no support* (emphasis added)…. Maybe some agencies and some workers are putting more of an effort into putting support around the child or the family but I don't see that, *I still don't see that happening a lot* (emphasis added)…. To me that hasn't changed much over the years.

Nettie remembered not receiving any supports after being apprehended or later when placed with her father and grandmother who were both abusive:

> She was not trained on how to deal with kids that are just apprehended from their mother. She was very cold. We had to go to bed at 6:00 at night. Um, you know, there was times I would lock myself in a room. Like, all day I wouldn't wanna come out.... My dad finally came around and he took us into his, well into my grandmother's home. But the transition from being in care to going to my grandmother's home was not there. *There was no social work support. There was no services provided for children* (emphasis added).... We had no idea what was going on. All we knew was that our mom gave us up, and then we were in care and still not knowing why our mom gave us up. Then we moved to my dad's house and my dad's family of course put down my mom so we heard very negative things about our mother, that she's this and that and she's not a good mother and she'll always be a bum and this and that, so, growing up after that, that experience was very, we weren't supported. There was no social workers coming down to my gramma's house regularly to come check up on us just to see how my grandmother was, you know, handling us three because she was in her 70s at the time and she was, again had to parent 'cause she raised five kids and now she had to raise three more and so there was a lot of bitterness. There was a lot of resentfulness. There was a lot of anger towards us and also my dad, he didn't know how to be a parent, so they didn't provide him with any kind of parenting supports. Um, and being away from our mom for so long, we were wondering, "Where is she, how is she doing?" because I always thought, "Well, what happened to her?" It's been a couple of years and we had no idea what happened. And so, just growing up after that experience not knowing where my mom was, really affected all of us.

A lack of supports and referrals or substandard services was noted across a variety of settings: Eliza received a referral only to complete voluntary hours from her social worker through probation, she received no other referrals for supports during her two years in the criminal justice system. This lack of referrals and services was especially apparent for Nettie. Nettie began her story recalling that her school social worker made no further referrals after meeting only once with her father and siblings after her brothers showed up at school with bruises:

> I remember there was counsellors involved but they would never get social workers involved. They would never pick up the phone, 'cause we had some situations where my dad would get very angry at us. He punched my brother, left a black eye, he would abuse us at times but not on a regular basis but we would show up to school with, you know, bruises and you could tell we were emotionally hurting and we were withdrawn so teachers were concerned and the counsellor was called and then my dad was called and then we would have meetings but we'd only have one meeting and that was it. So nothing was really done.... I remember the whole meeting and I just remember why we were there, because my brother had a black eye and I remember my dad hitting him that day because he was so frustrated with my brother and my brother just detached himself from my dad and so my dad punched him and so ... *as a child I was thinking we need help, we need help! But you know, as children, your voices are never heard* (emphasis added) ... They asked us a whole bunch of questions, and sometimes we hid a lot of things because we didn't want of course the school to know, we didn't want to go back home and get in trouble from my gramma because if we told the counsellor something then we would get in trouble when we'd go back home. I was just really hoping that supports would be given to my dad, just on how to be a dad because he was just never around. My Gramma always had to take on the parenting role and my dad would just go off on the weekends. So he was never there. It was just my Gramma and my Aunty. So, yeah, I just wanted attention. We really wanted that attention, that love, just yeah, supports. Basically supports, from our teachers as well and, but yeah, nothing was given to us.

This lack of supports would be a pattern Nettie would repeatedly encounter. After the birth of her son Nettie recalled being asked by a hospital social worker simply if she wanted to adopt him out but received no further referrals despite being a first-time single mother at the age of 16. Subsequently, Nettie received no referrals from her social assistance social worker even after she told her worker she had no family support as a young single mother. Later, when her sister was dying, she recalled how the hospital social workers offered no referrals for her family, who were now, amidst their grief, faced with raising her sister's two young children.

Other participants illustrated their encounters with workers who withheld important information from them. Alex remembered being pressured to give up guardianship of her child and not being informed by the social worker of her rights to appeal while Mina also was not informed of her rights in her attempts to gain guardianship of her niece:

> And then the next time I was involved with social workers was in the middle of 200X and that's when I was still living on a reserve and my mom had shown up with my niece because um, they were having troubles with CFS and they wanted to take my

> niece and give her to the dad, the guy who claims to be the dad.... My sister did not like him or trust him or whatever and my mom didn't either and I didn't .... Well I wanted to get guardianship of her. You know what's scary? *They, the CFS workers that I was dealing with at that time, they didn't let me know my rights. I was so scared* (emphasis added). I did not get supported in that ordeal at all. It was just scary.… We know people, like, you hear things, you see things, I mean, and CFS is not there. They don't, they're not there in the night time to see whose doing what, you know. So they don't know about him but me and my sisters, we do. Oh, my God I was so scared. I was so, so scared … and she's trying to tell me that he wants guardianship but he doesn't wanna go to court, so they wanted me to sign papers and stuff. And I'm thinking, if he wants her but is not willing to go to court because he has to pay for it, there's your big friggin' flag of how much he's invested in her, you know ... I didn't know my rights, right? I didn't know whether or not I had a right to fight for her but all I know was not to let her go to him.... That's it. She's my child now, you know. I'm gonna take care of her. (Mina)

Participants also described receiving substandard services. Liz remembered her experience as a 12 year old being placed in a rundown hotel in Vancouver. When she complained to her social workers, she was offered no alternatives and had to maintain a creative routine to meet her basic needs and remain in school:

> That was the first time I got meal tickets and he gave me meal tickets and he gave me a hotel voucher and it's like, like on triplicate paper and then he ripped off the two top and said "Okay, this is yours, give this one to the hotel" and then I went to the hotel. They didn't take me there or anything ... there was three hotels you could go to on Granville. One was Hotel California. I'm trying to remember what the name of that one was. *But Hotel California, which was like slightly better, 'cause it had strippers at it so they kinda tried to keep it like a little bit more, but it was full. They had no room.... They placed me in a hotel on Granville Street which would be like us putting a 12 year old in the North End*[123] *in Winnipeg* (emphasis added) and that wasn't very helpful because it was full of cockroaches and the first night I was there some guy kicked in the door looking for cocaine but then realized he was on the wrong floor and like.... It was a little tiny room eh, like this big, gross, like dirty, dirty, dirty and then you had to share a bathroom with everyone on the floor.... I was supposed to live in this hotel and that's where I would kinda keep my stuff but I would always take off from there and go and stay in the squats or sleep under a bridge. I had a very nice bridge. It was very safe and I always went to school.... The place I was in was a catastrophe.... Like, I remember trying to talk to them about it but I can't like, *I can't remember them ever coming up with any sort of alternatives* (emphasis added). It was like, this is the placement we have for you, this is where you're expected to stay. If you don't stay there, you're AWOL and, like, the old weird creepy man at the desk was the one that like checked me in and checked me out.... And you weren't even allowed to have friends in your room, like, ever and it wasn't just kids in the hotel. It was, like, junkies and you had to share a bathroom with, like, the whole floor and yeah, it was quite an adventure now that I think about it, I'm like, and that's why I would go and live under the bridge.... Or stay in squats, it's 'cause I

> could be with people. I felt safer. It was cleaner if you can believe it and I'm, like, I used to volunteer at the Y so I'd have a free pass to take a shower every day and go work out 'cause I didn't like to be dirty and then at the Adolescent Street Services Unit they had laundry machines so you could go there and do your laundry so I'd always go there and do my laundry. I'd go there every day, do my laundry, get meal tickets, and then school was just upstairs so I'd go to school every day.

Trouble remembered that while her social workers were helpful, she felt let down by the system. She recalled that the lack of financial supports available to her as a result of her child welfare involvement continues to haunt her today:

> I had good social workers but it wasn't the social workers that let me down, it was the system. It was the policies. It was, you know, when you're 18 you're on your own. I didn't qualify for any assistance, I'm dealing with the financial fallback of that at 36, I'll be 45, 50 before my student loans are paid off. I can't afford to buy a house because my debt ratio is too high. It wasn't one of my workers that harmed me, it was the system. (Trouble)

In addition to either not receiving needed services or having to accept services that were substandard, three participants (20%) recalled having their services used as leverage to get them to change their behaviours. Nettie was threatened with having her benefits cut off unless she contacted the abusive father of her child, Geri had her worker literally slam her door in her face and cut her services off when she perceived Geri as being non-compliant, and Adrian was not transferred from her dangerous foster home and instead threatened to have her clothing vouchers stopped because she would not stop using substances:

> I was doing intravenous use and ... I couldn't just stop whereas the other social workers were just telling me, "Just quit doing it. You need to stop." Like that's just it and like no, it's not that easy. Like, it's all I could think about, like, all the time, like, if I'm not doing it, I need it. You know, and they didn't understand that at all and I'm thinking it's 'cause they didn't have any life experience. Like, they never experienced it themselves. They may have heard about it or learned about, you know, like, in their books or whatever but they didn't, like, they didn't know. They thought that I could just like stop. You know ... they like took offense to it and they would, like they would tell me "You're not getting any more clothing money, you know, you're not, we're not gonna help you out anymore." When I had asked to be transferred or something, they'd be like "Oh no, you're not going anywhere."

Implications

As displayed in Table 5.2, nearly all participants discussed experiencing negative

implications following their interactions with unhelpful social workers. These implications were characterized as participants experiencing distress and developing needed coping strategies.

Distress

Most participants remembered distress ensuing as a result of their interactions with social workers. Their distress was manifested through isolation from their families, experiencing the delay of essential processes, being afraid, and feeling demoralized.

Isolation/separation. The most frequently mentioned implication of having social worker involvement was isolation and both short and long-term family separation. Doreen and Mina recalled the devastation apprehension did to their families, not only were they separated as siblings, there was no effort made by their workers to keep the siblings in contact with each other. As a result, they felt estranged from their siblings, an estrangement that continues on to the present:

> They put us into care, so we all went to different homes, so there was four of us in different homes. At no time did they ever ensure that we had meetings or visits or any of that stuff so *we really didn't have any contact with any of my siblings* (emphasis added) … I don't remember us communicating for many, many, many years. Maybe that's why we don't really do it now. (Doreen)

> I just feel like ever since we got apprehended, *it's cut our family ties* (emphasis added). That bond is just gone and it's still going on because right now, I don't talk to any of my sisters, any of them, you know, it's just gone. We're not connected anymore and I don't know how to fix it. And from that bond being broken and then life experiences and stuff that happened that helped with keeping us all apart. (Mina)

While long-term separation was a common theme, Lenore illustrated the pain of short-term separation. Lenore was in and out of child welfare in order to get medical services in Winnipeg and in addition to being separated from her family for months at a time, she experienced serial losses as a young girl:

> I think my mom told me that ... I'll have a helper, have helpers in Winnipeg … I think that they were given no choice. I mean, they couldn't leave the home to come and find me, very lonely, very lonely childhood.... I just thought it was medical homes

> and there was a lot of people that I would see in the hospital, like a lot of kids that I would see from back home, and I would talk with them but then I would be taken away. I would be taken away to someplace totally different and *I would never see those people again* (emphasis added).

In addition to separation, participants experienced the permanent severing of kinship ties. Alex remembered having her son taken from her and becoming a permanent ward because of her sentencing and incarceration. She recalled feeling that her social worker did not want to see them reunited:

> Well actually, I got involved with drugs and it kinda simmered off when I got pregnant and then started again after my pregnancy which got me into the Criminal Justice System like where I got in trouble and ... like me and my boyfriend, our sentences were gonna be three years, four years, they took permanent guardianship.... I had to be off probation, parole so for another six years. Like probation I think is four years but I had two years [of] probation, parole, then probation, so like six years more. So I couldn't try to get a hold of my son until all that was dealt with.... He was a cute, blue eyed, you know, very white, blue eyed. He was only two and a half. They thought that they could probably adopt him out and he'll never remember me and that's what I think.... I don't know why they didn't wanna work with me to get him back. I don't know. *It's like it felt like they were trying to sell my child or trying to take my kid* (emphasis added).

Participants explained that apprehensions and separations from their family members resulted in an overwhelming sense of isolation. Participants stated this sense of isolation remained even when they were no longer physically separated from their family members. Mina remembered when she was falsely told that her mother did not want her, she refused to see her mother when she came for a visit at Mina's group home:

> I just remember asking my worker, you know, "How come I'm here?" And then she said my mom, you know, didn't want me. And after that I just, something shut off with me. I was just like, well, I don't care either. Why should I? You know, if I was just given away like that, like I'm nothing, well you know ... I believed her. Why would she say it right? ——————Yeah. My mother went to come and visit me and my sister at the group home and I didn't go and visit her. I just felt, you know, she gave us away, why is she coming here now? So, so I stayed in my room.

Mina lamented that when she did see her sister again after six years of not having contact, Mina encountered her sister as a stranger:

> I went to go to the airport and it was like, my baby sister is now a woman. And it was

> like a stranger. It felt so weird. I don't know, weird. It's like I don't know you anymore, you know. And that's bad, I mean I think that's bad. *Your own blood you don't know anymore* (emphasis added).

Separation and severed ties to family resulted not only in a sense of isolation for participants but also an altered awareness of kinship ties and kinship interactions. Amie described the how periods of separation had resulted in secrets and a lack of shared history:

> I became a permanent ward at the age of 13.... When I learned how to do a genogram,[124] I uh, actually had done one on my family and just started to kinda piece together who was who, 'cause within our family of, my family of origin, nobody shared the history of anything, even though there was many family secrets.

Nettie described that the legacy of foster placements left her and her siblings unable to demonstrate affection for each other:

> We found that out when she [her sister] was diagnosed with cancer and we thought she's gonna get through it but then we found out it was terminal and, I guess, we didn't even hug each other. We never could hug each other but, um, she was in the hospital bed and I gave her a hug for the very first time, 'cause *we were never given hugs, or love* (emphasis added), or, and if someone would reach out to me or my brother or my sister, and hugged us, we could not hug back.… We just didn't know how to love. Like, when I first gave birth to my child, I didn't know how to love him but I had to learn and I don't know how I did it but I did it somehow. I don't know. But there wasn't social workers involved after I had my child. The only time a social worker was involved when I gave birth to him at St. Boniface Hospital and she asked me if I wanted to adopt [out] my child.

Participants also talked about the effects forced removal from families had for their siblings and parents. Nettie shared that her mother was herself apprehended as a child and struggled with marginalization, addiction, poverty, homelessness, mental illness, and parenting:

> Um, because we thought that she gave us up because we were bad but we didn't understand, they didn't give us an understanding of why she gave us up. And so, when my mom gave us up, well she was in care and so when she was I think five or seven she was apprehended by CFS. *Her mom was an alcoholic so all her siblings were all split up* (emphasis added). So they were all put into different foster homes and as children, when we were in her care, she would talk a little bit about her experiences because she had no one else to talk to so she would talk to us about some of the abuse she suffered growing up and so I just remember as a child I just felt so bad for my mom 'cause I knew she was alone without supports because when we were in her care, she had really nobody but just all the other single moms in

> housing and with the same situation. No family, no support, um. So, us three we suffered with just our identities, our culture, our self-esteem, our sense of belonging, our um, just how we functioned in school. We really, we could not function, all three of us had problems in school. Um, so then we had a lot of issues in school with, you know, the kids, the teachers, um, even the teachers would notice things.... She just completely stopped all the supervised visits … 'cause it hurt her so bad to see us and … she couldn't take us home and I guess she didn't wanna put herself through that again and again and again, so she just ran. So, and that's the only way she could cope. And she suffered for years after that. She became homeless … she suffers with mental illness. She's a very intelligent woman but she doesn't know how to be a mother. She doesn't know how to be a sister. She doesn't know how to be a friend … She's isolated herself to the point that … she just doesn't want anyone around her … And I guess that she feels like it was all her fault and when I went through my Social Work courses and my training, I realized it wasn't her fault and I became aware of all the issues that Aboriginal women go through, in terms of Child Welfare and you know, colonization, but she wasn't aware of that and to this day, she's not in touch with her culture. Not in touch with anything about her children. Nothing.

Mina and Nettie shared that they each have a sibling who struggles with mental illness and homelessness:

> Yeah, it's also damaged my sister XXXX. I mean, she's got drug addictions. She's been prostituting for I don't even know how long, like 15 years, you know. I mean she's still doing it. Once in a while she will. Yeah. She's been diagnosed with schizophrenia. That's why I have her kids (Mina).

> In that same year, we all just moved out and my dad just had a hard time with that … and I was kinda surprised … And when we moved out, my brother … he went missing for two years. The family didn't know where he was. I didn't know where he was. We were fairly close me and my brother. My sister … got pregnant too and then she got pregnant again and then she was diagnosed with cancer and then died at 31. She recently died, two years ago (Nettie).

Mina's separation from her family, while short in duration, had long lasting and negative consequences for herself and her siblings. She framed it as being pointless—she was placed in foster and group homes where she fulfilled the very roles for which she was taken into the child welfare system—parenting responsibilities. She described why she was apprehended and the consequences she was forced to live with as a result of that apprehension:

> I was 15 when I got apprehended and I got released sometime after my 16th birthday.... Yeah. I'm the oldest. Yeah. Yeah. So by the time CFS had become involved, I had been parenting since I was 13. So, up until 15. I could do the cooking, you know, I was doing the grocery shopping. That's when I started, when I

> was 13. She would give me 3 or 400 dollars and I would go to Extra Foods.... I mean I know to some people that could sound wrong but, that was just the way it is. You know, like, still to this day I feel like it wasn't that bad, you know. I mean I know I didn't get to be a kid but, you know, look what it's done to my life.... *Maybe I shouldn't have been a parent but still, we coulda had more support in the home instead of ripping us all apart* (emphasis added).... It was working. I mean yeah, it was a little stressful for me.... But how do you compare it to what happened afterwards? Uh, a whole hell of a lot better. I'd rather do that than be taken away and worry about my sisters. I don't know where they are. I don't know what's happening with them. You know, after I left that Seven Oaks, and I went to the group home, I didn't know what was going on with my sisters and my little baby sister. You know, she got put in a foster home and she got sexually abused there, you know, and then they moved her to Ontario and we didn't see her for six years.

Mina added that while she was apprehended for 'parenting' her siblings and doing all the grocery shopping and cooking, ironically, she found herself teaching the group home staff how to budget and shop and then was about to be placed in a foster home where she would have been in the role of babysitter. When she turned down that last foster placement, her worker allowed her to go back home to her mother; unfortunately, her siblings would stay in the system:

> Well what could I do at the group home right? I was an 'adult' there. I was telling, I went shopping with the workers.... Teaching them how to shop, telling them to turn out the lights, you know, because, I heard them complaining in the kitchen one time about their finances and they can't afford so I said "Well, turn off the lights," you know, then I'd go shopping with them and they'd buy all the expensive things and I'd always say, "Get this. This is more cheaper. It's still good." I know all the deals at the store and everything. It was just you know, years of shopping.... She tried to put me in a foster home and I went and checked it out and it was a family, a mom and dad with three kids and I thought, you know, I don't want to, 'cause I'm just gonna be a babysitter. You know, I don't wanna do that.... She said okay, you can go home. It was like okay. So like she let me go when I was 16.

For years after, Mina described looking for her worker to tell her the havoc she had caused. When she did find her serendipitously at a conference, Mina found out the worker's decision to apprehend was less based on Mina's situation and more on the worker's own inexperience:

> I remember too after I got released or whatever, sent back home, I remember looking for my worker 'cause I was so mad at her. I, you know, I was only 16. I wanted to beat her up. Yeah, I was so mad at her. So for many years I looked for

> her in the crowds or whatever and I never forgot her name. Yeah. And the funniest thing is 2008 I went to this conference ... and her name was on that paper and she's gonna be talking and I'm like, oh that's her. I know it's her.... So we talked for a little bit and, yeah. But that was really good. I was in a good space to see her at that time.... *I just wanted to deal with it, let her know how much it hurt* and you know, yeah, so I kept in touch with her ever since. She knows I'm going here ... because I want her to know.... It really hurts and it really damaged my family but I'm still, I'm still gonna beat her.... *It's almost like I got something to prove to her, you know, like, what she thought about me or whatever, about my family, you know. We're not that. We're strong people* .... Her saying my mother didn't want me. It obviously tells me she didn't understand my mother very well because she loved us. Like, she could have been a real, brought that crap into our home or whatever. She was taking it out, you know. Like, she was going to be sick somewhere else, you know. Like, she wasn't having parties in the house, you know, with all these men or whatever, you know. Our home was safe, you know, that's why I know she took care of us. She was a good mother…. Yeah. *She was a new worker.... It was about her*.

Delayed processes. In addition to familial separation, fear, and demoralization, four participants explained that they were delayed in completing their schooling as a result of their child welfare involvement. Lenore started grade one three years later than her peers because of her need to access medical services away from her community and go into foster care. Liz described her struggle to continue her schooling after being placed in an unsafe downtown hotel and, therefore, living under a bridge. Amie and Trouble shared that they aged out of child welfare while still in high school and had to both withdraw in order to work and support themselves:

> I just continued going to school and did that 'til I turned 18 and then after that, was just booted out of the system.... "Here's your last cheque. See ya" and that was the end of that. So I had to quit school. I had to quit school to go to work.... I was part way through grade 11 and I had to give it up.... I have no choice. You know, I gotta take care of myself somehow, I mean I'm in this apartment now. Rent's still gotta be paid and I still have to feed myself. *(*Amie)

> So there was no preparation, I mean, I had anxiety through the roof, that was part of the reason why I couldn't finish high school just 'cause I wasn't stupid I knew I was on my own. I mean, at that time in the nineties, when I turned 18 it was '92 you went on social assistance to finish high school so I went on social assistance for a month and I couldn't do it, I couldn't make it so I moved in with family which was dysfunctional. **(**Trouble)

Fear. In addition to forced separation from family, participants recalled feeling

scared to tell their workers about their mistakes or concerns for fear of either being moved to a worse placement, being sent back to prison, or having their services removed. As Geri and Alex explained:

> I felt very scared that if I told them anything that they were going to contact, you know, especially with probation you know, they were gonna throw you back in jail. (Geri)

> Well I decided not to be with my mom. I didn't wanna give my reason why. I should have. I thought it was like I shouldn't tell or I'd get in trouble or you know.... They never said, hey you can tell us anything you want, um, we're not gonna um, you won't get in trouble. (Alex)

Demoralized. Participants also spoke about feeling demoralized as a result of encountering judgmental and racist workers and at being made to feel inferior for experiencing marginalization. Geri recalled feeling worthless, hopeless, and ashamed at not being able to please her worker. She recalled that years later when she encountered her worker, her worker said to her that she always knew she'd be successful. Geri shared the hurt she felt when hearing that comment since her worker had never told her that before and had conveyed the opposite when Geri was her client:

> It's just like everything she kept putting, and I kept failing you know, 'cause she kept putting pressure … and um, I was trying and then finally I just gave up. I remember just giving up and I went on the run because I was just tired of the things that she said about like with my aunt and like when I told her I wanted to, you know, I wanted to get my own place and I wanted to like go back and forth to see my kids because my mother had them, you know, and my kids are my life and she was, she just wasn't very helpful at all. Like, she wasn't trying to listen to me. It was just like, you have to do it my way … Or you're going to jail … And um, when I did went on the run. I was on the run for like a long time and a lot of the things I wanted to do, I completed and stuff like that because it's like she just wouldn't listen to me eh? Like, so there was a lot of that … Yeah and then I remember bumping into her after and I had already been accepted to school here and I told her exactly what, where I was and all she said to me was, "I knew you could do it." Well, maybe you should have told me that back then. Like, not with no faith back then but now you're like, oh I knew you could do it but it would have been nice if I got it back then. It would have been a bit up-lifting and it would have been building my self-esteem, my confidence and stuff like that.

Lenore remembered her bewilderment at being thrust into a non-Aboriginal world

when she was forced to go into foster placement in Winnipeg to access medical services and being told that her parents were to blame for the situation:

> It seemed that it was back then, a pure white world.... I was just a little girl.... I was put there because my family did not meet the natural responsibility involved in the care … it costs a lot to run medical procedures to be done. And my dad had a job. He got a great job but there's still a cost to my health condition and, there was six others to take care of and so I'm the second oldest of a big family … I came to Winnipeg as an infant. The minister that I was talking to … they're the ones that told me I had been in care. They said they had to put you into care because your parents couldn't pay for your surgeries.

Daniella recalled feeling afraid and ashamed when she was told people like her were "savages" and "bastards":

> That's when I found out that my ancestors were savages, so I never told anybody that I was Métis because I was so afraid ... that's when I also found out that children that were born out of wedlock were bastards, so I never told anybody about that. I was so afraid that people would find out that I was adopted and find out that I'm a bastard.

Demoralization based on a projected sense of individual blame for their marginalization was also articulated by Amie. She described feeling a sense of personal failure when she needed welfare assistance, and recalled another incident when she heard for the first time that she was not to blame for being sexually assaulted as a child:

> Through the social worker at the support group ... that was the only time really that I heard that what happened to you was not your fault. That was the only time I heard it and that was when I was 20 years old. So it was like eight years after the act, you know, eight years after the last time when I ever let anybody touch me.

Mina described that her sense of demoralization was based on not being informed what her rights were as a client and, therefore, having to trust that her worker was good-natured:

> I don't remember really talking that much. 'Cause you know, when you're not a worker or whatever you don't know what to ask for. You don't know what your rights are … you're pretty much going by their good will.

Coping Strategies

Because of the distress participants experienced, many participants talked about coping with the implications of their systemic involvement. Participants spoke about relying

on alcohol or drug use, their own fortitude, running away, and faith.

Alcohol and drugs were mentioned as a means of coping with the pain. Eliza added that the trauma she experienced resulted in her needing to numb the pain at the expense of losing her vivid inner sanctuary:

> Because faith is really hard, it's hard to get.... I lost it when I grew up, when I started drinking and all that stuff. I lost that faith and I lost my imagery. You know, I lost having a safe place to go because my mind was always dead I would say because I was always drinking and you know, all that stuff. It was just like a big blur.

Nettie and Adrian recalled that their drinking coincided with their running away in efforts to numb their pain:

> We all got together and you know, that's when you start drinking and when you are, well I got into trouble, my brother got into trouble when the fighting started. That's when I got in trouble with the law, um, that's when I would run away. (Nettie)
>
> I was like running away and drinking all the time and partying and I didn't care anymore.... You start feeling emotions again, 'cause you spent so much time numbing them, you know, with drugs and alcohol that once you start experiencing them you might start freaking out. (Adrian)

Participants also spoke about relying on their own determination and fortitude to cope with their circumstances. Adrian and Doreen described their motivations to succeed despite the system setting them up to fail:

> I did not want to be a social statistic all my whole life (Amie).
>
> So I went back for a bit, then I was taken back out again. Do you know what I mean? In and out. And then when I finally said "screw this, this sucks" when I was 16 and I didn't go to CFS, I just went to and said "Well they're not doing anything better. I'll just do it on my own and figure it out." So ever since then, I figured it out because the system was not working for me right? I didn't want to go back to where I was at all. (Doreen)

And Eliza recalled as a little girl coping with the pain by going inside herself, daydreaming a happy spot and holding the hand of Jesus:

> I was a little girl and I was playing around in our yard and I had my hand up in the air, for the longest time you know, I couldn't remember why I was doing it.... Running around just happy and I guess you know people were thinking I was waving. But then one day it came to me. I was holding the hand of Jesus. That's why I had my

> hand up. Yeah. He was keeping me, he was what I hung onto all the years when I was crying. (Eliza)

Conclusion

What can we learn from the experiences these participants had as youth with social workers? How do their recollections increase our understanding of the ways social work works directly with Aboriginal youth? The findings presented in this chapter highlighted the experiences the 15 participants had with over 60 social workers. Most participants described experiencing both helpful workers, invested and empowering, as well as unhelpful workers, not invested and controlling. Most importantly, participants gave detailed examples of what invested and empowering experiences looked, sounded, and felt like: participants felt listened to, cared for, and understood. From these experiences participants felt hopeful, close to their workers, and more aware of the traumas and losses they had undergone. Participants also felt empowered. Because of their interactions with their invested workers, participants had a sense of self-efficacy. For some, this was the first time in their lives that they felt they could have some agency over their lives. They described learning from their workers as role models and experiencing decisions about their case management made collaboratively. Even when they made mistakes, participants felt their workers did not judge them and, instead, made them feel that mistakes were part of learning. And throughout their interactions with their helpful social workers, they valued their worker's truthfulness not only adding to their ability to make informed decisions but validating their sense of worth. In short, participants felt their workers were invested in them and their interactions left them feeling empowered.

Participants also shared their specific recollections of what not-invested and controlling social workers did and said. These workers were remembered as non-Aboriginal and white. Unfortunately, not-invested workers appeared disinterested, leaving participants, who were then children, feeling processed, discarded, and as an imposition. Workers did not explore

pertinent issues and would talk over participants to other adults even when the issue at hand was directly involving the participants themselves. Tragically, workers did not debrief these then children after traumatic experiences and often did not speak to these children even when spending hours together after the events. These workers consistently did not listen to the then child participants when they tried to voice their concerns and the working relationship was comprised of infrequent contact and unreturned phone calls. Additionally, participants recalled receiving either no referrals to additional supports, receiving substandard basic needs services, or having those services threatened to be terminated as a way to force compliance. Consequently, participants experienced distress arising from these interactions. This distress came in the form of participants' isolation and separation from their families, their siblings experiencing homelessness, mental health issues, and suicide, and participants having delayed critical life development processes, such as completing school. These interactions also left participants feeling afraid, demoralized, ashamed, and ready to give up. To their credit, participants did not give up and instead developed coping strategies to carry on. These included running away or using alcohol and drugs, strategies that helped participants feel better in the short term but had long term negative effects, or as children, developing fortitude and faith. Given the experiences participants had with social workers, the next chapter presents the findings from my second and third questions: why participants chose to become social workers and the barriers and supports they encountered in their professional pursuits in light of their lived experience with colonializing systems.

Findings: Career Choice and Barriers and Supports

Understanding the role that social work plays in contemporary colonization processes is not just about reflecting on how we treat clients, it is also about who we admit into our field as future social workers. If we admit, support, and graduate only privileged (and white) students, the colonial relations present during the residential school system and the Sixties Scoop will narrowly be altered; privileged social workers will predominantly continue to make decisions about marginalized (and Aboriginal) clients. However, if we admit, support, and graduate the very individuals we apprehended as children for their best interests, we begin to change those colonial relations. A new generation of social workers, more representative of the clients we serve, will change the face, and hopefully, the approach, role, and negative outcomes of our profession. This chapter presents the findings regarding the participants' career choice and the ensuing barriers and supports they encountered over their social work career. While the previous chapter presented how participants recalled being treated by social workers, this chapter highlights how those experiences influenced them in becoming social workers themselves.

Career Choice

Participants were asked about why they chose to become a social worker, what they hoped to accomplish, and whether their lived systems experience influenced their career choice. Their answers reflected a diversity of reasons (see Table 6.1). The most common reasons given were to make a difference and do better than the social workers they themselves encountered. Less frequently, participants mentioned that social work was a natural self-actualization choice and, conversely, an accidental move. Least common reasons

cited were that participants wanted to emulate the social workers they encountered, that social work was a career step, and that their choice occurred as a result of exposure to social workers as the primary group of professionals of whom they were aware.

Table 6.1. Career Choice

	Number of participants (%)*	
Make a difference	**11**	**(73%)**
Do better	**10**	**(67%)**
Change perception	2	(13%)
Change policy	2	(13%)
Self-actualization	**8**	**(53%)**
Accidental	**7**	**(47%)**
Emulate social workers	4	(27%)
Career step	2	(13%)
Exposure	2	(13%)

*Percentages do not add up to 100 as participants offered multiple answers

Make a Difference

More than two-thirds of participants stated wanting to make a difference was their motivation for pursuing a career in social work. While some offered generalized goals in making a difference, such as establishing long-term, credible services, most participants mentioned specific goals. These goals included providing services for women experiencing abuse, addictions, parenting, and education issues; implementing services for families and youth and preventing children from being removed from their families; and offering services for students who had moved from reserves to continue their education. Overwhelmingly, participants said they wanted to make genuine connections and create long-lasting change for the betterment of Aboriginal peoples:

> Because I wanna help people. Once I started my learning journey, I wanted, I can help. Margaret Mead did say that.... It only takes one of us. (Roselinda)

> I did it just for change because my people have had no voice. (Thunder56)

Do Better

Along the lines of making a difference, most participants said they wanted, in particular, to do better than the social workers they themselves encountered and, in turn, change the way that people thought about social workers. Participants explained that they wanted to help others avoid experiencing what they themselves went through and be able to steer clear of the damaging cycle and effects of systemic involvement:

> Cause I thought I could do it better. (Trouble)

> I didn't wanna be those kinda social workers. (Amie)

> Because I thought I could do better.... I can help, I have experience, I know what it's like to be a kid in care. (Roselinda)

> I definitely want to make a difference. I don't want to treat people the way ... I remember the way the social worker was with me, do you know what I mean, and the foster homes were with me so I now want to make sure that I don't make the same mistake again.... 'Cause I remember the way she was and I wanted to make a difference in someone else's life. *Like I've learned from what not to do* (emphasis added) right? (Doreen)

> I just decided I wanted to be a social worker.... I don't know why because ... when you think, out of my experiences, I wouldn't want to be. But it's almost like I've always had this innate yearning to just be helpful to people. And, and it's kinda funny in a sense that even at that time, I was 19 or 20, that I still had a perception that social workers are helpful, or can be helpful.... I just kinda blurted it out. It's like, wow, I wanna be a social worker.... Like I could actually do this! I could go. And you know, I always just felt ... I knew I was smart enough in school. I was definitely not a genius but I mean I worked hard, but never ever in my years, ever thought I'd get a university degree, like ever, and especially as a social worker, 'cause I just thought like, growing up, it was like social workers, they're just there to tell you what to do and, but it was almost like, again, I just had this idea like, *I can be a different social worker* (emphasis added). (Amie)

As practicing social workers, two participants stated they wanted to change the perception people had of social workers. They wanted clients to be able to get the help they needed and not be afraid to ask for support. As Mina explained:

> Well, I'd like to change how people view social workers. Well, I grew up fearing these social workers, you know, all around my family. People have lost their kids and my mom's friends would come over and cry about it and it's just so awful and you know, I grew up thinking CFS workers were bad, they're bad people. But you know what? In reality, there's some really good workers out there and I've had experiences with them and it's good, so I'm gonna focus on that and, you know, I, I'm gonna try to be a good social worker.

Changing policy was also addressed by two participants when describing their motivation to become social workers. They explained they wanted to affect policies that direct how social workers intervene:

> I would like to change policies, I would like to change how workers to do things. That it's, you know, it's the system that doesn't work, and it's the policies that don't work, that are unrealistic, that are stupid that, you know, that tie our hands in a lot of ways. (Trouble)

> I wanted to be a social worker because I want to change the way people think.... Well, the way the system is, how the system is. (Geri)

Self-Actualization

Many participants stated they chose to become a social worker because it was a natural extension of their personal self as helpers and as leaders. Participants relayed feeling great compassion for others as children, for rooting for the underdog, for always being a humanitarian, for also being a helping person and for feeling that their own experience as a client would be valuable as a professional helper. Other participants articulated wanting to use their experience to act as a motivational speaker, to act as an activist, and to act as a role model both for clients as well as for their fellow social work colleagues who may not have the same level of compassion or awareness.

Accidental, Emulate, Career Step, and Exposure

In contrast to those participants who saw social work as a natural choice, nearly the same number described their career choice as accidental. These participants described their choice of profession as accidental or falling into their laps as a result of seeing an advertisement or listening to a friend's recommendation.

In contrast to participants who wanted to do better than the social workers they encountered, some participants said that because they had experienced both helpful and harmful social workers, they wanted to emulate those social workers who were helpful and who acted as role models. As Adrian explained:

> With the negative experiences that I had with the workers, I felt that because I did have the life experience, that I would be better than them. I could do a better job and I feel like there should be more social workers that do have a life experience so that—and then also, because of the one probation officer that was really understanding and caring that I really liked and could really identify with, she was kinda the one that like, *I'm gonna be like her!* (emphasis added)

Less frequently cited motivations for choosing social work as a profession included a few participants who described pursuing social work as a career step: as an asset in a long term goal of midwifery and for another individual because she knew Aboriginal social workers were needed in child welfare. Finally, some participants described choosing social work because, as Aboriginal individuals, they had repeatedly been exposed to social workers as the primary group of professional people of whom they were aware. As Nettie and Leo explain:

> I just remember being really young … and we were sitting with all our friends outside and I just remember saying, "I want to be a social worker. I want to be a social worker!" I was very young when I said that… *Because there was always social workers coming in and out of our area because we lived in housing, so we saw a lot of social workers* (emphasis added). I really didn't know what they did. All I know was that they worked with children and families, yeah. I wanted to be a social worker … I don't know why. Maybe because I could have helped my mom? Maybe they could have helped my mom and maybe I could help women like my mom? Because they didn't take the time to? So then I thought maybe I could make some changes and offer, especially Aboriginal women with services that they need, to keep their kids and not feel like they have to give them up. Because I know in a heartbeat, like my mom, if she was offered the right services, she would have never given us up. (Nettie)

> I think just because the Aboriginal population has come into so much contact with social workers on a regular basis, "Well I wanna do that job" you know. If we had more contact with engineers, we might become engineers more or lawyers or medical professionals. I think it could be anything but because this is our contact over the past you know, 20, 30 years, that this is what we're becoming because that's what we see. But I mean, it could go too that it's part of our cultural ways too, I mean humility and sharing and caring and those things, so, there's a lot to it but I definitely go more with the fact that *that's been our frequent contact and we just don't have a lot of contact with pharmacists or accountants* (emphasis added). (Leo)

Supports and Barriers Encountered

Participants were also asked to describe the supports and barriers they encountered in pursuing their social work career in particular as a result of having lived experience with child welfare/criminal justice systems. Almost all participants described the supports they received while nearly as many participants recalled the barriers they encountered.

Supports

Nearly all participants recalled a variety of supports they received in light of their lived experience. As displayed in Table 6.2, participants spoke to the supports they received in completing their professional education, framed their lived experience as an asset for their professional practice, and remembered being encouraged by their co-workers.

University

Of the participants who shared experiencing supports while completing their social work degrees, most recalled the positive difference inclusive admissions policies and practices made. Many participants spoke about supportive instructors, and several mentioned the pivotal role of their student peers.

Table 6.2. Supports and Barriers Encountered

	Number of participants (%)*	
Supports	**14**	**(93%)**
University	**12**	**(80%)**
Admissions	**10**	**(67%)**
Instructors	**8**	**(53%)**
Peers	4	(27%)
Self-identified asset	**12**	**(80%)**
Co-workers	**7**	**(47%)**
Barriers	**13**	**(87%)**
Conventional university	**9**	**(60%)**
Balance	6	(40%)
Disclosure	5	(33%)
System	4	(27%)
Curriculum	4	(27%)
Teaching style	2	(13%)
Othered	2	(13%)
Co-workers	**9**	**(60%)**
High school completion	**7**	**(47%)**
Financial	3	(20%)
Self-identified liability	3	(20%)

*Percentages do not add up to 100 as participants offered multiple answers

Admissions. Most participants spoke about the supportive equity practices that facilitated their pursuit of their social work education. One person commented on the flexibility of distance education aiding her ability to pursue her BSW studies while still working full time and another noted that equity policies make possible her admittance into the MSW program. Many participants made mention of the particular admission policies at the Inner City Campus. Participants commented on the helpfulness of WEC staff in reminding them of admittance deadlines and pardon applications.

> But the WEC, the program at the Aboriginal Centre was fabulous ‘cause I was humming and hawing at the beginning to go and that person they had in charge for intake kept phoning me and phoning me and bugging me and I’m just like “Fine! I’m just gonna send it in!” Do you know what I mean? And that’s the thing that changed my whole life. Like that was one thing that just changed my whole life from her

> pestering me and then once I got in there, then we just, we were our own little family in order to get things done because there was a whole learning curve. (Doreen)

Many participants spoke about the admissions process as being inclusive of their lived experience. They were asked to provide a biography and describe their history, background, and why they wanted to be a social worker. As Eliza and Geri described, their lived systems experience was not viewed as an impediment in the admissions process:

> Well at the interview … I asked them right away how that would affect my getting into the program and they asked me what happened and then I told them and they said no it wouldn't because it had nothing to do with sexual abuse or assaults and it was all about drinking. (Eliza)

> The whole thing, the criminal record check … they had the right to know … about what happened and why you got these charges and me just being honest, I practice the Seven Sacred Teachings[125] all the time and … I'm honest, yeah … I didn't water it down, you know, and mine was a pretty violent act and I wrote down exactly what happened, you know, who I hurt and that was it … They asked me to elaborate a little bit more. *(*Geri)

Instructors. Many participants specified the support they received from their instructors. Participants stated that their lived experience with either the child welfare and/or criminal justice systems was seen as an asset. One individual commented that her professors told her outright that her experience was important and would help her relate to clients; similarly, other participants shared they were told that because of their experience, they would become very good social workers. Thunder56 said that his professors were curious about his criminal justice experience and asked to know more:

> Some of the professors were very curious so they came to me.... I think they wanted to know more so I think they wanted to drill my mind.

One participant commented that this inclusion was evident because she knew that some of her professors themselves had lived experience with the child welfare system. Another individual recalled that the Inner City Campus treated students with respect and encouraged independent thought and decision-making. Still another individual shared that whereas the main campus was competitive and isolating, WEC was collective and supportive

and interested in what students had to say. Eliza stated that WEC instructors were accommodating to student's multiple responsibilities and students felt groomed and protected:

> You know what, I have to say *it was all positive and we had lots of supports and it was because we were at the WEC program* (emphasis added) and we were away from the university and not everybody was like we were. We were, I wanna say, groomed but we were sort of like sheltered … the teachers being very understanding for one thing because we were all single moms with kids right? And if something happened and if we had deadlines, the deadlines were always like, "Okay you have this many days then to do," they weren't really like, "Oh too bad, you missed it" you know? And, and uh, we could go and talk to them anytime we wanted to.… I guess all of the understanding, the caring, the nurturing, all that stuff. (Eliza)

Nettie explained how when she was experiencing personal stressors, an instructor said that social workers need therapists as well and encouraged her to see her assigned counsellor. As Nettie illustrated, her instructor also became her counsellor and role model:

> She was a good role model too because I would see her in different roles. She was a professor, very on time. The papers were handed out on time. She wrote little memos for herself. I would watch her, just the way she carried herself and the way she presented herself, you know, it's like, wow, I wanna be like that and, because when I grew up, I didn't know how to be. I would get mad so easily and I would, people would take me the wrong way but there was, and she was very, she taught me a lot.... It was very hard for me to say goodbye to her but I knew I had to and that's the part of social work, is when the client can say, I'm ready to go now and then that's when you know it's when you've done your job. But when they need you, need you, need you, you've gotta question, like, you're not doing your ... you're not being effective and that's what I, that's what she taught me and that's how I work and my lived experience, combine that all, education, everything.

Nettie also noted the critical role counselling played during her BSW education:

> I started my healing in my second year. I actually saw a counsellor, my professor. She counselled me for four years during my social work program. 'Cause I'd been triggered in so many ways and I just wanted to give up and not go any further and again, I was so angry at what was happening, what the system does … and the barriers people are faced with.

Student peers. Some participants remembered their fellow students as being very supportive. One person recalled that her cohort was small and since most had had similar lived experience as herself she did not feel alone. Two participants described their peers as being very compassionate and supportive of their decisions to go for counselling and another

participant depicted her fellow WEC students as a cohort who were committed to making positive social change:

> Well the thing about WEC is everybody who goes there, basically they're marginalized in some way so we all try to be, not a bad group think but a good group think where we wanna change the world 'cause we know what it's like and *we wanna make it better for our children* (emphasis added) (Roselinda).

Amie emphasized the sense of accomplishment she felt upon graduation as reaffirming her triumph over her previous struggles:

> It was the most empowering night for all of us, like, all of us that graduated. We were just beaming. We were happy. We were ecstatic with just everything. And being able to share that with our profs and our families and our kids and friends, it was just phenomenal. But I remember my little brother just coming up to me, just picking up and just swinging me around and I could see the look on his face, like, it was just pure joy, pure joy that we could do these things.... It's those kinda things I think about why I became a social worker, that, to me, it touches my heart.... When I have things like that happen, it reaffirms for me why I became a social worker and the type of social worker I aim to be.

Self-identified Asset

Most participants saw their childhood experiences with systems as an asset in advocacy, in decision-making and establishing rapport with clients, and in maintaining a healthy professional identity. Four individuals spoke about their lived experience in either the criminal justice and/or child welfare systems as a skill in advocacy—their childhood experiences forced them to develop the courage to speak up, to know what they do not want, and as Trouble stated, and hence her chosen pseudonym, "to not tolerate shit." As Amie and Eliza explained, their experiences have given them persistence and fortitude:

> When I look at my life experience because it pretty much, I mean it's almost like the school of life. Like, that's what you've learned. As you go on, you learn to be a survivor. You learn to eventually to go past that or beyond it. Like you just keep going at it. (Amie)

> It's good in some ways because … it gives me the courage to say what I wanna say a lot of times. (Eliza)

As an asset, Lenore was quick to clarify that she sees her lived experience not as an expertise, but rather as an understanding that gives her credibility with the women she works for and with:

> I think it's given lots of credibility. I think that um, to have a social work degree gives some more credibility, more power … It's the personal experience that … It made me a stronger, I wanted to become stronger helper. As a victim of abuse, I, um, I wanted to I guess keep it to what it is that these women envision.

Many individuals framed their lived experience as an asset in informing their decision-making abilities and maintaining connections with clients based on empathy and compassion. As Daniella explained:

> You have the experience ... and sometimes that very thing ... is what connects you to the person that you're wanting to help.

Amie elaborated that her lived experience gives her an additional understanding of her clients' realities and connection that her co-workers seem to lack:

> *I don't wanna be the kind of helper that I had as growing up* (emphasis added), like the social workers that I had growing up.... I was thinking back to the folks that I went to school with, because of our life experiences ... it brings a different perspective that you can actually ... put yourself in your client's shoes. They can really do that. They can do it and they have the different level of understanding that I would say these textbook social workers, they'll never have. They will never have it.

Lenore explained that this connection is based on her lived and professional experience and results in a spiritual affinity for not only why she works in this field but also how she works:

> My own life experience, experiences, have been a teaching for me.... What I have learned in social work ... what my grandmother has taught me, makes so much sense. How to connect with people, how to be a helper, how to listen, how to really be spiritually inclined to do the work, this is very important for the social work ethics to be there … I went to social work school and I think in the city, it gives it more recognition. There's power there … If I was working as a social worker in my community, there would be some recognition of it and acceptance of it but there would be I think more challenges … plus the challenges I see are based on Indian Affairs expectations … Like I say to my uncle who passed on.... I said I'm not gonna answer to no Chief and Counsel. You know, I have my own way of wanting to work with them. The women … I'm not going, that's breaking confidentiality. You know, I'm not gonna do that. I'll stay in the city and work with these kids.

Some participants described how their lived experience is fully integrated in their professional identity, where, as Liz suggests, “the school of hard knocks” helps them to manoeuvre systems. Similarly, Adrian uses her experience to educate and affect policy, a skill developed early on when a teacher saw her public speaking potential:

> She had heard that I had been doing some speaking and she called me in to speak in front, to do kind of like a panel, kinda interview thing in front of all of the teachers of the school. So that was pretty cool and so the teachers got to ask me questions because when I was in that school I was using in the bathroom and stuff, on breaks and stuff and I was always high and I didn’t care, so they were asking me questions, you know, like, if I have a student that’s like this, what can we do? And they were asking me, you know, from the teachers’ perspective, you know, like, what it’s like to be so young and using all these drugs, and especially hard drugs. Yeah. That was awesome.... I could see them engaging and listening and *they actually wanted to hear what I had to say* (emphasis added) and that was, it was just a really cool feeling and I started to do more and more speaking and I started, like, it was like “Wow, I’m making a difference here, you know, I’m talking to people here and they’re listening you know, even if they go out and use, if I helped one person, you know, then it was cool.”

Amie clarified that although her lived systems experience gives her an empathetic understanding of her clients’ realities, she struggles between maintaining an integrated professional identity and working within a mainstream health setting:

> Only select people have only gotten glimmers of what I’ve been through. My concern is that if I go see a client, because of how I conduct myself now, they may not realize ... I’ve been there. I know what that’s like. I know what that can do to you.... *My worry with that is they may just perceive me as another social worker, and not someone who can truly identify with what they have gone through* (emphasis added).... I’ve lived in the North End. I know what it’s like to live with nothing in the house. I know what it’s like to live without utilities. I know what it’s like, when there’s fighting, there’s drinking, there’s violence, all of those typical clichés that you have ... but it’s like I think, because of how I conduct myself today, people wouldn’t see that. And I do protect that ‘cause ... I don’t feel it’s necessary for me to kinda spill my whole life out to anybody.

Co-workers

When asked about their co-workers’ responses to disclosures of their own experiences as clients, many participants expressed receiving a positive reception. One individual stated that her current workplace viewed her lived experience as an asset and

influenced their hiring of her while another participant shared that management recognizes her experience as an asset in her professional capacity. Other individuals commented that their colleagues respect their lived experiences and draw upon their knowledge:

> Not that I'm necessarily a better social worker than the ones that have you know, lived at home until they graduated.... They'll come and ask me questions and try and draw on my experiences. So I feel respected because of it, not looked down upon because of it. *(*Liz)

Still others clarified that it was the more experienced, skilled, and confident co-workers who appreciated and respected their additional expertise of lived experience:

> I think some of them respect me a lot more. I think some of them understand why I do what I do better. *(*Trouble)

Barriers

While most participants recalled experiencing supports, nearly as many participants also remembered the barriers they endured due to their lived systems experience in either the child welfare or criminal justice systems. As Table 6.2 displays, the barriers noted were those that participants experienced while attempting to complete high school, while completing their social work education in a conventional setting, from a lack of financial support, from co-workers, and from viewing their own system involvement as a liability.

High School Completion

Many participants described the difficulties they encountered in trying to complete high school as a result of child welfare involvement. These barriers ranged from having to repeat grades as a result of frequent moves between placements to aging out of the child welfare system halfway through their final year of high school. Other individuals remembered having to complete grade 12 while pregnant or having to quit school in order to work and support themselves. Some participants recalled having foster parents and school personnel doubt their abilities by virtue of being a "kid in care," as Trouble frequently referred to herself, while Liz remembered living under a bridge when she was attending

junior high school and using a passing train as an alarm clock to wake herself up in time for her classes:

> And then like I'd stay in squat but even squats are pretty dirty and gross, so then I had this awesome bridge that kinda came down on the side and there was a train gorge that went underneath it, like the train runs through downtown Vancouver and the train came by on time to wake me up to go to school.... So I'd get up and go to the Y and have a shower and go to school. Now that I think about it, I was crazy. In a good way but I'm like, how the heck did I do that? (Liz)

Conventional University Setting

Many participants divulged dealing with a variety of barriers in a conventional university setting. Settings did not often accommodate marginalized or mature students juggling a myriad of responsibilities, did not provide safety for participants to disclose their lived experience within a classroom environment, and presented a challenge to understand and decipher. Participants recalled that their BSW curriculum did not reflect their realities, specific teaching styles did not match their learning needs, and classroom experiences resulted in them feeling Othered.

Balance. Some participants stated that the multiple roles of marginalized students were not considered or accommodated. Juggling parenting and frequently, sole income earner responsibilities were cited as posing additional stressors to completing an undergraduate degree:

> Um, I would think that my personal life is a little bit of a barrier because I'm a single parent and sometimes, you know, my kids get sick.… I'll miss a class, you know and it's like missing a whole week and that's the only thing but there's nothing I can do about that, you know, that's just built in and it's not really a barrier really, it's just a challenge and you know, yeah. Yeah. And sometimes, some teachers, I don't know. There's this one where, you know, I took a test, and I failed it and then I missed the second one and he just said, "I don't think you can do it." And I'm like, "It's a bit early." (both laugh) I'm thinking in my head, it's a bit early! … and uh, you know, he was already saying, I'm pretty much toast. So it was like, you know, "Let me take the second test and we'll see." (Mina)

Nettie spoke of the stress she experienced while raising her young son and having her brother go missing for two years during her BSW. Trouble described that she had been going "full

speed" since 16, worked more than full time as a child welfare worker for 12 years, and now while doing her graduate work was experiencing exhaustion. Participants also talked about facing issues triggered by their coursework and needing time to work through those issues. Nettie illustrated how her course work had triggered her and caused her to start reflecting on her own experiences with systemic barriers, colonization, and personal crises, making her question if she could ever be a social worker:

> At one point I just didn't think I could be a social worker because I had so many issues at the time and I questioned whether or not I could do this kind of work because I feel like I'm a client and here I am going into the helping role and I don't know if I can help them if I can't help myself.

Disclosure. Regarding disclosure of their lived experience, some participants stated they did not disclose within their classroom settings, one person said he did in his written assignments for his instructor's eyes only, and two individuals indicated they would have, had lived experience been presented within course content or class discussion as an asset. Adrian stated after she had disclosed, a number of fellow students avoided her, and others essentialized her as her past experience only: if the topic of her lived experience arose, they looked at her as though that was all she embodied. Doreen shared that when she encounters course content that contradicts her insider knowledge of systems, she often chooses not to say anything:

> Sometimes I just suck it up, unfortunately. Unfortunately, it's just like another thing that you work on that's gotta get changed. Is everything, can I save the world? No. Can I make a difference in someone's life? You betcha I can and I can make that difference in how I work with others.

System. Several participants referred to their experiences at conventional campus settings as posing a challenge to figure out. Doreen described her experience as isolating, impersonal, and competitive:

> Then I went to the main campus and got my bachelors and was thrown to the dogs (laughs). It was just, I had to figure it out. There was no support there. There is no one to ask. I came from a classroom for two years where I was with the same 10,

> 11 students the whole two years so we learned to work together to get things done and then build those friendships. When I got to the main campus, I didn't have any of that so then I found the Aboriginal Centre … And the main campus, they're just like *you're isolated, you're on your own and you figure it out* (emphasis added). You're in class with just certain students and then you don't see them again until, you might graduate on the same time. It's so impersonal and no one cares and it's survival for the fittest and someone is going to get a higher mark than you, just because they have to. It's just crazy. So, I don't know. And there I'm not as outspoken because you gotta watch what you say to the profs too right? Most of the time your opinion doesn't matter.

Similarly, Amie depicted her experience taking classes at main campus as considerably different to her experience with the program at the Inner City Campus:

> When I had the opportunity and got accepted into this program, if I was given a choice between learning on campus, like the mainstream, with everybody else, or taking the program here, hands down I would have taken the program here.... The difference I saw in the level of support. Um, I had actually only taken a couple of classes on campus but it was like, everybody was, you were strangers. You didn't know the person sitting next to you but here on this campus, the year group you had, you were your own little group. You were your own support system and you had tons of different people, the profs were onsite. *If something was going on, you had somebody there* (emphasis added), you know, in that immediate moment, if you were struggling with something.

Roselinda relayed that she initially never wanted to go to university; she did not feel her experience would be understood or that she could relate to the other students. She perceived conventional university settings as foreign spaces where students with experience of living with marginalization were not represented or reflected:

> 'Cause not everyone was a kid in care. They can't appreciate that experience … and that's one of the reasons that I didn't wanna go to university, because they all seem to be just natural kids who don't know anything but they're there because mom and dad said they have to go to university.… They haven't experienced absolute poverty. They haven't experienced family break-ups maybe. They just seem really immature there. Sorry. I didn't wanna go there.

Curriculum. Several participants made clear the curriculum acted as a barrier. Trouble's sentiments about the lack of concrete skills in her social work education were echoed by Liz. While Liz took her courses through distance education in order to maintain her fulltime child welfare position, she was looking for practical skills to augment her

professional competencies. Instead, Liz perceived the BSW program as being geared toward educating people of privilege and converting white, middle-class liberal/conservative students into socialist-based theorists:

> I haven't learned any practical skills in my BSW.... Like the applied counselling is way more valuable, because it gives you actual practical knowledge of like how to interact with people, how to talk to people, real ways to make connections with people, different tools you can use, attachment stuff, child development stuff. It's, like, how to make connections with people, how to do assessments on the whole situation, the whole person.... The focus of it is "applied" counselling right? ... So far, in the BSW, it's all about politics. It's like chewing gravel.

In line with concrete skills, participants noted that the Social Work Code of Ethics was too seldom talked about in course work and how social workers speak about clients was not covered as frequently as it should have been. Another participant, with several years of professional experience, imparted that her opinion about practical applications was not sought out in her MSW courses despite having insider knowledge about organizations.

As Aboriginal students, two participants made note that their BSW curricula did not often reflect the overwhelmingly Aboriginal client base here in Manitoba, and that there appeared to be too little initiative from instructors to incorporate Aboriginal content into class material. When Aboriginal issues were discussed, they added, participants were often treated as the token spokespersons on all issues Aboriginal.

Teaching style. Two participants spoke to the teaching style they encountered as posing a barrier. Trouble described that while her life experience got her through the BSW program, her learning style was not transferable to her MSW studies. She described that the teaching style she encountered did not build upon what she already knew and the lack of concrete examples and focus on theory was not compatible with her experiential learning needs. As a professional social worker for over a decade, she stated she needed to learn concrete and transferable employment skills:

> I'm a concrete learner, so to throw another article at me or to throw another chapter at me, it's like, to me, that's just an hour and a half of sleep I'm not going to get.... I don't know if that's just academia or if that's just the masters program, if that's how they deal with things, is they just throw an article at you but I need a concrete explanation.... If you're gonna open the door to people like myself, you're gonna have to change some things. And I'm not saying that I shouldn't be expected to learn the same material. Otherwise I shouldn't get the piece of paper at the end of the day. *But you have to sort of make it possible that I can learn that stuff* (emphasis added).

Trouble emphasized the frustration she experienced after repeatedly asking for clarification from an instructor:

> You know I'm pretty good at problem solving. When I come up to you and say I need help, it means I NEED HELP. It's not because I'm trying to be lazy or I'm trying to whatever, it's because I'm REALLY not getting it.

.

Othered. Two participants spoke about feeling Othered. Nettie recalled students at the main campus often stated opinions that were judgemental and not inclusive of people with lived systems experience:

> I've taken classes at the main campus and it's really different because the students were younger, because most of us at Inner City were single moms … like I'm 32 and they're 20, 21, 22 and here I'm like 30 and I wasn't able to connect with them and when you know, class was going on and they could give their opinions and their opinions it's like, what the heck? (laughing) It's just, I couldn't, I was angry because they didn't have the experience to even give that kind of answer you know?

Financial

Some participants disclosed experiencing financial barriers while attending university. The barriers ranged from struggling with reduced incomes and the challenges in appealing Band funding decisions, to dealing with maxed out student loans and facing high debt loads:

> I didn't qualify for any assistance, I'm dealing with the financial fallback of that at 36, I'll be 45, 50 before my student loans are paid off. I can't afford to buy a house because my debt ratio is too high. (Trouble)

Co-workers

Beyond the barriers experienced while attending university, many participants described encountering negative reactions from co-workers about their lived experience.

Some people described being hesitant in disclosing their lived experience to certain colleagues. Individuals spoke about perceiving co-workers' attitudes of "us and them," of talk that discriminated against people with lived experience, and of bumping up against a culture of superiority that co-workers were keen to defend. One participant said that this research was the first time that a social worker expressed interest in hearing about her lived experience. Another person said that despite working in an Aboriginal child welfare organization and in light of the overrepresentation of Aboriginal peoples in child welfare systems, workers' lived experiences were not something that was spoken about.

For those participants that did disclose, the perception that their colleagues did not see lived experience as an asset or expertise was commonly shared. Trouble described having learned to be careful in whom she shares her background with so as to avoid backlash and Thunder56 emphasized the animosity he faced because having lived experience and carrying out his professional role: "In terms of facing animosity and bias? Absolutely I've faced it. Yeah."

This animosity was echoed by other participants who recounted similar sentiments manifested in their co-worker's statements—that social workers with lived experience may not be as professional as their colleagues and their peers often framed participants' efforts at self-advocacy as inappropriate or stirring up trouble. Amie described sensing judgement from her co-workers:

> Judgement.... To me, with the peers ... my worry would be that they may perceive me as being less than. So it's almost like if, well if you have a damaged history, then what kind of social worker does that make you today?

Adrian stated that her lived experience was interpreted as a vulnerability:

> I think that they think that I'm more vulnerable to going back to that lifestyle.… I think that from my point of view, that I'm less likely to, you know, relapse and go back 'cause I know what it feels like after spending you know, $1000 in a night on coke, and waking up realizing I spent my rent, I have no food and I really wanna get high again. You know, and just this overcoming feeling of grossness and shame and guilt

> and panic and worry and you know, anxiety, what am I gonna do? Whereas they've never experienced that so if they … start dabbling in it, they're not gonna know that feeling until they've gone all out and done it, whereas I already know what it's like and I know I don't every wanna be there ever again, so I think it's opposite to what people think.

Similarly, Trouble explained her lived experience was framed as getting in the way of her work responsibilities:

> I always put on the table with my employers that I was a kid in care, I've always put on the table that there are certain cases that I cannot have that bring out buttons for me so I need to be careful and I'm mindful of that and I think that's why I've been able to do my job for so long is that I know what my buttons are. I know what what's gonna trigger. I mean there was one, when I was working in [another province], I had a caseload of, I think I counted 15 abusive males who were into power and control, domestic violence and violence towards their kids and it was like you can't give me 15 cases with this issue of when I was a kid in care and that's where I found in [that province] especially they used it against me they said that's your job, this is the caseload that we have and you need to be able to do the job.

Leo conveyed his careful consideration to whom he discloses to in light of the stigma of his past substance use and that he might not integrate theory into his practice as well as his colleagues:

> Um, sometimes *I'm hesitant to say with colleagues, just 'cause I could still feel that I could be stigmatized* (emphasis added).... Maybe that I'm not as uh, I can't understand as well as they can, you know, or I don't get it as well as you do and I can't apply it as well as you do in theory, you know.... That I'd feel that well, he can't possibly know as well as we do, he made those mistakes, so he's probably not as able to apply theory as well as we are because he obviously made mistakes before. Something like that I would think you know, when I tell people, oh really? They say things like that you know, it's kinda like you can hear tones in people's voices so, um, but I mean not everyone's like that I guess. That's just been my experience, sometimes, not all the time. Other people do appreciate it but some don't.

Self-identified Liability

While most participants did not see their lived experience as a liability, Eliza expressed the bifurcation she feels between herself as a social worker and herself as a mother and daughter—she is a professional but still goes home to the familial issues residual from residential school experiences. She struggles with family members who themselves are still dealing with trauma and has often experienced family members viewing her social worker

self as phoney and contrived. She added that her own mother told her she did not like social workers because social workers tear families apart.

Conclusion

Why did participants choose social work as a career and once chosen, what supports and barriers did they encounter? Given the social worker experiences that stemmed from participants' own marginalization and contact with colonializing systems, it is not completely surprizing that participants chose social work for their career. Some saw social work as a positive way to bring about change for Aboriginal peoples, others wanted to emulate helpful social workers, while others still wanted to be more helpful than the social workers they themselves encountered. Part of the reason they chose social work as a profession was also because that was the profession they most often encountered as Aboriginal children and parents. While many saw this career choice as a natural extension of their helper selves, others also described the opportunity as serendipitous or falling in their path.

Once chosen, participants experienced significant supports and barriers in pursuing their social work education and establishing their careers. An inclusive university setting was pivotal in compensating for the marginalization these participants had experienced. Equity admittance criteria, supportive counselling, and instructors and curriculum that were representative, acknowledging, and respectful of marginalized peoples' realities were important. Once graduated, participants found their professional career was easier when co-workers were not just tolerant of their prior status as clients, but more importantly, viewed their experience as a professional asset. Similarly, many saw their experience and resulting empathy and awareness as an additional resource.

Conversely, participants experienced significant difficulties in finishing high school and maintaining financial solvency as a result of their child welfare and criminal justice involvement. They encountered barriers within mainstream university settings that were not

accommodating of the realities that they as marginalized students lived with. Once practicing as social workers, participants found the Othering discourses and stigma they faced from co-workers who framed lived systems experience as a liability for professionals as demoralizing and disheartening. Given these experiences, the next chapter will present how participants' own professional practice as social workers was shaped.

Findings—Professional Practice and Recommendations

What difference does having the lived experience of being a client of social work services make for Aboriginal social workers? How does surviving the childhood involvement of child welfare or criminal justice systems influence social workers' practice? Which contributions can be made to social work discourse from colleagues who have intimately experienced the effects of colonizing systems which employ social workers?

While participants were asked how their own lived experiences with child welfare and/or criminal justice involvement influences their professional practice and effectiveness, the recommendations they offered were not specifically inquired about. In other words, I did not ask participants for their recommendations for social work, but interestingly, when I asked participants if they had anything else they would like to share with me, 13 of the 15 participants offered their perceptions for much needed improvements .

Participants described their own clinical practices or how they worked with clients, their overriding approach to how they do social work, and the services they provided. They also framed their professional clinical practice within an analysis of how it was influenced by structural issues. Participants' clinical practice was built upon empathy, non-judgemental and respectful interpretation of client issues and behaviours, and establishing and maintaining rapport through listening, honesty, and empowerment. Their overriding approaches guiding their clinical work centred on having client service as a priority, ongoing professional reflexivity and professional wellness, and equalizing power dynamics between themselves and their clients. Their resulting services included outreach or providing services where their

clients were at, providing referrals and increasing accessibility to resources, and ongoing advocacy and enhanced system navigation.

Participants also framed the work they do within a comprehensive structural analysis. They shared their understanding of the influence the child welfare and criminal justice systems have for Aboriginal peoples and their awareness of their clients' realities and the interplay of residential schools, child welfare, and criminal justice system legacies. They saw these systems intimately connected to Aboriginal peoples' parenting and family patterns. In addition, they noticed the experience of violence, as encountered from police and collaterals, evident in their clients' lives. Their structural analysis also included the roles and practices of social workers both within and beyond the child welfare system. They noted the power social workers have in relation to clients, the fear and dislike many clients have of child welfare social workers, the privileged judgement passed by many white social workers onto Aboriginal clients and onto Aboriginal social workers alike, and the scrutiny they themselves experience as social work professionals within larger social service systems. Finally, their structural analysis also integrated the organizations with which they were involved. They commented on Aboriginal organizations run by white management, the child welfare devolution process, and their own experienced racism.

Clinical Practice

As displayed in Table 7.1, participants' clinical practice was described by three general themes: non-judgemental and respectful interpretation, rapport, and empathy.

Non-judgemental and Respectful Interpretation

All participants made reference to their lived systems experience assisting them in having non-judgemental and respectful interpretations of their clients' realities and behaviours. They recalled having a deep understanding of how the devastating effects of

being judged feels and relayed the centrality that respect plays in their professional relationships.

Table 7.1. Professional Practice

	Number of participants (%)*	
Clinical Practice	**15**	**(100%)**
Interpretation	**15**	**(100%)**
Non-judgemental	11	(73%)
Respect	6	(40%)
Rapport	**12**	**(80%)**
Engaged listening	8	(53%)
Asking	3	(20%)
Non-prescriptive	3	(20%)
Timing	1	(7%)
Empowerment	8	(53%)
Collaboration	5	(33%)
Hope	4	(27%)
Honesty	7	(47%)
Empathy	**9**	**(60%)**
Approach	**11**	**(73%)**
Client priority	8	(53%)
Reflexivity	8	(53%)
Professional wellness	6	(40%)
Equalizing power	3	(20%)
Services	**11**	**(73%)**
Advocacy	8	(53%)
System navigation	4	(27%)
Outreach	6	(40%)
Referrals	5	(33%)
Structural Analysis	**15**	**(100%)**
Social workers	14	(93%)
CW/CJ systems	10	(67%)
Client realities	9	(60%)
Residential school legacy	9	(60%)
Violence	2	(13%)
Organizations	9	(60%)
White management	8	(53%)
Devolution	6	(40%)
Racism	5	(33%)

*Percentages do not add up to 100 as participants offered multiple answers

Non-judgemental

Participants reflected on being able to look past their clients' behaviours to interpret those behaviours as often a means to an end. The importance of remaining open to different explanations or scenarios in explaining clients' presenting behaviours was key. Mina and Nettie conveyed the importance of [a] non-judgemental interpretation of their clients' seemingly difficult behaviours:

> Well I'm not so judgemental right? I try to see everything before I do or say anything. Yeah. And I try to, and when I'm working with the girls, I try really hard to look past the things that, like, how do I try and explain it? ... There's this one girl there who, a lot of my co-workers ... they think she's trouble, difficult, and at first, they were telling me things about her and I'm, you know, I don't know … I don't care what she's done or whatever, I'm just gonna, you know, it's almost like that song, come as you are (both laughing).... Like I've learned, um, I learned that what kids give out is usually what they had gotten right? ... *I'm just trying really hard to get past the yelling and the swearing and really trying to hear what she's saying to me* (emphasis added). (Mina)

> I realize I can be with them, I don't, you know, I, I really don't judge them. Nothing shocks me anymore. I had this one guy. I was in my car and he told me he murdered someone. First thing was, okay like, I'm in my car alone with this guy but he was testing me. He was testing me to see what I would do, if I would judge him and I didn't and he came back again and then he came back again and he still keeps on coming back. But at the beginning when I first started there, it was test after test and a lot of people that we work with, they know the system. They know the workers. They know the ins and outs of the Child Welfare system too and they know if they can get away with certain things but they just want that connection. They want somebody that can connect with them. But like, I know I've lived all these

> experiences and things like that but *I always try to separate my reality from their reality* (emphasis added). That's one thing I always, I think about that all time 'cause I know that, um, their experience is so different from mine. (Nettie)

Others specified that clients may be scared or fearful and distrusting of social workers along with the authority and systems they represent. Participants commented on the difficulty clients may have in being in the position of needing to ask for help as a result of not knowing how to do things, given their experience of being too frequently controlled or institutionalized.

Respect

Participants reported respect being central in building relationships and working for change, whether with clients, colleagues, or cultures, as Thunder56 shared:

> *It goes how we respect each other as human beings* (emphasis added). Bottom line. If you treat people with respect and you don't get it, unless you give it. Goes for any kind of system, whether it's you, our families, our friends, our governments and the other stuff we're connected to 'cause if you don't, you get nowhere and you got a barrier. You get nowhere and then it's an uphill struggle even more.

Participants related how a worker's quickness to judge and lack of respect makes clients want to give up, feel worse about themselves, and return to what they were doing. As Nettie explains:

> Just being a social worker, I get a degree and I get this education but no book can teach you how to work with people that have suffered abuse in the Child Welfare system or have suffered a death, a loss of a sibling.... I don't judge because I know I've been there and I know that *I've been judged and when I was judged, I know how I felt* (emphasis added) and so, I know how the people I'm working with feel but my reality is different from their reality. See, what I went through was different. But you know, the education part of it was helpful but I think my experience was even more helpful because I work with my clients in a real way and in a caring way and um, in a good way.

Participants clarified that their own experience of being talked down to by a professional inversely shaped how they as social workers interacted with their own clients. Participants spoke *with* rather than *down* to their clients and interacted in ways that

facilitated their clients' sense of self-worth. Amie shared that this centrality of respect was based on her lived systems experience, and her professional and personal beliefs:

> There are so many of them that are so disconnected from their own family of origins and I know what that feels like so it's like, I'm not gonna sit there and kinda wag my finger and "Do this, you need to do this." … Odds are they might be getting that from somebody else and I don't need to be doing that to them. To me that is disrespectful.... With my current stage of exploration in my life, *I'm really trying hard to live my life around the Seven Teachings* (emphasis added) so of course number one that comes to me is respect.

Rapport

The second most prevalent clinical theme was rapport. Most participants made clear that their previous experience as clients was core to establishing rapport with their clients. This rapport was augmented through engaged listening, empowerment, and honesty. Participants identified rapport as making them more accessible to marginalized clients and more able to relate on their client's level. This rapport or connection made clients more receptive to interventions and easier for clients to identify with the participants as social workers. Based on his lived systems experience, Thunder 56 illustrated the importance of getting to know his clients first, exploring the good things in their lives, and establishing a relationship before dealing with mandated issues. Daniella explained that as an experiential worker, she shares her story with clients to connect and create rapport and shift the power. She remembered her experience working with a woman in prison:

> I sat down beside her and I said, I hope you're not feeling bad about yourself for being in here [in jail]. I said, this used to be my home too and *I share my experiences with as many of my clients as I can*, (emphasis added) because in spite of what they say in social work schools, that you're supposed to keep yourself, your identity and yourself, up here and you're supposed to maintain your anonymity, I think that's the worst thing you can do because you can't connect to somebody, especially if you've been through some similar kind of situation. You can't do that. To me it's sinful. Because there's so much of a power imbalance and you don't want that imbalance to be there because this person that's, they're another human being and you're no better than they are.

In contrast, Liz made plain she does not use of self disclosure; rather, she tells her clients, in establishing rapport, that she too has lived with something similar to their experience:

> It really helped me to connect, and still does help me to connect with the youth that I work with 'cause I kinda see where they're at and no, I know they all have different experiences than me and all that kind of stuff but I'm pretty able to suspend that whole judgement piece and I have a lot of hope for kids because I know, like not only me, but I know other people that have become very successful out of those kind of situations.... I kinda know what it's like to live on the street. I know what it's like to be homeless. I know what it's like to be hungry. I know what it's like to feel like nobody wants you and that your social worker doesn't give a shit about you, so I try pretty hard to make sure that, even though I don't always agree with the bratty things my kids at work are doing, like what they're doing, that I still care about them.... *I don't do a lot of self disclosure with them 'cause, sometimes it can be like a slippery slope* (emphasis added) but you know, I will say things like, I kinda have a sense of where you might be, I've sort of experienced something similar to that. I don't know, I just feel like it gives me compassion, patience, and just helps me to suspend that judgement of, "Oh, you're just like, oh you're nothing but a rotten little teenager."... Like, just like being able to see underneath, and I'm not freaked out by obnoxious teenagers.... I just have a high level of respect for kids that are kinda living through that 'cause it takes a lot to keep going every day, so I think that has a big part of what's helped my skills.

Engaged listening. Many participants referred to their use of listening to establish rapport with their clients. Listening was described as an engaged process that included asking, adopting a non-prescriptive manner, and the use of effective timing. Participants' rationales ranged from wanting to hear their clients' stories, perceptions, perspectives, and opinions, to listening to their plans. As Lenore explained:

> Being listeners and talking to these, you know, like I develop relationships with these kids by at least listening to them. Just basically listening to them.

Amie clarified she puts in the effort to listen to her clients despite working within a health setting where listening is not often valued:

> There's no value put on just listening to somebody. Definitely in the healthcare system 'cause there's just no time for it.

Asking. Engaged listening was also identified by a few participants as a process of asking clients questions—asking if they are scared, asking if they have any questions, and listening to their answers:

> The look on his face, oh my God. Just, the fear, the sadness, the hurt, everything. So I went to the mother and started talking to her and I asked him, "Are you okay? Are you feeling scared? Do you have any questions for me? Are you sure you don't wanna talk about it?" ... And then I was telling him what we were gonna do and I told him not to be worried. Talking to him made him feel a little bit better. (Eliza)

> I really listen. I really ask the people I'm working with, whether it's moms, kids.... "What do you think is happening? Why do you think I'm involved? Like what's your perspective on this?" Because they know a heck of a lot more about the whole situation than I do, even if they might have a totally different perspective of it and just really valuing them. (Liz)

Non-prescriptive. A few participants disclosed they engaged in listening by asking questions and listening to their client's answers because, based on their own experience of being dictated to, they do not want to tell their clients what to do. As Eliza stated:

> I'm really glad I went through all that stuff because it's made me who I am. You know, it may have been really hard for me, I went through all kinds of crappy stuff but because of it, I feel compassion for people. I feel empathy for them and ... I wanna do what I can for them to help them see ... what their world would be like if they weren't in this situation. Because I never saw, I wish that I could have been able to see everything at an earlier age. I would have been able to start earlier to help people but I didn't see it at the time. I was too busy trying to survive in it. So when I try to help people it's so that they don't have to be in it for a long, long time and suffer. And so when I, when I'm working with people, I ask them, *I don't tell them what I see. I ask them things that will make them see* (emphasis added) and, it's just like all these little lights are going off sometimes you know. You can just see it in their faces and like they get this little glow that's just like, oh wow!

Participants communicated that their central belief in non-prescriptive listening was based on their belief that clients understand what it is they need, what it is they want, and what it is they want their workers to do for them:

> It's a conscious choice that I make in every interaction that I want to treat people the way I would want to be treated and I want to listen to them. I want to listen to their stories. Let me know what you want to do. What can you do? ... I learned that talking to the children is very important .... And building those relationships. Not going there for a few minutes and getting a whole scripted story and only talking to the foster parent and ignoring the child right? And if the child does say something and if it does start to sound scripted all the time, there is an indication for you.... you have to talk with the kids. Ask them what they want.... I've noticed with the kids that I work with and a lot of the teenagers, *no one has ever asked them. It's always what*

> *they want them to do.... You gotta listen to them, to their plans, and their behaviours* (emphasis added). *(*Doreen)

> "How can I best help you that I would be most effective?" I ask people that. (Thunder56)

Timing. Thunder56 imparted the importance of timing and listening for his clients' readiness before approaching sensitive issues:

> When you need to ask questions, well then you'll pick the time that is right. It could happen over one session. It could happen over five. It could happen over ten. Depends on how you approach it right? And that's how I usually like to work.... I don't talk about whatever the referral says right there. I leave that alone. I wanna know about you. So I'm gonna talk about, "What are some of the good things that have happened in your life?" ... And you draw what you need to draw and then you eventually [get] to the source.... *So you go in a roundabout way and there's ways to get there* (emphasis added). And if I can make people comfortable around me, it's like building a relationship.

Empowerment. The second theme participants referenced in establishing rapport was the importance of empowerment. Many participants specified empowerment, collaboration, and hope as being central in maintaining rapport with their clients. Participants spoke about helping their clients increase their self-awareness and the discovery of possible solutions. As Amie illustrated:

> To me it's not about me telling them how to live their lives or what they need to do.... If I want to get a point across, I try to give them like a little story and just try to see how they react to it or if they kinda, you know, grasp onto it but ultimately, it's their life, they have to live it. I'm not the one living their life.... People are entitled to make those decisions.

Participants described creating opportunities and planting seeds of choice and responsibility to empower clients to make their own decisions and giving them power to do so:

> I want to work with people and try to help them so that they can make the choices for themselves and give them the power to make those choices. And, yeah, that's my goal ... plant a seed. Like she planted a lot of seeds for me, you know? At least *if you can plant that one seed, it will make such a difference* (emphasis added).... If I make a little change, then that's good for me. *(*Nettie)

Collaboration. Some participants also articulated that working in collaboration with their clients was essential in empowerment. Sharing professional knowledge, role playing outcomes of potential choices, being a sounding board and acting as a resource were offered as examples for empowering clients. As Amie explained:

> I mean you're [just] giving them a resource, in my opinion, that's not good social work.... Do they have the courage to take that number and go and call, or even go and visit the agency? ... When I assess someone and I see that there's some hesitation there. I will offer and say, "Would you like me to make that first call for you?" Or have them with me when I'm making that call, sort of thing. To me, that ... takes the fear off them but *it also empowers them to think, hey you know what, maybe next time I can grab that phone* (emphasis added).

Other participants talked about "walking down the same path," making plans and doing assessments in collaboration with clients, and working with teachers, counsellors and resource workers to support clients with consistent structure. Amie commented that collaboration was not only a fit with her sense of professional integrity, but pivotal in providing services that fit for her clients:

> I do believe in holding tight to my integrity and just trying to do what I feel needs to be done but doing it with whoever it is that I'm working with.... That means ... like a harm reduction approach, if that's what fits for that individual, then that's what I do and that's what I should be doing.

Hope. Several participants also made known the importance they placed on facilitating hope as part of empowering their clients.

> For me it was never about making life decisions for someone else by saying "Well you need to go do this or you have to go do that." 'Cause they get that enough from the Child Welfare if they've had their kids apprehended. But just trying to be a sounding board but also a resource to them and a support to them ... they don't need to be told.... When they're told all the time "This is what you have to do" and not really having that encouragement like, "Yeah, you can do this!" ... *Like giving somebody the hope that there is hope* (emphasis added). *(*Amie)

Honesty. In addition to engaged listening and empowerment, many participants (identified the importance of honesty and truth, the third theme, in establishing rapport with their clients. Given the participants' own lived systems

experiences, the importance of honesty and truth in their interactions with their clients was central in ensuring they were not setting their clients up for false hope. As Liz and Trouble described:

> I try to be honest. I try not to give people false hope you know, like oh am I gonna get my kids back? Well, I don't know. (Liz)
>
> I grew up in the North End I grew up in foster care and I didn't grow up in middle class suburbia so, maybe my etiquette is not as sophisticated as they would like or you know I say things that I probably shouldn't *but I also am a straight shooter. I say it like it is* (emphasis added). (Trouble)

Honesty and the disclosure of the positive and negative potential consequences of choices and behaviours was also emphasized as essential for long term rapport building and integral in maintaining a relationship based on trust:

> Be honest with them. Tell them the truth, what's gonna happen because some try to sugar coat it so that ... the kids are not crying as much or they're not scared.... That's manipulating them …So kids learn to distrust social workers that way. (Eliza)
>
> Like I've had lots ... of clients be like "Oh you're just CFS. CFS just takes babies away and puts them in foster homes where they die." I'm like yeah, you're right, CFS has done that a lot, like I get that, like I totally think that CFS has done a lot of really horrible things and I totally see where you're coming from.... I'm trying really hard to like work with you.... My goal is to try and keep your family together. I always tell people, my goal is to work myself out of a job. Like, if tomorrow there's no more families that needed our intervention and no more kids that needed protection, I would be super happy and I would go and move on and find something else to do.... I'm committed to you and your family at whatever capacity I can be. (Liz)

Empathy

Empathy was the third and final theme that emerged from how participants described their clinical practice. Many participants spoke about the role of empathy in their practice and having increased empathy and compassion for their clients' complex and marginalized realities because of their own similar experiences. They described empathy as distinct from sympathy, the empathy they had for professional peers traversing ethical terrain, how empathy was central in their professional identity and the toll empathy took on themselves as human beings when faced with their clients' chronic marginalization.

Participants expressed the empathy they had for their clients' complex realities arising from having walked in similar shoes and sitting in the same chairs in offices across from social workers. Because they themselves had known hunger and homelessness and not being cared for or wanted by their workers, they described understanding that their client's lives often hang in the balance and how much it takes for clients to simply keep going. As Amie and Geri described:

> When you have those life experiences and you can actually really put yourself in the other person's shoes, it makes a difference in terms of being able to really understand where the client is coming from. (Amie)

> I think I'm more understanding of people and where they're coming from and how desperate and despairing ... people get. (Geri)

Participants illustrated the empathy they had for both parents and children caught in the child welfare system and for understanding the context of their struggles within a backdrop of chronic marginalization. Leo appreciated the layered complexities of parenting and living with substance misuse—the conflicting responsibilities parents face between loyalty to their children and loyalty to the substances alleviating their own distress. Eliza and Trouble acknowledged the anguish parents experience who have become separated from their children and the distress children undergo who have had to leave their parents:

> I put myself in their shoes and I think about what happened and how it helped and the overwhelming feeling, the "Oh my God, I lost my kids" and that's when ... I feel for them because even though they're the ones that weren't looking after their children, it's not their fault. They're victims of what our life was like before. (Eliza)

> 'Cause I understand what kids are going through. I understand what it's like to leave ————- … I understand what it's like ————- to leave everything —————- behind —————- like your pets. —————— I have maybe —————- ten pictures of me as a kid. (Trouble)

Two participants made distinctions between sympathy as a feeling of compassion and empathy as a feeling of compassion combined with action to alleviate the distress. Leo spoke

about being sympathetic as a child but now as a worker is empathetic while Eliza explained compassion as a characteristic of who you are but generosity as a description of what you do.

Mina framed the discrepancy between what social workers did to her and what social workers are supposed to do with compassion and her understanding of social workers' varying levels of awareness:

> Each one of us comes from a different place, with different teachings and some people aren't aware of what they're doing. And I'm not saying I'm totally aware. I mean there's like 50 million things I still need to learn right? ... People are people, right? I mean, we're not perfect and we're never going to be no matter how much education you have. I know that when I'm a social worker, I know I'm gonna make mistakes. I know I'm gonna hurt somebody, but my intentions, or what I'm gonna keep close to my heart, is that I really wanna be as compassionate as possible.

Amie emphasized the central role empathy plays in her professional identity. She illustrated how empathy plays into her decision to remain living in the same marginalized neighbourhood as her clients in order to remain connected to their realities. Amie also recounted the toll keeping these realities close to her takes and how she uses her own life experience to understand her client's complex feelings arising from those realities:

> I remember for the longest time feeling embarrassed if someone had asked me where I lived because it was almost like, well once you reach that status of social worker, you should be outside of that.... But it's like, you know what? That doesn't make sense. Like, for me to be able to fully comprehend and understand issues that people might be going through today that I come across, I'm not saying that I have to live the life they're in, but *I can honestly speak to their truths* (emphasis added)... I'm in as much that sometimes I wanna run, and get away from it but when you have so many people, so many young people that come into the hospital ... with gunshot wounds, stab wounds, the violence like the beatings.... Today as a social worker I look at that and honestly, I feel defeated in a sense 'cause ... when you look at the detachment, the level of detachment or attachment that's not in place with a number of these young kids, honestly, it just tears my heart out.... It's those kind of insights I think that very much give me a uniqueness about being a social worker.... I can talk about my abuse, um, and I can talk about it in the sense that ... it's over with, it's done with.... It is in the past, but at the same time when I think about the attachment, when I listen to a young female talk about missing her mom, you know, it's like you know what, I know what she's talking about. I get it, like even though she's in Child Welfare and she's not allowed to see her mom.... I understand what she's talking about because no matter how much damage ... with my mom, it was a love-hate relationship 'cause I loved her but I hated her. I hated her for the pain she passed

> on to me but at the same time, like, that's your mom, you know, like nothing could ever take that away.

Amie cautioned, however, against confusing *having* empathy with *taking* her clients' issues on as her own:

> I think because of my life experience, and being able to appreciate a different perspective on behalf of the client, but not taking their issues on as mine. It's like *you really have to create those boundaries around a professional* (emphasis added). I've seen some workers where they've actually gotten too enmeshed in with their clients and then after a while it's just a friendship. It's not a client-worker relationship anymore and that's not healthy. I've seen it where it's like the lines have gotten really misconstrued and ... a red flag goes up. It's like, no, you can't be doing that.... I certainly don't regret my decision on ever becoming a social worker. It's just now, like I said, it's hard not to kinda keep your head afloat when, just everything that's going on out there right now, it's heart breaking to me. It's just heart breaking. I've thought at times just giving up and saying you know what, just, but then it's like, I'm walking away from it.

Approach

Many participants communicated having a central value-based principle that frames their work: client priority, reflexivity, professional wellness, and equalizing power (see Table 7.1).

Client Priority

Participants identified "client service as a priority," and their practice being "100% about clients." Participants talked about their commitment to their clients. They shared that for them, being a social worker was not just a career but also a personal commitment. Thunder56 explained he is a social worker because it comes from his heart, not because he has a degree. Other participants spoke of training "students to treat clients with respect" and about "treating clients well because you could be in their chair tomorrow." Other participants talked about thinking about their interactions with clients and the "long terms consequences of actions" and "every day, in some small way, improve somebody's quality of life." As Amie clarified:

> What keeps me going again like I mentioned, even if it's just with one person, if I've made a difference in their day, I'm not looking for, oh yes I've changed a person's life. That doesn't come from me. That comes from them. But if it's *just being that stepping stone to help them* (emphasis added) and actually being able to see ... they're feeling less stressed, they're actually calling on me when they need something, when they actually would recognize me as a helper. That's what keeps me going.

Participants also made clear their awareness of client realities in conceptualizing how they defined client successes. As Roselinda explained:

> When a family gets their kids back and they're able to maintain that or when you see a child that's happy, see their parents work out that fear, you know you're on the right road somewhere. And successes are a family coming to you and saying, I need help. I need you 'cause I know you can help me ... being able to just speak up for themselves.... That's a success.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity, the second approach theme, was noted by participants as being central to their practice. One worker described how she never wanted to forget where she came from so that she would never lose her connection to her clients. Another participant stated her childhood experience in the child welfare system allowed her to understand that client experiences were not just stories. And another worker, who went from a child in care to a child welfare worker in the same office, reflected on the chaos of her childhood as being a good training for the chaotic nature of being a child welfare social worker. This inclination for reflection was elaborated on by Leo as being influenced by both his lived and professional experiences:

> I'm only realizing the importance of reflection and thinking in depth and critically about just myself and my interactions with people.... I can always reflect on it even a couple of years down the road. Like wow, that's what that meant. I feel really great about that, so it's a result of both my interactions or my experience.

Other participants recounted how their reflexive approach was based on the integration of their childhood experience with social workers and professional learning. As Roselinda and Nettie explained:

> I always use my reflection on my experience to make decisions, like well maybe she's like that 'cause she feels, and I always think there's an extra angle to draw opinions. (Roselinda)

> I try and work with people from my own lived experience too but also my role model approach to things, and also you know, school, education. So I combine all three of them. (Nettie)

This reflection on being a social worker with lived systems experience was also mentioned in terms of boundaries. Participants identified having to make ongoing decisions about whether or not to disclose to co-workers, clients, or employers, about potential triggers affecting case assignment, about considering word choice when speaking with clients, and about making decisions in light of understood potential long term consequences of those actions. As Mina explained:

> I know that when I become a social worker ... that's gonna help me be more compassionate and think of *every little thing that I do is gonna have a ripple effect* (emphasis added) and I'm aware of that now, you know and that's gonna be in my mind. Okay, if I do this, what's gonna happen to the person I'm working with? What's gonna happen down the road?

Professional Wellness

Professional wellness was the third theme communicated by participants. As Doreen described it, the importance of professional wellbeing was central to her ability to carry out her work effectively:

> I had to do a whole bunch of healing for myself before I could actually start working with all other people.

Eliza emphasized the challenge she and other Aboriginal social workers face—at work they need to maintain and portray the role of professional health and competency and yet go home to the very struggles that bring so many Aboriginal people into contact with social workers:

> As a Native person you think it's such a dysfunctional background … like witnessing the alcohol abuse and the physical abuse and … going through it and then marrying somebody who was that way … and then I went to counselling and I went to university and got a degree. *I'm this professional person but yet I still have this and you know what, you can never get away with it because it always enters into your life* (emphasis added). Like yesterday … the phone kept ringing. No matter where I am,

> somebody is always calling me and … pulling me into their stuff … and how am I supposed to get away from it? How am I supposed to be any different if I'm still right in the middle of it? … When I leave my home during the day, I have to leave that behind and be somebody else. I have to be a healthy social worker who has all the answers and can fix everyone. At the end of the day I can go back to being me, that dysfunctional person (both laughing). It's hard … now that my kids don't understand and I always tell them well.… "You guys can't come around my place when you're drinking and whatever you're doing and bringing all this stuff into my home because I'm a social worker and I'm a foster parent.… If you guys come here … our boy will have to leave.… You all have your own places, don't come here. You can come visit me on a Sunday and we'll all go out together but that's it." I don't want anybody coming to try and steal him.… So you know, my haven is when I go to work and it's like that for a lot of Native people.

Eliza also expressed the anger she carries about her experiences, the difficulty she faces at work encountering social workers who replicate some of those very practices, and her need to protect herself:

> I'm glad I went through the experiences I went through 'cause it makes me see who I am and it makes me see my world and it makes me see people the way that I see them. But, at the same time, I have so much anger and so much hate in me.… It really upsets my work sometimes … because it comes up. And especially the agency that I'm working in right now. There's a lot of non-Native people and I see that every day and it's a constant reminder of the things that I'm angry about. Yeah … it's there in my face and I think now it's there for me to deal with you know, and like to, to get it out so that I don't feel that way anymore. *'Cause I can't carry this hate anymore and this anger. It's too awful* (emphasis added). It's just, like, a, it really makes me physically ill sometimes. Like my body will ache.

Because of the trauma of their encounters with child welfare and criminal justice systems, participants shared using a variety of health maintaining strategies. Participants reported relying on their culture for teachings and strength. Nettie recalled how her professional education was also a gateway into personal awareness and emotional and mental health:

> I did healing when I was in ... my social work training because an important component to the education is you have to do your own healing.... At one point I just didn't think I could be a social worker because I had so many issues at the time and I questioned whether or not I could do this kind of work because I feel like I'm a client and *here I am going into the helping role and I don't know if I can help them if I can't help myself* (emphasis added).

Other participants explained their lived systems experiences taught them to focus on the task at hand and recognize and avoid distracting triggers. Two participants disclosed that they knew, because of their experience of being a child in the child welfare system, that they could not work in child welfare as professionals while another participant stated that she was aware of the anger she carries from her experiences and is cognizant of that in her encounters with the non-Aboriginal workers in her agency.

Equalizing Power

The fourth theme describing participants' overriding approaches was that of equalizing the power they had as professionals. Several participants reported on the importance they placed on equalizing power dynamics with their clients. They noted they tried to equalize power dynamics with their clients by paying attention not only to their own attire (casual business clothing, instead of more formal attire in order to acknowledge their client's socioeconomic struggles), but to the language they used so as to ensure they were respectful of their clients' social locations . As Daniella stated:

> It's what comes out of your mouth. You have to be so careful. You can build up a person or you can just break them.

Participants recalled knowing how it felt to be looked down upon by their own workers and, therefore, they themselves, practiced from a place of equality to facilitate their client's sense of power.

Services

Participants also spoke about the services they provided as integral to their professional practice, including advocacy, outreach, and referrals (see Table 7.1).

Advocacy

Many participants expressed the importance of doing advocacy as part of their services, both for themselves as professionals who experienced discrimination for their past

involvement with systems as well as for their clients in enhancing their abilities to navigate systems. Participants spoke about self advocacy, about defending their approach in working with clients, and often, finding themselves challenging their co-workers' worldviews. As Trouble noted:

> *I'm challenging their whole world* (emphasis added), basically, I'm challenging how they do their job, I'm challenging their education, I'm challenging their life and choices that they've made and things that they say. So, it is difficult in their minds, I think they think I'm judging them and in ways I am. *I'm able to not judge my clients but I will judge my co-workers* (emphasis added).... Some staff had issues with me and I have no problem with conflict and when you're in child welfare you have to be ok with conflict so my supervisor approached me with issues about getting along with others and I said "Ok who is it? Let's sit down let's talk it out." "Well they don't feel comfortable." I said "Well then it's not an issue.... If as my supervisor you do not tell me who it is and what the issue is and what the example of the issue is then it's not an issue as far as I'm concerned" … And of course he backed right off and it's, I guess, it's a bad thing in some ways 'cause I have no fear … Challenging management, challenging my co-workers, saying what I think … I think that come from ————- living in trauma … My childhood trauma. I think it comes from ———-——- you know not having a voice as a kid. Leaving home ———— and saying now *I have a voice. And I'm not gonna, not have a voice* (emphasis added).

Participants also voiced how their childhood experiences with systems made them stronger advocates for their own clients. As child welfare workers they advocated against unnecessary apprehensions and for the continued integrity of sibling groups; as board members they advocated for women's needs remaining forefront in organizational mandates and marginalized knowledge being present on advisory committees. Participants imparted the importance of persistent and strategized planning in pursuing their advocacy both with other social workers as well as with workers from other disciplines. Amie related her experience of advocating for a young couple within a hospital setting:

> I had one young couple from out of the city, like they were from on a reserve.... They were gonna notify Child and Family because this couple had not gone down ... to visit the preemie baby overnight in ICU, so they were going to notify Child and Family of this because in the hospital, they consider it abandonment. So I went and talked with the family and found out that the young couple, they were doing basically as they were told. The doctor had said to them, wait 'til you are notified or the nurse tells you can go down to see the baby. Well that's exactly what they did. They had been waiting all night for a staff person, because one person, the doctor had told

> them that but instead of the family having the courage to go and ask, or been outspoken saying like "Hey, you know, come on, this is so many hours later, can we go see our baby now?" They complied and they were obedient and they listened and they didn't question it. They were waiting until a nurse came to tell them, "Yes you can go see your baby now" and meanwhile, all this other stuff was going on. I had to deal with that, more or less, just to make sure that the staff understood where the family was coming from but again, still trying to do it in a manner that they do not make fun of the family or make assumptions about the family 'cause right away then it starts other things like "Why didn't the family come and ask us? Why didn't they speak up?" It's always like why, why, why, but again it's always putting it back on the individual.... And I explained it to the nurse ... you know what, this is what they were told, and this is exactly what they did. They did exactly as they were told and it was just kinda like, the nurse just, her eyes just went big. But again, taking that moment for people to understand where the patients or where the clients are coming from. They just don't do that. Everything's so busy and on the go. They just don't, they don't do that. They just don't pay attention to it. *They'd rather assume, make assumptions right away and start blaming the client* (emphasis added).

Similarly, Thunder56 recalled his experience of listening to his clients' concerns in accessing benefit services. He listened, went undercover, met with staff, and ultimately, enhanced his clients' access to services:

> There are many people coming to me and they're struggling with XXX workers. "They're very rude. They're very arrogant. Very snotty." ... I just grabbed my jean jacket one day, went downtown and got in the line-up, waited 45 minutes, had a smoke and a coffee. I walked in there to see what the system would offer me, 'cause I heard it from so many of my clients.... People were absolutely rude. I was a number to them and it was like an assembly line. I said "Good morning." They didn't even look up at me to see who I am.... They said "What are your reasons here?" I said "Well I'd like to see a case worker and get on the system here." "Well, we're booked right now. You'll have to come back." She threw two bus tickets at me. Well, where is the courtesy? Where's the hello? Treat me as a person with dignity. Where's a hello? Where's the professionalism? ... So my next step, two weeks down the road, I submitted a letter of introduction. "My name is [Thunder56]" because she never even asked me my name.... But I remember her. She never asked my name. She forgot about that. So there was four people. They all looked at me like, "Oh we're getting another one." You know what I mean? ... So I'm getting a sense of what the people are telling me and so I'm experiencing it so I send a letter. I said "My name is [Thunder56]. I'm an Aboriginal community outreach worker in north Winnipeg here. I really would like to come and do a presentation here in terms of what I do in my role, what my role consists of. I'd love to meet your staff because I have the distinct feeling that we're going to be crossing paths many times in terms of case load and case management so I'd really like to give a presentation." They said "By all means [Thunder56]." They were very nice to me. I show up at the door and they say, "Oh hi [Thunder56]. Come up, come up" right? ... There was about 22 to 27 staff in there, managers on the side and I come walking in there and they said "I'd like to introduce you to [Thunder56] from [agency]." I said

> "Good morning" and of the four people that were rude, two people were in front here. That woman was off to the right and when they seen me in the front there, this lady knew exactly who I was. I was in the line-up two weeks ago. She remembered me 'cause her face went three colours of red right? ... I said "Good morning, how is everybody? My name is [Thunder56] and I'd like to discuss my role here and what I do." ... Of the four people that were rude, two of them came to me to shake my hand: (The manager said to Thunder56) "I totally apologize." I didn't even mention it. I said "Hi, how are you?" The manager was really nice to me. You know, it made a difference that day. But that was the only way I could approach it. So if we're going back to … what we can do as Aboriginal people to effect change and make change in policy, we did it. I did it. Yeah. And that came not from my idea. That came from the people that said "[Thunder56], you have to come meet my worker" … And I said "Okay, this is my plan. This is what I'm gonna do." It made a difference ... I didn't go there with the intent to be arrogant that way. I never do in my approach whatsoever.... I made good connections ... because I got not only the managers in there, I had the front line staff in there and some of the case workers ... people who could make change quicker.... That's what I was after.... So I did that on behalf of an agency and it worked out well. So there's one *… I did it just for change because my people have had no voice (*emphasis added).

System Navigation

Several participants made plain how their own lived experience with child welfare or the justice system enhanced their ability to navigate systems in order to advocate. Thunder56 explained how his knowledge of systems is respected and sought out by his colleagues:

> Well, if you've been in the justice system, on whatever level right, as a social worker, Aboriginal or not, you're gonna know a bit of how to manoeuvre the system with whoever you're helping.… Like I got colleagues, Aboriginal, who come to me and say, "Well you've been in there, you know what it's like. Can you please explain?" So as friends or as a group or former colleagues, we'll all share that because then that gives an insight into what you're getting into.

Trouble and Doreen talked about needing to know the policies of their work systems in order to navigate around them:

> I've learned to navigate in the system. I've been there 12 years*. I've learned how to navigate what to bring up, what to get permission for and what just to do on my own* (emphasis added). (Trouble)

> But I've always just learned to figure things out. *Learn the rules of the game and get things done* (emphasis added). *(*Doreen)

Leo relayed how he recognizes that while his supervisors are bound by policy that is often unrealistic, he has more discretion and can navigate between guidelines, going above and beyond for his clients:

> I know that policies are just really unrealistic. So if I have no problem ... if I know I'm supposed to do something in this circumstance but the family says no resources are possible for them to abide by that policy*, I'll look the other way* (emphasis added).... I mean I can't be this evil administrator who is just, "This is how it is and that's that!" 'Cause it's just not realistic whatsoever.... I understand what it's like to be over there.... People who haven't lived that other side of the fence wouldn't understand that ... there's a lot of people who grew up having the large majority of their needs met, have no understanding of ... what it's really like to grow up in a home with nothing. No nurturing, no emotional connection, no communication, just all the awful feelings of negativity and all the bad stuff. They don't understand what that's like and how detrimental that is to a person over time.... They have no idea what that is. They just take it for granted. They just think that that's how it is for everybody.... One of my supervisors says "Well, maybe we should apprehend the children" and I see that's not necessarily warranted.... She's going based on one of the policies, and I see that and I always advocate no.... "No, we're not gonna tear that family apart." So the management and directors are doing things, following that book more than I'm doing things 'cause I'm on the front line, seeing what's the real deal here. So I just think we need to do things, keeping that in mind; residential school legacy. It doesn't heal itself, you know, in a few decades.

Outreach

Doing outreach services was the second most prevalent theme that participants identified as being integral to the services they provided. Being of the same culture and bringing programs to clients and providing outreach were recurring themes for reducing access barriers for clients. As Thunder56 described:

> I'm of the same culture and I can get more sitting at an open fire and drinking a cup of tea, where I'm in your environment, and I came to you. These people do not go to people that are sitting in an office downtown that's fancy and set up like that 'cause as soon as you come in there, there's a barrier there. It's invisible and it's there 'cause these people have walked out and come to me.

Participants mentioned meeting clients in their environments, or away from their office, or taking them for lunch. One participant saw his relationship as the best resource. He spoke about an intervention with a client who was suicidal, how they went for a walk and talked and mutually agreed on hospital admission, and, returned the next morning to talk with his

client about next steps. This 'walking the path' with their clients and meeting clients in their environments involved participants often wearing many hats, from life coach to employment counsellor to role play partner. Leo recalled his roving social worker/boxer/ art therapist role he adopted in developing an outreach art and boxing prevention group for boys:

> I'll go hit the streets as well. I'll hit the pavement too. Walk up and introduce myself ... it's about community and that's just what we try to create. So I created a little community for those kids for the year I was there.... It's gonna stick with them, the things we talked about and learned and laughs and food and it's a good place for them. I even had something for them at Christmas time for them, I had a little pizza night for them and some movies and some boxing.... I was there with my wife and eight of them came in and I made sure their mothers knew where they were, and that was it. Then my wife dropped them off at home after 'cause it was late. It was 10pm you know, in the North End and these were all young kids, like ten years old, so she was nice enough to drop them off.... That's just good people trying to help people. You know, but others look at that, whoa, whoa, we can't do that.... you know how many regulations you're going against? ... I just went with it and I'm sure it was a great experience for those kids.... Genuine experiences.... When you feel something that's real, it's gonna stay with you.... *12 kids who would show up in the neighbourhood and they really felt it was a good safe place to come and it was good so I was fostering and developing things within them* (emphasis added)…. I knew that those little kids needed a safe place like that. I remember how it felt to be a little kid and wanting to feel safe and how it felt being confused and feeling lonely and you know, how unsafe that feels so I created a place like that for them.

Referrals

Making appropriate referrals was the fourth theme participants identified as part of their service delivery. Participants talked about not only the importance of making referrals for their clients, but also in putting the extra effort in to connect people to those resources. As Eliza and Thunder56 explained:

> I'll give them a list of places that they might want to check out and I tell them, if you don't wanna go by yourself I'll go with you or, if you don't know what to do. *(*Eliza)

> I make sure *I connect them to the culture* (emphasis added) where I know people that know sweats, pipe ceremonies, stuff where they're more comfortable. Because if they're in that realm, and they're in that place ... they will open up more because ... they speak Ojibwa or Oji-Cree, Denai or Cree, I'll make sure I have the right people there, where they can heal and at the same time express and once they get a sense of self-respect and who they are, it's very easier to speak to because you make more people comfortable right? *(*Thunder56)

Structural Analysis

In addition to describing their clinical skills, their overriding approach, and the services they provided, participants also emphasized and as displayed in Table 7.1, having a structural analysis guiding their professional practice. All fifteen participants identified having a structural understanding of oppression, theoretically and from lived and professional experience. They described having a structural analysis of the roles and practices of social workers, of the overrepresentation of Aboriginal peoples within and links connecting the child welfare and criminal justice systems, of the context of their clients' realities, of the legacy of residential schools for Aboriginal peoples, and of the organizations within which they were employed.

Social Workers

Almost all participants made reference to having a structural analysis of the roles and practices of social workers both within and beyond the child welfare and criminal justice systems. They noted the power social workers have in relation to clients, the fear and dislike many clients have of child welfare social workers, the privileged judgement passed by many white social workers onto Aboriginal clients and onto Aboriginal social workers alike, and the scrutiny they themselves experience as Aboriginal social work professionals within larger systems.

Participants spoke about the power social workers have over clients' lives both as inspirational but too frequently as adversarial. As Doreen and Liz illustrated, the power child welfare social workers hold should not be underestimated:

> We hold the power to destroy families. Nothing to be proud of at all. (Doreen)
>
> It's people's lives we're messing with, man. Like, you need to be very cognizant about, like, and *we have more power than the police* (emphasis added). I don't think people get that. Like, we can walk into homes that the police can't walk into. They need a warrant. We just need to be concerned about a kid's safety. (Liz)

Participants disclosed how social workers are perceived as "child thieves" and as people who break families apart. Mina recalled her own experience of hiding her sister from social workers:

> The social worker came to my place looking for my sister. I'm, like, I know where she is but I'm not saying, so then I don't know. I've seen her but I told her go home. You know, which was the truth but, you know, she was at my mom's and my mom was hiding her. *(*Mina)

Participants admitted that social workers are too frequently not liked and the word "social worker" is often used as a dirty word in many First Nations languages. Liz and Amie described dealing with this perception in their professional capacities:

> Like I've had lots of workers be, like, or lots of clients be, like, "Oh you're just CFS. CFS just takes babies away and puts them in foster homes where they die." (Liz)

> You have the clients that think all social workers are either Child Welfare or Welfare workers. They don't see social workers outside of that.... I remember walking in ... and I would identify, I would say "My name is so and so and I'm a social worker." A female, her eyes would just go big like a deer in the headlights and honest, I have to say first thing 'cause I know what they're thinking. "I'm not that kind of social worker. I work for the hospital. I'm not from Child Welfare" and they're like, "Okay," 'cause ... that's a very valid fear for them, for a lot of the women that come in to the hospital. They figure, first thing, because if they're not this or you're not doing that, the social workers come in and apprehend your baby and they take your child from you. Like, that's the perception that happens a lot in the hospital. But at the same time, I know if the management is true in their word, it's those kind of perceptions that they're wanting to change. (Amie)

Mina added that she understands her clients' fears of Child Welfare social workers and laments that this often leaves them suffering in isolation:

> If we can get past looking at people and the behaviours they're doing and just work with the people.... *I just don't want people to be afraid of social workers anymore* (emphasis added), because there's so much going on in homes behind closed doors that it's just amazing of how people are so afraid of CFS that they won't, they won't even deal with it. So they'll keep living in abusive, or whatever it is they're living in, because CFS is scary, because CFS, what do they do? They only take away your kids right? I mean, that's a lot of the thoughts out there. I mean, even my own sisters, you know, they hate CFS. They don't wanna talk to CFS. But me, for a long time, I'm like, no, I will call them up when I need help and I've done that, you know. There's supposed to be there to help us and yeah, it is kinda scary when you get a call from a CFS worker 'cause you don't know how that person is*.... And that's*

> *exactly what's the scary part. It's not the social work thing, it's that person that has that power within the social work* (emphasis added).

Eliza explained that clients' compliance with workers is often based on fear, a fear that she finds her privileged non-Aboriginal co-workers often fail to understand or acknowledge:

> They don't understand because, when they go up north, Native people are very welcoming. You know, there's this belief that when somebody comes into your house, you show them kindness. You show them respect and then you feed them, you know. And you give them all the help that you can. If they're around quite a while then you befriend them I guess but, and I said that's why they don't show any anger when Child Welfare comes in and takes their kids. But, in the meantime, they're wishing you would go away. And one of the ladies says, "Well no, we always end up becoming [friends]," I said "No you're not! They're just putting up with you. The reason that they're doing that is that they're tired of you coming in there so they figure, if we just work with them, they'll leave. They're wanting to get rid of you." ... I saw that all the time in my uh, in my grandparents and parents ... what they didn't like and what they didn't want in their house was that power over them.

Participants also conveyed their concerns over the judgemental attitudes some of their colleagues demonstrate. As Adrian stated:

> They were so negative and judgemental and they're like, "Oh those people are no good and they're just, you know, they're just wasting their life away."

Amie described the heartache she experienced when hearing her co-workers speak about clients in condemning terms.

> Quite truthfully, I find it's becoming harder to be a social worker.... Even just last year, I started to really reconsider and thinking about a ... career change.... Some of the social workers, and even in the environment I work at, they have no concept of what it's like to be without and when you don't have that concept of what it's like to be without, I find that perpetuates that attitude of, "Well why can't they?" You know, "Why can't they do this?" and, "How come they don't? How come they can't even buy a bag of diapers?"... I'm just like, "Oh my goodness, you guys don't get it," you know.... I've lived through a lot of those things that people are dealing with. I'm happy that I got past that and got out of it.... But it's like*, when you're struggling with working with the ideas that are out there at some of the places, it's, it's heartbreaking actually some days. You just wanna give up* (emphasis added).

Amie lamented many social workers lack empathic imagining:

> How do you teach a sixty-year-old Cree woman, who's never lived in the city, and probably rarely used a telephone, to now start making her travel arrangements just

> to access healthcare? ... It baffles me and people just don't get it. Like, people just don't get it. It's like, "Well, they just have to arrange their appointments" ... and it's like, you know what, no one recognizes the tiniest little things that can be helpful for somebody can become such a big barrier such as using the telephone.

"The paternalistic attitude is so prevalent," Amie added, when explaining the attitude of co-workers who voiced judgemental sentiments. These workers were described by a number of participants as "textbook social workers", workers with very little understanding of their privilege, who fail to understand why clients do what they do. As Amie clarified:

> I've been practicing now for 15 years and I see the differences in the social workers.... There are some I call "textbook social workers" that I see are just textbook social workers and some that are another group that I find are just very creative and how they approach people and their issues. It's out of that group that I find those are the ones that think outside the box. And the bottom line is, they do what they can to help somebody. You know, like I've seen lots of social workers where they're just like, "Well that's not my job" or it's a straight "No" and to me, that's not being helpful at all and that's how I perceive that social workers should be. Maybe I'm wrong.... *I have this ideal about social workers, of being helpful* (emphasis added) 'cause to me it's about helping someone out of a jam ... helping someone move beyond or get past whatever's stopping them or whatever barriers they might have and as a social worker, I mean, we're always dealing with tons of barriers, 'cause it's like the system creates tons of barriers and then people of course, what I see is *they still blame the individual without really looking at the bigger picture of why people maybe struggle* (emphasis added) more with trying to move forward in their lives or getting out of these cycles.

Amie elaborated that this blaming, together with her own experience of social workers telling her what to do as a youth, were approaches she still sees used by her co-workers today:

> "We know what's best for you" and that was always the attitude, they had it with pretty much everybody.... It was more, "We know what's right for you" and unfortunately, I still see that attitude with workers today. Even where I work and I work in other places. I still see that attitude and it's still there definitely and to me, I just think, that's not helpful for anybody.... I work with a multi group of professionals and the paternalistic attitude is so prevalent.

In addition to the pathologizing and Othering discourse expressed by co-workers about clients, participants also acknowledged this discourse was difficult to endure. Trouble described the toll it takes on her own professional identity to have to listen to paternalistic and elitist sentiments and stigmatizing attitudes:

> I think there is a bit of an elitist attitude from again middle-class, upper-middle class white families, people who are used to having stuff they aren't used to working hard for things and I think they have a different view of the client I think there is a bit of a stigma about our clients … 'Cause I think that at the end of the day there's still this mentality that we're better than the clients we serve. So here's me who's been a former client now I've succeeded with less than you've got and I'm better at my job.

Eliza described feeling shocked when she heard a worker describe Aboriginal children as "commodities":

> They'd have meetings with us and that's when they'd tell us about you know, the AJI[126]... All the agencies were gonna be given over to the Native people. This one says, she was really angry and she stood up and she says, "They can't do that. That's my bread and butter." My jaw just dropped. That's all, and you know what, that's how I see it a lot of times. I feel like they're just fighting, they don't really want our kids. It's the money that they want. It's what they get from our kids, you know, and so our kids are commodities for them.

In addition to commenting on how some clients perceive social workers with fear and distrust and how some social workers perceive clients with blaming and Othering, participants also reflected on their own positioning as social workers within larger systems. Roselinda talked about workers being under a similar scrutiny as their clients in terms of their professional discretion working within the child welfare system. She specified that this poses difficulties for her when she is challenged by families as to why she is taking their children away as an Aboriginal woman. She replies that her preference to provide supports rather than remove children is curtailed by policy, and as a result has had to develop more creative thinking and ways of problem solving:

> "I thought you were supposed to be Anishinaabe and how come you're taking our kids away from us"? "If I had the choice on my own, I wouldn't take your kids. I'd leave them here with you and I'd give you a daily support worker, a resource worker to come in and help you because your wife has some mental issues but I can't do that, because it's policy. I have to ensure that these kids will be safe and you can't be here because you need to go out and support your wife and family. You don't wanna be on welfare, that's good, but I have to make sure that the kids are safe." But if I did have a choice, I would have a Kohkom[127] living there with them, you know, but I can't make that decision, based on policy. Based on funding and finances and resources. But I think that's what I'd like to see … *Maybe we could buy some sort of road plots and grow some Kohkoms for every family who needed one* (emphasis added) (laughs).

Leo echoed the use of creative problem solving—"It's not one way, it's what way?" Leo and Trouble spoke to the importance of social work education in fostering more creative and effective approaches for working for their clients:

> Education means more knowledgeable minds, more diversity and we'll only grow as a profession, social work and Aboriginal component to social work.... To me, university is just making you more knowledgeable. You're a better thinker. You're a better critical thinker. (Leo)

> You need to learn about oppression, you need to learn about your worldviews. You need to learn that you are coming in judging people with your own view of the world … like the Aboriginal history, feminist and those pieces you need to know. (Trouble)

Child Welfare/ Criminal Justice Systems

Many participants shared their structural analysis of the overrepresentation rates of Aboriginal peoples in both child welfare and criminal justice systems. Lenore and Thunder56 described the direct link their clients have experienced going from the child welfare to the criminal justice systems:

> *The young men who are put in care and they end up in institutions such as jails* (emphasis added) …. He's the sweetest and gentlest young man I've come to see and you know, this was like back in the 80s and we were sitting in my office—sweet, innocent, big tears in his eyes … His stepfather was beating him and one time he came to my office and no tears, no nothing. Couldn't cry. "He did something to my mom last night. I heard them fighting" … Anyway the following week he killed his stepfather. He killed his stepfather and he did seven years in Stony. (Lenore)

> The biggest thing for me is your family connection. How strong you are connected, you know? And the kids that get hauled away from that system, like family, end up here and then if they don't ever get through that system healthy, well then you have a young adult with a lot of serious problems and you have an older adult whose going to be incarcerated because that's just the route you're going.... It's made me a more stronger advocate for Aboriginal youth because I find sometimes the justice system totally unfair. It's sometimes a very biased the system. It's a very long and drawn out system. It takes forever to get to a court hearing ... there's so many problems ... I don't have to speak about numbers. Just look at the remands. *Look at Manitoba Youth Centre*[128]*. Look at Headingley*[129] *and look at Stony Mountain.*[130] *Our people are there. You know, and how did they get there?* (emphasis added). (Thunder 56)

Roselinda articulated that apprehensions within child welfare are still driven by policies that overlook the overarching influence of poverty in systemic oppression. She recalled her experience with her non-Aboriginal supervisor on a home visit, contrasting her structural analysis with that of her supervisor's conventional assessment:

> I've had that experience as well with a supervisor who was a Caucasian woman who … never had to struggle with money. She always had food on the table and stuff like that … She couldn't understand how I could overlook the dirt on the floor and, you know, things like that [at a home visit] and that's a cultural barrier that I found at that particular office, although she was the supervisor of an Aboriginal agency. She just couldn't see past things—cleanliness is next to Godliness type thinking—and I could. Just because my floor is dirty today, doesn't mean it's not clean ever again. It just means I didn't get to it today. Or that means that I'm depressed and I don't feel like working or my kids are just crazy today. Whatever, it's like I had to buy Pepsi instead of milk 'cause milk is more expensive.

Liz commented that the child welfare system was inherently connected with other systems and attempts to rectify one in isolation appeared perplexing to her:

> We can't fix the Child Welfare system until we fix the whole system like the Welfare system, the School system, the Support system, the Residential School system, and I mean I realize that it's over and giving people a bunch of money and having the TRC[131] [Truth and Reconciliation Commission] and trying to fix the whole thing and, like, I had lots of family members that were in residential school or impacted by residential school and that's a lifelong thing. It's a multi-generational thing. So how do you break that cycle? I don't know. We can try but we can only take it one step at a time and that's what I tell clients.

Client Realities

Participants related their structural analysis of their clients' realities. Participants saw their clients dealing with the effects of residential schools and child welfare and criminal justice systems. They saw these systems intimately connected to Aboriginal peoples' parenting and family patterns. In addition, they saw the experience of violence, as encountered from police and collaterals, evident in their client's lives.

Residential School Legacy

Many participants identified the effect of residential schools in their own and in their client's lives. As Daniella explained:

> I mean, take a look at First Nations people. Colonization and those residential schools. It took our purpose away. Our purpose was to maintain Mother Earth and try to live in a good way.

Lenore was sent to a residential school and remembered the shame she was made to feel:

> I went to residential school.… But we still were not allowed to speak our language … made us feel guilty. Made us feel ashamed of ourselves, like our culture.… It was a major hurt.

Legacy on parenting. Participants identified the legacy of residential schools on parenting and family patterns. Liz demonstrated that she understood her clients' realities were rooted in systemic oppression:

> I realize that a lot of our clients are involved with us because of systematic oppression … like, yeah right, try and live on welfare! Good luck trying to find housing and keep it all together. No wonder people don't have adequate housing. No wonder people are leaving their kids with inappropriate caregivers. No wonder people are hitting their kids. 'Cause they're so stressed out because they don't have enough means to make the ends meet.… Don't even get me started on the whole residential school system and how that impacted people's ability to parent. Like, if you're not parented, how can you turn around and parent? It's just not possible … *We're so confused over why all these Aboriginal kids are in care? Well, they're in care because you took their grandparents away which impacted their parents which is impacting them* (emphasis added).

Amie related her recent awareness of the origins of the family patterns she has observed in her personal and professional life:

> It's just hard, especially with the young ones that are having babies.... I've learned that with parenting it goes way beyond just feeding them, changing them, clothing them, and bathing them. It goes so beyond that and that is just so missing out of families but then I realize, it was also missing from the generation before, 'cause we didn't get that.... Indian residential schools ... seeing the impacts on the generations, it's just messed up. Like, it's messed up big time ... and for me recognizing that it's not only touched all these families, like, you know, actual survivors, it's everybody. Like, it's impacted everybody.... I'm in my early forties now and only now am I starting to fully understand and open my eyes to what happened with the residential schools. Because, like, for a lot of people, I was, like, I didn't personally go so it didn't affect me, like, I've got nothing to worry about.

Roselinda shared that her learning about residential schools helped her to understand why her parents and community struggle:

> I think everything goes back to the residential school thing. And I'm not saying because it's the things right now, but it really is influential in many families' well-being.... I started learning about residential school, and that's where I had the breakthrough that that's why my parents are the way they are and inter-generational effects from all that stuff … finally the pieces came together.... That's why my parents are like that and all that. So I had, I don't know what you would call that experience an awakening or something? And that's why I wanted to go further … now it's popular [public awareness about residential schools] but when I was learning about it I guess that was just the beginning of it. And then you start to make all the connections, well that's why that person is an alcoholic and that's why this person uses drugs and that's why that person can't parent. It's because they never learned how. And you can see that, really, like not just our family but our whole community is like that.

Eliza explained that since her parents were at residential schools, the legacy of their experience resulted in her, as well as many other children on her reserve who despite living with their parents, feeling as though the residential school system was still present in their homes:

> You know how they say the kids that weren't in school weren't affected as badly? That's not true because … my parents were so entrenched in residential schools, that when it came to us, they were more or less like our sitters, and the parents were still in residential schools. Like through the whole reserve … they were doing things the way residential schools told them to do it and because they were still connected to the residential schools through us, they still had to, you know, watch their p's and q's.

Leo divulged the effect his grandmother's residential schooling had on his own emotional health and his awareness of why the young men he works with continue to struggle with anger, anxiety, and fear:

> I can totally understand where all these kids are coming from and the biggest thing I think is just that emotional development.… I'm only learning really how to be better with my emotions and I'm just in my mid-twenties ... *my grandmother was in residential schools and she was raised like a robot* (emphasis added) and she didn't show that love and affection to any of her children. It was relatively cold and you just be a certain way and that carried on to us but it's getting better, you know, at a slow pace and I know that … my grandmother did really well for us … she got her education. *She was always driven by fear* (emphasis added) though and that's not that healthy.… She's been recovering her entire life from that and trying to figure out how to be. So that isn't a great drive, fear. It would be better to drive off ambition or something, you know, not fear driven but nonetheless, she did really well for us in regard to education. She got her education so her daughter started getting an education and I got my education and so … we're doing really well for an Aboriginal family and that emotional piece came along but I know that there's just so many more there that aren't even close to that and

> are just living in that basic need, basic urges and I mean nothing beyond that you know, and so much confusion and anxiety and anger and fear and that emotional development just isn't there.

Legacy for criminal justice and child welfare. Thunder56 spoke about his four uncles' experiences at residential schools resulting in their incarceration and his understanding of the damage those systems have on individuals and families:

> I have younger brothers and my dad had eight brothers and two sisters. Quite a few of them went to residential school ... my dad ran away and he worked somewhere in Saskatchewan for 10 years on a farm.… By leaving the reserve, he left his mom. He came back and he was still too young. Residential school was a big thing like that so my dad lied to get there [the farm] so he never had to go to that [residential school]. But … his brothers, some of them weren't so lucky. They went through that abuse of residential school in Saskatchewan. I definitely can see now, looking at my uncles, the ones that had passed on … You also look at the down side of what systems did to my family and how it affected my family and now I'm not ashamed to say that half of my uncles, four of my dad's brothers, they spent time in the penitentiary. I had one uncle that … went through a life of hell. Through jail and broken families and stuff like.… And that's a learning in itself for me as a social worker. What can I do different so that it never happens to some other poor children's kid. You know what I'm saying? To let a system do that to you to 'cause so much damage?

In addition to the generational effect of residential schools, participants discussed the devastating effects of child welfare involvement for Aboriginal families. Lenore shared a story about one of her clients who lost contact with his 11 siblings and his attempts to find them after being taken into child welfare:

> I have a young man that I worked with years ago and this young man had 11 siblings …. He lived here in Winnipeg and you know what he did? He started looking. He wanted to find his siblings and when I last saw him he had found seven and that's like 12 years ago.

Participants also identified the generational effect of child welfare involvement on families. They revealed having second and third generation families on their case loads and parents, who themselves were children in the child welfare system, continue the struggle today. Many of these parents, as Liz identified, often do not understand why child welfare was involved:

> Like, I think lots of times, kids don't know but lots of times the parents don't even know. They're like, it's because my house was messy? Well, maybe that's part of it but maybe it's also 'cause your kids came to school with bruises on their face. Maybe it's 'cause you have a pedophile living in your home. Like who, like, but half the time I don't even think the parents know or if they're under the influence when they're apprehended.... You know, like imagine if I was under the influence of alcohol and my kids came into care. Well, I have no idea what the hell happened. I know I just woke up and now my kids are gone.

The intergenerational effect of child welfare involvement has left many Aboriginal families fearing its ever-looming presence. Roselinda said that she understood why parents often feel they need to be evasive; their fear of child welfare involvement and prior experience with the child welfare system often leaves them feeling distrustful:

> Because the way regulations and policies and responsibilities and ethics and you know all that stuff that we have to abide by, sometimes it puts the family at the feeling that they need to sneak around.

Aside from intergenerational effects, other participants echoed the vulnerability of children and youth in child welfare per se—childrens' needs for positive support and mentoring, and the importance of workers anticipating their needs and anticipating the barriers that clients face in accessing resources. Geri stressed the importance of anticipating client needs but at the same time cautioned against overwhelming clients with requirements and putting them on an unending program treadmill:

> It's like, how much more do you want me to do? I've met a girl that she's programmed out after three years. She was burned out.... Mind you, she's back out there so it's, it was too much you know, too much of that.

Legacy on professional practice. Participants also described how the increased awareness and public acknowledgement of residential schools has affected their work with their clients. Lenore, who works for a community organization, started including residential school history in her assessments:

> *Assimilating, christianizing and criminalizing* (emphasis added).... I work with a lot of kids that have parents or grandparents that are from the residential school background.... One of the questions I was missing, more to understand where this kid was coming from, why this kid is so distraught and why the whole family is so

> distraught. What's happening here? So one of the questions we have is … "Do you have a residential school background in your family. Were your grandparents or your parents in residential school?"

In contrast, child welfare workers Leo, Liz, and Doreen conveyed their frustration in being bound by policies that do not acknowledge or reflect the legacy of residential schools on their clients' realities:

> We're not taking into consideration the residential school legacy (Leo).
>
> Considering that 70% ... of the families that are involved with Child Welfare are Aboriginal, and like five percent of the textbook is devoted to an Aboriginal perspective ... residential schools has barely been touched upon … At the Truth and Reconciliation Commission … they were talking about the impact of residential schools on Child Welfare and residential schools on criminality of Aboriginal people and over-representation of the Justice system ... but like to me that's so, like that's such a pivotal piece. Like, probably half of our families are involved with us because they're involved with the justice system, whether it's through domestic violence, addictions, like theft, whatever, lack of housing, poverty, sexual abuse, physical abuse. But where's all that from? Well most of that's from residential schools, you know what I mean? So we can't look at just the criminal justice system or just the child welfare system and think we're gonna fix it. I think we need to look at the whole thing 'cause it's all impacting each other right.... I work with a lot of guys who are incarcerated. And all their kids are in care. So for the ones that aren't, their moms have child welfare involvement. Why do they have child welfare involvement? Well … either their parents had been in residential schools or their grandparents and the whole splitting apart of the family and the community and addictions and the sexual abuse … it's all wrapped up together. (Liz)
>
> It's the same thing with the residential school. We were talking about that this morning where they're still shipping kids out of communities and they're shipping them to South East College[132]. Well, that's an Aboriginal residential school then. Same damn thing. They're still shipping them out for no reason. So that's another big pet peeve. Hot topic. *(*Doreen)

Violence

In addition to the intergenerational legacy of residential schools affecting client realities, the issue of violence from the police and collaterals was also identified. Two participants shared stories about their client's experiences stemming from urban violence arising both from peers and the police:

> These young men … that's why we lose our young men, you know, why the jails are full is because … people get to them … [My son] won't walk anywhere because he

> knows that he'll get jumped because the people will try, okay, "You come join our gang or we'll beat the shit out of you. We're gonna stab you." Like he's had a gun pulled on him already a couple of times and he just says "No." He won't even walk across the street to the store. That's how scared he is … He's already lost a couple of friends … they used to hang out at the house, play games, but then they started going out and stuff like that and they got right involved in it. Right involved in the gangs, and guns and the violence. *(*Geri)

> You know how the law is a girl cannot be touched unless there's a police woman involved. Well … security, most of them are men, flirting with these girls, touching them and you know what? ... A lot of these girls come see me after and say, you know what happened to me? … They just describe how they're feeling and what's happening to them and I think, why is this allowed to happen? ... And a month ago, one of my clients … and her friends were in the car. Her friend was drunk, driving, so they got arrested, my client and her girlfriend were sitting in the back seat, the cop opened the door and pulled out XXXX . She remembers these guys touching her. She remembers what they did. They even checked under her bra. They checked in her underwear ... they pounded her head when she fought back from not wanting them to touch her like that. She said they slapped her head to come out of the vehicle.… I would fight too if somebody were, if a man was handling me that way, you know. (Lenore)

Organizations

Participants specified their structural analysis also included the organizations they were involved with. They commented on Aboriginal organizations run by white management, the devolution process in child welfare, and their own experienced racism.

White Management

Many participants spoke about their frustration with Aboriginal agencies still being under the control of non-Aboriginal management and policies. As Eliza explained, it is not white people she is tired of, it is the white mentality, white politics, white attitude, white privilege, and white control:

> Why should we have to be under them when this should be our agency? … A lot of the management is white. You know, all of these people under management, like supervisors and all of these other people, they're so … they're so white-washed that they can't see. They still think that the white people are there to save them and everything, so they won't let go of them.

Thunder56 traced the continued control of Aboriginal organizations to federal funding dollars:

> It's like the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs[133] … and Indian Affairs[134] and how they're federally funded.… They're still paying to control us because as much as they've given a political voice, where's that dollar coming from eh? … They have control and they'll always have the upper hand. Government will never give you this without taking this. They're not gonna give you this unless they take a chunk.

Lenore outlined how the continued control of Aboriginal organizations was part of the larger control the federal government plays in Aboriginal peoples' lives:

> Ottawa is where all the decisions are made for us under the Indian Act. What they're changing now is the treaty rights of our people. They said, when they signed the treaties in the late 1800s and the early 1900s, they said that this is for everyone as long as the sun shines, the grass grows, and the rivers flow.... Time immemorial. That's what the understanding has been of the treaties. Now it's changing everywhere, the housing, the land, the education. Everything's changing … like in two or three generations, we are gone.

Other participants spoke about their frustration not only with non-Aboriginal control of Aboriginal organizations but also of the seemingly slow pace of Aboriginal leadership and change towards self-determination. As Roselinda described:

> There's a lot of talk. There's not a lot of action. So like where does that actually need to come from? We need to think grass roots ... everybody expects somebody else to be the leader.

Doreen acknowledged her own position in challenging the very systems she is employed by:

> You have to know the rules in order to get the things done. You have to stay within the confines of whatever or else you won't get because if you challenge too much, you're squashed. So I've learned that. Been squashed a couple of times. Learned the hard way.

Despite the challenges faced, Daniella shared her hope for a more united movement:

> I know eventually we are going to get stronger. I also know that like eventually we're gonna get smarter.... I think maybe the hardships might drive us to become more united because we're not united and I think that's the problem, that the government has divided and conquered for 400 years because they've done their job so well that we, they don't even have to do it anymore. We do it to ourselves.

Devolution[135]

Participants spoke directly to the devolution process within Manitoba child welfare. Participants clarified their frustration with funding restrictions; about having to hire new and often inexperienced workers to deal with the high number of investigations, apprehensions, and caseloads; and about Aboriginal workers having to now do the apprehensions of Aboriginal children.

In regards to funding restrictions, participants commented on working with families where they could not introduce much needed resources due to funding and policy constraints. As Daniella described, she encounters foster families who struggle to meet the needs of their foster children because those cases fall under pre-Aboriginal Justice Inquiry frozen rates:

> They claw back the resources and they tell us that we still have to do our job but we have to do our job without these resources and they're setting us up for failure. *They're setting the kids up for failure* (emphasis added). They're setting the families up for failure. And what pisses me off is that there isn't enough of me, and there isn't enough time in the day to do the stuff that I wanna do.... The government is trying to standardize everything and it just doesn't work because people don't come in standard form.... Our kids are big business, that's the only part of my job I hate, because ... our child authorities out there, are still not giving the resources to the families and if they can't to the nuclear family, then at least give it to the extended family and if they can't, give it to the people in that community so that we don't displace those kids anymore.

Correspondingly, Roselinda spoke about having to do apprehensions because resources are not available for families to stay together:

> I don't enjoy apprehensions. It's one of the worst things that I need to do and if we could just avoid that whole scene and get somebody into that family and help that family but again, everything always comes down to money.

Participants also made reference to the public criticism Aboriginal organizations face since devolution. As Amie explained:

> It's like everybody targeted the Aboriginal organizations because you do question, are they ready? Do they have enough support people? Do they have enough qualifications there?

Amidst escalating child welfare cases, Aboriginal organizations have been forced to hire new and inexperienced workers instead of being able to build on their existing capacity. As Roselinda and Trouble explained:

> At the authority level, they're telling themselves, "These agencies can't do it. They're just not able to do it. We have to go in there and force our mandate and force them to accept new workers." These workers they're putting in there.... I had seen that from my own experience at the authority, but, and how is that helping? It's not helping. Like go in there, ask them what their abilities are and help them build those abilities. (Roselinda)

> So I think there needs to be a happy medium. I'm all for hiring Métis and Aboriginal workers but they still need to have a BSW, they need to have the skills to do the job.... I mean they are hiring people with Human Ecology degrees, BAs and I'm sorry that's not a social work degree. (Trouble)

Participants also relayed their concern that the child welfare authorities were essentially imposing unchanged provincial policies on Aboriginal organizations and in effect mandating Aboriginal workers to now carry out the apprehension of Aboriginal children. As Amie and Leo explained:

> Now that the system itself is now recruiting our own people to go and do what they've been doing to us for hundreds of years, but now they're sending our own people in to do it. (Amie)

> And still, five years later, I still feel a lot of authorities: Southern Authority, Northern Authority, Métis Authority, are still just basically doing things the way the provincial government has done them. It's just being done by Native people to Native people. (Leo)

Despite their concerns with the devolution process, participants were clear in stating that they were united with their Aboriginal co-workers in supporting devolution as a means to a more hopeful future for Aboriginal families. As Amie explained:

> I see today, with devolution ... I think it's gonna be a long time before it actually gets there. Um, I'm hopeful that at some point ... once they get a good grasp and their feet to the ground, that they will be able to support the families and not be so reactive.... I'm a firm believer in prevention. Like you put the prevention pieces in place so that you don't have to react, you don't have a crisis, you don't have a child that's hurt ... to me that makes more sense, to do what you can for the family, preserve the family while they're intact.

Racism

Participants also described their experiences encountering racism both within their professional organization as well as in their personal lives. While most participants identified dealing with racism in their professional capacities, Lenore shared her experience of the effect racism plays within the neighbourhood where she lives with her grandson:

> I lived in a neighbourhood that's predominantly non-Aboriginal but there's a building there, right close to where I live ... 74% of it was Aboriginal.... I see kids wandering around the neighbourhood…. Their dark hair, jackets, walking up and down the street, nothing to do because there's nothing for them these kids. They get into trouble. Sooner or later they get into trouble … they tried to start a service to the community. They wanted to be introduced to the community somehow or introduce themselves to these kids by knocking on the doors, five or six of them and they wanna rake the yard, they wanna shovel the snow, doors were slamming…. Of course what's happening in the news, and the media, they were thinking these were bad kids.... To be faced with racism at that age you know, like my grandson, he's eight years old ... they saw a fence and you know little boys, they're gonna get on that fence … and this woman comes out that night and "Get off the property. This isn't public property. Get out!" and you know, he gets scared so he jumps off and he jumps off right onto a nail and it went right into his knee, right.

Eliza explained that with the advent of political correctness, she has seen even more racism than before:

> Well what did they used to call the Native people before? "Savage" and, what's the other one, 'cause they had no Christian background? Yeah, "Heathens." I think it still seems that way you know, a lot of them.... But you know what I find is really strange though is it seems like people are trying so hard to hide their, how prejudiced they are and yet it's, it's more seen now.

Experienced racism was also noted by participants in their professional lives. Amie and Eliza articulated that too often their experiences as Aboriginal social workers include being treated as though they were inferior in skills and education as compared to non-Aboriginal social workers:

> When people identify someone as an Aboriginal social worker, it's almost like the level of education is lowered and that just drives me insane. It's like you still graduate from the same program, it's the same courses whether you take on campus or off.... It just seems like as soon as you say anything that's Aboriginal, people, you know, they kinda flip it off and it's just like, "Oh well that's not serious." ... I'm always conscious of that perception and just trying to show, it's almost *like you*

> *still have to show people, like, you're worth something* (emphasis added)... you have the degree, you have the credentials, and sometimes you do things a little different. (Amie)

> They think that we, as Native people, are not good, that we didn't get our education … like they did, that ours was made easy so we could become social workers, and the things that are said on the phone to us, like from other agencies, like one called the other day and was saying … "We need this … green sheet" … and I said "No, we have green sheets" but it wasn't the one that she was talking about and anyway she said …" "It would be pretty, like pretty unprofessional of me, unprofessional of me if I did that without the paper work." In other words, because of the things that I said, she was saying more or less saying that I wasn't a professional.… Yeah … right away they're always ready to complain, ready to write emails about us to our supervisors.…Yeah. Um hm. And they see us that we can't do as good a job … as they can you know.… The worker before me, she said she just couldn't take it anymore. It wasn't her cases or her co-workers. She said it was the outside agencies … and the court system … their attitudes and how they used to fight with her.… *A couple of social workers too say the same thing … that they get treated really badly by other social workers* (emphasis added), because they don't see them as their equals. Yeah, we're social workers … they smile at our faces but behind our backs.… I gotta be careful because … they might wanna try and get rid of me because of how I, what I think. Because all management is mainly all white.... But I wonder if it's like … the non-Natives are up here and we're down there, so they … try to befriend us and gain our trust but they can't because they're always treating us like we're children.... We're still only that one single Native person who is beneath all these other people.… Sometimes it just makes me so angry. I wish that there was something I could join where people are fighting to make this stuff right so that we can share our ideas and … meet with people that feel the same way I do. (Eliza)

Participants also described experiencing racism in scenarios where they were particularly sought after as Aboriginal professionals. Lenore shared her experience as a board member encountering subtle racism:

> I'm a board member of a shelter and one of the things that I've noticed about shelters is that it's multicultural. Women from different cultures come into the home but the board is totally Christianized and they are, sometimes I feel that they need more, um, multicultural awareness. And that's necessary. Sometimes meetings are held in the church basement. It's one of the committee members' church.... It has to be done. It has to be done their way or the highway and it's, like, I've gone into meetings where they were never hostile but I would feel very uncomfortable.

Doreen was treated in a derogatory manner under affirmative action:

> I was the only Aboriginal person there and they're like, "You don't know anything, you're stupid, la la la," so that I worked double hard in order to prove myself which

> now I'm thinking back, "I don't have to prove myself to you. You're stupid. If you can't take me the way I am, then you're the racist."

The advent of Aboriginal liaison positions under affirmative action was identified by Amie as not being immune to the alienating effects of racism. Amie shared her own experience of soul destroying isolation not only from of other Aboriginal workers but from other non-Aboriginal social workers as well:

> In healthcare, they create these positions and it's almost, you know, we kinda have, what I've now called, these "soul" survivors. We have Aboriginal liaisons in this area and that area ... but *we're all isolated* (emphasis added). We're all working on our own little islands and trying to uh, keep connected for one thing 'cause you need that, you definitely have to have that support to do what you need to do but I've also noticed as I took on this unique role, even though I still practice as a social worker, I don't do the exact same things that the unit social workers do. Even with that status or that kind of difference in my role, I also notice how I'm outside of the social work group.... I'm part of the group but they threw me to the side.

Eliza spoke about her frustration with having to face continuing barriers that she sees as ensuring not too many Aboriginal social workers enter the profession:

> Access Program started for these Native people so that they could get in and you know, more people, more Natives could get into professions, but as time went on, they thought hey, what's going on here? There's too much of them. They put up these barriers, so they're putting up barriers now. Like, what was it? The social workers were trying to make it some kind of a law where we all had to be registered.... "Oh, here they are again." They got this and now they're putting this in front of us.

Amie shared that she has made it her personal mission to counter and challenge the racism she witnesses amongst her colleagues, not only for her own health but also for her client's:

> I have to appreciate that other people have their own practices, being a social worker. Some people I question why they even do it in the first place or how they got through it. There's some out there, I'm just baffled, you know, just baffled ... when I talk to them they just kinda brush off what I say and there is a couple in particular and it just kinda makes me laugh.... I can certainly already tell that they've very minimal if any life experience, about being a social worker and it's, it's almost like they take that status and they walk around, "I am a social worker." I mean I don't walk around like that.... It's almost like they want the clout.... It's bad enough when you see doctors doing it.... I have to say, over time, I've learned to love the challenge ... you hear so much of the prejudicial comments about, "Aboriginal this, Indian this, they do this or they do that. All they're doing is having kids young and all, they're all joining gangs." ... To me it's important to show that we can be successful.

> We can be strong, and we are.... Not only am I there to provide support to Aboriginal females, but I'm also there to educate the healthcare staff that are in the program, that alone in itself has been pretty scary when I think about it 'cause I just think about how much is this going to be, will the reception be good to this? Or are they going to come back with their, you know, everybody's entitled to their own way of thinking, but at the same time trying to determine, *am I strong enough to hear their feedback* (emphasis added)?

Lenore shared that while she knows too well the effects of racism, she does not stoop to perpetuating it:

> It took a long time for me to realize that I don't have to be racist like that. You know, so that's what I teach as well. I've heard my Granny telling me something about racism and I just say, "Well, you know what? We'll not respond like that. That's their problem. You have to recognize that's their problem, not yours."

Unsolicited Recommendations

As with the themes describing participants' own professional practice, the recommendations they offered covered a wide array of social work jurisdictions. While I did not specifically ask participants for their recommendations for social work, most participants offered them when I asked if they had anything else to share with me. As illustrated in Table 7.2, the recommendations converged around six primary themes: services, social work education, more Aboriginal social workers, more social workers with lived systemic involvement experience, personal wellness, and activism.

Services

Many participants made recommendations pertaining to the most frequent theme of services. These included recommendations for improvements to child welfare, increased funding for social services, enhanced quality of social services, and for additional programs.

Child Welfare

Participants offered recommendations for the child welfare system: key supports for families and youth, more funding, and more Aboriginal child welfare workers. Participants spoke to the necessity of having more supports for families and youth. They relayed the importance of understanding the legacy of residential school experiences on families' coping strategies and for embracing empowerment approaches to facilitate family wellbeing. As Rosalinda explained, this would mean more of an emphasis on harm reduction strategies rather than apprehensions:

> I would like to see them *empower families more* (emphasis added). Because the way regulations and policies and responsibilities… all that stuff that we have to abide by, sometimes it puts the family at the feeling that they need to sneak around.… I'd like to see harm reduction, rather than apprehension.

Participants also stressed the need to support parents *after* they had had their children apprehended. They explained the importance of parents being familiar with and understanding their rights and avenues available to them to get their children back. As Liz illustrated:

> We're so good at writing out plans for people, like what if they can't read and they don't want to tell us they can't read? How the hell are they supposed to know what the plan is? Like what about our parents that have FASD?... I think we should *read parents their damn rights* (emphasis added) when we take their kids ... give them something like, "Okay, so now we took your kids. Now this is what's gonna happen. So now court is gonna happen within five days and this is your right or whatever, the papers need to be filed within five days so you're gonna have court. This is where court's gonna be. You have a right to a lawyer. Here's the number for Legal Aid. Legal Aid will be there, then the judge is gonna…" I talked to my supervisor about that and he's like, well, yeah, but you know, that's a complicated thing and I'm like, I know but ... we're

Table 7.2. Participant Recommendations

	Number of participants (%)*	
Recommendations Offered	**13**	**(87%)**
Services	**11**	**(73%)**
Child Welfare	8	(53%)
Funding	6	(40%)
Quality Enhancement	6	(40%)
Programs	4	(27%)
Social Work Education	**8**	**(53%)**
Curriculum	6	(40%)
Support for students	3	(20%)
Financial investment in students	3	(20%)
Outreach	2	(13%)
More Aboriginal Social Workers	**7**	**(47%)**
Lived Systems Experience	**7**	**(47%)**
Personal Wellness	**6**	**(40%)**
Activism	**6**	**(40%)**
Policy	5	(33%)
Awareness	3	(20%)

*Percentages do not add up to 100 as participants offered multiple answers

> basically arresting these people's kids and their lives and their finances.... "Oh, good luck with housing! Oh, your welfare's cut off! Now you don't get child tax credit!" ... Like it's like not only have we destroyed their life by taking their kids away—and maybe we needed to, I mean, I hope we needed to—but like, it's just like compounded and then it's like okay now there's … Like where are your rights as a parent? I don't think anybody knows. I certainly didn't know until I became involved in the system.

Other participants echoed the need for post-apprehension support by clarifying the struggles that youth experience when they age out of the child welfare system. Nettie described the bewilderment, isolation and lack of supports that many youth experience and the crucial need for follow-up services with them:

> When kids are in the Child Welfare System and they're trying to go to school, they're in foster homes and then they go on to this independent living and then they're on their own and when they're on their own for the first time without social workers, without foster parents, without the supports that they once had.... They don't have the life skills that is needed to successfully live on your own.... I think that *there needs to be follow-up* (emphasis added)... programs specifically for them so that they can connect with other individuals that are in the same.… This is happening to so many youth.... *They feel alone* (emphasis added).

Funding

Participants spoke about the need for enhanced funding for services and programs: for additional child welfare funding to hire workers with BSW degrees and funding to provide essential supports to families. Participants explained that skilled workers were essential and having a BSW was part of that skill set. Facing increasing cuts to child welfare budgets, participants lamented working with newly hired colleagues, without BSW degrees, and who lacked fundamental knowledge sets instrumental in doing effective child welfare case management with Aboriginal families. As Trouble stated:

> I worked with some amazing social workers, who are not Aboriginal who are just skilled, wonderful workers … and now I'm working with some very unskilled workers.… *You need certain pieces from the BSW program* (emphasis added).

In addition to the necessity of hiring skilled workers, participants also articulated needing additional financial resources for families, extended families and communities—

financial resources crucial to keep children from not being taken away in the first place. They relayed that the amount of ad hoc funding that goes into the foster family system would be better allocated to families as prevention. As Eliza explained:

> You know, 'cause a lot of people say, "Why do we have to pay all of these foster parents that money? Why can't we put the money towards the families and have somebody in the home helping them, teaching them, you know? Especially if the families are willing." You know, you'd get a lot more stuff done because parents wouldn't be so resistant then and they would see social workers as *positive* people.… Instead of now. You know, social workers have such a ——— nobody likes social workers.

Participants also spoke strongly about the need, post-apprehension, for financial resources for families to work to prevent their children from becoming permanent wards, to get their children back and not give up. As Trouble succinctly summarized, the need for additional resources for child welfare was critical:

> Prevention, money into prevention, skilled workers doing appropriate risk assessments and resources. Reeeeeeeesources.

Quality Enhancement

Several participants recommended improving the quality of existing social work services by doing outreach, offering a continuum of services, by working collaboratively with, and offering viable hope for clients. Participants made plain the significance of needing to offer services to clients in their own communities instead of expecting clients to come to office settings. As Lenore and Thunder 56 specified:

> There should be more services to the community.… When I was younger, social work was institutional, and now, it has to be more of a community thing. It has to be not on a 10th floor. (Lenore)

> I find that if you want to put the best resource there, put yourself there. That means you go to them.… If you go to them, you're gonna get more. You draw out more. That's just the way I work. (Thunder 56)

In addition to outreach, participants reported that services also need to be offered on a continuum—a continuum that would reduce the need for clients to

traverse an often bewildering array of seemingly unconnected services where the potential for them to fall through gaps is high. As Leo illustrated:

> I know they've been talking about that for a long time, having a single window approach, you know, to service delivery for young people… just be one starting point that's your finishing point as well.

Finally, participants emphasized the need for service providers to work both more collaboratively with clients, including them in decision-making and planning, as well as empowering them, in order to provide viable hope for clients and a belief that their actions have purpose:

> I guess, for social workers, if they could just help one person keep the hope, just keep that little light of hope that they matter and that they might be a help to somebody else 'cause that's really important ... that maybe they're useful for something. That's important....You're in the darkness and there has to be a light and that's what I see social workers, you know, like, if the world was, you know, in a perfect world, social workers would be more like the spiritual leaders. (Daniella)

Programs

Participants spoke about additional needed programs. These programs included additional sport activities for youth, 24-hour crisis lines on reserves, increased access to cultural teachings, and transition support services for people moving from reserve to urban centers and from reserve courts to urban courts. Participants mentioned the need for more school social workers to assist youth dealing with child welfare, and Aboriginal street patrols providing safety and protection from violence and police harassment.[136] As Nettie and Lenore noted:

> I think that there should be *more social workers in the school systems* (emphasis added)…. In the inner city schools, it's tough for the kids just to go to school because of all the issues in their community. They can't get an education because of family life…. When they don't get their education, they become dependent on the system and when they become dependent on the system, their self-worth just goes down … there's so many cases…. I think there needs to be teachers working with the social workers. It has to even start working with the families in the community. Because a lot of the kids that go to school, they can't learn because of their whole family situation. They're either being abused, or just different issues going on in

> their family life and when they go to school, they're not able to focus and that's what happened to me, and that's why I dropped out of school. That's why I made the choices I did in the past…. I think that the schools really need to be prepared to work with these kids. (Nettie)

> There should be the Bear Clan Patrol.[137] The patrol that used to be.... I have a client. He came to see me … but he had to walk a block. In that block that he walked to catch a bus, he was arrested four times.... He was trying to come and see me. He says to me, "I'm late" he says "But I got arrested four times walking down the block." (Lenore)

Social Work Education

Participants offered recommendations for social work education, the second most mentioned theme. These recommendations covered areas of curriculum, supports to students, financial investment in students, and outreach.

Curriculum

Participants spoke directly to curriculum changes. These recommendations ranged from personal healing as a part of the curriculum, to more practical skills and experiential learning about compassion and empathy, to more Aboriginal content. Participants recommended that interpersonal skills that are taught at the beginning of the program should be taught closer to a student's practicum so that their ability to interact with clients is more accomplished. They expressed frustration about having to work with new child welfare colleagues who, despite having graduated from BSW programs with a solid theoretical base, were often lacking important practical assessment skills and approaches pertaining to attachment and child development. As Liz explained:

> [The BSW program] is not really about actually what you do. Like, it's not about how to deal with a parent when you apprehend their kid.... I realize that the BSW is a generalist program … but let's not kid ourselves. Everybody has to start out in Child Welfare because nobody is going to hire you in a school or child development clinic ... or anywhere else, without a couple of years of experience. Who's gonna hire you without that experience? Child Welfare! We have workers coming in, they have no idea what they're doing [but] they'll be the first ones to tell you, they can spout off theories to the end of the world.

Following the thread of more practical skills, participants also recommended having more experiential learning opportunities within their BSW education in order to work through their own issues and feel what some of the challenges the clients they would be working with might experience. As Mina relayed:

> Our teacher, she was trying to teach us about people with fetal alcohol syndrome.... She got a co-worker to turn a TV and it was really loud off and on. And then another person to turn the lights off and on and then she was gonna give us a test while all these things are going and you can't really hear because these tissue papers are over our heads.… It was so amazing because … that's how it feels to be a person with FAS. You can't concentrate and I was trying to do her test, really trying, and I couldn't do it and it was such an eye opening experience and I think that *that should be in our courses too, where we actually go through feeling those feelings, because that's what's gonna change us* (emphasis added).... It changed my life. It just changed my perspective of what they're going through, because my sister had FAE, so it gave me a better understanding of how maybe she can't hear me sometimes, you know, or maybe I'm talking too much, with too many things going on around her, so it was really, really helpful.

Participants also stressed the importance of having "more Aboriginal content" within their courses. They recommended bringing people in, who had once been children involved in systems, such as themselves, to talk to students to create a stronger awareness of the link between residential schools and contemporary child welfare and criminal justice systems.

Supports to Students

Some participants proposed that social work programs provide more support to Aboriginal students in adjusting and thriving in an academic environment. They stressed that students need to be mentally and emotionally prepared and supported throughout their studies. They recommended that instructors meet students' learning styles and counselling resources be made available as soon as students enter the program. The adjustment to a mainstream university setting, they explained, was for many participants a difficult and isolating experience.

Financial Investment in Students

Participants also communicated the importance of investing financially in Aboriginal social workers' education. Because Aboriginal social work students carry multiple responsibilities for themselves and their children, and because so many, due to their own child welfare involvement, do not have support from their families, investing in their education is important to generate the leaders of tomorrow. As Thunder 56 stated:

> I said "You should invest a good 40 to 50 million and renew the investments and the revenue that you generate in terms of interest on that, you would educate how many people in this room that are young? … They're gonna be our future leaders someday. That's where you put it."

Outreach

A couple of participants also articulated the importance of expanding social work programs in northern and remote communities. By offering university satellite programs in communities, more Aboriginal social workers would graduate, and reciprocally, teachings from the communities would reach university instructors. As Lenore explained:

> They have the school in Norway House and they have University of the North there and that's great that's happening. That's gotta happen more. Take the teachings into the community. We're teaching something, they're teaching something in the community—let's share. Sharing.

Thunder 56 added that even prior to Aboriginal students enrolling in social work programs, social work educators need to go to northern communities, in collaboration with band counsels and chiefs to "light the fires of education":

> You can bring people here but it's better to go there … where the problems are and if you …speak from the heart … to people in terms of education, to people in social work … you'll set a fire there somewhere and it will burn because reserve life is a hard life compared to urban … Education is a way out of that way of life.

More Aboriginal Social Workers

Participants made plain the urgency of the third theme—the need for more Aboriginal social workers working in communities, in systems and institutions, and in administration and policy. Participants described the importance of Aboriginal clients having Aboriginal

social workers to act as support people, as advocates, and as mentors engaging in prevention and making connections and fostering community. Participants spoke about the importance of having more Aboriginal hospital and child welfare workers assisting young mothers so that their children do not get apprehended, and more Aboriginal social workers working with youth in schools. A shared social identity and social location was described as fostering a level of understanding and connection often not experienced with non-Aboriginal workers and creating stronger working relationships. As Thunder 56 remembered with his own Aboriginal worker:

> I just felt more comfortable. There was like a silent connection…. He's Aboriginal. I'm Aboriginal and we knew it and we didn't have to speak of Aboriginal way of life or culture. We knew it, just by him looking at me and me at him…. *So it was like a silent bond* (emphasis added). With somebody non-Aboriginal it wouldn't be there.

It was also stressed that not only was having a common identity important in fostering a strong working relationship, having a shared First Nations language was crucial when working with clients whose first language was not English. Thunder 56 shared his experience working within prisons as a community support worker:

> Let's take Stony Mountain or Headingley Institution,[138] there should be Aboriginal social workers there that are fluent in their language … in their culture and well balanced in life…. That means in their ceremonies. They live and walk that way of life. Those are the kind of social workers you need in the institutions ... *you definitely need the language* (emphasis added) in there 'cause you can go in there anytime and you can see a lot of them speak broken English, have low literacy levels as they left school at a young age … caught up in the system, caught up in CFS … and been through hell … Their way of life of surviving through all the trauma that's down here, is through crime and violence … a lot of that trauma [comes] out and that's where you find the balance because you're instilling it in them. You gotta walk with them on the same path down the road.

In addition to having more Aboriginal social workers to provide effective services for Aboriginal clients, as peers and colleagues, participants spoke about the significance of having a community of Aboriginal social workers. Strength in numbers was referenced as vital in order to change policies that continue to marginalize Aboriginal peoples, to recreate

organizational climates inclusive and reflective of Aboriginal workers' concerns, and to offer professional peer support and community to Aboriginal social workers. Nettie, now as a social worker, recalled her own experience feeling isolated as an Aboriginal youth having to work with non-Aboriginal social workers, and articulated her relief to find other Aboriginal social workers among her professional peers: "I'm glad ... there's a lot of people like me working in the field now."

Lived Systems Experience

Many participants spoke strongly about the fourth theme—having more social workers who had lived experience of being clients. While one participant expressed concern over workers having not yet done their own healing and potentially projecting their experiences onto their clients, other participants were clear that lived experiences as users of services was beneficial. They stated that workers with lived systems experience would have more grounded compassion and awareness of the power they had as professionals vis-a-vis their clients. It would result in client's having to spend less time explaining their struggles and would result in more acceptance and less judgement from their workers. They added that this vital additional competency would result in fewer apprehensions and more critical thinking about the challenges clients face and the efforts they make to overcome their difficulties. In effect, participants commented that workers who had a lived experience with the effects systems can have on clients, would be more valued and trusted by Aboriginal clients and families.

Personal Wellness

Participants also stressed the importance of personal wellness, the fifth theme, of working through one's own issues before becoming practitioners. They stressed that not only could the systems within which they worked be oppressive to Aboriginal workers, and the nature of the work inherently stressful, they articulated that without a healthy sense of self,

the danger of projecting their own issues onto their clients was too great. As Trouble and Liz warned:

> I've seen workers who have not been in care who are great workers. I've seen workers who have been in care and who had experience with the child welfare system and they're crappy. Because depending on what their view is, some of them will keep families together no matter what…. The kids could be bleeding and dying on the side of the road and they'll be still standing by that kid …. to stay in the family. Well that's not protection, that's not keeping kids safe! Other workers will apprehend, apprehend, apprehend. Well that's not in the "best interests of the child either.". If you haven't dealt your stuff, if you are not an overall healthy person doing this job and you're not aware of your triggers, you are more damaging than good to these families. (Trouble)

> You need to be over your issues of your life experience before you can be an effective social worker 'cause I've seen social workers coming in that have the life experience but they haven't done the work and they're bringing all their issues from back there into here, whatever way that is, either as a way to get control or as a way to fix things.… It's like that delicate balance of being a compassionate caring worker and being able to go home and sleep at night. Like, there's that delicate balance between having a life experience and having that shade everything you do. (Liz)

Activism

The final theme of increased activism was articulated by several participants. They recommended better representation of Aboriginal social workers in legislative and policymaking arenas and increased public and client awareness of Aboriginal issues. Five participants talked about needing Aboriginal professional associations and more collective and united action in order to have a stronger political voice to affect policies and bring about social change. This included recommendations for Aboriginal management of Aboriginal organizations and efficacious political representation at local, regional and national levels. Participants spoke about wanting political representation that was made up of Aboriginal social workers, academics and grassroots activists. As Nettie and Thunder 56 stated:

> There's so many barriers that we face as workers.… *We gotta get to that higher level of changing policies* (emphasis added) and how do we do that? As social workers you can do the work, but that doesn't change the policies. They need to be changed. (Nettie)

> You need so many people in the Aboriginal social work realm.… We need them at a very high level, in management, in government.… We need the same powers in the

> province of Manitoba where you enact laws.… They should have a voice that is in parliament.... *If we do not have the same power in these three circles, provincial, federal … we go nowhere* (emphasis added). (Thunder)

Finally, three participants spoke of activism that increases both client and public awareness of Aboriginal issues. One participant explained that social workers need to create environments where clients can come together and cultivate their abilities to have collective awareness about social issues. Their current processes of receiving services from social workers only results in a continued isolation from each other and a lack of awareness of their individual difficulties as social problems. Participants also talked about needing to educate the general public by including more Aboriginal content in provincial high school curricula as well as toying with an innovate public awareness campaign they called “book drive-bys.” As Eliza and Rosalinda explained:

> You know what, all these things that they’re teaching [at WEC], you should be teaching that to all the white students and they should be teaching it at the high schools. You know why? … Because it makes the person feel so good about themselves when they hear that history. Like, I wasn’t a savage after all and my people were so strong! … It made me feel very proud being Native because of all the stuff that we did. (Eliza)

> The consensus we came up with in a social welfare class, saying we need to do more *book drive-bys* (emphasis added) because we felt that we were learning about residential schools, about the way Native people have been marginalized and all that. Not everybody knows but we still see it every day—you read editorials in the newspaper. Every time there’s a protest and people are just unaware of what we’ve been through as First Nations people. (Roselinda)

Conclusion

Participants’ own professional practice as well as their recommendations for social work reflected a simultaneous commitment to clinical practice as well as a structural analysis of their client’s realities. Non-judgemental and respectful interpretation of their client’s behaviours, ongoing rapport, and empathy were foundational for effective work with their clients. Participants developed and maintained rapport through engaged listening with their

clients, asking them for clarification and direction, being non-prescriptive, and making note of the importance of effective timing for sensitive issues. They built rapport further by being honest with their clients and by utilizing empowering interventions through the use of collaboration and facilitating hope.

Their overriding approaches were centered on prioritizing clients, practicing professional reflexivity, maintaining professional wellness, and equalizing power dynamics with their clients. Their clinical practice included providing tangible services, including advocacy and system navigation, outreach, and meaningful referrals.

Contextualizing their clinical practice, participants' structural analysis included the overrepresentation rates of Aboriginal peoples in child welfare and criminal justice systems, situating client realities within residential school and child welfare legacies, evaluating social workers for their actions and attitudes, and assessing Aboriginal organizations for their autonomy and Othering practices.

Participants' recommendations for enhanced services included more harm reduction, prevention, education, and follow-up supports for families and youth in the child welfare system. Increased funding was identified as essential in order to hire skilled child welfare workers as well as provide families and communities with the financial resources to keep their children from being apprehended, and if apprehended, to access the legal resources to get their children returned. Participants also spoke to the need for improving the quality of existing social work services by offering outreach to clients, by providing services on a continuum, and by working with clients collaboratively and from an empowerment model. They also made clear the need for essential programs, including sport activities for youth, on reserve crisis lines, transition services, school and hospital support, and programs offering protection from police harassment.

Participants made recommendations for social work education, including additions to curriculum, support services for and financial investment in Aboriginal students, and offering education outreach to northern and remote communities. They voiced the need for more Aboriginal social workers providing frontline services, working actively and substantively in administration and policy, and in cultivating professional associations. They recommended having more social workers with lived systems experience. They claimed that more workers with this experience would create a professional community of critical thinkers and allies of clients who struggled with system control.

Participants also made recommendations that social workers place a priority on personal wellness in order not to project their own issues onto their clients. Finally, participants recommended increased activism resulting in better representation of Aboriginal social workers in policy making arenas and more client and public awareness of issues facing Aboriginal peoples. In short, participants offered a wide array of recommendations to reduce marginalization processes that currently face Aboriginal peoples. The next chapter will present a discussion of the findings and their fit with and contributions to the existing literature.

Discussion

What difference do these data make in understanding social work's role in contemporary colonizing and structurally violent processes affecting Aboriginal peoples? How does the data received from this study's participants fit with existing research? What does it add to social work discourse? Congruent with structural social work's critique of positivism and its postmodern appreciation of multiple truths, the findings from this study also reveal multiple truths. These multiple truths could be interpreted as contradictory but should instead be read as inclusive: participants encountered helpful *and* unhelpful social workers, experienced professional supports *and* barriers, and had both a clinical practice *and* a structural analysis.

The fifteen participants in this study offered a wealth of data derived from their cumulative experience as Aboriginal social workers who were former clients in child welfare and criminal justice systems. While the information that they shared confirms much of what already exists in the literature, who they are as informants is original and informative. We rarely see our work from the perspective of the people with whom we work, and have thus far not received this feedback from Aboriginal colleagues. Filtered through their professional understanding as social workers, participants recalled how they were treated as former clients and continue to be treated as contemporary colleagues.

Participants experienced helpful interactions with social workers who were clearly invested in their clients and left participants feeling empowered and accessing tangible and meaningful supports. Participants also, however, experienced unhelpful social workers who were not invested and focused instead on controlling participants, withholding supports, and

leaving participants to cope with these harmful interactions. As a result of these interactions, participants' motivations for choosing a profession with a mandate of social justice but with a history of colonial control over Aboriginal peoples stands out as more social-justice oriented than what has been for the most part previously documented. The supports and barriers these participants encountered during their professional careers reveal troubling attitudes about clients that are critical for social work to overcome. And they also shared experiences of progressive supports that valued their client experience as a professional asset. Their social work practice revealed clinical skills often referenced within Aboriginal social work approaches and also documented in the literature as valued by social work clients in general. These participants also shared a strong critical analysis of contemporary issues facing Aboriginal peoples in Canada and recommendations for social work that are grounded in their considerable professional experience. Their descriptions reveal a more informed understanding of the role social work plays in processes leading to or mitigating against rates of overrepresentation, structural violence, and contemporary colonization for Aboriginal peoples.

Effects of Social Workers on Aboriginal Clients

Interviewing the research participants as informants, my four questions were designed to explore, from multiple vantage points, the role that social work plays in contemporary colonizing processes. The first point was to understand how clients of social workers were treated through the perspective of a person who has the professional training of social work service. While most clients would be able to describe if they felt they were treated with respect or with reproach, a social worker/former client would be better able to measure their experience against professional standards. Drawing on processes of structural violence, some contact with social workers may have directly led a participant to child welfare or criminal justice involvement (such as apprehensions or revocation of probation).

Other interactions may have facilitated the same result but more indirectly (such as failing to provide effective service to a mother leading her children to be eventually taken into child welfare). Conversely, this vantage point was also designed to discover what social workers did well to prevent participants from having repeated contact with either system. Since overrepresentation of Aboriginal peoples in either system is a form of contemporary colonization, this question sought to understand from service recipients' perspectives, what social workers specifically do to add to or minimize this colonizing process.

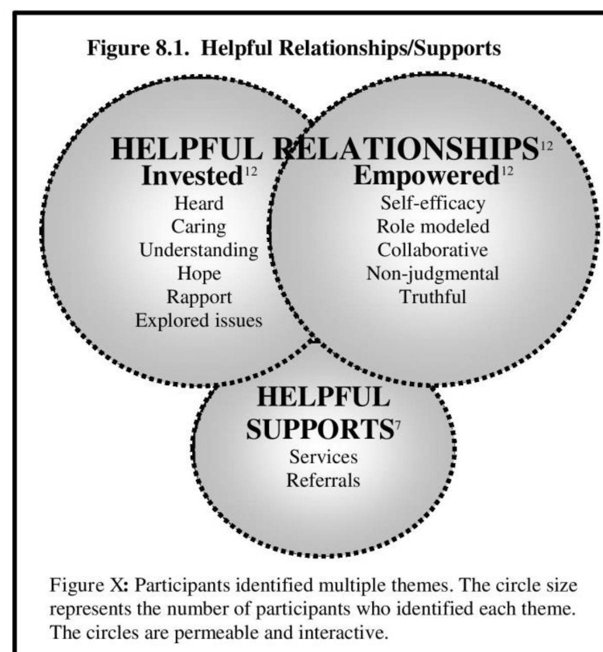

Figure X: Participants identified multiple themes. The circle size represents the number of participants who identified each theme. The circles are permeable and interactive.

Table 8.1. Experienced Helpful Relationships/Supports Identified in select Client Experience Literature.

Helpful Relationships	
Invested	**a, b, c, d, e, f**
Heard	c, d, e, f
Caring	a, b, c, d
Understanding	c, e, f
Hope	a, b, e
Rapport	d, e, f
Explored issues	e
Empowered	**a, b, c, d, e, f, g, i**
Self-efficacy	a, e, g, i
Role modeled	c, d, e, f
Collaborative	b, c, d, e, g
Non-judgmental	c, e, f, g, i
Truthful	d, e, f, g
Helpful Supports	**a, c, e, i**
Services	a, c, e, g, i
Referrals	

[a]Akin and Gregoire (1997), [b]Baker (2007), [c]Chapman, Gibbons, Barth and McCrae (2003), [d]Dale (2004), [e]De Boer and Coady (2007), [f]Drake (1994), [g]Kapp and Vela (2004), [h]Ribner and Knei-Paz (2002), [i]Ylvisaker (2013)

Helpful Experiences

As depicted in Figure 8.1, participants' descriptions of helpful social workers included being invested, empowering, and providing tangible services and accessible referrals. Accordingly in Table 8.1, many of the characteristics comprising these qualities have been previously identified within the literature (Akin & Gregoire, 1997; Baker, 2007; Chapman et al., 2003; Dale, 2004; DeBoer & Coady, 2007; Drake, 1994; Kapp & Vela, 2004; Ribner & Knei-Paz, 2002; Ylvisaker, 2013). In particular, participants remembered being

heard, being cared for, being understood, having hope, sharing rapport, and exploring issues together with their invested social workers. Similarly, the characteristics that participants used to describe empowering social workers were that they promoted self-efficacy, role modelled behaviours and attitudes, and were collaborative, non-judgmental, and truthful. In addition, participants described receiving tangible services and accessible referrals from helpful social workers.

When viewed against a lens of structural violence, the experiences and approaches that participants recalled as helpful and empowering carry additional significance than when framed purely as doing good,[139] ethical, or strengths-based approaches.[140] As displayed in Table 8.2, when helpful and empowering approaches are framed as counter weights to structural violence, meaning these behaviours are neither violent nor merely neutral, this reframe can underscore the necessity of their inclusion, and can also prescribe tangible and incremental behaviours building toward social justice. These specific social work behaviours, as presented in Table 8.3, resulted in hope, validation, and being seen and can potentially protect against alienation or spiritual death and forms of structural violence. In other words, if

Table 8.2. Participants' Experiences Countering Structural Violence Outcomes

Structural violence outcomes	Participant experiences
Deprivation or misdistribution of material and/or non-material resources	• helpful services and referrals • supportive instructors
Repression	
• alienation or cultural de- and re-socialization and spiritual death	• social workers heard, cared, understood, facilitated hope, shared rapport • instructors were supportive • lived systems experience perceived as an asset by participant, instructors and co-workers
• fragmentation or diminished collective identity and action	• career choice: make a difference • student peers supportive
• marginalization, institutional and systemic inequities	• university admissions processes
• penetration, internalized oppression	• lived systems experience perceived as an asset by participant, instructors and co-workers
• segmentation or false consciousness	• social workers explored issues • social workers facilitated self-efficacy, role modeling, collaboration, non-judgment, honesty • lived systems experience perceived as an asset by participant, instructors and co-workers

the omission of these helpful and empowering approaches can be viewed as structural violence, then their inclusion may be conceptualized as *structural anti-violence*. Just as anti-oppressive approaches are seen to enhance emancipation, structural anti-violence may have the potential for enhancing social justice. The exploration of the significance of this arising concept is an implication for future research.

De Boer and Coady (2007) listed specific behaviours that clients reported were helpful. The authors' intention was to make positive social work interactions easier to replicate. Correspondingly, Structural Social Work and Institutional Ethnography are also concerned with the specific processes leading to or mitigating against oppression. Furthermore, structural social work has been criticized for lacking detailed and tangible descriptions of opportunities and interventions for social change (Murray & Hick, 2012). As a result, I have followed the example of De Boer

Table 8.3. Helpful Social Work Activities Participants (P) reported with their Social Workers (SW)

HELPFUL RELATIONSHIPS (80%)	Theme	Activities
Invested (80%)	Heard (40%)	• expressed interest in listening • let P talk but at the same time did not force P to talk • listened at a pace P needed, let P talk it out, then validated
	Caring (33%)	• used the healing power of safe touch • going on outings with worker • showed interest in what was happening in P's life • worker genuinely interested in what P had to say
	Understood (33%)	• workers disclosed their own client experience giving P a sense that they could relate, there was a connection, and sense of acceptance with their worker
	Hope (33%)	• giving encouragement • instilling pride • nurturing a sense of faith in the P's own abilities • acknowledged P's potential
	Rapport (27%)	• demonstrated a laid back and friendly approach • had a positive and supportive attitude • facilitated a trusting relationship that allowed P to make mistakes
	Explored issues (27%)	• did not tell P what to do but rather helped P to reflect upon their issues, reasons, triggers
Empowered (80%)	Self-efficacy (40%)	• encouraged P to discover additional supports • informed P of their rights • let P proceed at a pace that worked for P • offered choices • offered skills and support for P to make informed decisions
	Role modeled (33%)	• demonstrated the attributes, skills, boundaries, and attitudes that P explored in sessions together
	Collaborative (27%)	• with plans, setting goals, facilitating choices
	Non-judgmental (20%)	
	Truthful (20%)	• was truthful in terms of what the worker could /could not do • forthcoming with the consequences of P's actions

*Percentages, identified in previous data chapters, indicate the prevalence of participants describing each theme. These may not add up to 100 as multiple themes were offered by each participant.

and Coady (2007) and listed the specific behaviours participants identified for each question. The purpose of this inclusion is twofold: to make specific activities more identifiable, and to add to the transparency of the themes.

Unhelpful Experiences

Three themes arose from participants' descriptions of unhelpful experiences with social workers (see Figure 8.2). As in Table 8.4, the descriptions of the characteristics of social workers who were not invested, who were controlling, or who gave no or substandard supports, validate largely what has been identified in the literature as negative client experience with social workers (Akin & Gregoire, 1997; Dale, 2004; De Boer & Coady, 2007; Kapp & Propp, 2002; Ylvisaker, 2013).

Figure 8.2. Unhelpful Relationships/Supports and Implications

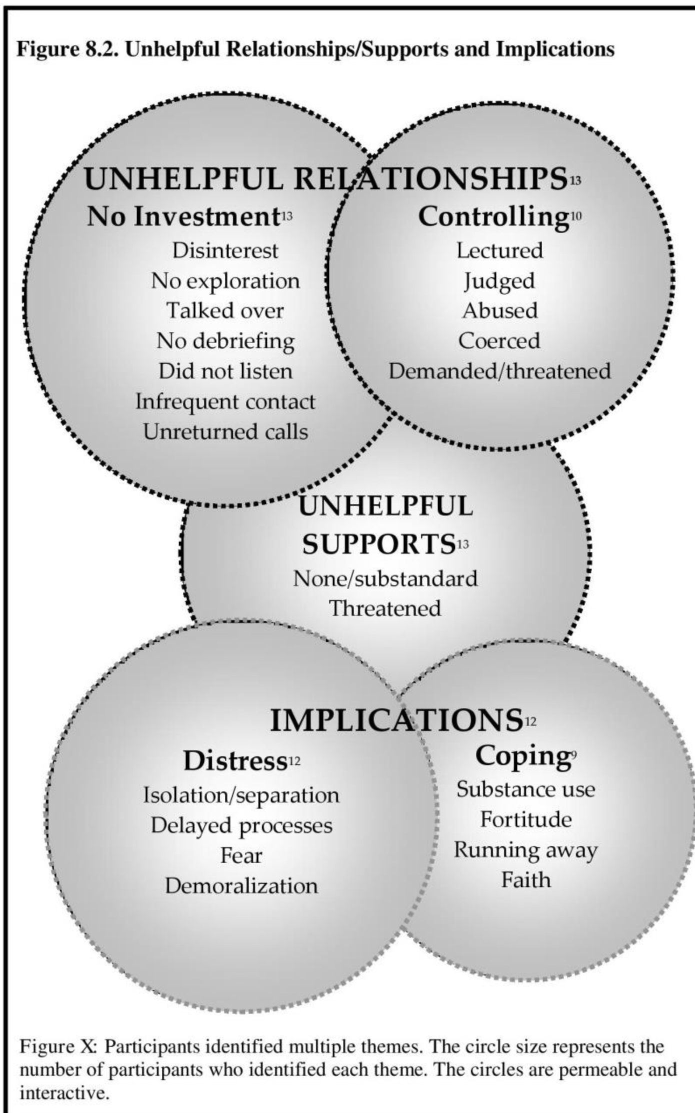

Figure X: Participants identified multiple themes. The circle size represents the number of participants who identified each theme. The circles are permeable and interactive.

Table 8.4. Experienced Unhelpful Relationships/ Supports Identified in select Client Experience Literature.

Unhelpful Relationships	
Not invested	a, b, c, d, e
Disinterested	a, b, d
No exploration	b
Talked over	
No debriefing	
Did not listen	c, e
Infrequent contact	b, d
Unreturned calls	b
Controlled	**a, b, c, d, e**
Lectured	b
Judged	b, c, d, e
Abused	a, b, c
Coerced	d
Demanded/ threatened	b, d
Unhelpful Supports	**a, b, d**
None/substandard	a, b, d
Threatened	a, d

[a]Akin and Gregoire (1997), [b]Dale (2004), [c]De Boer and Coady (2007) , [d]Kapp and Propp (2002), [e]Ylvisaker (2013)

An area of understanding these data augment, as presented in Table 8.5, is that many of the outcomes that

participants described can easily be identified as forms of structural violence. While the term structural violence was never mentioned during any of the interviews, participants' experiences are examples identified within the structural violence literature.

Table 8.5. Participants' Unhelpful Experiences with Social Workers and their Structural Violence Categorization

Structural violence subtypes	Participant experiences
Physical harming or threat	• controlled, abused, threatened • substance use, running away as coping • fear
Deprivation or misdistribution of material and/or non-material resources	• none/substandard referrals/resources • infrequent contact • isolation/separation from family • delayed processes • university system barriers • high school completion • financial
Repression	
• alienation or cultural de- and re-socialization and spiritual death	• not invested worker • demoralized • delayed processes • demoralization • Othered in University setting
• detention, expulsion	• removal from family
• discrimination	• after professional disclosure
• hyper-surveillance, involvement with the state agencies	• lectured, judged, coerced, demanded/ threatened
• marginalization, institutional and systemic inequities	• balance multiple responsibilities • university system barriers • teaching style
• penetration, internalized oppression	• lived systems experience as liability
• segmentation or false consciousness	• curriculum

Participants described experiences that can be identified as harm, deprivation, and repression. As harm, participants reported experiencing abuse and threats from their workers. In response to interactions with these unhelpful workers, participants described feeling fear, using substances to cope, and running away from intolerable situations, all forms of harm. As deprivation, participants spoke about having vital information withheld from them, and receiving no, infrequent, or substandard resources and services.

By far, however, their harmful experiences can be seen as forms of repression; being taken from their families and communities resulted in their expulsion and detention in child welfare and criminal justice systems. As listed in Table 8.6, participants also recalled specific behaviours of being Othered. They described encountering not-invested social workers who demonstrated neither interest nor acknowledgement. Participants remembered being talked over, being not listened to, and not having their phone calls returned. These behaviours match

forms of repression, alienation, and spiritual death and because participants were children and youth when these occurred, they became, not surprisingly, demoralized.

Table 8.6. Unhelpful Not Invested Activities Participants (P) reported from their Social Workers (SW)

UNHELPFUL RELATIONSHIPS (87%)

Not Invested (87%)

Disinterested (67%)
- P encountered only non-Aboriginal workers
- P felt processed, P felt like a number, just another case
- P felt like an imposition on her workers
- P felt discarded
- SW demonstrated annoyance
- SW more focused on himself and his own life story
- SW told P she was too difficult to bother with

No exploration (47%)
- SW did not explore or ask P how they were, how P was feeling or coping with their circumstances
- SW only interested in laying out case plan expectations
- SW only interested in small talk despite P's serious situation

Talked over (47%)
- SW not talking to P, only to other workers, hospital staff, foster parents
- P sent out of the room
- P expected to recite a memorized script
- SW took only the word of foster parent, never pushed or reassured P to speak candidly

No debriefing (33%)
- SW did not acknowledge, explain, or debrief with P her current traumatic apprehension and separation from mother, siblings, child
- SW offered no words of comfort after traumatic ending of parental visit
- P sat alone in the backseat, unacknowledged by SW in the front seat on the extended car ride from apprehension to new foster placement
- told not to talk, to behave, expected to sit quietly and passively
- hospital SW ill offered no debriefing for a family experiencing the death of a sister, a young mother and daughter

Did not listen (33%)
- did not listen to the bullying, physical safety, or sexual abuse concerns P had about foster placements, or estranged mother and son's father having visiting rights to son in foster home

Infrequent contact (27%)
- "ships that passed in the night"

Unreturned calls (20%)
- Sitting for a lengthy period in waiting room after calls not returned

*Percentages, identified in previous data chapters, indicate the prevalence of participants describing each theme. These may not add up to 100 as multiple themes were offered by each participant.

In addition to the Othering effects of being ostracized and excluded, participants remembered their workers failing to explore and debrief after significant traumas, resulting in participants experiencing what can be described as segmentation or false consciousness. They disclosed that when they were traumatized by being taken away from their parent(s), their social worker not only failed to acknowledge the experience through debriefing, they also did not contextualize the trauma as being a result of larger system decisions. While developmentally egocentric, children and youth would likely internalize this as self-blame. Neo-liberal risk thinking and its focus on responsibility encourages this form of blaming the self. This accumulated effect of Othering, false blame, and withholding of supports is at a minimum unethical and structurally violent.

When experienced by a significant proportion of Aboriginal children, and then their children in turn, it is not unlikely that a family's decision-making spheres become systematically compromised.

Research on the importance of social inclusion and social acknowledgement of traumatic events suggest that the experiences participants described are additional forms of trauma. Williams and Nida (2011) maintain that chronic exposure to ostracism and exclusion can result in reduced coping, depression, and learned helplessness. Furthermore, Jones, Müller and Maercker (2006), Maercker, Povilonyte, Lianova and Pöhlmann (2009), and Mueller, Moergeli and Maercker (2008) found that when participants received social acknowledgement of their trauma experiences, that their symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress were reduced.

Participants also spoke about receiving no or substandard supports or having the ones they did receive threatened as a leverage to control their behaviour (see Table 8.7). These lack of supports are also part of the neo-liberal shift from welfare to risk, from rehabilitation to punishment (Beckett & Western, 2001).

Since the overrepresentation of Aboriginal peoples in either system is a form of contemporary colonialism, what social workers specifically do to contribute to this colonizing process is more than just unethical or harmful. Combined with child welfare and criminal justice systems that physically remove individuals from Aboriginal families and communities, these "unhelpful" social worker behaviours (Tables 8.6, 8.7, and 8.8) can be recognized as taking on a more sinister and colonializing role within neo-liberal governing.

While many of these unhelpful experiences that participants recalled could be also true of any marginalized client group, Bracken et al. (2009) argue that Aboriginal peoples' experiences under colonialism create more significant reverberations than, for example, racism for visible minorities. The layers of colonialism affecting generations of Aboriginal

people's family groups, communities, and cultural, linguistic, social, legal, political, and economic integrity make heavy the unhelpful processes experienced from social workers in colonializing systems.

Table 8.7. Unhelpful Controlling Activities Participants (P) reported from their Social Workers (SW) and Unhelpful Supports

UNHELPFUL RELATIONSHIPS (87%) and SUPPORTS (87%)

Controlled (67%)

Lectured (33%)
- "personal lecture times"
- excluded in planning process
- repeatedly being told what to do and reminded that she had no choice
- shame and sense of failure they felt after struggling with plans that were made about them and not with them

Judged (33%)
- told by SW that P was a "lost cause", worker told P she would never amount to anything
- felt worthlessness when worker did not look at P when she approached her
- felt shame and futility when SW essentialized P based on her behaviors, SW stereotyped her and Othered her

Abused (33%)
- foster parents threatened P's physical safety by repeatedly falling asleep, smoking, burning down house
- foster fathers' sexual assaults
- emotional abuse from foster parents , cold and distant
- child welfare workers who swore and yelled, held Ps captive with emotional abuse, "walking on eggshells" around workers who were quick to diminish their clients
- SW told P her mother did not want her anymore
- torn between wanting to protect her sister and wanting to protect herself

Coerced (20%)
- manipulated into compliance
- compliance by reminding P of the power difference, through the way she dressed and through her seemingly benevolent support, worker seemed so nice and had the power to remove children
- fluctuating kind and cutting words

Threatened/demanded (20%)
- being sent back to prison
- having children removed or not returned
- discontinuing services
- ever increasing compliance stipulations – SW demanded P take one program after another
- social assistance SW demanded P contact P's son's father despite him being abusive to P

Unhelpful Supports (87%)

None/substandard (80%)

Threatened (20%)

*Percentages, identified in previous data chapters, indicate the prevalence of participants describing each theme. These may not add up to 100 as multiple themes were offered by each participant.

An interesting finding arising from participants' experiences with social workers is the level of underreporting by participants of their experiences with social workers during their criminal justice system involvement as compared to the their child welfare system experiences. Only Adrian recalled having a helpful social worker/probation officer. In contrast, Eliza remembered receiving no referrals for supports in her two-year probation period and Geri recalled being threatened to be sent back to prison by her probation officer as a way to make her comply.

Bracken et al. (2010) note that only one in five probation officers are social workers in Canada, explaining in part why remembered social workers might be fewer than with child welfare involvement. Still, participants mentioned the criminal justice system in general

much less frequently than the child welfare system despite over half of participants encountering 18 social workers over an accumulated 28 years in the criminal justice system. Geri recalled using "criminal activity to survive" while Alex mentioned her substance use led her to having criminal justice involvement and being on probation/parole led her to being unable to have her children returned to her, and yet her ex-husband, who was on probation, was granted visiting rights to see her children. Leo recalled never being warned that his behaviour could lead him to criminal justice involvement while Geri mentioned having a criminal record check done when she applied for her social work program. Danielle and Thunder56 spoke about working with clients in prison, Thunder56 had uncles who had been in prison, and he had instructors who were curious about his own experience inside. Finally, Lenore talked about how young men who are taken into child welfare often end up in the criminal justice system and Liz warned that a structural analysis of the criminal justice system cannot be done without understanding the child welfare or residential school systems.

A partial explanation for the far less frequent criminal justice recollections could perhaps be due to the stigma of being a criminalized Other. While children with child welfare involvement can be seen as less responsible for their predicament, youth with criminal justice involvement are often painted as a criminalized Other, or as Vodde and Gallant (2002) describe, the antithesis of healthy norms. This master status could be especially problematic for individuals self identifying as social service professionals.

Why former Aboriginal Clients want to become Social Workers

The second question was to appreciate the processes that participants experienced in moving from service recipient to service provider. Aboriginal children are too frequently apprehended "in their best interests" by social workers yet outcomes for Aboriginal children and youth involved in child welfare and then often criminal justice systems are regularly damaging, structurally violent, and colonizing. I wondered—why would these participants

themselves want to become social workers? It is true that as professionals we enjoy certain privilege and increased life choices. Accordingly, being a professional would reduce an Aboriginal person's risk for experiencing further involvement in either system as well as fewer experiences of structural violence and direct colonial processes. Consequently, an understanding of participants' own choice-making processes in imagining themselves move from client to social worker is valuable. This understanding could help shed light on how social workers can facilitate the children to whom we provide service envision themselves as future professionals. In other words, while Aboriginal children come into contact with social workers over here-and-now concerns, structural social workers should remember the involvement of social workers in residential school processes and be alert to the longer term effects of our interventions.

Much of the literature discussing student motivations for choosing a social work career tends not to identify former clients as part of their student participants. Studies prior to the influence of neo-liberalism in the mid-1990s indicate that motivations for students to

Table 8.8. Unhelpful Supports Participants (P) reported from Social Workers (SW)

UNHELPFUL SUPPORTS (87%)	
	None/ substandard (80%)
	• P not checked up on in foster homes • no arranged visits with siblings • no supports when reunited with family members, or placed with abusive father and grandmother • no referrals for supports during her two years in the criminal justice system • no referrals from school SW after brothers showed up in class with bruises • no referrals from hospital SW despite being a first time single mother at the age of 16 • no referrals from social assistance SW despite having no family support as a young single mother • no referrals from hospital SW for P's grieving family faced with raising dead sister's two young children • important information withheld • not informed of their rights to appeal, after being pressured to give up guardianship of child, or of rights in attempts to gain guardianship • being placed as a 12 year old in a rundown Downtown Eastside hotel in Vancouver and receiving no alternatives after she complained
	Threatened (20%)
	• threatened with having benefits cut off unless P contacted the abusive father of her child • cut services off when SW perceived P as non-compliant • not transferred from dangerous foster home and instead threatened to have clothing vouchers stopped because P would not stop using substances

*Percentages, identified in previous data chapters, indicate the prevalence of participants describing each theme. These may not add up to 100 as multiple themes were offered by each participant.

choose social work were primarily affiliated with its professional status and included professional community, self-actualization, and personal rewards (Christie & Kruk, 1998). Christie and Kruk (1998) found that many students enrolled in a Canadian social work program in the 1990s were without any prior knowledge or experience with social work, chose social work as a stepping stone to another profession or as an alternative to similar helping professions, or as a way to work with individuals and join a profession. More recently, Furness (2007) found that 48% of British social work students interviewed wanted to help others, make a difference, or had a concern for others, four percent wanted to fight social injustice, and two percent wanted to give back society. A generous interpretation of these results could imply that 54% of students chose social work out of humanitarian reasons. A more skeptical analysis might note that while many social work students want to be helpers, only a small percentage want to fight oppression.

The reasons for why participants in this study chose social work as a career suggest an interesting addition to the literature in understanding motivations for Aboriginal persons moving from service recipient to service provider. If some of the benefits of being a social worker are the perks of professional community (income and status enhancing insulation against state intrusion), it could be expected that this personal enhancement motivation, as seen in Christie and Kruk (1998), might be especially evident for Aboriginal students. Since Aboriginal peoples are overrepresented in intrusive systems and experience economic and social marginalization, Aboriginal students may see social work as a way out and up. This was not the case. Only 13% of participants indicated career step as a motivation. While 53% of participants gave a reason themed under self-actualization, their development of self was within a context of helping others. This again is likely different that self-actualization goals around professional status.

The findings from this study, as presented in Table 8.9, show that participants too had multiple reasons for choosing social work. What is different is that a higher percentage of participants (73%) identified reasons that have to do with helping others than what was predominantly indicated in the literature. This difference, in comparison to that of more privileged students, was also found for American Indian students and their motivations for choosing social work (Limb, 2001; Limb & Organista, 2003). In addition, many of the participants in this study wanted to help others because of their own experiences of marginalization.

Interestingly, and perhaps not coincidentally, 67% of participants indicated that they wanted to do better than the social workers they themselves had encountered. This is vastly different from Christie and Kruk (1998) who found most students had had no previous social work contact. The term “do better” was used verbatim by social work academic Jeannine Carriere writing about her own experience as an Aboriginal child in child welfare: “Social workers had a lot of power in our lives and it seemed important to be grateful. I remember that my original reason for being a social worker was because I thought I could do a much

Table 8.9. Reasons Participants chose a Social Work Career

CAREER CHOICE (100%)	
	Make a difference (73%)
	• provide services for women experiencing abuse, addictions, parenting, and education issues • implement services for families and youth to preventing children from being removed from their families • services for students who had moved from reserves to continue their education • make genuine connections and create long lasting change for the betterment of Aboriginal peoples
	Do better (67%)
	• help others avoid what they themselves went through and be able to steer clear of the damaging cycle and effects of systemic involvement • wanted clients to be able to get the help they needed and not be afraid to ask for support • wanted to affect policies that direct how social workers intervene
	Self-Actualization (53%)
	• their own experience as a client would be valuable as a professional helper • act as a motivational speaker, an activist, and as a role model both for clients, as well as for their fellow social work colleagues who may not have the same level of compassion or awareness
	Accidental (47%)**, Emulate** (27%), **Career Step** (13%), **and Exposure** (13%)
	• seeing an advertisement or listening to a friend's recommendation • as an asset in a long term goal of midwifery • knew Aboriginal social workers were needed in child welfare • as Aboriginal persons, had repeatedly been exposed to social workers as the primary group of professional people of whom they were aware
	*Percentages, identified in previous data chapters, indicate the prevalence of participants describing each theme. These may not add up to 100 as multiple themes were offered by each participant.

better job than the models I had" (Strega & Carriere, 2009, p. 23).

Participants' desire to help because of experienced marginalization can be very different from a desire to "help" born from a place of privilege.[141] The social location and origins of "helpfulness" are important factors when considering colonizing processes. The Charity Organization Society, the Residential School System, and child welfare systems all under the rhetoric of helpfulness have attracted, and until relatively recently, hired only social workers whose social locations were unlike the people they wanted to help. Often under a guise of good intentions and helping, unexamined privilege (Mullaly, 2010) and a colonial gaze (Pratt, 1992) resulted too frequently in judgement and indifference, management and modification of the Other (Mullaly, 2010).

While social workers do make and have choices about how they practice, social workers acting badly is also linked to their social control function and Foucault's (1977) scrutinizing role of social work in neo-liberal governing, Parton's (1996a) dual-role of social work as monitor and mediator, and Rose's (1999) description of social workers as the "petty engineers of human conduct" (p. 92).

While I am in no way suggesting that persons with privilege (their social location does not reflect layers of marginalization) should not become or cannot carryout effective, ethical, and competent social work practice, their privilege, when unexamined, can create barriers and reproduce colonial relations. As social workers we *profess* to want our clients who are still children to believe in their own self-worth. If we *believe* that as well, then we would also want them to envision, at minimum, their adult selves unrestrained by marginalization, and hopefully, thriving in whatever capacity they desire, including being our privileged colleagues. Augmenting our professional discourse with the knowledge, awareness, and motivations of social workers who know what it is like to have to see a social worker, should enhance our decolonizing efforts.

An interesting and related finding from this study is why participants answered the poster call. The seven participants who answered this question all stated that it was important for them to talk about their experiences in the hopes of bringing about positive change for Aboriginal peoples. In particular, they wanted to

- highlight the hardships children who age out of the child welfare system experience;
- voice the many negative experiences personally experienced at the hands of social workers;
- share their own experience as a child who made it out so more children can be successful;
- share stories of success and pride in being a social worker;
- emphasize the valuable contribution workers with lived systems experience make to the social work profession; and
- add their experience to social work knowledge and education.

Some of these themes have been echoed in the literature of the value of client feedback. Baker (2007) noted that client feedback has particular value for social work. It can act as a source of empowerment for clients, provide critical information for service delivery improvement, and add substantively to social work knowledge. Although leading in the inclusion of service-user narratives, Beresford (2000) cautions that social work is just beginning to consult service users when it comes to theory building and analysis, a beginning that should result in a systemic or coherent inclusion.[142]

What Social Work does to Support or Challenge the Professional Development of Aboriginal Social Work Students and Practitioners who were once Service Recipients

Building from the second question, the third question asked about the supports and barriers that participants experienced in pursuing their profession of choice. Given that the participants were once clients, and then wanted to become social workers, would their previous social location and experience be met with stigma or status? Since the first value in our Code of Ethics stipulates that social workers have “respect for the inherent dignity and worth of persons” (Canadian Association of Social Workers, 2006, p. 4), would that respect be extended to peers who once were clients? I wanted to better understand how we, as social

work practitioners and educators, treat future professionals who come from backgrounds with less privilege. While it is one thing to be vigilant of harbouring colonial and pathologizing attitudes and behaviours with people who have less power, it is another matter, though, if we are as attentive when those same people challenge colonial and power relations by becoming our peers.

Colonial processes are not always as immediate as the incarceration of Aboriginal parents and the apprehension of their children. And, our responsibility to adhere with the Code of Ethics is not always as clear as when clients sit across from us in offices. More often colonial processes are more subtle, persistent, and pervasive, as evidenced in ideology, and ethical practice is less defined, as is apparent in dual relationships. While our mandate for social justice and values for respect receive much rhetoric, social work struggles in applying those principles even when our roles of client and worker are mutually exclusive. How do we fare when former clients now become our colleagues? What does our treatment of these co-workers say about our deeper attitudes about clients? Would their previous social location and experience be met with stigma or status?

Strega and Carriere (2009) lament that while students of social work are often immersed in course content locating client issues in marginalization, oppression, and colonization, students often find a different world when they step into their practicum and work sites. The authors state that students often are met with:

> "Forget all that useless stuff you learned in school—now we are going to teach you how to practice in the 'real world'". Inevitably that "real world" perspective involves individualizing and pathologizing practices and perspectives that separate workers and clients into two separate and distinct groups—a hierarchy in which the worker is different and better than the client, who is "Other": lesser than in almost every way. (p. 15)

Supports

Encounters with social workers influenced not only participants' career choice but when positively received from professional colleagues, resulted in a more cohesive identity and source for action. Having participants' lived experiences recognized as professional assets protected participants against penetration/ internalized oppression and segmentation/ false consciousness. In other words, respectful and positive regard of participants' previous client experiences appeared to have a considerable effect in reducing some of the lingering harms of those experiences. The respect that participants experienced appeared not only to be supportive, but to some degree, perform restoratively as an antidote or form of structural anti-violence.

While Canadian social work education incorporates issues of oppression and colonialism in its curriculum (Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work, 2013; Strega & Carriere, 2009) and participants talked about the critical importance their social work education had on increasing their awareness of Aboriginal issues, participants also recommended having more Aboriginal content. These multiple truths are important to consider as the amount of inclusion varies not only among schools of social work, but also among campuses, programs, courses, and instructors. The implication of this for social work education will be explored further in the last chapter.

Participants also described the specific supports (Table 8.10) that made their university studies inclusive and successful, attributes that have been identified in the literature. The literature on alternative education settings appears to centre on school rather than post-secondary education. Still, many of the characteristics of positive settings that reduce barriers for marginalized students are themes participants within this study identified. Conrath (2001) explains that mainstream settings are designed to ensure only the most privileged will succeed. While alternative settings are consistent on the same outcomes or standards, they are

"flexible on strategies to accomplish those goals… [and that] true equity in school calls for different means to bring everybody to the same end" (p. 586). As such, some of the characteristics identified in the literature include:

- a culturally appropriate and relevant curriculum (Lehr & Lange, 2003; Powell, 2003);
- small classes, small schools (Aron, 2006; Lehr & Lange, 2003);
- a sense of belonging, community(Aron, 2006; Powell, 2003);
- a caring environment that builds and fosters resilience (Lange & Sletten, 2002; Lehr & Lange, 2003);
- mutual respect between instructor and students where students are seen as competent and able (Powell, 2003);
- a flexible structure that accommodates the student's academic and social-emotional needs (Aron, 2006; Conrath, 2001; Lange & Sletten, 2002; Lehr & Lange, 2003); and
- support services for students (Aron, 2006; Powell, 2003).

Many of the same characteristics and themes identified by participants are also principles of adult education or androgogy. These include:

- a climate encouraging collaboration, trust, and mutual respect between instructors and students;
- cooperation, collaboration, and learning among student peers;
- using participants experiences as a learning resource and as a foundation for learning new concepts and practical skills relevant to their goals;
- cultivating self-directed, empowered adults; and
- critical reflection and action (Brookfield, 1988; Imel, 1998; Knowles, 1970).

Participants were clear in describing the positive difference having a supportive and inclusive academic setting made in their professional education. The WEC campus actively supported students in fulfilling academic expectations. Substantively, it also removed many of the conventional institutional barriers Aboriginal students often encounter because of their marginalization. Equity admittance criteria, process counselling, and instructors and curriculum characteristic, recognising, and deferential of marginalized peoples' realities were identified as essential. While participants also described the marginalization WEC graduates experienced from conventional campus students and alumni, this discrimination is less likely about the WEC program and more likely about racism and backlash to equity initiatives. The

difference WEC initiatives made is subsequently an important consideration for all social work schools if we want to increase the numbers of Aboriginal graduates.

Barriers

Harmful outcomes were also apparent when participants described the barriers they encountered while pursuing a social work career (see Tables 8.11, 8.12). Their challenges in completing high school while aging out of the child welfare system and their resulting financial struggles can be understood as deprivation of material resources. This deprivation analysis could also be extended to the challenges participants described they experienced at conventional university settings and in the difficulties they encountered completing degree studies while carrying multiple responsibilities. Because of their marginalization, participants remembered facing deprivation, a form of structural violence resulting in the denial of non-material resources and know-

Table 8.10. Supports Participants Experienced

SUPPORTS (93%)

University (80%)

Admissions (67%)

- flexibility of distance delivery degrees to pursue studies while maintaining full time employment
- equity policies made admittance into the MSW program possible
- helpfulness of staff in reminding them of admittance deadlines and pardon applications
- admissions process inclusive of lived experience, not impediment, asked to provide a biography and describe their history, background, why they wanted to be a social worker

Instructors (53%)

- experience with either system would help P relate to clients and become very good social worker
- curious about P's criminal justice experience and asked to know more about the system
- some had lived experience with the child welfare system
- treated students with respect, Ps felt groomed and protected
- encouraged independent thought and decision-making
- accommodating to student's multiple responsibilities
- when P experienced personal stressors, instructor said that social workers need therapists as well and encouraged her to see her assigned counselor, instructor also became P's counsellor and role model

Peers (27%)

- supportive, cohort was small with similar lived experiences, did not feel alone
- supportive of Ps' decisions to go for counseling
- compassionate
- committed to making positive social change
- accomplishment felt upon graduation as reaffirming of their triumph over previous struggles

Self-identified Asset (80%)

- seen as additional competency
- strengthened advocacy skills and ability, gave courage to speak up, developed persistence and fortitude, helped to manoeuvre systems, to know what Ps do not want, "to not tolerate shit"
- motivated maintaining healthy professional identity
- helps to educate others to affect policy helped establish rapport with clients, helped maintain connections with clients based on compassion, seen not as expertise, but understanding that gives credibility with clients, additional understanding of client realities that co-workers seem to lack
- informed professional decision-making abilities
- fully integrated in their professional identity
- lived and professional experience results in a spiritual basis for why and how P's practice social work

Co-workers (47%)

- workplace viewed Ps lived experience as professional asset, positively influenced Ps hiring
- the more experienced, skilled, and confident co-workers appreciate and respect Ps lived experience and draw upon Ps' knowledge

*Percentages, identified in previous data chapters, indicate the prevalence of participants describing each theme. These may not add up to 100 as multiple themes were offered by each participant.

how that people accumulate through their social networks and location. Because of being removed from their families and informal community supports and experiencing frequent moves and multiple foster placements, participants gathered fewer material and other resources with which to support themselves during their professional studies.

Table 8.11 Barriers experienced with Conventional University Setting

BARRIERS (87%)	**Conventional university setting** (60%)
	Balance (40%)
	• multiple roles not considered or accommodated: parenting, sole income earner
	• doing BSW, raising young son alone and having P's brother go missing for two years
	• "full speed" since aging out at 16, worked more than full time for 12 years in child welfare and doing MSW was now exhausted
	• needing time to work through personal crises and issues of systemic barriers and colonization triggered by course content - P questioning if she could ever be a social worker
	Disclosure (33%)
	• not within classroom settings
	• did in written assignments only for instructor
	• would have, had lived experience been presented as asset
	• after disclosing some students avoided P, others stigmatized and stereotyped her,
	• encountering course content that contradicts her insider knowledge of systems, P chooses not to speak
	System (27%)
	• big campus challenging to figure out
	• isolating, impersonal competitive
	• initially never wanted to go to University, did not feel P's experience would be understood or that P could relate to the other students
	Curriculum (27%)
	• lack of concrete skills
	• perceived as being geared toward educating people of privilege and converting white middle class liberal/conservative students into socialist based theorists
	• Code of Ethics too seldom discussed
	• how social workers speak about clients rarely covered
	• opinion about practical applications was not sought out in her MSW courses despite having insider knowledge about organizations and years of professional experience
	• little initiative from instructors for Aboriginal content
	• Ps often treated as token spokespersons
	Teaching style (13%)
	• did not build upon what P already knew
	• MSW focus only on theory was not compatible with P's ten year professional experience and needed concrete and transferable skills
	• frustration from repeatedly asking for clarification from an instructor
	Othered (13%)
	• students stated opinions were often judgemental and not inclusive of former clients

*Percentages, identified in previous data chapters, indicate the prevalence of participants describing each theme. These may not add up to 100 as multiple themes were offered by each participant.

A surprising barrier identified within conventional university settings was that only two participants described being/feeling Othered. As with layers of direct and structural violence or racism, Othering also occurs on individual and structural levels. A relative absence of experienced individual Othering does not mean structural Othering is also absent and could be more about political correctness than a lack of bigotry. As Othering is a tool of structural violence (Anglin, 1998), its manifestations go far beyond individual interactions and were experienced by participants, as previously noted,

when they were deprived, repressed, alienated, expelled, detained, scrutinized, penetrated, and marginalized.

Specifically, participants relayed feeling Othered by co-workers and university peers after disclosing their childhood experience with child welfare and or criminal justice systems. This direct Othering speaks to the pathologizing of clients that Strega and Carriere (2009) described and potentially identifies the irony that as a helping profession, we stigmatize colleagues who have used our services. As with other helping professionals, I would not want to have a dentist who did not herself go for regular dental cleanings, or a physician who had never been for a physical exam. And yet, the Othering that participants described receiving from their colleagues suggests the level of Othering we practice is greater than what we admit.

Othering is not based just on social or professional status, but is also intimately connected to racism and whiteness. As Kivel (1996) states:

> Racism is based on the concept of whiteness—a powerful fiction enforced by power and violence. Whiteness is a constantly shifting boundary separating those who are entitled to have certain privileges from those whose exploitation and vulnerability to violence is justified by their not being white. (p. 19)

Whiteness is a socially and politically constructed ideology conceived from but also constructing beliefs, behaviours, values, and attitudes. It represents an unequal distribution of power and privilege based on skin colour. The powerful construct categories of racial hierarchies and fluid criteria of who is considered white and who is not. Whiteness is relational and in defining who the Other is, it defines itself and maintains its structural privilege (Frye, 1983; Kivel, 1996). For those deemed white, their Whiteness or privilege is often invisible to them and the corresponding oppression that Others experience is unnamed and unquestioned (Frankenberg, 1993; hooks, 1994). Henry and Tator (2006) point out that

Whiteness carries an assumption of universality and "allows one to think and speak as if Whiteness described and defined the world" (p. 327).

> 'Whiteness' and 'colour' or 'Blackness' are essentially social constructs applied to human beings rather than veritable truths that have universal validity. The power of Whiteness, however, is manifested by the ways in which racialized Whiteness becomes transformed into intellectual, social, political, economic, and cultural behaviour. White culture, norms, and values in all these areas become normative and natural. They become the standard against which all other cultures, groups, and individuals are measured and usually found to be inferior. (Henry & Tator, 2009, pp. 25)

Whiteness is not just a colonial legacy but is a contemporary reality and a "Eurocentered frame of mind" (Kramer, 2000, p. 109). As Lopex (2005) asserts, "… that European colonialism was a white, implicitly and explicitly racist undertaking should by now be beyond argument. What is just as obvious, though too often overlooked, is that whiteness continues to play a role in the postcolonial world" (p. 6). The contemporary role that whiteness plays cannot be over emphasized. Estable, Meyer and Pon (1997) maintain that whiteness occupies:

> a dominant cultural space with enormous political significance, with the purpose to keep others on the margin....white people are not required to explain to others how 'white' culture works, because 'white' culture is the dominant culture that sets the norms. Everybody else is then compared to that norm. (p. 21)

Participants' experiences in encountering whiteness and their own subsequent Othering was manifested in their childhood involvements with social workers and the often *pure white world* (Lenore). Whiteness was apparent in participants' realities omitted from conventional university settings and are similar to what Tate and Schwartz (1993) found with many potential American Aboriginal students not entering into social work because of cultural differences, barriers of conventional university settings, and the lack of supportive instructors.

Similarly, whiteness and Othering were encountered from co-workers and in social work classrooms when participants overheard how "clients" (and on the Prairies, clients are most often Aboriginal), were talked about disparagingly. Moreover, participants experienced whiteness as employees of organizations (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) run by white management that included white mentality, white politics, white attitudes, white privilege, and white control. This control of whiteness was manifested in federal funding and legislation dictating Aboriginal child welfare policies, in the too slow evolution of Aboriginal leadership, and in the ever present challenge of being an Aboriginal social worker maintaining employment while not replicating colonizing practices. As structural violence, this Othering resulted in alienation and isolation, fragmentation, and a reduced potential for collective action.

One of the key findings of this study is the feedback these participants provide on social work activities. Their descriptions act much like a mirror. In a way, much like

Table 8.12. Barriers experienced regarding Co-workers, High School Completion, Financial, and Self-identified Liability

BARRIERS (87%)	
	Co-workers (60%)
	• attitudes of "us and them", discriminated against people with lived experience, judgemental, defended a culture of superiority • P learned to be careful in whom P shares her background to avoid backlash • "facing animosity and bias? Absolutely I've faced it" • perceived social workers with lived experience as not as professional, or might not integrate theory into practice as well as colleagues • lived experience was framed as getting in the way of P's work responsibilities • lived experience interpreted as a vulnerability for relapse • framed P's self-advocacy as inappropriate or stirring up trouble • this research was the first time that a social worker expressed interest in hearing about P's lived experience • despite working in an Aboriginal child welfare organization and in light of the overrepresentation of Aboriginal peoples in child welfare systems, P's lived experiences were not something that was mentioned
	High School Completion (47%)
	• having to repeat grades as a result of frequent moves between placements • aging out of the child welfare system halfway through their final year of high school • complete grade 12 while pregnant or having to quit school in order to work and support themselves • school personnel doubt abilities of a "kid in care" • living under a bridge at 12 and using a passing train as an alarm clock to wake herself up in time for her classes instead of staying at an unsafe rundown hotel placement
	Financial (20%)
	• struggling with minimal incomes • appealing Band funding decisions • maxed out student loans and facing high debt loads
	Self-identified Liability (20%)
	• bifurcation felt between P's roles as social worker, mother, and daughter – professional by day but still goes home to the familial issues residual from residential school experiences • struggles with family members who themselves are still dealing with trauma viewing her social worker self as phoney and contrived • P's mother said she did not like social workers because social workers tear families apart

*Percentages, identified in previous data chapters, indicate the prevalence of participants describing each theme. These may not add up to 100 as multiple themes were offered by each participant.

critical theory offers a critique of taken-for-granted theory, client feedback offers a critique of taken-for-granted social work activities. Forrest, Risk, Masters, and Brown (2000) warn that incorporating substantive service-user feedback will require a fundamental shift on the part of policy makers, educators, and practitioners, and this shift, where essential assumptions and values about who service users are and their inherent knowledge, will be challenged. I would add that this shift will also challenge essential assumptions of what social work activities are comprised.

This shift includes a model of stake holding, humanizing institutions and replacing a master status of client with one of citizen. Stake holding stipulates a "negotiated agreement about roles and responsibilities and power differentials" and suggests service users participate as partners (Barnes, Carpenter, & Bailey, 2000, p. 190). It is also about placing the onus on service providers to change: "the main thing [is] not to give the poor the chance to make their voice heard, but to open our ears. It is not about empowering the poor, but about humanizing citizens and institutions" (Denvall, Heule & Kristiansen, 2006, p. 5).

Beresford and Croft (2004) propose humanizing institutions would result in service delivery based on civil and human rights rather than client needs. A client need model relies on the discretion of the worker and results in unequal and paternalistic power differentials. Civil and human rights, in contrast, lay the onus of responsibility to attend to needs inherent to human citizenship rather than merit and dependency on client status.

Gupta and Blewett (2008) offer the example of how the concept of "povertyism" plays out from a client-needs versus rights-based approach. Povertyism describes the experiences of powerlessness, discrimination, and oppression service users encounter from their interactions with professionals: being treated from a poverty-blind approach, where professionals do not consider the impact poverty has on their wellbeing; and encountering stereotypes of laziness, irresponsibility, and assumptions of diminished worth and respect,

such as lengthy waiting times for essential services and disregard for accessing pertinent information. A rights-based approach, in contrast, would view the experience of living with poverty as one of creativity and strength in the struggle to access recourses, and the need to challenge structures to better meet needs of reduced participation and wellbeing. Kulchyski (2013) lays out an important caution to this in his example of the residential school system: "while notions of universal human rights should not be lightly dismissed, they have on critical occasions served colonial projects by justifying interventions into indigenous practices" (p. 37-38).

Finally, and of particular relevance for social work, Denvall et al. (2006) argue that bringing service users into social work programs is important in facilitating a perceived role of productivity and to move beyond a master status of 'client' and dependency of organizations that operate beyond their sphere of influence.

Great Britain leads the way in involving people who use services in social work education, and at the undergraduate level the involvement of service users in shaping and raising standards of British professional social work education and training has become an accreditation requirement (Molyneux & Irvine, 2004). This involvement includes incorporating feedback from service users on student practicum evaluations (Ager, Dow & Gee, 2005; Molyneux & Irvine, 2004) and requiring course instructors to inform course content through visitations to "service land," or two service agencies per year, or to find out what social work students need to know (Ager et al, 2005, p. 473). Whereas previous models encouraged service users to come to a class and speak about their issues, rarely were they canvassed for their views about directions for social work or impressions of service efficacy. The Department of Health in England set up an initiative to improve Social Work education by ensuring services users had involvement in the BSW curriculum design, by funding user organizations to increase input competencies (Beresford et al., 2006). The inclusion of

service users in social work education challenges ongoing ‘them and us’ notions prevalent within helping professions through the inclusion of lived experience expertise (Beresford & Croft, 2004).

Sweden has taken this one step further by strategically incorporating supports for service users to complete their undergraduate social work degrees. In addition to the supports that all social work students receive, such as free tuition, service user students also have access to individual and group coaching for course content integration, examination preparation, and practicum completion *(*Denvall et al., 2006). While students of social care professions may also be or have been service users, and as a result of perceived stigma may often not disclose this experience, Beresford (2000), a self-identified service user and researcher, concurs with Forrest et al. (2000) that this expertise should be “validated and supported rather than devalued” (p. 53).) Denvall et al. (2006) argue that students from

> service user organizations point out the boost to their self-confidence that can be involved in completing a university course. They maintain the importance of being able to relate their experiences, undisturbed, to future social workers and how they develop new relationships and a deeper understanding of what it involves to sit on the opposite side of the desk in the role of ‘helper.’ (p. 8)

Simultaneously,

> students of social work maintain the importance of encounters with individuals with, often painful, experiences of being discriminated by authorities and that the often rigid construction of a “client” that up until then has been conveyed in the education is challenged. (p. 9)

In essence, the expertise of people with lived experience has been recognized as central for building emancipatory social work theory (Dominelli, 2004). While their input has been incorporated for service evaluation, there is still much room for inclusion at decision/making tables and policy development arenas. Many service users continue to be critical of token and unproductive consultation processes (Beresford & Croft, 2004), advocating instead for strategies using accessible language, bottom up networking, and real power at decision

making tables (Ager et al., 2005). Encouragingly, Great Britain has included service user feedback in curricula development and Sweden has moved to reduce barriers for people with lived experience to enter into social work education and the arena of professional practice.

Participant Professional Practice Contributions

The final vantage point and question asked participants what difference, if any, their experiences with colonizing systems had on their own professional practice. Memmi (1991) suggests that the purpose of colonization is not assimilation but rather internalized oppression. Because of their insider knowledge of colonizing systems and structural violence, and their professional identity as Aboriginal social workers, did their own professional practice maintain or minimize colonial relations with their clients? Did participants feel or not feel assimilated as social workers? Were participants now carrying out or challenging the very colonizing processes that they experienced themselves as children?

Christie and Weeks (1998) discussed how life experience is an overlooked form of social work knowledge, yet something that racialized and female social workers draw from regularly in connecting with their clients. The authors stressed that the British social work students they interviewed maintained that lived experience does not replace but, rather, augments the rigour of professional training. In addition, the students maintained that their lived experiences were not essentialized representations of similar experiences. Similarly, participants in this study reported that their own experience as former clients shaped and informed their professional practice and augmented but did not replace their professional training. They described having greater understanding and compassion for their clients and used their knowledge of systems to go the extra mile for them. They also struggled with internalized oppression and assimilation as social workers and dealing with continued Othering within the profession; as Aboriginal persons, they acknowledged the colonial legacy social work continues to have.

Participants reported being constrained with policies of social control that often put them, as Aboriginal social workers, in the role of colonial agent. Because of their insider knowledge of colonizing systems and structural violence, and their professional identity as Aboriginal social workers, their own professional practice minimized but could not eradicate the colonial relations that were inherent in the systems within which they worked. They described working with the paradox of carrying out and simultaneously challenging the very colonizing processes that they experienced themselves as children. Their recommendations demonstrated a structural analysis of contemporary issues critical for social work.

Clinical Skills and Approach

Participants shared how their lived systems experience shaped their own professional practice. While participants stressed the importance they placed upon their social work degrees, professional education, and training, they also valued how their personal experiences shaped their practice. The key clinical skills they described using, presented in Figure 8.3, included non-judgmental interpretation of client behaviours, rapport, and empathy.

While many of the clinical skills identified by participants are also basic social work skills, their significance within structural social work is important to note. While conventional social work is concerned with personal change and/or the client's fit with their environment (Mullaly, 2010), structural social work extends beyond clinical ethics to connect social workers' interactions with clients to larger social arrangements (Weinberg, 2008). In other words, failing to use basic social work skills with a client is more than an ineffective intervention, it is about adding to the layers of oppression and marginalization that clients contend with.

Instead of ascribing a deviant meaning to client behaviours, participants withheld judgment and situated their clients' behaviours within a context of power dynamics, marginalization, and structural inequities. Because they themselves survived these systems,

their interpretation of and empathy for their clients' actions, resulted in a strong connection and natural rapport.

This empathy is similar to what Blum (1980) referred to as the ability to imagine what another person experiences, instead of what we might experience given the same circumstance. Interestingly, participants described it was because of their insider knowledge that they were better able to empathically imagine and non-judgmentally interpret their clients' behaviours, as opposed to workers who could not imagine because of their privilege.

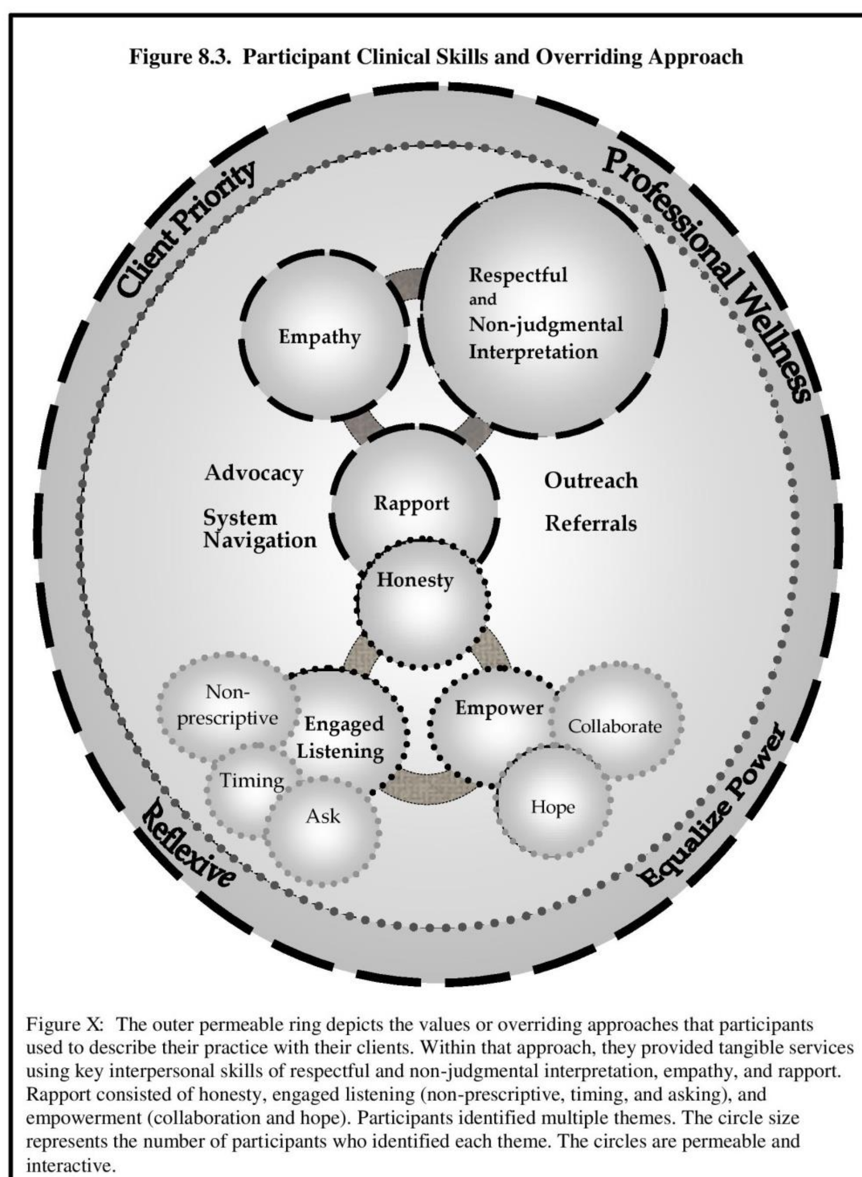

Figure 8.3. Participant Clinical Skills and Overriding Approach

Figure X: The outer permeable ring depicts the values or overriding approaches that participants used to describe their practice with their clients. Within that approach, they provided tangible services using key interpersonal skills of respectful and non-judgmental interpretation, empathy, and rapport. Rapport consisted of honesty, engaged listening (non-prescriptive, timing, and asking), and empowerment (collaboration and hope). Participants identified multiple themes. The circle size represents the number of participants who identified each theme. The circles are permeable and interactive.

This insider knowledge as professional competency is modelled by the field of Convict Criminology.[143] The New School of Convict Criminology[144] is informed by PhD and PhD candidate academics who have the lived experience of being imprisoned, or are ally academics that support and follow critical criminological analyses (Richards, & Ross, 2001). Convict criminology examines and challenges how crime is constructed and thus defined,

proposes alternative solutions, and considers the effect both mainstream and critical solutions have on criminalized individuals (Jones, Ross, Richards, & Murphy, 2009; Ross & Richards, 2003a).

Convict criminologists are able to use their past experience as expertise and provide a much needed addition to criminological discourse[145] (Jones et al., 2009). Their subjective experience of prison enhances both teaching and research activities by providing an additional analysis of criminological constructs—as instructor, their inside experience of being criminalized or imprisoned, and as a researcher, a shared or common experience enhancing the interview process, such as using language or asking questions that only an insider would understand (Murphy, 2007).

Table 8.13. Professional Skills ar Approach fitting witl Aboriginal Approacl to Social Work

Clinical	
Interpretation	⊕
Non-judgemental	⊕
Respect	⊕
Rapport	⊕
Engaged listening	⊕
Asking	
Non-prescriptive	⊕
Timing	⊕
Empowerment	
Collaboration	⊕
Hope	
Honesty	⊕
Empathy	⊕
Approach	
Client priority	⊗
Reflexivity	⊗
Professional wellness	⊕
Equalizing power	⊕

⊕ Hart (2002) (2009)
⊗ Strega & Carriere (2009)

Table 8.14. Participant Professional Practice Themes Identified in select Client Experience Literature

Clinical	
Interpretation	**b, c, e, f, h, i**
Non-judgemental	c, e, f, g, i
Respect	b, e, f, g
Rapport	**c, d, e, f**
Engaged listening	c, d, e, f
Asking	e
Non-prescriptive	
Timing	
Empowerment	a, b, e, g, i
Collaboration	b, c, d, e, g,
Hope	
Honesty	c, d, e, f, g
Empathy	d, e, f
Approach	
Client priority	h
Reflexivity	
Professional wellness	
Equalizing power	e, h
Services	c, e
Advocacy	g
System navigation	g
Outreach	h
Referrals	

[a]Akin & Gregoire (1997), [b]Baker (2007), [c]Chapman, Gibbons, Barth & McCrae (2003), [d]Dale (2004), [e]De Boer & Coady (2007), [f]Drake (1994), [g]Kapp and Vela (2004), [h]Ribner and Knei-Paz (2002), [i]Ylvisaker (2013)

In addition to non-judgmental and respectful interpretation of client behaviours, the study participants valued empathy and rapport building through

Table 8.15. Social Work Activities Related to Effective Interpretation

INTERPRETATION (100%)	**Non-judgemental** (73%)
	• clients' seemingly difficult behaviours as often a means to an end • remaining open to different explanations or scenarios • clients may be scared and distrusting of social workers, authority and systems • clients may have difficulty in having to ask for help or not knowing how to do things
	Respect (40%)
	• speaking with rather than down to their clients

*Percentages, identified in previous data chapters, indicate the prevalence of participants describing each theme. These may not add up to 100 as multiple themes were offered by each participant.

engaged listening, empowerment, and honesty. These professional forms of intervention can result in a form of inoculation against feelings of alienation and spiritual death. Participants combined these skills with tangible services with which they provided clients referrals, outreach, and advocacy. In particular, participants described using their knowledge in navigating systems as beneficial for both their clients and themselves. These material and non-material resources, as well as their understanding of system processes, protect against the repression of deprivation and segmentation.

The activities, skills, and approaches that participants described are closely aligned

Table 8.16. Social Work Activities Participants Related to Rapport

RAPPORT (80%)	
	• workers more accessible to marginalized clients and better able to relate on their client's level • made clients more receptive to interventions • easier for clients to identify with the participants as social workers • getting to know clients first, establishing a relationship before dealing with mandated issues • using self-disclosure to connect and shift power
Engaged Listening (53%)	
Asking (20%)	• wanting to hear clients' stories, perceptions, perspectives, opinions, and plans
Non- prescriptive (20%)	• do not want to tell their clients what to do • clients know what they need, what they want, what they want workers to do
Timing (7%)	• listening for readiness before approaching sensitive issues
Empowerment (53%)	
	• increase client self-awareness and discovery of possible solutions • create opportunities, choices, shared power, responsibility-taking to help clients make decisions • sharing professional knowledge • role playing outcomes of potential choices • acting as a sounding board, as a resource
Collaboration (33%)	• "walking down the same path", doing assessments and making plans • with teachers, counselors, resource workers to create consistent structure
Hope (27%)	• "hope that there is hope"
Honesty (47%)	
	• not setting their clients up for false hope • of the potential consequences of client choices and behaviours

*Percentages, identified in previous data chapters, indicate the prevalence of participants describing each theme. These may not add up to 100 as multiple themes were offered by each participant.

Table 8.17. Social Work Activities Participants Related to Empathy

EMPATHY (60%)

• for clients' complex realities, having walked in similar shoes, sat in the same offices, known hunger, homelessness, and not being cared for or wanted by their workers
    • context of client struggles within a backdrop of chronic marginalization
    • client's lives often hung in the balance
    • how much it takes for clients to simply keep going
• parents and children alike caught in the child welfare system
    • layered complexities of parenting and living with substance misuse – the conflicting responsibilities parents face between loyalty to their children and loyalty to the substances alleviating their own distress
    • for the anguish parents experience who have become separated from their children and the distress children undergo who have had to leave their parents
• the distinction between sympathy as a feeling of compassion and empathy as the feeling combined with action to alleviate the distress
    • empathy not the same as taking clients' issues on as one's own
• for workers' varying levels of awareness and the discrepancy between what workers did to participants and what social workers are supposed to do
• worker's decisions to remain living in the same marginalized neighbourhood as their clients in order to remain connected to their realities
    • for the toll it takes emotionally in having client realities close to worker's personal life

*Percentages, identified in previous data chapters, indicate the prevalence of participants describing each theme. These may not add up to 100 as multiple themes were offered by each participant.

with an Aboriginal approach that Hart (2002, 2009) calls *Mino-pimatisiwin* or "the good life" (see Table 8.13). Furthermore, these activities of helpful interactions have also been previously documented in the research (see Table 8.14), as being valued by social work clients (Akin & Gregoire, 1997; Baker, 2007; Chapman et al., 2003; Dale, 2004, De Boer & Coady, 2007, Drake, 1994, Kapp & Vela, 2004, Ribner & Knei-Paz, 2002; Ylvisaker, 2013). Their specific activities are listed in Tables 8.15 to 8.17.

Participants described having overriding approaches guiding their practice (Tables 8.18, 8.19). They articulated protecting client service as their first priority, and worked to equalize the power differentials inherent in their client/worker relationships. Participants similarly noted the importance they placed on social workers actively maintaining their own professional wellness and incorporating a reflexive approach to the effect they have on their clients. These values can act as antidotes

Table 8.18. Social Work Activities Participants Related to their Overriding Approach

APPROACH (73%)	
	Client Priority (53%)
	• personal commitment not just a career; from the heart, not because one has a degree • "treating clients well because you could be in their chair tomorrow" • Aware of interactions with clients and the "long terms consequences" • "every day, in some small way, improve somebody's quality of life" • aware of client realities in defining client successes
	Reflexivity (53%)
	• on remembering ones past in order to retain ones connection to clients • on own experiences in child welfare validating client experiences as more than just stories • on the processes from being an apprehended child to a social worker in the same agency • on the chaos of one's past training for the hectic nature of child welfare • on integrating their experiences with their professional training • on ongoing decisions to disclose their past to co-workers, clients • on awareness of potential triggers affecting case assignment • on word choice when speaking with clients • on making decisions despite knowing the potential long term consequences
	Professional Wellness (40%)
	• central to ability to carry out work effectively • challenge to maintain and portray the role of professional health and competency and go home to the very struggles that bring many Aboriginal people into contact with social workers • is cognizant of the anger she carries from her former experiences in her encounters with the non-Aboriginal co-workers • encountering social workers who replicate some of the same harmful practices P experienced as a child and needing to stay healthy • relying on traditional culture for teachings and strength • professional education as gateway into personal awareness, emotional and mental health • focusing on the task at hand, recognize and avoid distracting triggers • because of their experiences not choosing child welfare as a career
	Equalizing Power (20%)
	• aware of attire and language choice to respect clients' social locations

*Percentages, identified in previous data chapters, indicate the prevalence of participants describing each theme. These may not add up to 100 as multiple themes were offered by each participant.

to deprivation and discrimination.

It is important to note that while social workers use many types of assessments, only Trouble specifically mentioned "risk assessment". This is interesting as Strega and Carriere (2009) confirm much of the previously cited risk discourse literature in acknowledging the proliferation of risk assessments in Canadian child welfare systems since the late 90s. Because risk assessments were not specifically asked about, the reasons for this omission by participants would be important to explore in future research: are risk assessments so prevalently used in child welfare and criminal justice that they are informally referred to only as assessments by social workers working in these systems? Or contrastingly, are risk assessments not used within these systems as prevalently as the literature would indicate?

Table 8.19. Social Work Activities Participants Related to Services

SERVICES (73%)	
	Advocacy (53%)
	• part of their services • enhancing client abilities to navigate systems • self-advocacy in defending their approach in working with clients • challenging their co-workers' worldviews • childhood experiences made them stronger advocates for their clients, against unnecessary apprehensions, keeping sibling groups together • as board members, advocated for women's needs remaining forefront in organizational mandates and marginalized knowledges on advisory committees • for persistent and strategized advocacy planning with co-workers • listened to clients' concerns in accessing benefit services, went undercover, met with staff, enhanced clients' access to services
	System navigation (27%) • knowledge of systems is respected and sought out by colleagues • knowing the policies of their work systems in order to navigate around them • uses discretion to navigate between guidelines, going above and beyond for clients
	Outreach (40%)
	• meeting clients in their environments, or away from their office, taking them for coffee • relationship as best resource: met with client who was suicidal, went for a walk, talked, mutually agreed on hospital admission, next morning met about next steps • 'walking the path' with clients meant participants often wore many hats: life coach, employment counsellor, role play partner, roving social worker/boxer/art therapist
	Referrals (33%)
	• putting the extra effort in to connect people to resources

*Percentages, identified in previous data chapters, indicate the prevalence of participants describing each theme. These may not add up to 100 as multiple themes were offered by each participant.

Participants did, however, describe their frustration with assessments that were driven by policies that did not take the overarching influence of poverty, residential schools, or the child welfare/criminal justice pipeline into consideration. These assessment concerns are reflected in the previously cited literature critiquing risk thinking and risk assessments for depoliticizing and decontextualizing marginalized peoples realities.

Participants described having second- and third-generation families on their case loads and parents who themselves were once children in the child welfare system. Participants relayed understanding why Aboriginal families often appeared evasive and wary, that their frequent contact with social workers from child welfare and criminal justice systems left them feeling mistrustful. This meta understanding was reflected in a structural analysis of contemporary issues that all participants shared readily.

Figure 8.4. Participant Structural Analyses of Client Realities

Figure X: Participants identified multiple themes. The circle size represents the number of participants who identified each theme. The circles are permeable and interactive.

In line with Spivak's (1988) concept of subjugated knowledges, hooks (2000) describes the critical importance of marginalized people's analyses moving to the centre of our knowledge systems. In this way, the structural analyses that participants shared are key not because their observations are novel, but because they confirm much of the previously cited critical literature and are made by social work colleagues with extensive service provider *and* insider client service recipient experience.

Structural Analysis

Along with experiencing negative outcomes previously identified in the literature, participants recalled the processes producing these outcomes, including the widespread role social workers have in governing Aboriginal peoples. Depicted in Figure 8.4 and Tables 8.20 to 8.22, the prevalence of social workers monitoring Aboriginal peoples was apparent not

only in the descriptions that *social worker* was a “bad” word in some Aboriginal languages, it was evident by some participants choosing social work as their career because social workers were the professionals which whom they had had such frequent contact with. Additionally, this wide spread governing role was apparent by the level of described fear that Aboriginal people had of social workers taking away their children.

Participants described the prevalent role that the residential school system had on their own and their clients’ lives. They described it as still living in people’s homes and affecting families’ emotional and social wellbeing. Participants described its colonial legacy on many Aboriginal peoples’ parenting behaviours and subsequent family struggles. They highlighted that the violence used in the residential schools was alive in peer-to-peer violence and police brutality. And they talked about the child welfare and criminal justice systems being

Table 8.20. Participants’ (P) Structural Analysis of Social Workers (SW)and the Child Welfare and Criminal Justice Systems

STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS (100%)	
	Social Workers (93%)
	• power SWs have over clients’ lives as inspirational but too frequently as adversarial ▪ power child welfare SWs have should not be underestimated • clients fear and distrust, perceive as “child thieves”, who break families apart ▪ frequently not liked, “social worker” is often used as a dirty word in many First Nations languages • difficulty merging this perception in their own professional capacities as Aboriginal SWs ▪ understands clients’ fears of child welfare SWs and laments often leaves them suffering in isolation ▪ clients’ compliance often based on fear, a fear privileged non-Aboriginal co-workers often fail to understand or acknowledge • perceive and treat clients with blaming and Othering ▪ judgemental attitudes, speak about clients in condemning terms ▪ “paternalistic attitude is so prevalent” ▪ textbook SWs - little understanding of their privilege or why clients do what they do, lack empathic imaging • toll it takes to listen to paternalistic and elitist sentiments and stigmatizing attitudes ▪ heard a worker describe Aboriginal children as her bread and butter • workers under a similar scrutiny as clients in terms of their professional discretion ▪ poses difficulties when challenged by families -why she is taking children away as an Aboriginal woman? ▪ preference to provide supports rather than remove children curtailed by policy • use of creative problem solving – “It's not one way, it's what way?” ▪ importance of social work education in fostering more creative and effective approaches
	Child Welfare and Criminal Justice (67%)
	• direct link clients have experienced going from the child welfare to the criminal justice systems • apprehensions still driven by policies overlooking the overarching influence of poverty in systemic oppression, contrasting P’s structural analysis with that of her supervisor’s conventional assessment • child welfare inherently connected with other systems and attempts to rectify one in isolation is doomed *Percentages, identified in previous data chapters, indicate the prevalence of participants describing each theme. These may not add up to 100 as multiple themes were offered by each participant.

contemporary extensions and the common denominator being social work and its negative connotations.

Participants spoke of the devolution process in Manitoba and their frustration over the continuing colonial governing relations. Non-Aboriginal management of Aboriginal child welfare agencies combined with federal legislation and funding formulas produced high case loads, reduced resources, and resulted in Aboriginal social workers apprehending Aboriginal children. Participants stated they were tired of funding restrictions forcing the hiring of workers without Social Work degrees. They lamented having to work alongside inexperienced co-workers during difficult apprehensions and missing the necessary resources required to keep families together. While they were very critical of colonial white mentality and white control of Aboriginal child welfare agencies, they distinguished this from white individuals.

Strega and Carriere (2009) argue that policy context that Aboriginal child welfare organizations largely operate within is setting them up for failure. The delegated policy and funding formulas

Table 8.21. Participants' (P) Structural Analysis of Client Realities

STRUCUTRAL ANALYSIS (100%)

Client realities (60%)

Residential School Legacy (60%)

- on **parenting and family patterns**
  - clients' realities rooted in systemic oppression
  - BSW content on residential schools helped understanding why parents and communities struggle
    - feel as though residential school system is still present in homes
  - awareness of grandmother's residential schooling had on P's own emotional health and why young male clients struggle with anger, anxiety, fear
- for **criminal justice and child welfare**
  - four uncles' experiences at residential schools resulting in their incarceration and P's understanding of the damage those systems have on individuals and families
    - remembered a client who, after being taken into child welfare, lost contact with his 11 siblings and his attempts to find them
  - many parents do not understand why child welfare is involved
  - intergenerational effect of child welfare has left many families fearing its ever-looming presence
    - second and third generation families on caseloads
    - understands why parents often are evasive; their fear and prior experience with child welfare system leaves them feeling distrustful
    - knowing the vulnerability of children and youth in child welfare, need for positive support and mentoring, and importance of workers anticipating their needs and barriers
    - keeping clients off an unending program treadmill
- on **professional practice**
  - increased awareness and public acknowledgement of residential schools has affected their work with clients, started including residential school history in assessments in the community
  - child welfare workers frustrated by policies that do not acknowledge or reflect the legacy of residential schools on their clients' realities

Violence (13%)

- urbanized violence from peers and police

*Percentages, identified in previous data chapters, indicate the prevalence of participants describing each theme. These may not add up to 100 as multiple themes were offered by each participant.

Table 8.22. Participants' (P) Structural Analysis of Organizations

STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS (100%)

Organizations (60%)

White Management (53%)

- Aboriginal agencies still under the control of non-Aboriginal management and policies
  - it is not white people, it is white mentality, white politics, white attitude, white privilege, and white control
  - continued control by federal funding dollars
  - continued control of Aboriginal organizations was part of the larger control the federal government plays in Aboriginal peoples' lives
- frustration with slow pace of Aboriginal leadership and change towards self-determination
- difficulty in challenging the very systems employed by
  - hope for a more united movement

Devolution (40%)

- frustration with funding/policy restrictions, could not introduce much needed resources due to pre-Aboriginal Justice Inquiry frozen rates, having to apprehend because resources are not available for families to stay together
- public criticism Aboriginal organizations face since devolution
  - having to hire new and often inexperienced workers amidst escalating child welfare cases instead of being able to build on their existing capacity
- unchanged provincial policies on imposed on Aboriginal organizations and in effect mandating Aboriginal workers to now carry out the apprehension of Aboriginal children
- despite concerns, participants were clear they were united with their Aboriginal co-workers in supporting devolution as a means to a more hopeful future for Aboriginal families

Racism (33%)

- since political correctness, seen more racism than before
  - within neighbourhood where P lives
  - Aboriginal social workers treated as inferior in skills and education
  - in scenarios where they were particularly sought after as Aboriginal professionals, as a board member, under affirmative action
- Aboriginal liaison positions under affirmative action identified as soul destroying - isolation not only from other Aboriginal workers but from non-Aboriginal social workers as well
- continuing barriers seen as ensuring not too many Aboriginal social workers enter the profession
- personal mission to counter and challenge the racism she witnesses amongst her colleagues, not only for her own health but also for her client's
- knows too well the effects of racism, does not stoop to perpetuating it

*Percentages, identified in previous data chapters, indicate the prevalence of participants describing each theme. These may not add up to 100 as multiple themes were offered by each participant.

they operate under-privilege apprehension over prevention. Reid (2005) noted that Aboriginal child welfare workers struggle between wanting to provide better service and ending up being the "perpetrators of colonialism" within their communities (p. 30).

Participants also reported the racism that they regularly experienced in both their professional and personal lives. As a form of cultural violence, the racism participants recalled manifested in structural violence or physical harm in the form of enhanced stress and duress. Living with this daily violence affected Aboriginal peoples when they left their homes and entered the public but racialized space of poorer neighbourhoods. This violence often resulted in workers worrying about their own adolescent sons getting to and from school without being harassed by police, or getting jumped or recruited by gang members. They shared that their sons were spending too much time inactive online at home, not getting enough exercise or interacting in the community. These

experiences with violence are also indicative of the enhanced policing of marginalized populations (Bauman, 1997, Comack, 2012) and racialized spaces under neo-liberalism (Razack, 2002).

Participant recommendations

Participants also gave recommendations without being specifically prompted. As presented in Tables 8.23 to 8.25, their recommendations generated six major themes: services, social work education, more Aboriginal social workers, social workers with lived

Table 8.23. Participant Recommendations for Services

RECOMMENDATIONS (87%)

Services (73%)

Child Welfare (53%)

- more supports for families and youth
- understanding the legacy of residential school experiences on families' coping strategies
- embracing empowerment approaches to facilitate family wellbeing
- an emphasis on harm reduction strategies rather than apprehensions
- support parents after they had had their children apprehended
- parents understanding their rights and avenues available to get their children back
- post apprehension support for youth
- crucial need for follow-up services with youth who age out

Funding (40%)

- for services and programs
- to hire workers with BSW degrees
- for essential supports to families
- for additional financial resources for families, extended families and communities
  - to keep children from not being taken away in the first place, ad hoc funding that goes into the foster family system would be better allocated to families as prevention
  - to prevent children from becoming permanent wards
  - to get children back and not give up

Quality Enhancement (40%)

- improve outreach, services for clients in their own communities instead of expecting clients to come to offices
- offering a continuum of services to reduce the need for clients to traverse an often bewildering array of seemingly unconnected services where the potential for them to fall through gaps is high
- to work collaboratively with clients, including them in decision-making and planning
- empowering clients and provide viable hope and belief that their actions have purpose

Programs (27%)

- additional sport activities for youth
- 24-hour crisis lines on reserves
- increased access to cultural teachings
- transition support services for people moving
  - from reserve to urban centers, from reserve courts to urban courts
- more school social workers to assist youth dealing with child welfare
- Aboriginal street patrols providing safety and protection from violence and police harassment

*Percentages, identified in previous data chapters, indicate the prevalence of participants describing each theme. These may not add up to 100 as multiple themes were offered by each participant.

Table 8.24. Participant Recommendations for Social Work Education

RECOMMENDATIONS (87%)

Social Work Education (53%)

Curriculum (40%)

- personal healing as a part of the curriculum
- more practical skills, interpersonal skills be taught closer to a student's practicum so that their ability to interact with clients is more accomplished
- more experiential learning opportunities in order to work through their own issues and feel what some of the challenges the clients they would be working with might experience
- more Aboriginal content
- guest lecturers, who had once been children involved in systems, such as themselves, to talk to students to create a stronger awareness of the link between residential schools and contemporary child welfare and criminal justice systems

Support for Students (20%)

- more support to Aboriginal students in adjusting and thriving in an academic environment
  - students need to be mentally and emotionally prepared and supported throughout their studies
- instructors meet students' learning styles
- counseling resources be made available as soon as students enter the program

Financial Investment in Students (20%)

- investing financially in Aboriginal social workers' education to generate the leaders of tomorrow Aboriginal social work students carry multiple responsibilities for themselves and their children, and many, due to their own child welfare involvement, do not have support from their families

Outreach (13%)

- expanding social work programs in northern and remote communities - more Aboriginal social workers would graduate, and reciprocally, teachings from the communities would reach university instructors
- social work educators need to go to northern communities, in collaboration with band counsels and chiefs to "light the fires of education"

*Percentages, identified in previous data chapters, indicate the prevalence of participants describing each theme. These may not add up to 100 as multiple themes were offered by each participant.

systems experience, personal wellness, and activism. Participant recommendations speak to the evisceration of social services under neo-liberalism, the need for inclusive professional education for marginalized populations, the importance of having professionals better reflective of and culturally competent with respect to marginalized Aboriginal peoples' realities, of incorporating a professional value of wellness, and of having avenues for collective Aboriginal social work action. Several of their recommendations were later echoed by the Phoenix Sinclair Commission released in January 2014, including: graduating more

Table 8.25. Participant Recommendations for Aboriginal Social Workers, Workers with Lived Systems Experience, Personal Wellness, and Activism

RECOMMENDATIONS (87%)

More Aboriginal Social Workers (47%)

- working in communities, in systems and institutions, and in administration and policy
  - the importance of Aboriginal clients having Aboriginal social workers to act as support people, as advocates, and as mentors engaging in prevention and making connections and fostering community
  - more Aboriginal hospital and child welfare workers assisting young mothers so that their children do not get apprehended
  - more Aboriginal social workers working with youth in schools
  - shared social identity and social location fosters a level of understanding and connection often not experienced with non-Aboriginal workers and creates stronger working relationships
- having a shared First Nations language crucial when working with clients whose first language is not English
- needing a community of Aboriginal social workers, to change policies, to recreate organizational climates inclusive and reflective of Aboriginal workers' concerns, and to offer professional peer support and community

Lived Systems Experience (47%)

- more social workers with lived experience of being clients, would have more grounded compassion and awareness of the power they had as professionals vis-a-vis their clients, would result in fewer apprehensions and more critical thinking about the challenges clients face and the efforts they make to overcome their difficulties, would be more valued and trusted by Aboriginal clients and families.
- concern over workers potentially projecting their experiences onto their clients

Personal Wellness (40%)

- recognizing the importance of working through one's own issues before becoming practitioners
  - systems where they worked were oppressive to Aboriginal workers, nature of the work inherently stressful, danger of projecting their own issues onto their clients was too great without a healthy sense of self

Activism (40%)

Policy (33%)

- needing Aboriginal professional associations and more collective and united action in order to have a stronger political voice to affect policies and bring about social change
- Aboriginal management of Aboriginal organizations
- substantive political representation at local, regional and national levels was made up of Aboriginal social workers, academics, and grassroots activists

Awareness (20%)

- environments where clients come together, cultivate their collective awareness about social issues, and mitigate the isolation many feel from marginalization
- more Aboriginal content in provincial high school curricula as well as with an innovate public awareness campaign Ps called "book drive-bys"

*Percentages, identified in previous data chapters, indicate the prevalence of participants describing each theme. These may not add up to 100 as multiple themes were offered by each participant.

Aboriginal social workers and removing barriers to professional education (Recommendation 27), hiring child welfare workers with a BSW (Recommendation 26), having child welfare workers include awareness training of residential schools legacies (Recommendation 29), and extending support for children to age 25 (Recommendation 34) (Hughes, 2013).

Conclusion

The findings from this study, informed from Aboriginal social workers and through a structural social work framework, presented clear examples and themes of the role that social work plays when Aboriginal peoples and the child welfare and criminal justice systems collide. From how social workers intervene with Aboriginal clients, to why Aboriginal people choose social work as a profession; from Aboriginal people's experiences becoming social workers and practicing, to their professional practice and analysis; and finally, to their recommendations for our professional future, these findings offer a valuable perspective from our colleagues about our professional selves. The final chapter will summarize this study, speak to its limitations, and present its implications for social work practice, education, and research.

9 Summary, Limitations, and Implications

This study has addressed a growing problem in the social service field: the increasing overrepresentation of Aboriginal persons in both the child welfare system and criminal justice system. Furthermore, those Aboriginal youth who find themselves in child welfare systems often go on to the criminal justice system. This overrepresentation is a relatively recent phenomenon and, since social workers are employed in both systems, is of critical importance to the field of social work. Because these two systems have been identified as contemporary colonializing systems, the main question that was explored in this study was how do social workers contribute to or mitigate against these colonializing processes? Using structural social work as the theoretical framework, these contemporary colonizing processes and their outcomes were re-conceptualized as structural violence. Presenting overrepresentation as colonialism with structural violence provides an important awareness of the structural processes and the role that social work plays in contributing to or mitigating against rates of overrepresentation.

To address how social work affects overrepresentation rates, a sample of fifteen Aboriginal social workers who had, as youth, been in either one or both of these systems were interviewed with respect to what they found was oppressive or enabling in their interactions with social workers. An exploratory design was used and an interview schedule developed to obtain responses to the four interview questions:

1. Please tell me about your experience with social workers during or as a result of your child welfare/criminal justice involvement.
2. Can you tell me why you decided to become a social worker?
3. Given your lived experience of child welfare/criminal justice involvement, please describe what it was like for you to pursue your career as a social worker.

4. Given your lived experience of child welfare/criminal justice involvement, please describe any effect this has on your social work practice or how you do social work?

Data were analyzed using two complementary and supplementary research methodologies, Institutional Ethnography (IE) and Hermeneutic Phenomenology. Institutional Ethnography, a critical theory and method, gathers narratives exploring how ruling relations are produced, maintained, and potentially deconstructed. Whereas individuals were interviewed in this study and participants acted as informants of what social workers specifically do, the research goal of this study was to better understand the role social work as a profession plays. Hermeneutic Phenomenology was included in order to ensure that a reflexive process was utilized during data collection and analysis.

The findings highlighted how helpful social workers (invested, empowering, and providing accessible and tangible supports) acted as anti-structural violent or as protection or mitigation from alienation, deprivation, and colonializing processes. Unhelpful social workers (un-invested, controlling and supports depriving) in contrast, were active in Othering and structurally violent processes, including harm, deprivation, repression, and segmentation or false consciousness. While many of these interventions are indicative of unethical practice, they are also representative of neo-liberalism and risk thinking—blaming and monitoring the individual rather than empowerment and social justice.

In contrast to the literature on why more privileged (non-Aboriginal) individuals choose social work, these participants more frequently made their decision because of their desire to help others and to either emulate the good social workers they had or to do better than the bad ones they encountered. Their desire to participate in this study was also altruistic: to educate about and articulate the hardships they experienced at the hands of social workers, to share examples of success, and to emphasize and to add the contributions social workers with lived systems experience make to social work discourse.

The supports and barriers that participants experienced as they pursued their social work careers revealed both decolonizing and colonial processes that are not as obvious or immediate as when they sat across from their social workers as clients. Decolonizing processes were those that facilitated participants' admission into university, inclusion in the curriculum, community with their student peers, and success in their degree completion. And decolonizing processes were evident when participants' co-workers and participants, themselves, valued their lived systems experience as a professional asset. While these attributes have also been identified in the literature as equity enhancing with marginalized high school students, these processes are particularly relevant in light of the colonializing legacy the residential school system has had on education and Aboriginal peoples.

In contrast to decolonizing supports, participants experienced numerous barriers in pursuing their social work career. The challenge of even completing high school while concurrently aging out of the child welfare system left many participants on their own and without income at a time when they needed to complete high school. This deprivation of material and nonmaterial resources removed the option of continuing on to university as young adults and forced them to find ways to support themselves independent of the familial supports many more privileged eighteen year olds enjoy. Conventional university settings were seen as foreign spaces not welcoming of Aboriginal people. For those that did attend, they experienced Othering from instructors and peers, course content, and teaching styles. Once practicing, participants recalled feeling Othered again by co-workers who saw their lived systems experience as a professional liability, and feeling torn between their dual identity as Aboriginal person and social worker, and professional by day and traumatized family by night.

Participants' clinical practice themes reflected a skill set described as effective and respectful in the broader service user literature and in Aboriginal social work approaches:

non-judgemental and respectful interpretation of client behaviours, rapport through engaged listening, empowerment, honesty, and demonstrated empathy. These approaches are similar to the anti-structural violence that their own helpful social workers used.

Participants also had overriding practice approaches that acted as antidotes to deprivation and discrimination. These were making clients their priority, being reflexive on how their experience affected their practice, being committed to their own professional wellness, equalizing the power dynamics with their clients and providing tangible services of advocacy, system navigation, outreach, and referrals.

Participants' practice also included a structural analysis of their clients' and their own realities. This structural analysis is contrary to a neo-liberal culture of apolitical and decontextualized risk thinking. Participants were aware of the power social workers had over many Aboriginal people's lives and the frequent Othering and blaming their co-workers exhibited to Aboriginal clients. Participants understood the subsequent fear and distrust many Aboriginal clients had of social workers. While not named as neo-liberal, participants were aware of the scrutiny that social workers were under in terms of their professional discretion and that apprehensions were driven by policies that ignored the influence of poverty and residential schools. They identified the direct link child welfare had with the criminal justice system, and the legacy residential schools still had on Aboriginal peoples' parenting and family patterns, on the child welfare criminal justice pipeline, and the day to day violence from peers and police that Aboriginal peoples live with. Participants were also painfully aware of the structural inequity, racism, and colonial legacy apparent within their organizations of employment.

Limitations of the Study

The credibility of qualitative research lies in its trustworthiness and rigour. As described in Chapter Four, I utilized a number of strategies to improve the credibility of my

findings, including triangulation, member checking, prolonged engagement, journaling, and a clear audit trail of transparency and confirmability in linking participant quotes to themes to implications. Still, given the nature of this study, there are a number of limitations that are worth noting: 1) small sample size and sampling strategy; 2) reliance on memory recall of events occurring as much as 30 years prior and selective memory processes; 3) lack of collateral verification and inability to operationalize 'social workers'; 4) participant responses reflect more child welfare than criminal justice experience; 5) lack of text analysis despite using IE; and 6) prevalence rates of emergent themes.

The sample size of 15 participants for this study, while small, is within the range for both hermeneutic phenomenological studies as well as exploratory qualitative research where sampling size tends to be small, often even as small as single digits (Marshall, 1996; Padgett, 1998). Eight additional people initially replied to the recruitment poster but withdrew before an interview occurred. There is no way of telling if the characteristics and experiences of these eight potential participants would have altered the findings and the experiences of the 15 participants is not meant to be generalizable to all Aboriginal social workers with lived systemic involvement.

Related to the small sample, five of the 15 participants were still taking BSW coursework and did not yet have their degree. I chose to include these participants in the study because they were immersed to varying degrees in professional education and all five had some social work experience (three participants had one year of work experience, one had three years, and the remaining participant had seven years of social work experience). Because mandatory professional registration does not yet exist in Manitoba, people without a social work degree can still work in social work positions.

The sampling and recruitment strategy is also a limitation. Because recruitment was sent out via email, I had no way of knowing to whom my poster was forwarded. Using

convenience and purposeful sampling, my initial email was sent out to over 30 Aboriginal organizations. While this was no means exhaustive of all Aboriginal organizations in the Winnipeg area, it was based on the email contacts I could gather from a web-based search as well as my own professional contact list. Additionally, because I relied on email rather than a postal mail-out, the number of organizations reading and forwarding my email could have been influenced by the email volume they had that day. As a result, there may have been many potential participants who fit my criteria but did not receive notification of my study. In addition, because I was interested in hearing about circumstances coinciding with potentially traumatic events when asking participants to recall their experiences while involved in child welfare and/or criminal justice systems, potential participants who fit the criteria and knew about the study may have decided not to respond. Again, I have no way of knowing how this may have influenced the findings.

There are also limitations in terms of the data collected from the research participants. Participants were asked to recall events that occurred anywhere from one to 30 years prior and selective memory processes may have been a factor. Amie stated that she was more likely to remember the social workers that she felt had supported her while Mina shared she was more likely to remember only her negative interactions:

> I still remember the individuals that I felt supported by, but I mean the other ones, they're just faceless people. (Amie)

> So, like I can't remember her name or anything like that but, so bad memory, because she was okay right, so why would I remember her? (Mina)

Participants were also asked to recall their experiences with workers they perceived as being social workers. Because it was beyond the scope of this research to corroborate these perceptions, this study is limited in that it does not operationalize what it meant to be a social worker other than the participants' perception and the interactions or role these workers carried out fit within a social work scope of practice. In other words, while these workers

seemed to be active in social work activities, these workers may or may not have had a BSW, and may or may not have seen themselves as a social worker. Still, the findings are relevant to social work. Because the research participants were either social workers themselves or doing their BSW coursework with some paid social work experience, their recollections of people doing social work activities are likely more discerning that those of a lay person. Consequently, those remembered activities can serve as an important point for professional reflexivity and awareness.

A related limitation to this study is that participants spoke predominantly about their child welfare experience and less so about their experiences with criminal justice systems. This is interesting in light of the findings that 53% had criminal justice experience, compared to 73% with child welfare and 26% of participants reported having both. Further to this, those with criminal justice experience identified working with 18 social workers over an accumulated 27.75 years. This was comparably half of what participants with child welfare experienced with 42 social workers over 67 years. Some of this underreporting could be because participants simply had less contact with social workers during their criminal justice involvement than with their child welfare experiences. This does not, however, account for the level of underreporting. Whether the additional stigma that criminalization carries played a role in the recollections for these professional participants is beyond the scope of this study, but the under-reporting of their criminal justice experiences is a limitation that cannot be ignored.

Another limitation is that despite using IE as one of my research methodologies, I did not do any text analysis. In part, this was, as previously stated, due to the nature of the research that made identifying any one organization from which to draw texts, difficult. The participants identified experiences with social workers from numerous organizations, across several decades and provinces. Furthermore, the use of text analysis in subsequent research is

an important implication arising from this exploratory study. In particular, the narratives that participants gave as examples could be augmented with an IE text analysis of workers' case notes.

Finally, the findings are not intended to be generalizable to all Aboriginal social workers with child welfare and/or criminal justice lived experience or to all Aboriginal peoples' experiences with social workers. Rather it is intended to be exploratory of the experiences of the 15 participants. In addition, because participants were not asked about particular themes, the prevalence of emergent themes (for example; 67% reported feeling controlled by their social worker) does not indicate the potential prevalence had those themes been specifically asked about.

Implications

The preceding findings infer important implications for social work practice, education, and research at the personal, cultural, and structural levels. These implications address the role social work has in reducing overrepresentation rates, in contributing to contemporary decolonizing processes, and in sustaining structural anti-violence interventions and outcomes.

Social Work Practice

The findings from this research along with the recommendations from participants clearly suggest the importance of social workers providing helpful services rather than interventions resulting in structural violence and contemporary colonializing processes. This is particularly relevant for social workers working with and within child welfare and criminal justice systems. As displayed in Table 9. 1, this includes the importance of non-judgmental and respectful interpretation of client behaviours, establishing and maintaining rapport (including the acknowledgement and processing of service related traumas), and providing tangible services (including how to navigate systems). While this may appear self-evident,

these qualities of direct practice are often trivialized within these systems (De Boer & Coady, 2007). This disconnect between what *should* occur and what *does* occur speaks to the subsequent implications addressing the culture of social work practice.

The cultural level of social work practice refers to our stated and implied, intended and assumed, informed and produced discourse—our language, texts, values, knowledge, norms, and ideology (Mullaly, 2010). Since much of child welfare and criminal justice is currently influenced by neo-liberalism and risk thinking, the findings of this study speak to the importance of adopting a culture of practice built on structural and rights-based approaches. Instead of pathologizing and bureaucratizing clients, this means keeping clients as the priority, equalizing power dynamics, maintaining professional wellness, being reflexive, and offering helpful, not harmful services. It also means moving from a fragmented range of resources to a continuum of social work services. It involves social workers adopting a more active role in eradicating racism by increasing citizen awareness of historical and contemporary colonizing processes through public education and school curricula. It means taking substantive action in challenging racist stereotypes, deconstructing our current professional colonizing discourses, and ensuring our practice is not only sensitive to Aboriginal cultures, but inclusive, competent, honouring, and structurally anti-violent. And, it means that social work as a profession supports the necessity for financial investment in Aboriginal students as a vital decolonizing and self-determining strategy.

Decolonizing implications for social work practice at the structural level include professional social work associations lobbying and supporting the self-determination of Aboriginal child welfare agencies and the increased funding thereof. This includes funding for preventative and reunification dollars and services for families, and support services for children who are aging out. This means changing child welfare aging-out policies and practices to support instead of impede high school completion. In addition, this calls for

Aboriginal Social Work Associations that coordinate social action and offer community for many of the bifurcation challenges that Aboriginal social workers identified. This also included collective professional lobbying for child welfare budgets designed for hiring, retaining, and supporting workers with social work degrees. Participants' own recommendations implicitly endorsed the merits and importance of social work education as key to workers effectively honing reflexive practice and contextualizing client difficulties within structural inequities.

Table 9.1. Implications for Social Work (SW) Practice

Personal	Cultural	Structural
• non-judgmental/ respectful interpretation • rapport ⌖ honest ⌖ engaged listening ▪ acknowledgement and processing of trauma ⌖ empowering ▪ inclusion in plans • tangible services ⌖ outreach ⌖ system navigation ⌖ advocacy ⌖ accessible referrals	• strengths/rights based ⌖ client priority ⌖ professional wellness ⌖ reflexivity ⌖ equalizing power • helpful, not harmful • continuum of services • public education • financial investment in Aboriginal students	• SW associations support for self-determination of Aboriginal child welfare • SW associations lobby for child welfare funding ⌖ prevention ⌖ reunification ⌖ aging out ⌖ hire BSW workers • aging out policies to support high school completion • community/ collective action of Aboriginal SW ⌖ bifurcation challenges

Social Work Education

Social work education, in turn, offers the professional foundation for future researchers and practitioners. As such, social work education has the potential to lay the much needed foundation for understanding our role in decolonization and structural anti-violence processes. In particular, the findings and participant recommendations speak to the necessity of basing social work education on critical theories, teaching tangible anti-violence skills, enhancing educational equity policies and practices, and teaching effective activism strategies as essential in furthering decolonization and structural anti-violence goals (see Table 9.2).

If social work programs want to attract and retain Aboriginal students, curricula and course content need to reflect those goals. Incorporating Aboriginal social work approaches is a much needed addition. In conjunction with Aboriginal social work approaches, content on contemporary (rather than only historical) colonizing processes is vital. This would include client experiences, the child welfare to criminal justice pipeline, and structural violence as outcomes, omissions, and processes. This would also require content on the power of language to include or exclude. As Hawkins, Fook, and Ryan (2001) suggest, the language we use betrays the foundations of our practice, including how we understand oppression, marginalization, and social control.

Table 9.2. Implications for Social Work (SW) Education

Personal	Cultural	Structural

• Aboriginal SW approaches
• contemporary colonization processes
  ⌖ client experiences
  ⌖ criminal justice and child welfare pipeline
  ⌖ structural violence as outcomes, omissions, processes
• inclusive language
• Code of Ethics
• skills
  ⌖ activism
  ⌖ non-judgmental interpretation
    ▪ empathetic imaging
  ⌖ rapport
    ▪ honest
    ▪ engaged listening
    ▪ empowering
  ⌖ tangible services
    ▪ outreach
    ▪ system navigation
    ▪ advocacy
    ▪ accessible referrals
	• adult learning principles
	• professional wellness
	• reflexivity
	• experiential empathy
	• attitudes about clients
	• client experience
	• rights-based, strengths based
	• SW interventions having more than just immediate outcomes
	• critical neo-liberal/ risk thinking analysis
	• SW as social control
	  ⌖ the role of SW in governing Aboriginal peoples
	  ⌖ residential school legacy
	  ⌖ fear many Aboriginal clients have of SW
	  ⌖ devolution processes
		• recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and ally faculty
		• programs and admissions
		  ⌖ inclusive of experience
		  ⌖ flexible
		  ⌖ small
		  ⌖ foster belonging
		  ⌖ connected to community
		  ⌖ respect and value students
		  ⌖ view experience as asset
		  ⌖ transition supports and counselling

As recommended by participants in this study, this also calls for the integration of the Code of Ethics with specific practice skills. The Code of Ethics, despite its limitations, offers a baseline from which helpful and unhelpful behaviours can be differentiated. The code is in theory intended to take precedence over conflicting workplace policies but can only do so when social workers have an integrated understanding of its values and application for

practice. With such integration, the helpful skills identified in this study should be part of course content and framed as structural anti-violence. These include teaching students skills on activism and advocacy, how to help clients navigate systems, how to offer outreach as an outsider, and the elements of accessible referrals. These skills also include the afore mentioned skills identified in the practice implications with empathetic imagining as a key non-Othering strategy.

While the culture of social work education maintains a goal of non-Othering discourse, participants identified that they experienced Othering far too frequently. One of the ways in which this can be improved is through adopting adult learning principles and characteristics of alternative education settings. While the rationale of applying adult education principles within a university setting appear self-evident, alternative education setting principles are complementary and necessary if social work intends to reduce the barriers inherent in conventional university settings. Alternative and adult education principles would also create congruence between offering professional social work training within a culture of decolonizing education. This culture would 1) validate and promote professional wellness and reflexivity, 2) incorporate experiential opportunities to develop empathetic imagining skills, 3) maintain focus and critical reflection on the attitudes social workers hold of clients, 4) value client experience, and 5) use structural, strengths, and rights-based approaches.

In addition, a decolonizing professional education culture would reflect the awareness of, and acknowledge the responsibility for, social work interventions having long-reaching outcomes. It would recognize that despite being a helping profession, social work has a real and undeniable social control legacy and contemporary function. In particular, a decolonizing culture would mean acknowledging the role social work plays in governing Aboriginal peoples—the role social work played in the residential school system, the role social workers

occupy currently in child welfare devolution processes, and the real fear held by many Aboriginal people of our profession.

On a structural level, implications include having social work programs and admissions policies that are congruent with alternative and adult education principles. The success of such programs would be contingent on substantive equity initiatives that recruited and retained Aboriginal and ally faculty and students.

Social Work Research

As an exploratory study, an obvious implication for further research is the replication of this study with greater sampling diversity. The emergent themes of this study would be important to compare with studies using a participant population representing more diverse regional locations, including urban, rural, and remote locations; participants who graduated from various Faculties and Schools of Social Work with BSW, MSW, and PhDs; Aboriginal social workers representing more criminal justice client experience; and participants with professional roles ranging from front line, to managerial, to academic.

Table 9.3. Implications for Social Work (SW) Research

Personal	Cultural	Structural
• Research replication with sampling diversity: ⌖ geographical regions ⌖ academics, managers, front line SW ⌖ criminal justice experience ⌖ BSW, MSW, PhD • supports as anti-structural violence • motivations for choosing SW • specific exploration of themes	• "structural anti-violence" • SW attitudes of clients	• system navigation knowledge • client feedback of SW • IE text analysis of SW activities • SW use and application of risk thinking and risk assessments in child welfare and criminal justice settings • SW activities which act in opposition to structural violence and/or as resistance to neo-liberalism • reflexive research on social work practice and scholarship • decolonizing SW

Beyond replication (see Table 9.3), additional research arising from this study includes the exploration of specific themes and particularly how current supports to Aboriginal social work students and colleagues do or do not act as antidotes to previously

experienced harm. Consequently, the concept of anti-structural violence has implications for further examination within the culture of social work research. In particular, how our helpful interventions would carry a more significant political and social justice charge. Similarly, the attitudes that social work holds about clients is an important area for study to understand the inconsistency between our professional values and our actual practices.

On a structural level, researching the system navigation knowledge of both clients and workers is essential in furthering our abilities to change colonial systems and processes. This requires increased attention to what clients experience from social workers and increased utilization of text analysis of social work activities. This study calls for future research into how social workers use and apply risk thinking and risk assessments in child welfare and criminal justice settings and the particular social work activities that act in opposition to structural violence and/or as resistance to neo-liberalism. As such, the overriding research implication of this study suggests taking a more reflexive research gaze in decolonizing social work practice and scholarship.

Conclusion

Child welfare and criminal justice overrepresentation rates for Aboriginal peoples—how do we begin to change something so big? I have heard too frequently among my professional peers rates of overrepresentation referenced as though they are an unquestionable, non-“deconstructable” reality, a platform *from* which to launch social work interventions. And, I have heard the outcomes experienced by Aboriginal peoples described as unfortunate, unavoidable, almost par-for-the-course consequences. I cannot help but be reminded of similar sentiments echoed in government writings[146] legitimizing residential schools and their high mortality rates.

While rates of overrepresentation cannot, with any resemblance of social justice alliance, be traced solely to individual pathology manifested as neglectful parenting or

criminal inclinations, too often, our social work interventions with Aboriginal peoples appear to do just that. We work with Aboriginal peoples as though they are both the source of and solution to explaining why they are so overrepresented in both systems. Conceivably, blaming and focusing only on changing individuals *appears* easier, appears simpler, or appears more manageable than addressing seemingly insurmountable structural origins underlying these rates of overrepresentation. The costs of maintaining these simplified illusions, however, are the complex harms experienced by Aboriginal peoples by way of structural violence and contemporary colonizing outcomes.

Perhaps the complexity of this issue is both its challenge and its solution. If multifaceted processes can be understood to have created these overrepresentation rates, then we can also deconstruct these developments and make use of these many points from which to affect change. This study has identified some of the many routes from which to affect this change. These processes involve social workers and our roles in their reproduction, as well as, their obsolescence. When we understand the outcomes that Aboriginal peoples experience as a result of their involvement with child welfare and criminal justice systems as harms, we may take a more invested stance in ensuring *we* do not harm our clients. When we make the connections between neo-liberal ideology and crime control agendas as indicators of dangerous states, we may become more inclined to educate our peers and communities about the violence inherent in policies veiled in sheep's clothing. When we understand how the social machinery of oppression requires social workers to take invasive and scrutinizing roles as the eyes and ears of the state, we may reflect how our professional mores of empowerment and social justice require our stewardship now more than ever.

This study offered a unique reflection of social work practice from the eyes of Aboriginal colleagues who once were clients and from that, presented important implications for social work practice, education, and research. As participants of this study so steadfastly

articulated, survivors of child welfare and criminal justice systems have much to offer social work with which to create decolonizing and structurally anti-violent change.

APPENDIX A - Approval Certificate

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA | OFFICE OF RESEARCH SERVICES
Office of the Vice-President (Research)

CTC Building
208 - 194 Dafoe Road
Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N2
Fax (204) 269-7173
www.umanitoba.ca/research

APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

May 19, 2010

TO: **Juliana West** **(R. Mullaly- Advisor)**
Principal Investigator

FROM: **Bruce Tefft, Chair**
Psychology/Sociology Research Ethics Board (PSREB)

Re: **Protocol #P2010:032**
"Talking to Aboriginal Social Workers about the Social Workers they experienced as a result of their own child welfare and/or criminal justice involvement"

Please be advised that your above-referenced protocol, as revised, has received human ethics approval by the **Psychology/Sociology Research Ethics Board**, which is organized and operates according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement. This approval has been issued based on your agreement with the change(s) to your original protocol required by the PSREB. It is the researcher's responsibility to comply with any copyright requirements. This approval is valid for one year only.

Any significant changes of the protocol and/or informed consent form should be reported to the Human Ethics Secretariat in advance of implementation of such changes.

Please note:

- **if you have funds pending human ethics approval, the auditor requires that you submit a copy of this Approval Certificate to in the Office of Research Services, (e-mail @umanitoba.ca, or fax 261- , including the Sponsor name, before your account can be opened.**

- **if you have received multi-year funding for this research, responsibility lies with you to apply for and obtain Renewal Approval at the expiry of the initial one-year approval; otherwise the account will be locked.**

The Research Ethics Board requests a final report for your study (available at: http://umanitoba.ca/research/ors/ethics/ors_ethics_human_REB_forms_guidelines.html**) in order to be in compliance with Tri-Council Guidelines.**

Bringing Research to Life

Appendix B - Recruitment Poster

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA | Faculty of Social Work

521 Tier Building
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada R3T 2N2
Telephone (204) 474-7050
Fax (204) 474-7594
Social_Work@UManitoba.CA

Are you an **Aboriginal social worker** or **Aboriginal social work student*** who was a child/youth in the **child welfare system?** Or a youth or adult in the **criminal justice system**? If so, I am interested in hearing about **your experience with social workers.**

Since you have important insider expertise, I am interested in hearing about:
your experience with social workers,
why you became a social worker,
the barriers and supports you encountered while becoming a social worker, and
how your lived experience influences your social work practice.

As a social worker completing my Ph.D. at the University of Manitoba, I am a student researcher and I would love to chat with you for 1 ½ to 2 hours at a time and location of your convenience. A small honorarium will be provided as a thank you for your time. If you are willing I would also like your feedback on the transcript of your interview which contains some initial results.

Everything you tell me is confidential and will stay that way. Anything you tell me is completely voluntary - you don't have to tell me anything that makes you uncomfortable and you can quit at any time. I will not use any real names or recognizable details from interviews in my final written report.

If you are interested in being interviewed,
please call me, Juliana West, at XXX-XXXX,
or email me at @cc.umanitoba.ca
and we can chat about setting up an interview time.

This research has been approved by the Psychology/Sociology Research Ethics Board (PSREB). Any concerns or complaints about this project may be shared directly with me, or you can contact my supervisor Dr. Robert Mullaly, Faculty of Social Work, University of Manitoba at mullalyr@ms.umanitoba.ca, or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122 or Margaret_Bowman@umanitoba.ca.

*Current students registered in Summer 2010 session SWRK 4210 A01 and A02 taught at the Fort Garry Campus are not eligible due to the researcher of this study and the instructor of the course being the same person.

Appendix C – Recruitment Script

Thank you for replying to my call for research participants. My name is Juliana West and I am conducting research for my doctoral dissertation with the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Manitoba under the supervision of Dr. Robert Mullaly. I am interested in interviewing Aboriginal social workers and/or Aboriginal social work students who have had experience in child welfare and/or criminal justice systems. I am interested in hearing about the experience they have had with social workers, why they became a social worker, the supports and barriers they encountered in becoming a social workers, and any implications their experience has had on how they do social work. I would also like to get their feedback on the transcripts from the interviews and my initial findings from their transcript. I will also be offering a small honorarium in appreciation of your time. I would like to ask you a couple of questions to see if you meet the research criteria.

Are you a current student taking SWRK 4120 A01 or A02 in the Summer Session at the Fort Garry Campus?
- If yes – thank you for your interest but my research criteria does not fit your experience.
- If no - Are you a past student of mine?
  - If no – continue with script.
  - If yes – Since I am the only researcher in this study, you are under no obligation to continue and you may withdraw without penalty and everything you tell me is confidential. Do you still wish to participate?
    - If no - thank you for your interest. END
    - If yes – continue with script.

Do you identify as an Aboriginal social worker or an Aboriginal social work student?
- If no – thank you very much for your interest but my research criteria does not fit your experience.
- If yes – continue with script.

Were you a child or youth in the child welfare system and/or were you a youth or adult in the criminal justice system?
- If no - thank you very much for your interest but my research criteria does not fit your experience.
- If yes – continue with script.

Everything you tell me is confidential. I will ask you to please not use your real name or identifiers, or the real names or identifiers of social workers in the interview and I will remove all identifiers in the transcripts and final report in case any are mentioned. You also do not have to answer any questions you do not feel comfortable about and you may withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. The initial interview will last between 1 ½ to 2 hours. Would you like to book an interview time and location that is good for you?
- If no – thank you very much for your interest, if you would like to book at another time, I will wait for you to contact me again.
- If yes –When and where would be good for you?

Appendix D – Counselling Resources

Counselling Resources for Research Participants

If you experience emotional distress as a result of talking about your experiences for this research study and you want to have some additional support, please contact the researcher (Juliana West at 204.xxx.xxxx), the researcher's supervisor (Dr. Bob Mullaly at 506.xxx.xxxx), and/or a counselling agency listed below.

Elizabeth Hill Counselling Center		204.956.6562
Klinic	Intake:	204.784.4059
	Drop In:	204.784.4067
The Family Center		204.947.1401
University of Manitoba Student Counselling and Career Center (University of Manitoba students only)		204.474.8592

Appendix E – Initial Interview Script and Questions

Thank you again for agreeing to speak with me. I have included here the questions I am interested in asking you about. I would also like to remind you prior to starting the interview to not use your own real name or any personal identifiers (such as names of organizations or towns), or the real names or personal identifiers of the social workers you encountered.

Interview Questions

1. Please tell me about your experience with social workers during or as a result of your child welfare/criminal justice involvement. Prompting questions will include:
    a. In which ways did social workers intervene with you?
    b. Please describe the outcomes of these interventions.
    c. What difference did social workers make in your life?

2. Can you tell me why you decided to become a social worker? Prompting questions will include:
    a. Why did you choose this profession?
    b. What do you hope to accomplish as a social worker?
    c. Did your own lived experience of having social workers involved with you in the past influence your decision to pursue social work? If so, how?
    d. Did you own lived experience with child welfare or criminal justice systems influence your goal to become a social worker? If so, how?

3. Given your lived experience of child welfare/criminal justice involvement, please describe what it was like for you to pursue your career as a social worker. Prompting questions will include:
    a. Please describe any barriers and/or supports you encountered in pursuing your career as a social worker.
    b. Please describe any supportive or inhibitive processes you encountered once you decided you wanted to become a social worker?
    c. Please describe any barriers or supports you encountered in integrating your lived experience with your professional career?

4. Given your lived experience of child welfare/criminal justice involvement, please describe any effect this has on your social work practice or how you do social work? Prompting questions will include:
    a. In which ways does your insider knowledge and lived experience of child welfare and/or criminal justice processes influence your own social work practice?
    b. In which ways does your insider knowledge influence your effectiveness as a social worker?

Appendix F – Participant Demographic Information

Please provide a fictitious first name by which you can be quoted:_____________________

What is your gender? ☐ Female ☐ Male ☐ Transgendered

How old are you? ____

Were you a child or youth in the child welfare system? ☐ Yes ☐ No
How many years were you in the system? ________
Where? (Cities, Communities, Provinces?) _______________________________
How many social workers did you have contact with? _________

Were you a youth or adult in the criminal justice system? ☐ Yes ☐ No
How many years were you in the system? ________
Where? (Cities, Communities, Provinces?) ______________________________
How many social workers did you have contact with? _________

What kinds of social work roles have you had?	**Currently ✓**	**# of years you are doing this**	**Previously ✓**	**# of years you did this**
Student (Degree__________)				
Direct service social worker				
Management social worker				
Policy/ research social worker				
University educator				
Community social worker				
Basic needs				
Substance use				
Mental health				
Abuse				
Community building				
Other: ________________				
Government social worker				
Child welfare				
Criminal Justice				
Income Support				
Hospital				
Other: _______________				
Other: __________________				
Other: __________________				

Appendix G – Script Soliciting Feedback on Transcript and Initial Findings

Thank you for sharing your experiences with me. Once I listen to your interview again and read the transcripts of your interview, I will write a one to two page point form summary of my initial findings from your interview. These initial findings will be the themes that I understood from your answers to my questions. May I send you a copy of your transcripts and my initial findings for your interest?

- If no – thank you very much for your participation. END
- If yes – Would you be interested in meeting again for about 30 to 60 minutes to discuss any changes you want made to your transcripts and offer any feedback about my initial findings that I heard in your interview?
  - If no- Would you be interested in emailing me your feedback instead?
    - If no – How may I send you your transcripts and my initial findings?
    - If yes – I will email you your transcripts and my initial findings. May I have a email address that I can send you these documents?
  - If yes – Is it ok for me to email you your transcripts and my initial findings? May I have a email address that I can send you these documents?

Appendix H – Script for Follow-up Interview

Thank you so much for taking the time to review your transcripts and my initial ideas about themes that came out of your interview.

1. Do you have any changes you want me to make to your transcripts?

2. What are your thoughts about the initial themes that I drew out of your interview?
    a. Do you see any themes that I missed?
    b. Were there any themes that I pulled out that you do not agree with?
    c. Are there any themes that you see as being more important than others?

3. Do you have any additional comments or thoughts you want to share with me, as a result of reviewing your transcripts and the initial themes, regarding your experience with social workers, your experience of becoming a social worker or how you yourself do social work practice?

Appendix I – List of Aboriginal Agencies

Aboriginal Health and Wellness Centre of Winnipeg Inc.
Animikii Ozoson CFS
Anishinaabe Child & Family Services, Inc
Awasis Agency
Cree Nation Child & Family Caring Agency
Dakota Ojibway Child & Family Services
Dakota Ojibway Tribal Council Housing Authority Inc.
EYAA-KEEN Centre Inc.
First Nations of Northern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority
First Nations of Southern Manitoba Child and Family Service Authority
Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin Inc.
Indian Metis Friendship Centre
Intertribal Child & Family Services, Inc
Island Lake First Nation Family Services
Kanata Housing Kekinan Centre Inc.
Ka Ni Kanichihk
Ka Ni Kanichihk Eagle's Nest
Kinew Housing Corporation
Kinisao Sipi Minosowin
Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre Inc.
Metis Child and Family Service Authority
Native Addictions Council of Manitoba
Native Women's Transition Centre
Ndinawe Youth Resource Centre
Ndinwemaaganag Endaawaad
Ndinwemaaganag Endaawaad: Second Stage
Neah Kee Papa
New Directions
Payuk Inter-Tribal Housing Co-op
Pequis Child & Family Services
Sagkeeng Child & Family Services, In
Sandy Bay CFS Inc.
Southeast Child & Family Services, Inc
Stoney Child and Family Services
West Region Child & Family Services, Inc

Appendix J – Introduction Letter to Aboriginal Agencies

Faculty of Social Work

521 Tier Building
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada R3T 2N2
Telephone (204) 474-7050
Fax (204) 474-7594
Social_Work@UManitoba.CA

Dear Executive Director,

I am a doctoral student conducting my Ph.D. research study called "Talking to Aboriginal social workers about the social workers they experienced as a result of any child welfare and/or criminal justice involvement". I would very much appreciate your help in sharing my recruitment poster with your contacts. I plan to interview Aboriginal social workers about their experiences with social workers as a result of any child welfare and/or criminal justice involvement they may have experienced. I am also interested in hearing about why they wanted to become a social worker, any supports and barriers they encountered in becoming a social worker as a result of their own lived experience, as well as how their lived experience has influenced how they do social work as professionals. All interviews will be completely confidential and the final report will not contain any personal or organizational identifiers. In addition, participants will not be required to answer any questions they do not feel comfortable with and can withdraw from the study at any time without consequences.

I am asking you, if you are agreeable, to forward my attached recruitment poster to your contacts via email and/ or put up my poster on your bulletin board. The final report will be available by June 2011 and I would be happy to supply you with an electronic copy if you are interested.

This research has been approved by the Psychology/Sociology Research Ethics Board (PSREB). Any concerns or complaints about this project may be shared directly with me at xxx.xxxx @umanitoba.ca, or you can contact my supervisor Dr. Robert Mullaly, Faculty of Social Work, University of Manitoba at mullalyr@ms.umanitoba.ca, or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122 or Margaret_Bowman@umanitoba.ca.

I am happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you and Meegwich!

Yours sincerely,

Juliana West

Juliana West MSW, PhD Candidate, RSW

Appendix K – Introduction Letter to Faculty of Social Work

Dr. Harvy Frankel
Dean, Faculty of Social Work
University of Manitoba

Dear Dr. Frankel,

I am a doctoral student in the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Manitoba conducting my Ph.D. research study called "Talking to Aboriginal social workers about the social workers they experienced as a result of their own child welfare and/or criminal justice involvement". I would very much appreciate your help in sharing my recruitment poster with your contacts, your faculty, your students and your campuses. I plan to interview Aboriginal social workers and Aboriginal social work students about their experiences with social workers as a result of any child welfare and/or criminal justice they may have experienced. I am also interested in hearing about why they wanted to become a social worker, any supports and barriers they encountered in becoming a social worker as a result of their own lived experience, as well as how their lived experience has influenced how they do social work as professionals. All interviews will be completely confidential and the final report will not contain any personal or organizational identifiers. In addition, participants will not be required to answer any questions they do not feel comfortable with and can withdraw from the study at any time without consequences.

I am asking you, if you are agreeable, to forward my attached recruitment poster to your contacts via email and/ or put up my poster on your bulletin board. The final report will be available by June 2011 and I would be happy to supply you with an electronic copy if you are interested.

This research has been approved by the Psychology/Sociology Research Ethics Board (PSREB). Any concerns or complaints about this project may be shared directly with me at xxx-xxxx, @umanitoba.ca, or you can contact my supervisor Dr. Robert Mullaly, Faculty of Social Work, University of Manitoba at mullalyr@ms.umanitoba.ca, or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122 or Margaret_Bowman@umanitoba.ca.

I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Yours sincerely,

Juliana West
Juliana West MSW, PhD Candidate, RSW

Appendix L – Consent Form

Faculty of Social Work

521 Tier Building
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada R3T 2N2
Telephone (204) 474-7050
Fax (204) 474-7594
Social_Work@UManitoba.CA

Participant Consent Form

Researcher: Juliana West, Ph. D. Candidate in the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Manitoba j@cc.umanitoba.ca 204.xxx.xxxx.
Supervisor: Dr Robert Mullaly mullalyr@ms.umanitoba.ca 506.xxx.xxxx.

Research Project Title: Talking to Aboriginal social workers about the social workers they experienced as a result of their own child welfare and/or criminal justice involvement.

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Description of Research: I want to interview 10 to 15 Aboriginal social workers or Aboriginal social work students about their experience with social workers. Specifically I am interested in speaking with Aboriginal social workers or Aboriginal social work students who, as a result of their own lived experience as either a child or youth taken into the child welfare system and/or as a youth or adult involved in the criminal justice system, had contact with social workers. In particular, I am interested in hearing about your experience with social workers, why you wanted to become a social worker, the barriers and supports you encountered while becoming a social worker, and how your lived experience influences your social work practice.

Description of Procedures: You will have an initial interview at a time and location of your choice that will last between 1 ½ to 2 hours. The interview will be semi-structured based on the questions that you will receive in advance with this form. The interviews will be digitally recorded and I may take notes to refresh my memory. Afterwards, I will transcribe the interviews and put together some initial findings. You will have the opportunity to review your own transcript as well as the initial findings from your interview. This is optional and could take 30 to 60 minutes of your time. You will also be offered the opportunity to have a second brief follow-up interview to offer feedback about those findings and your transcripts, including the opportunity to edit your transcripts if you so desire. This follow-up interview is also optional and will take between 30 to 60 minutes. All recordings, notes and transcripts will be stored in a locked cabinet and/or password protected computer in my home office, where only I have access to this office. Interviews will begin in May 2010 and the final report will be completed by June 2011 and will be made available to you if you indicate you want a copy. Recordings will be destroyed by June 2011 and transcripts will be destroyed by June 2015. The transcripts will be used as data for my doctoral thesis which may then also result in articles published from this thesis.

Confidentiality: Your confidentiality will be carefully maintained. I will remind you at the start of interview not to use your own real name or any personal identifiers or the real names or personal identifiers of the social workers you encountered. In addition, I will remove all identifiers from the transcripts in case any were recorded. You will be asked to create a fictitious first name for yourself for the purpose of assigning direct quotations in the final report. Your consent forms and contact information will be assigned a number and stored separately in a locked filing cabinet and/or password protected computer. Your transcript will be identified by that number and your chosen fictitious name and will be stored separately from the consent files and contact information. In this way you will not be identifiable from your transcript or from any reference you make that I include in the final report. Only I and my supervisor (if requested) will have access to your information.

Description of Risk: This study will ask you about your experiences with social workers as a result of your own personal experience with child welfare and/or criminal justice involvement. As such, this may invoke some emotional stress about recalling painful events in your life. This risk is however perhaps reduced as you since you are either a professional social worker or a social work student and through your training and coursework, you will have already likely thought about and processed your own experiences. You will, however, be provided with a list of counseling resources (attached to your copy of this consent form) to access in the event that the content of the interviews causes you distress.

Confidentiality is of utmost importance as you may have had criminal justice involvement which may put you in a vulnerable position with your employer and/or the school of social work. While the school of social work requires a criminal record check of all students, as do many employers, you may have had criminal justice involvement for which you were not charged and would therefore not show up on a criminal record check. This research however does not ask you about the particulars of your criminal justice involvement aside from the length of time you were involved with the criminal justice system and as such does not ask you to reveal any details. In addition, as I am not a peace officer, I am not under any obligation to report on past criminal activity if disclosed. As a registered social worker, I am only required to report disclosures from research participants of "imminent serious harm on self or others", as per sections 63, 66 and 72 of the 2007 Alberta College of Social Workers Standards of Practice. Similarly, as a social work faculty instructor, I abide by the 2005 Canadian Association of Social Workers Guidelines for Ethical Practice and under section 1.5 only report to "prevent serious, foreseeable, and imminent harm to a client or others". As such, I am not required to report disclosures of previous criminal activity either as a social work researcher, or as a researcher from the Faculty of Social Work.

Feedback: At the end of this interview, I will provide you with an opportunity to debrief and provide and receive feedback about the interview process. In addition I will provide you with a one page summary about how this research fits within contemporary social work practice with Aboriginal peoples. You also will have the opportunity to participate in a brief follow-up interview to provide feedback to me on your transcripts and my initial findings from your transcripts.

Benefits to Participating: As soon as this consent form is signed and prior to beginning the interview a $20 coffee locale gift card will be given to you as a thank you for your much appreciated participation. While this in no way fairly compensates you for your time and sharing, it is my acknowledgement of your contribution. In addition, if you are interested, I would be happy to give you a copy of my final report. Other benefits for participating include being able to offer valuable information that can aid the social work profession in improving its practice, in being able to reframe your lived experience as a strength and source of insider expertise, and being able to be a part of research that values lived experience as an important source of

professional social work development.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation by contacting Juliana West at 204. or Dr Robert Mullaly at 506.

This research has been approved by the Psychology and Sociology Research Ethics Board of the University of Manitoba. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122 or email margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Participant's Signature ________________________ Date ____________

Researcher's Signature ________________________ Date ____________

☐ I would like to review the researcher's initial findings and the transcript of my interview.

☐ I would like to set up a second brief follow-up interview to offer feedback to the researcher on this.

☐ I would like a copy of the final report sent to my email: ______________________________ or sent to this address:

____

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Appendix M - Debriefing Script

This brings us to the end of the interview questions I had. Do you have any questions or comments for me about this process before I explain a bit more?

I also want to ask you if in sharing your experiences with me, if this has caused you distress where you would like to talk about this now? I want to encourage you if you want to talk about this with my supervisor or with a counselor, please feel free to do so and I have included a resource list attached to your copy of the informed consent.

Thank you so much for participating in this interview. In this interview I asked you to share with me your experience of the social workers you encountered as a result of your own child welfare and/or criminal justice involvement. I also asked you about why you wanted to become a social worker, the supports and barriers you experienced in becoming a social worker with the lived experience of system involvement and I asked you about what difference your lived experience has on your own social work practice.

This study is part of a larger area I am interested in, namely the role that social work plays in the contemporary colonization of Aboriginal people in Canada. There is by now considerable evidence that Aboriginal peoples are overrepresented in both the child welfare and criminal justice systems in Canada; systems that have been acknowledged as collaborators of contemporary colonization. In addition, there is evidence that social work plays a contributing factor in funneling Aboriginal peoples into these systems. What has not been explored, however, is the role social work may play in the contemporary colonization of Aboriginal peoples in Canada through our mutual involvement in child welfare and criminal justice systems and interventions. Your participation and sharing your experience will help me to generate ideas and suggestions about what social work is doing well and about what social work needs to change and do differently in order to make sure that fewer Aboriginal people end up being caught up in systems of control.

Thank you so much for your sharing your experience with me. Meegwich!

Appendix N- Participant Consent Form for Optional Follow-up Interview

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA | Faculty of Social Work

521 Tier Building
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada R3T 2N2
Telephone (204) 474-7050
Fax (204) 474-7594
Social_Work@UManitoba.CA

Participant Consent Form for Optional Follow-up Interview

Researcher: Juliana West, Ph. D. Candidate in the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Manitoba @cc.umanitoba.ca 204.xxx.xxxx.
Supervisor: Dr Robert Mullaly mullalyr@ms.umanitoba.ca 506.xxx.xxxx

Research Project Title: Talking to Aboriginal social workers about the social workers they experienced as a result of their own child welfare and/or criminal justice involvement.

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Description of Research: I want to interview 10 to 15 Aboriginal social workers or Aboriginal social work students about changes you may have for the transcripts of you interview with me as well as any feedback you may have on my initial findings (themes) I drew out of your interview and transcripts. In your previous interview with me, I was interested in speaking with Aboriginal social workers or Aboriginal social work students who, as a result of their own lived experience as either a child or youth taken into the child welfare system and/or as a youth or adult involved in the criminal justice system, had contact with social workers. In particular, I was interested in hearing about your experience with social workers, why you wanted to become a social worker, the barriers and supports you encountered while becoming a social worker, and how your lived experience influences your social work practice. This follow-up interview is an optional opportunity for you to give me feedback to make sure I understood you correctly.

Description of Procedures: As a result of you completely an initial interview with me, this optional follow-up interview will give you an opportunity to offer feedback about those findings and your transcripts, including the opportunity to edit your transcripts if you so desire. This follow-up interview will take between 30 to 60 minutes. All recordings, notes and transcripts will be stored in a locked cabinet and/or password protected computer in my home office, where only I have access to this office. Interviews will begin in May 2010 and the final report will be completed by June 2011 and will be made available to you if you indicate you want a copy. Recordings will be destroyed by June 2011 and transcripts will be destroyed by June 2015. The transcripts will be used as data for my doctoral thesis which may then also result in articles published from this thesis.

Confidentiality: Your confidentiality will be carefully maintained. I will remind you at the start of interview not to use your own real name or any personal identifiers or the real names or personal identifiers of the social workers you encountered. In addition, I will remove all identifiers

from the transcripts in case any were recorded. You will be asked to create a fictitious first name for yourself for the purpose of assigning direct quotations in the final report. Your consent forms and contact information will be assigned a number and stored separately in a locked filing cabinet and/or password protected computer. Your transcript will be identified by that number and your chosen fictitious name and will be stored separately from the consent files and contact information. In this way you will not be identifiable from your transcript or from any reference you make that I include in the final report. Only I and my supervisor (if requested) will have access to your information.

Description of Risk: This study will ask you about your experiences with social workers as a result of your own personal experience with child welfare and/or criminal justice involvement. As such, this may invoke some emotional stress about recalling painful events in your life. This risk is however perhaps reduced as you since you are either a professional social worker or a social work student and through your training and coursework, you will have already likely thought about and processed your own experiences. You will, however, be provided with a list of counseling resources (attached to your copy of this consent form) to access in the event that the content of the interviews causes you distress.

Confidentiality is of utmost importance as you may have had criminal justice involvement which may put you in a vulnerable position with your employer and/or the school of social work. While the school of social work requires a criminal record check of all students, as do many employers, you may have had criminal justice involvement for which you were not charged and would therefore not show up on a criminal record check. This research however does not ask you about the particulars of your criminal justice involvement aside from the length of time you were involved with the criminal justice system and as such does not ask you to reveal any details. In addition, as I am not a peace officer, I am not under any obligation to report on past criminal activity if disclosed. As a registered social worker, I am only required to report disclosures from research participants of "imminent serious harm on self or others", as per sections 63, 66 and 72 of the 2007 Alberta College of Social Workers Standards of Practice. Similarly, as a social work faculty instructor, I abide by the 2005 Canadian Association of Social Workers Guidelines for Ethical Practice and under section 1.5 only report to "prevent serious, foreseeable, and imminent harm to a client or others". As such, I am not required to report disclosures of previous criminal activity either as a social work researcher, or as a researcher from the Faculty of Social Work.

Feedback: At the end of this interview, I will provide you with an opportunity to debrief and provide and receive feedback about the interview process.

Benefits to Participating: If you are interested, I would be happy to give you a copy of my final report. Other benefits for participating include being able to offer valuable information that can aid the social work profession in improving its practice, in being able to reframe your lived experience as a strength and source of insider expertise, and being able to be a part of research that values lived experience as an important source of professional social work development.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation by contacting Juliana West at 204 or Dr Robert Mullaly at 506 .

This research has been approved by the Psychology and Sociology Research Ethics Board of the University of Manitoba. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122 or email margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Participant's Signature _______________________ Date ____________

Researcher's Signature _______________________ Date ____________

☐ I would like a copy of the final report sent to my email: ______________________________
or sent to this address:

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ENDNOTES

[1] The Sixties Scoop, coined by Patrick Johnston (1983), author of *Native Children and the Child Welfare System*, refers to the Canadian practice during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s of apprehending high numbers of Aboriginal children from their families and communities and fostering or adopting them out not only into non-Aboriginal families but often out of their home province and out of Canada.

[2] "The inquiry, which began in March 2011, was tasked with examining the circumstances surrounding the death of Phoenix Sinclair," a five year old Aboriginal girl, whose murder was undiscovered for several months, was failed by the Manitoba child welfare system. http://www.phoenixsinclairinquiry.ca/index.html

[3] "Headingley Correctional Centre (HCC) is located on Highway #1 just west of Headingley on 20 acres of land beside the Assiniboine River. It is a minimum, medium and maximum security facility for up to 458 adult males. HCC has a domestic violence unit and three physically separate units--the Community Release Unit, Annex A for people remanded in custody and the Assiniboine Treatment Centre for sex offenders." http://cc.bingj.com/cache.aspx?q=manitoba+
youth+center&d=4601748375536431&mkt=en-CA&setlang=en-CA&w=9cdecd5c,2335edaf

[4] Neve and Pate (2005) argue racialized women are the fastest growing prison population due to neo-liberal policies. "The 'war on drugs'; evisceration of education, health, and other social support services; and 'gender-neutral' zero tolerance policies have contributed significantly to this phenomenon" (p. 19).

[5] According to Article 2.1 of the Manitoba Child and Family Services Act, the "best interests of the child" is legislated as:

> "The best interests of the child shall be the paramount consideration of the director, an authority, the children's advocate, an agency and a court in all proceedings under this Act affecting a child, other than proceedings to determine whether a child is in need of protection, and in determining best interests the child's safety and security shall be the primary considerations. After that, all other relevant matters shall be considered, including:
>
> > (a) the child's opportunity to have a parent-child relationship as a wanted and needed member within a family structure;
> > (b) the mental, emotional, physical and educational needs of the child and the appropriate care or treatment, or both, to meet such needs;
> > (c) the child's mental, emotional and physical stage of development;
> > (d) the child's sense of continuity and need for permanency with the least possible disruption;
> > (e) the merits and the risks of any plan proposed by the agency that would be caring for the child compared with the merits and the risks of the child returning to or remaining within the family;
> > (f) the views and preferences of the child where they can reasonably be ascertained;
> > (g) the effect upon the child of any delay in the final disposition of the proceedings; and
> > (h) the child's cultural, linguistic, racial and religious heritage.
> > "http://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/statutes/ccsm/c080e.php

[6] Criminalization refers to the process involved in creating the social reality of crime involving labelling procedures and 'discovering' criminals. In particular, it is how "state authorities, media and citizen discourse define particular groups and practices as criminal, with prejudicial consequences" (Schneider & Schneider, 2008, p. 351).

[7] Marginalization refers to the process of exclusion from meaningful participation in social, economic, and political life. As Young (1990) warns, marginalization is the most dangerous form of oppression, as whole groups can experience material deprivation that can result in death.

[8] This political control has historical and contemporary congruence. For example, Samuelson & Monture-Angus (2002) argue that the Royal Proclamation Act of 1763 decreed the establishment of large tracts or reserves that in essence became 'prison camps' (p. 159).

[9] For instance the 1876 "Incitement of Indians to Riot Act included two to six months imprisonment for the celebration of the Potlatch – the central political-economic-spiritual mechanism of the west-coast Native traditions" (Neu & Therrien, 2003, p. 86). The Sundance, a central ceremony for Cree and Anishinaabe peoples, was also criminalized (Milloy, 1999).

[10] The 1927 amendment to the Indian Act made it illegal for Aboriginal peoples to form national political organizations (Samuelson & Monture-Angus, 2002).

[11] Adams (1999) explains that Aboriginal peoples have been *political prisoners* arising from their resistance to colonization, from the 'psychological warfare' used in the treatment of Louis Riel (p. 140) to the more recent imprisonment of Benjamin Nottaway, an Algonquin leader of Barriere Lake, Quebec who was imprisoned for leading highway blockades in 2008 (Friesen, 2008).

[12] Adams (1989) contends that the Canadian government acts for the interests of the ruling class where "all courts and laws are under the control of the ruling-class government and are changed or cancelled to suit their own interests" (p. 172).

[13] Mortality rates in residential schools were astronomical, according to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 50% of children died (Canada, 1991). The residential school system was perceived as a failure not for mortality rates, but for failing to provide the educational outcomes and preparation for trades it had promised to produce (Armitage, 1993a).

[14] A 1980 precedent setting bylaw challenge ensured Spallumcheen Band's legislative and administrative control over their child welfare services; similar by-law challenges from other Bands have been consistently defeated (Bennett, n.d.).

[15] Similar to Schneider and Schneider (2008) definition of criminalization, child welfarization is used here to refer to the processes involved in identifying and reproducing clients of child welfare systems.

[16] Figueira-McDonough (1993) suggested the goals of a discipline define its uniqueness and Wakefield (1988a, 1988b) identified the central value for social work was social justice. Building on Wakefield's work, Swenson (1998) agreed that that social justice makes social work unique, even more so than the person-in-environment perspective, as other professions also consider context (law, education, medicine).

[17] Thirty-five years ago Cloward and Piven (1977) had already suggested that contrary to dismantling marginalization, mainstream social work, by being entrenched in prominent social systems such as public housing, education, health, welfare and justice, has instead enhanced marginalization by keeping individuals accessing the system, dependent on it. In its place, Cloward and Piven maintain that social work should shift its focus from intervening solely with client (mal) function, to achieving greater awareness in regards to how systems threaten the well-being of the individual

[18] Anastas and Congress (1999) surveyed 34 social work PhD programs to identify underlying philosophical research frameworks. They found that although a variety of frameworks were included, the main focus was on logical positivism, premising constructs of linear causality, quantitative methodology and a belief that research is value free, or in other words, "neutral." The authors suggest that in order for social work research to enhance social justice, and to allow the voices of those silenced to be heard, there should be more focus on qualitative, case study, participatory research methods. This article peaked my curiosity about stated research interests for Canadian social work academics.

[19] Longres and Scanlon (2001) reviewed a leading social work research faculty in the United States, examining text material, course curricula and staff familiarity with social justice. Although faculty staff

stated social justice was important, a social justice forte was not concretely demonstrated. The twelve faculty members interviewed identified themselves as either instructing research or as actively involved in research projects. Longres and Scanlon found faculty members struggled in conceptualizing social justice and that although members stated social justice was important, they felt it did not need to be stated explicitly! This ambiguity was evidenced in both the required research texts as well as the course curricula. Ten research texts were reviewed: none identified social justice in the index, none offered a systemic discussion of social justice, and consistently "very little direct attention to justice as a goal of research" was apparent (p. 450). As well, a review of undergraduate, MSW and doctoral research syllabi revealed no reference to "social justice." Longres and Scanlon found faculty members described a perceived tension between pursuing social justice research and maintaining objectivity or scientific rigour. In addition, participants indicated the necessity of maintaining funding interests--interests that could be alienated by appearing "political" or biased.

[20] Curious about research interests for Canadian social work academics, I completed in 2006 a cursory online review of Canadian Faculties or Schools of Social Work Thirty-five schools/faculties of social work were accredited through the Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work. An online search of these schools indicated 26 offering programs in English. Of the 26 schools, 16 or 62% had "social justice" in their mission statements. I examined the six English language Canadian doctoral programs that were offered at the time. Four of the faculties (or 66%) used "social justice" in their mission statements. One-hundred-fifty-one faculty members in total were listed in the six schools of social work offering doctoral programs. Of the 151, only six faculty members or four percent, included a clearly stated "social justice" in their research interests. Although some faculty indicated areas of interests that could be construed as social justice pursuits (such as international social development) I did not count them. Was this an issue of syntax or one of substance? While it appears that the majority of social work schools articulate social justice in their mission statements, it remains questionable how social justice is articulated, operationalized, or demonstrated in faculty members' areas of expertise.

[21] In a review of two social work education journals (*The Journal of Social Work Education and Social Work Education*), Karger and Hernandez (2004) found 167 articles published in 2001 and 2002. Of those, only 19 or 11% directly addressed issues of diversity and social justice. Wondering if 2001/2002 were an anomaly, I completed a February 20, 2011 *Academic Search Premier* online database search for "social justice" in the same two journals for 2003/2004 and 2009/2010. I found only one percent and five percent respectively[21] of articles mentioned social justice. In order to determine if 2001/2002 were an anomaly, I completed a February 20, 2011 online search for "social justice" in the same two journals for 2003 and 2004 using. The 2003/2004 search came up with three hits out of a total of 230 articles: three articles where social justice was mentioned in the abstract, two articles where it was noted in the subject terms, but no articles in which social justice appeared in the title or key words. The same search was conducted for the years 2009 and 2010. This search came up with 13 hits out of a total of 268 articles: nine articles where social justice was noted in the abstract, seven articles where it was mentioned in the subject terms, four articles in which social justice appeared in the key words, and one article where it read in the title. At most, it would appear that social justice themes comprise only five percent of recent social work education articles; at worst, it appears that the percentage is decreasing--five percent of 2009/2010 articles compared with eleven percent in 2001/2002. Even if one were to argue that this search for 'social justice' resulted in issues of syntax rather than substance (terms such as 'equity' could imply a similar focus), the term specifically used within our professional mandate (social justice), is curiously lacking within two leading professional education journals.

[22] Pollack (2004) cites an example of how women in Canada, displaying resistance to incarceration and responding with anger and refusal to participate in programs are often given a Borderline Personality Disorder diagnosis. This diagnosis is especially problematic for women as it is women who are primarily given this diagnosis and this disorder is argued as being untreatable, permanent and unpredictable. Pollack cites the Solicitor General Canada in describing how women's behaviours are seen as evidence not of a chemical imbalance but that of a defective Being:

> Part of the trouble in understanding BPD is that it isn't a disease that can be cured with medication. Instead, it's a problem that permeates all the way down to the person's soul

> and manifests itself in extreme behaviors. It's hard to understand how someone who seems to be functioning well one minute can dissolve a minute later into a desperate, angry basket case (p. 698).

[23] The term *service user* is described by Beresford (2000) to refer to "people who receive or are eligible to receive social work and social care services" (p. 489). While potentially problematic for ascribing a primary status upon individuals, its intention is to describe persons who are at the receiving end of social work activities without suggesting any other nuance.

[24] Arising from the disability and consumer rights movements, user involvement in the social care literature appeared in the late 1980s (Ager et al., 2003; Beresford, 2000) in response to consumerist and democratic movements wanting to have increased control and influence improvement over services received (Molyneux & Irvine, 2004).

[25] As a concept, "social control refers to those processes in a society that support a level of social cohesiveness sufficient for the survival of the society as a recognizable functional unit" (Popple, 1985, p. 572).

[26] Atherton (1969) defines dependency as "a state of being in which one is not able to carry on with the business of living in his culture by use of his own resources, skills, abilities, and knowledge. The dependent person, then, is one who needs resources that enable him to perform legitimate social roles that he is not now performing satisfactorily either in his own judgment or in the judgment of society" (p. 421).

[27] In the 1940s, Blackstock et al., (2007) maintain social workers were strong supporters of the residential school system and lobbied as a profession against the schools closing. When unsuccessful, social workers pushed for child welfare services on reserves and removed ten percent of all Aboriginal children during the Sixties Scoop. The authors argue that the profession is silent on its culpability, and proclamations of ignorance, agency mandates and historical mores, do not explain why this legacy is not a matter of concentrated examination and discussion today.

[28] Structural social work originated in the late 1970s with Maurice Moreau and his colleagues at Carleton University and the University of Montreal and was further developed by Bob Mullaly in the 1990s in his book, *Structural Social Work: Ideology, Theory, and Practice* (1993).

[29]As a key concept within structural social work, Mullaly (2007) notes there is a vital distinction between neo-liberalism and neo-conservativism. Neo-liberalism refers to reform liberalism, where despite capitalism being seen as the most favourable economy, the reduced state must intervene to compensate for market flaws providing citizenship benefits such as residual welfare and education. Neo-conservatism, on the other hand, refers to both an economic and social ideology viewing welfare as the threat to the social fabric. The neo-conservative state protects the market and maintains the traditional self-sufficient law-abiding family as the ideal, and concurrently shifts resources from those in need to those with plenty. Comack (2006) adds this neo-conservative paradigm espouses a get-tough on crime platform resulting in increased policing, criminal justice, and correctional systems. Mullaly (2007) describes Canada's economy as reform liberalism while the United States reflects a neo-conservative ideology. It is also interesting to note that 'neo-liberal' is the term I found most frequently used, suggesting either a purposeful separation of economy and politics, or, that this vital distinction has been muted. In either case, welfarism is seen at best, as a necessary evil, at worst, as a threat to be dismantled.

[30] Mullaly (2010) cautions that critical theory is not *a* theory, but rather a "theory cluster" consisting of multiple and diverse theories subscribing to common principles (p. 18). For example, structural social work, critical criminology, critical race, critical pedagogy, critical discourse analysis, critical legal studies, and critical philosophy are each critical theories. Within this cluster, shared key principles include:

- a critique of positivism and beliefs that knowledge construction is value-free;

- a political intent in their linking of history with current events and the potential for determined social change free from domination and exploitation;
- a structural analysis of domination perpetuated by ideological hegemony and replicated by internalized oppression. Critical theories maintain that human beings are "regulated" by socially constructed cultural forms serving capitalism. These cultural forms, our values, ideas, practices, and so on, are a product of class history and not as a result of divine, natural, or universal forces. A collective awareness, deconstruction, critique, and rejection of these artificial constraints (such as monogamy) can result in our liberation without increasing the restraints on others;
- a belief in a dialectical relationship between structures and personal agency, that structures and systems influence people but people with awareness can also change systems;
- a positionality where social change originates from the private and moves to the public sphere. Avoiding determinism, and instead, supporting personal and collective transformational agency, critical theories maintain that change begins in people's everyday lives; and
- a responsibility for one's own liberation with an adherence to an anti-oppressive process to end domination (Agger, 2006; Mullaly 2010).

[31] While some critical theories focus on a primary source of oppression (such as racism in law analyzed in critical race theory), other critical theories look at an intersectionality of oppressions focused on an issue or population (such as critical criminology and its focus on race, gender, class, and globalization and its effect on criminalization, or structural social work and its inclusion of multiple critical theories and analysis of the intersectionality of multiple oppressions on marginalized populations) (Mullaly 2010).

[32] With its intention to form a critical analysis, challenge notions of the inevitable progress of modernity, positivist science, and capitalism, and offer accessible alternatives to reduce oppression, critical theory was largely influenced by the Frankfurt School and Marxist theory (Kellner, 1989). Augmenting Marx's class-based analysis, critical theory looks at diverse forms of oppression and draws, as well, on the following works:

- Freire (liberation theory) and post-colonial theory (Mullaly, 2010);
- Lyotard, Derrida, Foucault and Heidegger and their critiques of grand narratives or the primacy of one truth (Agger, 2006);
- the dialectic approach to analysis, informed by Adorno, Horkenheimer and Marcuse;
- influences by Habermas (communicative action);
- Western Marxist theory of Lukács (the role of Keynesianism to offset a socialist revolution);
- Gramsci (cultural hegemony);
- Fromm (Marxist social psychology);
- Feminist;
- Queer; and
- postmodern theory (Kellner, 1989).

[33] See for example Bailey, R., & Brake, M. (Ed.). (1976). *Radical social work*. New York: Pantheon Books.

[34] Postmodernity is characterized as a culture of drastic and essential change (Leonard, 1997). It is about globalization and mass information technology affecting at the local level; simulations replacing the social; plurality of dynamic subject positions; a skepticism of positivism and grand theories; a growing Otherness and resistance (Agger, 2006); the malevolence of progress; the localization of multiple realities and locations of power; a celebration of difference; and a focus on discourse (Mullaly, 2007). Conversely, Parton (1996a) describes modernity as:

> the cluster of social, economic and political systems that emerged in the West with Enlightenment. Unlike the pre-modern era, modernity recognized that human order is neither natural nor God-given but is vulnerable and contingent. However, by the development and application of science, nature could be subject to human control (p. 12-13).

Characteristics of modernity include: historicity as progressive, objective central truths, political and economic rationality, and a belief that government could and would coordinate social progress (Parton, 1996a).

[35] Mullaly (2007) maintains that critical postmodern scholarship has significant value for critical forms of social work and that the postmodern critique of modernity has often been misinterpreted as an outright rejection of modernity. Mullaly cautions, however, that postmodernism, despite its focus on multiple realities, tends to overlook that most of the world either does not share its tenets, or uses its tenets for further economic exploitation. Additionally, postmodernism is prone to a-historicity and tends not to account for the continuing intersectional oppressions of many, by a few. By fragmenting the common themes inherent to most social justice causes, postmodernism is in danger of being a "conservative, individualistic and nihilistic doctrine" (p. 219).

[36] Poverty exacerbates this transactional relationship because "poverty can function both as the context in which structural violence flourishes as well as a consequence of structural violence" (James et al., 2003, p. 132). As Pilisik (1998) states:

> Poverty, inequity, social marginality, and domination of resources all produce unneeded suffering and death. These structured patterns are not acts of nature but products of social arrangements, created by people and sanctioned by normative beliefs and practices of culture (p. 198).

[37] As Parsons (2007) propositions, marginalized groups have their power and options predetermined by an imposed structure. The imposed structure is a system of social stratification that sabotages life course wellbeing (Anglin, 1998) and results in not only the inequitable distribution of economic and political resources (Christie, 1997; Galtung, 1969), but also the division of power to decide that distribution and exploitation (Confortini, 2006). In other words, while privileged groups enjoy power and wealth, dominated peoples endure harms, insecurity, dehumanizing conditions, conflict and powerlessness. Inequalities in employment, wealth, housing, education, and discrimination result in a loss of freedoms and the life choices of marginalized peoples being severely curtailed (Gil, 1996).

[38] Gil (1996) suggests fundamental human needs are multi-dimensional and include:

- *"biological–material needs*- stable provision of biological necessities and culture specific life sustaining goods and services*;*
- *social-psychological needs* – meaningful social relations and a sense of belonging to a community, involving mutual respect, acceptance, care, love, and opportunities for self-discovery and emergence of a positive sense of identity;
- *productive-creative needs* – exploring one's world and discovering one's potential by participating in social valued, productive work, in a self-directed manner and in accordance with one's talents and stages of development;
- *security needs* – a sense of trust, based on experience, that one's biological-material, social-psychological, and productive-creative needs can be met regularly, now and in the future;
- *self-actualization needs*--for becoming what one is capable of becoming;
- *spiritual needs* – finding meaning in one's existence in the face of ultimately incomprehensible phenomena as life and death, time and space, and origins and destinations" (pp. 78-79).

[39] Although structural violence is omnipresent, it is people who are poor and from marginalized groups who experience its most harmful outcomes (James et al., 2003).

[40] Oliver (2001) adds the notion of cultural racism as a tool of structural violence and describes it as:

> the systematic manner in which the white majority has established its primary cultural institutions (e.g., education, mass media and religion) to elevate and glorify European physical characteristics, character and achievement and to denigrate the physical characteristics, character and achievement of non-white people (p. 4-5).

As an instrument of structural violence, Oliver offers examples of cultural racism as the loss of historical memory, diminished appreciation for cultural practices, and lack of cultural confidence for African Americans within American society, or the confidence of collective action. He describes the "conspicuous absence of African Americans in history textbooks" (p. 5), resulting in cultural imperialism, rendering a culture invisible while at the same time stereotyping and Othering (Young, 1990). The acceptance of

stereotypes results in “a massive breakdown in empathy across the color line” (p. 6). Oliver also speaks to ‘black on black violence’ occurring as a result of institutional racism (social disorganization resulting from denied equal access) and cultural racism, or the social disorganization arising out of cultural imperialism, compromised cultural integrity and internalized oppression.

[41] Structural violence relies on notions of Othering (Galtung, 1990). As people are exploited they become Othered, as Othered they are further exploited and blamed and deemed dangerous. The process of being Othered includes adjustment to second class status, marginal participation in the economy, and existence on the parameters of society.

[42]In addition to levels, there are also phases of violence. Initiating structural violence, necessary to maintain privileged access to resources and power is often met with reactive counter violence by dominated and exploited groups (Gil, 1996). The ensuing repressive societal violence is then implemented to deter, “control, punish and correct,” and reinforce conformity and submission by focusing on counter violence and ignoring structural violence (p. 81). Reaction to structural violence, by those who are oppressed, can be direct violence or hopelessness, and apathy. Galtung suggests that topdogs prefer governability, stability and apathetic underdogs. Those that are not deemed governable or react with counter violence are labelled the aggressor or dangerous. (Galtung, 1990). In other words, violence exists on levels and as phases: structural violence and resulting harms provide the social strain for direct or reactive counter violence that then is met by repressive societal violence in order to maintain the existing hierarchy (Oliver, 2000). Police violence, as an example, is not only direct violence but also repressive societal violence as “the actions of societal institutions and their agents” are used to maintain existing class and racial hierarchies (p. 14).

[43] While structural violence is often alluded to as discrimination, and cultural violence as prejudice, Galtung argues that these forms of sanitized language are in themselves cultural violence. Correspondingly, cultural violence are the ideologies that legitimize inequity (Kent, 2000), including media and discourse (Confortini, 2006) and create a collective consciousness of internalized and overt oppression. These ideologies encompass “the conscious and nonconscious view, attitudes, and actions that create everyday social realities” (James et al., 2003, p. 130).

[44] James et al., (2003) position structural violence as having transactional relations with direct violence, or both inter (violence between individuals) and intra personal violence (violence directed towards the self). For example, the structural violence in education funding formulas are related to direct violence forms of assault and substance use. Communities with unequal access to education often experience higher unemployment rates and communities with higher percentages of unemployed members are prone to experience elevated rates of mobility, homelessness and resulting in hyper-surveillance by child welfare and police systems. This heightened stress leads to higher rates of inter and intra personal violence, assaults and substance misuse and where “the oppressed engage in their own destruction” (James et al., 2003, p, 130).

[45] *Academic Search Premier* “contains indexing and abstracts for more than 8,500 journals, with full text for more than 4,600 of those titles. PDF backfiles to 1975 or further are available for well over one hundred journals, and searchable cited references are provided for more than 1,000 titles.” http://www.ebscohost.com/academic/academic-search-premier/

[46] *“Academic Search Complete* is the world's most valuable and comprehensive scholarly, multi-disciplinary full-text database, with more than 8,500 full-text periodicals, including more than 7,300 peer-reviewed journals. In addition to full text, this database offers indexing and abstracts for more than 12,500 journals and a total of more than 13,200 publications, including monographs, reports, conference proceedings, etc. The database features PDF content going back as far as 1887, with the majority of full text titles in native (searchable) PDF format. Searchable cited references are provided for more than 1,400 journals.” http://web.ebscohost.com.proxy2.lib.umanitoba.ca/ehost/resultsadvanced?sid=0c278c79-e9fd-477a-afe4-afc205d6e2bf%40sessionmgr15&vid=5&hid=13&bquery=("%3bstructural+violence"%3b)&bdata=JmRiPXNzZiZ0eXBlPTEmc2l0ZT1laG9zdC1saXZl

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[47] "*Social Sciences Full Text*™ provides access to a wide assortment of the most important English-language journals published in the social sciences. This resource provides detailed indexing for over 625 periodicals dating back as far as 1983—nearly 400 of which are peer-reviewed."
http://web.ebscohost.com.proxy2.lib.umanitoba.ca/ehost/resultsadvanced?sid =0c278c79-e9fd-477a-afe4-afc205d6e2bf%40sessionmgr15&vid=5&hid=13&bquery=("%3b structural+violence"%3b)&bdata=JmRiPXNzZiZ0eXBlPTEmc2l0ZT1laG9zdC1saXZl

[48] In a January 31, 2011 search on Academic Search Premier database for "structural violence" in all fields (titles, abstracts, key words, subject terms, all text and journal titles), 692 results were produced. When I searched for "structural violence" and "social work" in all fields, the search delivered six results. Similar searches were done 13 months later on two additional databases producing marginally better results.

[49] Aboriginal Justice Inquiry – Child Welfare Initiative (AJI-CWI) was a joint initiative between The Province of Manitoba, The Manitoba Métis Federation, The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, and The Manitoba Keewatinook Ininew Okimowin. Between 2003 and 2005 the implementation of the restructuring of the child welfare system in Manitoba occurred, transferring child welfare services for Aboriginal children to Aboriginal organizations. http://www.aji-cwi.mb.ca/eng/index.html

[50]The Truth and Reconciliation Commission held its first national event June 16 to 19, 2010 in Winnipeg. "Its mandate is to inform all Canadians about what happened in Indian Residential Schools (IRS). The Commission will document the truth of survivors, families, communities and anyone personally affected by the IRS experience." http://www.trc-cvr.ca/

[51] Undergraduate social work education in Manitoba requires that students complete at between 840 and 1000 practicum hours with a social work field instructor. A Faculty Liaison meets with the field instructor and the student at the agency between six and ten times over the course of those hours in order to ensure the quality of the professional learning, provide professional support and maintain a tangible link between the community and the university. Since 2006, I have worked with over 160 students and 110 instructors in over 80 agencies.

[52] Today, the colonial legacy and structural violence of forced expulsion has also resulted in Aboriginal peoples, in search of housing, employment, health and education services, being forced to relocate from home reserves and communities to urban centers. Deprivation, expulsion and internment, forces people to be removed from communities, and as hooks (1990) asserts, relocation is one of the most effective methods of reducing resistance to colonization.

[53] Blackstock et al., (2004) note that 40% of the 76,000 children in care in Canada are Aboriginal.

[54] Christie (1998) contends that the United States is one such example of a dangerous state. Incarceration as punishment has been adopted nowhere as wholeheartedly as in the United States (Parenti, 2000). Although the United States has five percent of the world's population, it has 25 % of the world's prisoners (Cavadino & Dignan, 2006; Parenti, 2000). In 2003, six million Americans were under correctional supervision (Western, 2006). One out of every 35 Americans is in state custody: incarcerated, on probation, or on parole (Roberts, 2006). According to Christie (1998), incarceration rates in the United States reflect a state where the privileged have created their protected territories and use the state machinery or private police as their soldiers and the prisons as places for internment" (p. 6).

In effect, Christie claims, incarceration as punishment has had the equivalent effect to that of "a civil war. Disproportionately the effect of the war on drugs has targeted Black American men (Jensen, Gerber & Mosher, 2004). While the white male incarceration rate rose from 528 to 990 per 100,000 from 1982 to 1997, the Black male incarceration rate rose from 3544 to 6838 per 100,000 (Sterling, 2004). Thirty-three percent of Black men in their twenties are under state control on any given day (Small, 2001). Post incarceration disenfranchisement affects 13% of all Black men, or 1.4 million compared to the 4.6 million who voted in the 1996 election. This disenfranchisement results in reduced democratic participation and representation informing policy, budget and service delivery (Jensen et al., 2004; Small, 2001). In addition, the 1996 Welfare Reform Act subjects people convicted of drug offences to a lifetime ban of welfare

benefits. Interestingly, no other offences are affected. While some states have modified or eliminated the ban, the ban affects over 92,000 women and their 135,000 children, affecting African/American and Latino women disproportionately as they are at greater risk for both criminalization as well as poverty (Allard, 2002). The war on drugs has also elevated rates of HIV infection as incarcerated people are at increased risk within prisons for sharing needles and engaging in unprotected sexual activity (Jensen et al., 2004). In addition, millions of Americans who have not taken illegal drugs are subject to civil infringements, including drug tests prior to and during employment (Reinarman, 2000).

Small (2001) state that American penal policy is a "system of apartheid justice" (p. 897), and Davis (2003) and Hallett (2006) describe the commodification of black men in the for-profit prison industry as slavery. California and New York have more Black American men imprisoned than graduating from colleges and universities. Although white women in America have higher rates of using drugs or alcohol while pregnant, Black women are ten times more at risk of being reported. The criminalization and imprisonment of Black Americans today is analogous to the forcible removal by slave ships of Africans 300 years ago. "The war on drugs has replaced chattel slavery and de jure segregation as the main method of perpetuating America's long history of racial oppression" (Small, 2001, p. 897). While white Americans consume and sell 80% of illegal drugs, Black and Latino Americans fill up police stations, court houses and prisons (Brownstein, 1992).

This commodification and regulation of black Americans has been consistent throughout American history and has served to maintain "white power and privilege" (Marable, 2007, p. 1). De Giorgi (2006) describes that commodification and the political economy of penalty pushes people into crimes of survival, criminalizes them, and thus regulates and removes the surplus labour force. In addition, this drives the for profit prison industry. Public stock trading profits highlight that warehousing prisoner's bodies is a lucrative commodity (Hallett, 2006).

Contrary to prevalent political messaging, the privatization of prisons is not about cost saving but rather, according to Price (2006), is driven by political and ideological forces that effectively merge a political economy by shifting the power to punish from the authority of the state to the private for-profit sector. Hallett (2006) argues that prison labour is profitable. A captive, 24-hour labour force, without benefits or bargaining power, receive wages as low as $0.25 per hour, with up to 80% recouped by the prisons to cover 'room and board' costs (Haney, 2004). The marketing of private institutions to multiple industries has resulted in a heavy reliance on prison labour for telecommunications, airline, computer, textiles and clothing, office products, agriculture, military, municipalities, and medical industries. In other words, the corrections industry has become, for many states, the largest expenditure and the largest economic boom54 (Hallett, 2006). For example, during the mid-1990s, three 500 bed prisons were build each week in the United States providing employment, promises of long term prosperity, but short term debt to rural communities – communities relying and needing people convicted of drug offences to fill prison beds. Not only are rural American communities invested, the privatization of prisons supplies an even cheaper and more manageable labour pool to corporations previously using Third World employees (Jensen et al., 2004).

Price suggests that state economic vitality and the reliance of prison labour is enhanced by get-tough-on-crime legislation and the Prison Industrial Complex is pushed by politicians and backed by private industry. Angela Davis coined the term Prison Industrial Complex in 1997 describing the American for profit prison industry. The private prison industry speculates its profits by selling prisons as sound economic investments to poor rural communities, and in turn, reaps governmental subsidies for increasing employment. As Price (2006) argues, the punishment for profit industry includes the 'purchasing' of prisoners from overcrowded neighbouring states through bid wars. Although many states use the rhetoric of efficiency, economy, and improved quality of service, performance indicators suggest otherwise.

[55] Canada's budget for crime control rose 23% from 2002 to 2012 whereas the crime rate during the same period fell 23%. For the year 2011 to 2012, Canada spent over $20 billion for federal, provincial, and territorial criminal justice systems (MacKrael, 2013).

[56] Bauman referred to Nazi Germany as an example and the conditions that gave rise to the state policies of Germany 1933-1945.

[57] Key trends in crime control include: crime and risk profiling; the audit and monitoring of organizational performance; the responsibilization for both those charged and sentenced and those victimized; a shifting of risk burden from government to non-governmental organizations; a mixed crime economy of public and for-profits industries; public messaging that life is increasingly risky and dangerous; criminality as moral degeneration; and exclusion penality (Kemshall, 2003).

[58] Garland (1996) argues that the state uses a number of strategies to appear successful in the impossibility of crime control, including: responsibilization, defining only specific forms of illegal activity as crime, increased punitiveness, and constructing successes. For example, Feeley and Simon (1992) argue that the return of parolees to prison is seen no longer as a malfunction of the parole system, but rather as a triumph of the parole system as a system of control and surveillance.

[59] Welfarism was based on optimistic notions of progress, social responsibility, social risk, social security (Parton, 1996b), and values of universalism, social citizenship, paternalism, and a benevolent state that could and would determine and provide for needs (Kemshall, 2002).

[60] Refers to the poor, homeless, and criminal population of the late 19th Century New York, as coined by Charles Brace in Brace, C. (1872). *The dangerous classes of New York and twenty years' work among them*. New York: Wynkoop & Hallenbeck. The dangerous classes, those seen as non-redemptive and permanently marginal, is a renewal of the notion of the dangerous classes of the late 18th and early 19th centuries (Feeley & Simon, 1992; Fitzgibbon, 2007b). The un/underemployed populations have consistently been cause for suspicion – their potential for resistance has been stirred by their denied ability to partake in the market economy and difficulty in sustaining themselves through non-criminalized enterprise (Christie, 1994).

[61] 'Old penology', Feeley and Simon (1992) maintain, upheld the individual as the unit of analysis in terms of guilt, motive, punishment, diagnosis, and rehabilitation. This 'penal welfare', however, Garland (1995) argues, was perceived as a failure in reducing crime and rehabilitating individuals. 'New penology' in response, is not a new theory but a new "interpretive net" (Feeley & Simon, 1992, p. 460). Characteristics of the new penality include: regulation, exclusion and preventative detention of dangerousness for public protection; actuarial risk assessment; increase in both penal and regulatory forms of control; increased criminalization with decreased individual rights; increased surveillance technology, fear of crime and knee jerk policy; increased managerialism; and widening of feeder criminal justice organizations (Kemshall & Maguire, 2001). Pratt (2000) suggests that this new penology ironically is a return to pre-modern notions of punishment with public shaming, chain gangs, and permanent branding. Garland (1997) notes that the distinction between *old* and *new* penology could better be framed as adjacent penologies that continue to co-exist. This coexistence is reflected in American penality.

[62] Popular reality shows such as *COPS*, with its catchy theme song, depicts primarily black men being chased by uniformed male police officers and their police dogs through working class black American residential communities with distraught neighbours and family members looking on. This visual depiction of 'real crime' allows for the privileged, who seldom encounter personal crime, to share vicariously in the victimization and revenge, and at the same time, affords the marginalized to participate in popular culture though carefully edited depictions. Similarly, *Dog, the Bounty Hunter* depicts a white heterosexual appearing family of bounty hunters, who prior to 'mounting up' and hunting down predominantly brown looking people who have missed court appearances, gather for a group prayer to do 'God's work'. It is interesting that 'Dog', the patriarch, once a former 'felon' himself, now professes to be on the 'good guys side'. Even *To Serve and Protect*, a Canadian reality show following police personnel as they respond to calls, tends to show a predominance of Aboriginal people ingesting 'substances' in parks and creating public 'disturbances'. What seems to be missing from this crime genre are shows depicting the experiences of Aboriginal men and women who are repeatedly stopped, detained, harassed and 'questioned' because they fit the profile of the 'usual suspect'. Where is 'Fraud Man: Band of Booty Hunters' – a reality show about tracking down perpetrators of corporate and state fraud and environmental rape? And why do we have yet to produce a reality show about living homeless and enduring poverty, exclusion and criminalization?

[63] Paradoxically, as the government responds to uncertainty with ever expanding systems of accountability, it contracts its obligations out to less accountable private industries, and responds to the publics' amplified anxiety with augmented authoritarianism (Webb, 2006).

[64] In order to govern at a distance effectively, a logic of regulation creates and maintains values, norms, principles, classifications, organization, performance, and obedience to which the multiplicity of contracted groups and organizations adhere (Webb, 2006). These practices of governing are not restricted to the state and the multiplicity of contracted groups and organizations, but are also assigned to the individual (Rose, 2000) through an *ethos of self-conduct* (Ciccarelli, 2008, p. 319). In other words, the state governs not only through many contracted organizations but also through people's own adoption of these regulatory values, or when understood as structural violence, through penetration and internalized oppression. This ethos of self-conduct implies that we are "free" to choose our communities, memberships, material satisfaction, and individual paths (Ciccarelli, 2008), contingent on our exercise of self-discipline (Parton, 1998).

[65] *Technologies of government* refer to the methods of judgment and understanding, management and measurement, and authority and control used within social systems such as child welfare and criminal justice (Rose, 2000) and are based on knowledge accumulation systems and policing (Rose, 1999). Anglin (1998) states that these technologies of government are part of the social machinery of oppression:

> In expanding our definition to include structural forms of violence we can better understand the social and government practices that valorize particular family forms and jeopardize others, programs that resolve local and national budgetary problems by withdrawing social support from the 'undeserving' many, and renewed emphasis on incarceration and other disciplinary techniques produce violence in the guise of social stability and order. (Anglin, 1998, p. 145)

[66] The family, spatial planning and architecture, education, the market and the media, are all actively involved in these *circuits of inclusion and exclusion* (Rose, 2000). Rose suggests that those included are the prudent subject and the vigorous consumer. Consumers are monitored through technology, such as digital tracking, that acts as "tentacles of the state," facilitating and sustaining inclusion in systems of privilege (p. 326). Bank cards, for example, result in digital tracking of consumer spending that inform credit and insurance ratings, that in turn, facilitate enhanced purchasing and material accumulation opportunities.

[67] This results in what Foucault (1977) referred to as the *carceral state* or one where individuals are observed, monitored, and scrutinized by professionals. This notion of the carceral state is based on Bentham's design of the Panopticon, a prison where the prisoner, without his awareness, could be observed and seen. Foucault suggested that contemporary control and surveillance of the excluded by the carceral state has not reduced its malevolence since the days of drawing and quartering, but rather this control has become more insidious. While the birth of the prison removed the state from being a cruel and furious inflictor of torture and death to the body, the carceral state instead became an aloof agent of regimented control over the mind and soul. Public spectacles were replaced with surveillance--the focus on punishing the body, albeit torturous but finite in duration, was replaced with the containment of the body and scrutiny of the soul, allowing for a more thorough form of domination and control within the realm of the social. This allows for a more thorough form of domination and control within the realm of the social, *without* these individuals necessarily being aware of the magnitude of this observation.

[68] According to Arrigo (1999), critical theories informing critical criminology today share four epistemological lenses: the person-world dialectic; a desire to demystify institutions of control; an exploration into the discourse of crime, justice and community; and a desire for emancipation. Theoretical influences include Marxist, critical race, chaos, catastrophe, and queer theory; socialist and postmodern feminism; peacemaking, constitutive, and anarchist criminology; prophetic criticism; and semiotics analysis.

[69] Critical criminology arose in the 1960s and 1970s and was part of the activist movement that exposed the "malevolent practices behind benevolent state intervention" (Platt, 1988, p. 132). While criminology has been described as the scientific inquiry into the charting of crime patterns, causes of crime, and the

scientific differentiation of criminals from non-criminals (Gelsthorpe, 2002), critical criminologists wanted to counter the prevailing liberal tenets of mainstream criminology--its adherence to a legalistic definition of crime and impartial notion of law, the rehabilitation of 'criminals', the rejection of a critical historical analysis, and a resistance to social change (Quinney, 1975).

A key branch of the criminal criminological tree is critical feminist criminology whose inquiry is concerned with the social construction of crime, the need for critical inquiry to examine relations between gender , law, deviance, and society, and to "relativize practices usually taken for granted, to problemize received wisdom, and to historize otherwise unquestioned assumptions" (Rafter, 1990, p. 377). Feminist scholars, since the 1970s, have articulated the inherent male-bias in general theories of crime and the invisibility and exclusion of women from traditional criminological inquiry (Chesney-Lind, 1986, 2006; Comack, 1996, 2006; Gelsthorpe, 2002; Hannah-Moffat & Shaw, 2000; Heidensohn, 1985; Hughes, 2005; Leonard, 1982, Smart, 1976). As Naffine (1996) poignantly stated, "criminology is still a discipline dominated by men… about academic men studying criminal men" (p. 1). Ontologically, it has been questioned whether there can even be "a feminist criminology" (Daly & Chesney-Lind, 1988). On one hand, feminist theory itself has multiple perspectives and lenses of analysis (Britton, 2000; Comack, 2006; Gelsthorpe, 2002). On the other, criminology has been described as a masculine bastion where a perspective inclusive of women has been marginalized, and a deconstruction of its frames of reference has been resisted (Britton, 2000).

As Burgess-Proctor (2006) suggests, a critical feminist perspective "recognizes that race, class, gender, sexuality, and other locations of inequity are dynamic, historically grounded, socially constructed power relationships that simultaneously operate at both the micro-structural and macro-structural levels" (p. 37). In linking the roles of patriarchal institutions, such as family and criminal justice, and the use of violence in sustaining those institutions, critical feminist perspectives challenge mainstream or positive epistemological notions of criminology with calls for legislative reform and social change (Britton, 2000). For instance, Klein (1973) and Simpson (1991) looked at the intersectional influence of race, class and gender as influencing women's oppression and increased criminal activity. Kruttschnitt (1982) looked at the influence of a women's social status on her sentencing. Rafter (1985) identified the link between the socializing role of early women's prisons in conforming women to fit the needed roles as wives and servants to the effect contemporary prisons had for all women, namely, to deter women from deviating from socially prescribed gender roles. In turn, Daly (1987) noted the contemporary influence a woman's marital status had on sentencing--the farther a woman was from the status quo, the greater the likelihood of imprisonment. Carlen (1988) looked at the criminalization of women living with poverty, and Faith (1993) explored punishment as social control for women's acts of resistance. Wright (1995), stepping back and looking at discourse within criminology textbooks, found women's oppression was largely depicted as victimization instead of resistance, suggesting mainstream criminology still left systems of oppression unexamined in the area of women and crime. Critical feminist scholars Comack and Balfour (2004) and Balfour and Comack (2006) examined systems of oppression and reviewed the process of criminalization through legal, human rights, and systemic abuses. Finally, Sudbury (2005) argued that current penal policies, influenced by global capitalism, patriarchy, and neocolonial ideologies, support neo-conservative politics, punishment, crime control, and the war on drugs (Chesney-Lind, 2006).

[70] Drawing on labelling theorists, such as sociologist Howard Becker (1973), critical criminologists were curious why certain persons and behaviours were at a greater risk for being labelled as criminal and why the legal and criminal justice systems acted as social control to contain class struggle and protect and legitimate economic interests. Becker (1973) explains that deviance is not an identifiable act but rather the value that some people's behaviours receive: "social groups create deviance by making the rules whose infraction constitute deviance…. From this perspective, deviance is not a quality of the act the person commits, but rather a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions to an 'offender'." (p. 9)

[71] Critical Race Theory (CRT) offers an analysis that legal and criminal justice systems in Canada and the United States are Racialized--race is a social construct, is applied differentially, and racism serves to maintain the status quo (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). As Alyward (1999) articulates:

> The prevailing myth in the United States is that Americans have overcome their racist past and are no longer racist; and the prevailing myth in Canada is that we are a country without racism…. In Canada

today, discrimination and racism exist in subtle and systemic forms and are concealed in systems, practices, policies and laws that may appear neutral on their face but have a serious detrimental effect on people of colour." (p. 12)

CRT developed in the late 1980s as a response to the lack of race analysis in Critical Legal Studies, a body of scholarship that critiqued the perceived objectivity of law (Alyward, 1999; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Key tenets of CRT include: moving discourse beyond rights; rejection of law as colour-blind; moving marginalized narratives to the center; analysis of how law subjugates people of colour; understanding that law constitutes and is constituted by racism (Alyward, 1999); the belief that racism is the norm (Alyward, 1999; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001); that racism serves to maintain the status quo; that race is a social construct; that racialization is comprised of the intersectionality of isms and is applied differentially; and that people of colour offer an irreplaceable narrative (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

[72] People and groups who have been Othered have been traditionally dealt with through anthropophagy, "devouring" and assimilation, or, if they resist assimilation processes, through anthropoemy or "vomiting" and exclusion (Bauman, 1997, p. 18). Bauman (1997) describes two modern strategies of dealing with 'Others':

> One was *anthropophagic*: annihilating the strangers by *devouring* them and then metabolically transforming into a tissue indistinguishable from one's own. This was the strategy of *assimilation*: making the different similar; smothering of cultural or linguistic distinctions; forbidding all traditions and loyalties except those meant to feed the conformity to the new and all-embracing order; promoting and enforcing one and only one measure of conformity. The other strategy was *anthropoemic*: *vomiting* the strangers, banishing them from the limits of the orderly world and barring them from all communication with those inside. This was the strategy of *exclusion* – confining strangers within the visible walls of the ghettos or behind the invisible, yet no less tangible, prohibitions of *commensality*, *connubium*, and *commercium*: 'cleansing' – expelling the strangers beyond the frontiers of the managed and manageable territory; or, when neither of the two measures was feasible – destroying the strangers physically (p. 18).

[73] Notions of monitoring and scrutinizing the poor go back to the Elizabethan Poor Laws of 1601 (Guest, 1985). The Poor Laws articulated the concept of public responsibility for those impoverished through: care for the 'deserving or honest' poor, forced workhouses for the able-bodied, apprenticeships for children, and punishment for the unwilling or undeserving.

[74] Responsible for a new way of thinking and their own prudence, the prisoner's completion of programs is then required to demonstrate readiness for release or decrease in risk rating (Hannah-Moffat, 2000). By participating in programs, taking medication, or seeing a mental health therapist, the new prudent self is expected to find resources, recognize risky situations, and prevent poor decision-making (Hannah-Moffat, 2004a).

[75] Under the panacea solution of incarceration, the populace is sold a package of goods, including: the merits of profiling, categorical suspicion (Fitzgibbon, 2007b), and actuarial justice and the use of risk assessment as social control; economic constraints and the role of capitalism in the discipline of labour; the management of the dangerous classes and retreat of rehabilitation (Kemshall, 2003); and the increase in the assembly of knowledge and classifications where risk becomes "symbolic … replicating and infinite" (Rigakos, 1999, p. 140).

[76] Canadian child welfare today reflects a residual framework, or a framework that is based on the premise that families can and should look after the needs of their children, and that the state should only intervene once they have failed in that capacity *(*Armitage, 1993a; Wharf, 1993). In addition to this basic principle, beliefs that child welfare services can operate by provincial jurisdiction without community or cultural ties; that good parenting is not affected by structural issues such as income; and that parental caring for children is not work and should only be paid if done by a non-parent continue to shape child welfare policies (Wharf, 1993). As a result, financial assistance is paid only to families that foster--parenting families on the other hand, have financial assistance withheld and in lieu of their 'inadequacies', are required to undergo psychological services and parenting classes (Pelton, 1989).

[77] The authority to investigate families falls under the legal construct *Parens Patriae*, or the contention that the state has the authority to intervene in families (Costin et al., 1996; MacIntyre, 1993; O'Brian, 2004; Swift, 1995). When parents cannot fulfill their parenting obligations, Parens Patriae does not stipulate that the state is responsible for providing care, but rather, is responsible for *enforcing* that care is provided by the family (MacIntyre, 1993; Swift, 1995).

[78] Gil (1984) explains that the lower a group's social status, the greater the state enforces the "control and suppression of tendencies toward individuality and self-direction" (p. 305).

[79] As a system of class and race control class, the origins of the Canadian child welfare are ideologically not dissimilar. The Canadian child welfare system stems back to the American Child Savers Movement (MacIntyre, 1993; Swift, 1995) where children of immigrants and the poor were farmed out to agricultural foster homes in the Mid-West, in order to save the cities from the dangerous classes (O'Brian, 2004). For example, the 1893 Ontario Act for the Prevention of Cruelty and Better Protection of Children and Children's Aid Societies placed children with "moral families" who were often used as free labour and 'taught' redemptive values of hard work and discipline (Macintyre, 1993). With the development of the social work profession in the early 20th Century, care of these children was done by volunteer foster homes while the supervision, investigation, and counselling was done by the newly developed social work profession (MacIntyre, 1993). Children of the dangerous classes were believed to be redeemable, through training and socialization, in order to preserve both social order and control, and reduce any future potential political threat (Costin et al., 1996; MacIntyre, 1993). This is eerily similar to the 60s scoop where Aboriginal children were "redeemable" if removed from their communities. A common thread is the legal construct under which child protection social workers are authorized to apprehend children.

[80] This paradoxal position arises due to the distinction between child welfare and child protection (Spratt, 2001). Child welfare, according to Spratt, contextualizes harm to children within the psychosocial difficulties experienced by the family and interventions are focused on the provision of services. Child protection, in contrast, utilizes legislative processes to protect children from real or perceived risk resulting often in adversarial relationships with families. Child protection, however, as argued by Sharland (1999), "is fairly successfully achieved, but at the cost of the children's broader welfare interests and needs" (p. 304). While this dual focus on child protection and child welfare may theoretically be laudable, in reality, it results too frequently in neither objective being successfully achieved. In part, this is due to the framework child welfare is based on.

[81] This industry and bureaucracy tends to be self-sustaining rather than providing efficacious services (Hagedorn, 1995), and not coincidentally, treats its workers much like its clients:

> On one hand, they are often pilloried in the press and public forums when something goes amiss; a child under their care is abused or killed, or parents accuse workers of acting precipitously in apprehending their children. On the other hand, they are chronically neglected most of the time. (Callahan, 1993, p. 64)

[82] Like a pied piper, Price (1997) warns the lure of risk assessments bears eerily similarity to a neo-liberal cult like following: "In Canada, the enthusiasm of the practitioners of the craft of risk assessment design borders on the cult with conferences of technocrats muting any discussion of ethics, law or systemic implication" (p. 2). Risk discourse appeals to popular sentiments because risk assessments promise to enhance community safety through prevention by identifying and separating a distinct high-risk group prior to engaging in the feared behaviour (Silver, 2000; Silver & Miller, 2002). Risk discourse is attractive to neo-liberal politicians because it fits with a belief in the acceptance of crime rather than crime as a social problem to be solved (Garland, 1996). Risk discourse is adopted by child welfare and criminal justice systems because it offers an efficient management of resources (Hannah-Moffat, 2004b; Silver & Miller, 2002; Wald & Woolverton, 1990), accountability (Hannah-Moffat, 2004b; Wald & Woolverton, 1990), transparency (Schwalbe, 2004), and a built-in defensibility for decision-making (Lancaster & Lumb, 2006). Risk assessments are promoted for their perceived validity (Andrade et al., 2008), consistency (Lancaster & Lumb, 2006; Schwalbe, 2004), objectivity, (Hannah-Moffat, 2004b; Schwalbe, 2004), rationality

(Schwalbe, 2004), and reduction of user bias and discretion (Krane & Davies, 2000). Workers prefer risk assessments for their promised reliability (Hannah-Moffat & Shaw 2001), rationale for service provision (Hannah-Moffat, 2004b; Krane & Davies, 2000; Wald & Woolverton, 1990), improved decision-making capabilities (Myers, 2007), and broader frame of reference beyond intake factors (Schene, 1996). In short, everyone seems pleased--that is, everyone except the very people who are assessed for risk and their allies, including critical theorists. People assessed for risk describe risk discourse processes as creating privileged texts that have very little resemblance to their own lives (Pollack, 2010).

[83] Neo-liberalism has used and constructed risk discourse in order to further ideological goals of delegitimizing and deconstructing the welfare state and notions of class privilege (Culpitt, 1999). Arguing that the risk society has replaced a class society is a slippery slope because, as Rigakos (1999) states, one's perceived risk is directly related to one's class position:

> the affluent can and do escape the fallout of risks, whatever their manifestation, by simply moving to safer neighborhoods or purchasing technology, healthcare, insurance, and security… The compartmentalizing of risk identities is actually a spuriously correlated constellation of traits that, in reality, hinge upon the actual predictors of socioeconomic status, ethnicity, gender, and age… In other words, one's position in society dictates one's credit rating, health benefits and the amount of attention one is afforded by policing institutions. (p. 144-145)

[84] Krane and Davies (2000) go so far as to say that nowhere is risk thinking more apparent than in child welfare where risk assessment is the "guiding ethos" of child protection (p. 36) and a cornerstone of professional practice:

> Increasingly, social workers and social welfare agencies are concerned in their day-today-policies and practices with the issue of risk. Risk assessments, risk management, the monitoring of risk and risk-taking itself have become activities for both practitioners and managers. Similarly, estimations about risk have become key in identifying and making judgments about the quality of performance and what should be the focus of professional activities. (Parton, 1996b, p. 98)

Parton (1998) contends the late 1990s saw a "major debate" in child welfare (p. 6) surrounding burgeoning caseloads increasingly compromised by a neo-liberal evisceration of the welfare net and existing resources (Krane & Davies, 2000; Leschied, Chiodo, Whitehead, Hurley & Marshall, 2003; Schene, 1996). Child welfare risk assessments were seen to aid in prioritization and promote consistency of service delivery, identify abuse situations, design effective service plans, and increase accountability (Krane & Davies, 2000; Schene, 1996).

[85] Claims of objectivity (Webb, 2006), technological neutrality (Silver, 2000), and unstated theoretical bases[85] inherent within assessment tools (Wald & Woolverton, 1990) reflect a positivist bias (Myers, 2007) and relations of power (Myers, 2007; Webb, 2006). As a neo-liberal tool, risk management reflects a politicized, contentious, and complex discourse where risk is subjective and socially constructed (Parton, 1996b; Slovic, 1999).

Constructed definitions of neglect are fraught by lack of clarity and subjectivity (Pelton, 1989), relativity (O'Brian, 2004), myths of pathology rather than oppression, gender neutrality (as it is mothers who are primarily investigated), and lack of ontological questioning (Swift, 1995, p. 10). Similarly, 'abuse' has similar operationalization difficulties: an overly broad definition results in the investigation of too many unharmed children and overwhelming the system; an overly narrow definition results in legitimate abuse cases not being identified (Swift, 1995). Knoke and Trocmé (2004) contend that the narrow focus on risk assessment results in child protection rather than child well-being, a distinction Parton (1998) asserts that results in merely removal and the abandonment of the needs of children.

[86] The discourse of risk makes an assumption that risk is an identifiable truth that can be calculated (Stalker, 2003). Parton (1996b) cautions that risk exists within ideologized space and is not an ontological but rather an epistemological issue reflecting beliefs about the world and not inherent realities.

[87] Krane and Davies (2000) contend that the obsessive nature of discovering even more risk detection methodologies detracts from the "the inherently moral and political judgments" behind risk detection (p.

42). Risk, then, is not about people but about assumptions (Garland, 1997) and, as Parton (1996b) contends, risks exist only because of their statistical creation.

[88] Media, science, and legal institutions, reflecting neo-liberalism, conceptualize and promote our understanding of risk and play important political roles in its persistence (Parton, 1996b).

[89] Risk interview guides have inherent moralistic/normative assumptions of gendered, racial, heterosexual, monogamous, middleclass lifestyles (Hannah-Moffat, 2005). In addition to intrinsic gender, class, and race biases, risk assessment tools identify structural barriers as risks, resulting in further marginalization and punishment (Canadian Human Rights Commission, 2003; Hannah-Moffat, 2004b, Lancaster & Lumb, 2006; Silver and Miller, 2002). The Canadian Human Rights Commission (2003) asserted that criminogenic risk assessment tools are a violation of the Canadian Human Rights Act in that they identify disability, religion, and ethnicity as risk factors, and thusly discriminate against, and over classify, women and Aboriginal peoples:

> Because the dynamic risk assessment is a form of individual assessment, it is important, from a human rights perspective, to ensure that it is suited to its intended subjects.… Given the over-representation of Aboriginal people in federal correctional institutions, particularly among federally sentenced women, the Correctional Service's failure to adequately test this important assessment tool is of serious concern to the Commission.… In the absence of adequate testing and modification, these instruments should not be used on women or Aboriginal offenders. (p. 27)

In response to the many concerns raised, Brennan, Dieterich and Ehret (2009), the creators of a fourth generation risk assessment, contend these are now appropriate for both men and women with risk prediction factors probabilities ranging from 65 to 75%.

[90] Increased risk management of marginalized groups is influenced by environmental tides such as time constraints and political 'heat' (Gambrill & Shlonsky, 2000). Garland (1995) suggests this myth making and the production of the *signs and symbols* of crime fear-mongering generate knee-jerk policy responses. For instance, policy protocols such as the case of Polly Klaas (Polly Klaas was a 12 year old girl who was abducted and murdered in California in 1993. Her abduction was the first case to use the newly developed internet for publicizing her missing child poster and as a result, her case received a very wide audience and also allowed facilitated other parents of missing children to contact each other. http://pollyklaas.org/about/pollys-story.html) and California's subsequent Three Strikes legislation (American Three Strikes legislations commonly mandates a sentence of 25 years to life for a third felony conviction) are often brought hastily into existence following highly publicized singular and non-representative incidents (Ferguson, 2004). These knee jerk responses often result in the majority being subject to greater scrutiny and policy designed for a select few, and under the guise of caution, result in many being subject to more stringent criteria (Parton, 1996b).

[91] Assessment tools "depoliticize the process of social regulation" by identifying only those certain groups meeting a risk criteria and not the causes of recidivism (Silver & Miller, 2002, p. 144). As such, risk assessments do not enhance causal understanding of the sources of crime, but rather only identify and label crime as a predictable outcome of certain groups. In other words, 'why' is no longer important (Silver, 2000) but rather, 'who', and the 'who' are the marginalized. "It is no accident that the most recent developments in actuarial risk assessment have occurred primarily in the criminal justice and mental health arenas in which politically marginalized populations widely feared by the public must be managed." (p. 141)

[92] This prejudgment based on group membership, or stereotyping, results in legal decision-making. For example, in the criminal justice system, risk analysis results in 'pre-emptive criminalization', or criminal justice responses based on anticipated actions (Fitzgibbon, 2007b). As Rose (2000) cautions, "the logics of risk inescapably locate the career and identities of such tainted citizens within a regime of surveillance that actually constitutes them all as actually or potentially 'risky' individuals" (p. 333).

[93] Profiling has policy implications for a 'two-speed society' or the "coexistence of hyper-competitive sectors obedient to the harsh requirements of economic rationality, and marginal activities that provide a refuge (or a dump) for those unable to take part" (Castel, 1991, p. 294). Instead of the refuge happening

post hoc, Castel postulates what would happen if profiling were used to direct entire risk populations directly to this dump, a dump where administrators efficiently fill quotas and assign a 'special destiny'? In other words, profiling through risk assessments has the structurally violent potential to deem entire populations guilty, risky, or dangerous, leaving the onus on the individual to prove otherwise.

The nature of actuarial prediction methods may in fact accelerate the increased marginalization of 'at risk' populations (Silver & Miller, 2002). Risk discourse shifts the focus to the future, resulting in a danger that what is occurring in the present bears less significance in terms of assessment, need (Green, 2007; Schene, 1996), or treatment (Silver, 2000). Particularly, if a person has a low risk, their present needs are likely not addressed (Parton, 1998), creating in effect, a "waiting room" of cases that remain unattended until conditions worsen sufficiently to warrant high risk status (Schene, 1996, p. 8). This shift to the future or the waiting room until elevated risk evolves results in structural violence on multiple and simultaneous levels. On one hand, individuals are denied services due to their less than high-risk levels, and on the other hand, once ensuing deprivation manifests, they are labelled high risk resulting in their reduced freedoms.

Assessments also tend to assume that behaviour is static, rather than dynamic and responsive to context, resulting in the pathologizing and essentializing of individuals (Myers, 2007). This objectification reduces individuals to a set of risk factors to be managed (Kemshall, 2003), vilifying those most marginalized and excluded (Culpitt, 1999). As Pollack (2010) warns, being risky becomes an "ontological state," permanent and inherent (p. 1272).

Due to predictive validity limitations, in order to reach the actual targeted group of 'dangerous' people, a far greater number of people must be retained (Silver, 2000), resulting in a net widening that has already occurred with the number of children in child welfare (Leschied et al., 2003). In other words, risk assessments can inflate the authentic risk of families, who otherwise without an actuarial assessment might not be deemed dangerous or harmful. As Castel (1991) states: "the shift from dangerousness to risk entails a potentially infinite multiplication of the possibilities for intervention. For what situation is there of which one can be certain that it harbors no risk, no uncontrollable or unpredictable chance feature?" (p. 289)

[94] Webb (2006) with his ground-breaking *Social Work in a Risk Society: Social and Political Perspectives* appears as a solitary soloist extolling a song out of synchronization with the backdrop choir of mainstream social work discourse. When risk discourse is infrequently vocalized, an assumption of the neutrality and objectivity of risk discourse is maintained (Shaw & Shaw, 2001) and unquestioned (Webb, 2006). Few researchers explore the use of professional judgment within an actuarial assessment environment (Parsloe, 1999), or even how practitioners use these assessments (Parton, 1996b; Schwalbe, 2008). There is little demonstrated engagement with those assessed for risk (Pollack, 2010), or even on the intention of risk assessment practice within child welfare (Ferguson, 2004). As such, a theoretical and conceptual discussion of risk has been lacking in social work (Parton, 1996a), and as Webb (2006) notes, an examination of the relationship between, and construction of, social work and contemporary society, is still in its infancy. This relative silence on a conceptual discussion of risk is perplexing, Parton (1998) cautions, as social work practice is all about risk and uncertainty and, therefore, we need to learn to work better with uncertainty instead of trying to avoid it.

[95] Two forms of risk assessment are used today: clinical or consensus based models, involving professional and sometimes client judgement; and actuarial, using statistical calculations based on large sample populations (Parsloe, 1999). Consensus models utilize a wide consideration of theories and offer a better case-planning model, however, are limited for poor operationalization both in terms of definition and selection of variables. Actuarial tools, in contrast, use a smaller number of factors that have statistical correlation (Andrade et al., 2008). As such, *risk assessments* are used to calculate the likelihood of a negative future event occurring based on current and past risk factors (Knoke & Trocmé, 2004), and are used to make judgments and decisions (Goddard et al., 1999).

While social workers have always done risk assessments, that is, trying to reduce negative future events by improving current conditions, Parsloe (1999) contends that actuarial risk assessment or risk assessments based on logistic regression and statistical correlation are a recent development as a central organizing principle of late modern society (Parsloe, 1999; Silver 2000).

[96] Michael Power (1997), in *The Audit Society*, identified the *rituals of verification* used to regulate institutions and professionals. Where professionals were once afforded trust, now they are audited. Power

argues that this crisis of trust leads to a double paradox: on one hand, the service provider is not deemed trustworthy of providing a competent service (and hence the introduction of standardized risk assessments), while at the same time, is deemed competent to produce honest records of those assessments. Additionally, while the audit is viewed as the pinnacle of accountability, its methods of measurement and sampling, or the 'epistemological character', leaves large gaps in validity and rigour. Powers argues all is audited but the audit process itself. Since the state does not directly provide services but contracts out and controls through audits, Power suggests a process of colonization has occurred where audit regulations infiltrate and replace professional practices and values. Professional competency becomes increasingly defined by audit competency and not whether the files were competently managed but rather how many files were managed. In essence, Power asserts, audit is about power and agenda setting.

[97] Diluting our practice to meet the needs of 'advanced liberal' societies implies a threat for social work and a fundamental shift away from social work traditions. By suspending the idea of practice with persons, groups, or communities, and replacing complex and comprehensive practice with the mere management of risk factors, we run the risk of becoming data collectors (Castel, 1991). Actuarial risk assessments transform therapeutic relationships into research relationships where data are gathered and analyzed in order to make decisions (Silver, 2000). This combination of constructed risks and needs creates a unique therapeutic industry that de-legitimates structural sources of oppression and violence and focuses instead on controlling and reshaping individuals (Hannah-Moffat, 2005). Actuarial social work practice has resulted in Max Weber's notion of 'instrumental rationality', or the increasingly narrow and reductive expertise and quasi-scientific methodology of evidence-based evaluation (Webb, 2006). Without a theoretical understanding, and reduced to performing "pre-coded procedures," social workers are in danger of increasingly shallow practice (Howe, 1996, p. 92).

[98] Douglas (1992) argues the political significance of risk strategically removes blame from the state, absolves the technocrats who developed risk assessment systems of accountability, and in effect, exalts risk assessments as expert, while placing blame squarely onto an individual or contracted organization. As Goddard et al., (1999) argue in child welfare:

> under the guise of protecting children, risk assessment instruments may essentially be devices used by bureaucratic, managerialist organizations in attempts to protect themselves from blame when tragedies occur. With risk assessment procedures in place, organizations are better placed to shift responsibility to individual workers when mistakes are made. (p. 258)

[99] Lancaster & Lumb (2006) differentiate between a defensible and a defensive decision: when consequences for client harms motivate practitioner's decisions, then a tendency to be over cautious results in defensive decision-making.

[100] Anthropologist Mary Douglas (1992) identified the forensic functions of risk (p. 27). Every caused risk can be traced to an individual to blame resulting in a propensity to "treat every death as chargeable to someone's account, every accident as caused by someone's criminal negligence, every sickness a threatened prosecution. Whose fault? is the first question" (p. 15-16). At the same time, actuarial practices reduce social workers' efficacy in problem solving and, therefore, increase the likelihood of blame (Green, 2007).

[101] De Montigny (1995) in *Social working: An ethnography of front-line practice* uses social working to describe the process of doing social work.

[102] The same relationship would exist for a conventional framework utilizing conventional research methods. As such, Peirce (1995) argues that conventional ethnography has a tendency to focus only on the observed and heard aspects of individuals' everyday lives. This narrow focus on individual behaviour often ignores macro, contextual, and intuitive influences and results in the assumption that personal agency alone is constitutive of reality. Given conventional ethnography's concurrent origins with anthropology, during mid-nineteenth Century pursuits of colonialism, imperialism, and Orientalism, conventional ethnography has been critiqued for furthering an Othering, objectifying, and alienating discourse (Peirce, 1995). Walby

(2007) argues that conventional ethnographies and their *social relations of research* are alienating for both participants and researchers alike:

> The social relations of research production provides the structure within which research is undertaken. These social relations are built upon a firm distinction between the researcher and the researched; upon the belief that it is the researchers who have specialist knowledge and skills; and that it is they who should decide what topics should be researched and be in control of the whole process of research production. (p. 1014)

[103] Lather (1991) states that our discourses are "politically uninnocent" (p. vii) and according to Fine (1994) create Othering where "much of qualitative research has produced, if contradiction-filled, a colonizing discourse of the 'Other'" (p. 70). Fine uses the metaphor of 'working the hyphen' to describe how discourse can separate and define the Other, instead of looking at how discourse can allow the Self and Other to pivot and evolve. As Fine suggests, the

> Self and Other are knottingly entangled. This relationship, as lived between researchers and informants, is typically obscured in social science texts, protecting privilege, securing distance, and laminating the contradictions… When we opt, as has been the tradition, simply to write *about* those who have been Othered, we deny the hyphen… When we opt, instead, to engage in social struggles *with* those who have been exploited, we work the hyphen, revealing far more about ourselves, and far more about the structures of Othering. (p. 72)

An interesting example of denying the hyphen, unstated assumptions, and non-critical discourse in a qualitative study is Geiger and Fischer's (2005) exploration of how Israeli women and men, who had been or were imprisoned, integrate stigmatizing labelling such as "prostitutes, criminals, drug addicts, drug dealers, or incompetent parents" with their self-identity (p. 194). Although the article is described as being about the effect of stigmatizing labels, the authors consistently refer to the men and women in the study as 'offenders.' The use of the term 'offender,' itself a stigmatizing label yet not identified as such, left me perplexed as the axiology inherent within the term "offender," the rationale for, or the effect of referring to people as offenders were addressed. The authors' results reflected a similarly unstated yet overwhelmingly Othering framework. A quote from the findings highlights a discourse reflecting a disturbing Othering:

> Female offenders' *inability* to provide accounts and positive self-definitions reached a peak when having to negotiate for the imputed label of incompetent mother. Their life of crime, prostitution, drugs, and subsequent incarceration had, all too often led female offenders to *abandon their children.* Yet despite *excuses and contempt for the whole world*, female offenders' continued commitment and attachment to the master status of motherhood prevented them from casting off the label of incompetent mother. They had *failed to provide* their children with the love, affection, and care *any competent mother* was expected to give. (p. 203) [italics mine]

The use of assumptive and judgmental statements describing women's behaviour provide an example of implicit researcher bias, a bias that has the danger of inferring an authentic description or truth of women's behaviours and informing potentially harmful recommendations. As Kovack (2005) suggests, discourse betrays our frameworks of analysis and creates and recreates the production of truths. Similarly, Smith L (1999) in her book *Decolonizing Methodologies*, describes the importance for challenging conventional qualitative research that has historically harmed rather than helped the people of its focus:

> …stories about research and particularly about researchers (the human carriers of research) were intertwined with stories about all other forms of colonization and injustice. These were cautionary tales where the surface story was not as important as the underlying examples of cultural protocols broken, values negated, small tests failed and key people ignored. The greater danger, however, was in the creeping policies that intruded into every aspect of our lives, legitimated by research, informed more often by ideology. (p. 3)

In other words, conventional ethnographies draw on positivist ontological and epistemological assumptions of objectivity, wherein the researcher's location, interpretation, and analysis are considered neutral (Walby, 2007). In the aforementioned example, an uncritical consumer of the research might accept those renditions of the women's behaviour as accurate, and interpret women's counter narratives as evidence of further pathology and denial. For the critical reader, however, these renditions reveal more about the researcher's own standpoint (albeit unstated) than about the research participants' actual experiences, and risk becoming increasingly fictionalized and morphed 'truths' informing conventional theory and practice.

[104] The goal of taking a critically reflexive stance is to account and make explicit the researcher's values, positionality, knowledge and biases in order to increase the credibility of the findings (Cutcliffe, 2003). According to Finley (2002a, 2002b), reflexivity can help the reader to better distinguish between the researcher's and researchee's perspectives and consider the placement and presence of each. It can allow greater transparency of the research process and evaluation of the methodological decisions. For the researcher, it can facilitate insight into their personal responses and the relationship dynamics within the interview. As a teaching tool, it can empower other researchers to engage in greater consciousness within research activities. On one end of the continuum, reflexivity can simply acknowledge the bias of the researcher. *(As a non-Aboriginal, middle-class, urbanite woman, I have never lived without access to clean water, and, therefore, wonder about the challenges of maintaining a 'sanitary' home, an environment not deemed neglectful should child welfare workers come a knockin').* At the other end, it has the potential to utilize a researcher's insight and an ongoing meta-analysis to consider the broader political dimensions of the research project (*Given that child welfare policies frequently reflect Eurocentric middleclass, urban standards, the chasm between possible cleanliness standards or realities and intentions of neglect become evident*). Being reflexive, we can be free to use a portfolio of methods, acknowledging the fit and the impact of each. It allows us to listen for the layering and placement of voices and play devil's advocate with our own theory. Reflexivity according to (Cutcliffe, 2003). According to Finley (2002a, 2002b), "… involves a reflective self-examination of our own ideas and an open discussion and comparison of our research experiences" (p. 286). Similarly, Hertz (1997) suggests that reflexivity is "… ubiquitous. It permeates every aspect of the research process, challenging us to be more fully conscious of the ideology, culture and politics of those we study and those we select as our audience" (p. viii). Whereas subjectivity was once considered a liability in qualitative research, Finley (2002b) contends, it is now an opportunity for greater credibility and transparency – and the debate is no longer whether reflexivity has a place, instead it is on how to do it.

While reflexivity can enhance the credibility of the research and visibility of the researcher, it is not without difficulties or a risk of enhancing oppression (Ferguson, 1997), of justifying knowledge claims rather than subjecting them to query (White, 2001), or creating dances of self-absorption. As Finlay (2002) cautions, "the process of engaging in reflexivity is perilous, full of muddy ambiguity and multiple trails" (p. 212). Cutcliffe (2003) questions if we can ever really account for ourselves, if the inventory of a priori knowledge and values can ever be an attainable or complete process.

In the quest for a reflexive revealing of a dynamic and multi-faceted Self, Padgett (1998) cautions against reflexivity potentially becoming "unauthorized autobiography and tedious self-absorption" (p. 111) and D'Cruz et al., (2007) forewarn a journey of self-indulgence. Similarly, Finley (2002a) suggests in "taking the threatening path of personal disclosure, the researcher treads a cliff edge where it is all too easy to fall into an infinite regress of excessive self-analysis at the expense of focusing on research participants" (p. 532).

> One of the imagined horrors of taking another turn on the reflexive spiral is that it will suddenly start spinning, with the researcher helplessly caught up in a whirlpool of analysis in which he [sic] writes about his studies of studies about studies about studies ad infinitum (ad nauseam), ending up with an analysis to which the reader shrugs and says "so what" as she closes the pages (Macmillan, cited in Finley, 2002a, p. 542).

[105] Feminist research, described by Reinharz (1992), is an approach using a variety of research methods guided by feminist theory involving a critical analysis of scholarship. In its aim for social change, it incorporates values of diversity and multidisciplinary approaches and the inclusion of the relationship and power dynamics between the researcher, the people interviewed, and the reader. Rather than a singular method, as Campbell and Wasco (2000) suggest, the overarching objective of feminist research methodologies is to capture people's "lived experiences in a respectful manner that legitimizes [their] voices as sources of knowledge. In other words, the process of research is as of as much importance as the outcome" (p. 783).

[106] Within the literature, IE has utilized the experience of informants to explicate relations of ruling across a variety of settings:

- Brown (2006) studied how risk discourse denied mother's unpaid work contributions within child protection;
- Hughes (2006) reviewed how women's discourses were excluded from child custody law;
- Luken and Vaughan (2006) examined how early 20th Century childrearing norms were codified according to a burgeoning housing market;
- Walby (2005) looked at a textual analysis of surveillance processes;
- Campbell (2004) studied practices of exclusion inherent within a rhetoric of inclusion in federal Canadian corrections;
- Truman (2003) examined research participants' experiences as mediated by research ethics boards;
- Mykhalovskiy and McCoy (2002) examined racism and colonization in health discourse;
- Rankin (2002) explored how patient satisfaction surveys subjugated patient treatment experiences in hospital policy development;
- Pence (2001) presented how legal texts sanitized safety concerns of women who were battered;
- Campbell (2001) examined how nurses' professional expertise is subjugated by routinized assessments in community nursing;
- Grahame (1998) explored intake screen processes of Asian immigrant women into and out of gendered job training programs;
- Smith G (1998) looked at homophobia within educational regimes in schools; and
- McKendy (1992) studied emotion management within group treatment of men who abuse their wives.

A common goal of these selected works is to make understandable the processes of marginalization and to explore the unique circumstances wherein someone's lived experience arises. These 'someones' act as informants of those circumstances rather than as the subjects of study. Their experience of those circumstances may not include an understanding of macro forces, but it orients the researcher's understanding of macro forces within the actual lived experiences of individuals. As such, explication, as a central IE research process, can identify ruling relations that affect people and IE can, therefore, be a powerful "resource for activism and for transformation of the conditions of people's lives" (Campbell & Gregor, 2004, p. 61).

[107] Smith contends this demystification occurs at both extra local and local levels. The extra local, or institutional level is often textually organized, that then affects and shapes peoples experience at the local level. "People participate in social relations, often unknowingly, in the act competently and knowledgeably to concert and coordinate their own actions with professional standards or family expectations or organizational rules." (Campbell & Gregor, 2004, p. 31)

[108] Specifically, IE focuses on explicating ruling relations and the extra and trans-local forms of organization, including health, education, business and law industries, and the "objectified forms of consciousness and organization based on textual technologies" (Smith D, 2007, p. 412). In addition, these industries are viewed as dynamic, that people are both constitutive of and constituted by these organizations, organizations that regulate and coordinate our everyday activities through the *social relations of capital*. This Marxist notion of social relations suggests that activities are a "sequence of action in which people are involved at different stages but not necessarily directly engaged in a shared work process" (p. 412). These activities direct research, as a politicized activity, to explore how people's activities are communicated and arranged, or textualized, with institutionalized associations. In this manner, institutions are not treated as things, but rather as dynamic entities that coordinate and regulate people.

[109] Texts act as a skeleton for ruling relations and allow standardization across settings and methods of regulation across particularities (Smith D, 1987). For example, in welfare work, standardized forms and tracking systems are used at the local setting despite being developed at the provincial or federal level (Weigt, 2006). In child welfare, risk assessments and practice policies coordinate consistent responses across agencies (Brown, 2006), and risk level assessments and case plans manage persons on parole across offices (Smith D, 2005).

[110] Smith D (1999) argues that texts are activated by people who use them. Relations of ruling depend on this activation linking people's activities across sites. When texts are activated, such as assessments, the text, or form, creates a construct of the individual that takes precedence and in essence objectifies individuals. Workers begin to see only those aspects of the client that the form identifies. Smith argues this also objectifies and controls the workers, extracting only the information that ultimately supports efficient and consistent decision making. In essence, activated texts allow ruling interests to supersede interests of clients or, in other words, institutional accounts of client needs actually express organizational interests and become technologies of knowing and ruling. The worker and the client become objects within organizational documents and, as such, IE is interested in how a subject's experience is organized. These texts, created by governmental and non-governmental agencies (including the media and professional bodies) are coordinated ideologically and provide a common interpretation of the social world. This interpretation allows for a normative discourse, a framework for prescribed talk and action, as well as parameters for determining what is acceptable and what is deviant (Smith D, 1999).

[111] Walby (2005) suggests that Smith's conceptualization of texts is akin to dossiers within Weber's notion of bureaucratization and constituents within Foucault's rational knowledge systems. All require the generation of centrally produced knowledge dissemination and tracking systems as essential for state power. Walby (2007) maintains that text creation involves a construction of a "truth" producing a virtual rendering of reality created from an "institutionally derived hermeneutic frame" that excludes the "subject's standpoint from the account" (p. 1012).

[112] Walby (2005) describes how texts are instrumental in maintaining surveillance processes. "Texts transport the observations and discriminations of surveillance agents from one setting to another, at the same time, the particularities of the surveillance subject disappear into the discursive" (p. 162). The text by itself, however, does not regulate; it requires the activation and interpretation by a worker to coordinate the worker/client relations, an interpretation that is also bound by the relations of ruling.

[113] Smith D (2007) critiques mainstream sociology for studying people according to preset objectifying conceptualizations. Instead, IE shifts the lens of conventional sociology by questioning marginalized persons not about themselves, but rather about their experience with prominent systems (Smith D, 2005). Institutional ethnographers take peoples' localized experiences and material conditions as their starting point and turn the lens of analysis onto the trans-local institutions to uncover relations of ruling. The "aim is to explicate the actual social processes and practices organizing people's everyday experience. This means a sociology in which we do not transform people into objects, but preserve their presence as subjects (Smith D, 1984, p. 6).

In addition, what distinguishes Institutional Ethnography from other ethnographic methods is the goal to *explicate* actual lived experiences and not just describe them (Campbell & Gregor, 2004). For example, anthropological ethnography attempts to describe accurate accounts of how things are and often uses triangulation from various data sources to test the accuracy of what informants said. Grounded theory aims for generalization or theory building to explain what informants experience, and similarly, symbolic interactionists attempt to make generalizations about how people 'do' their lived experience without looking at external causes and effects. Institutional Ethnography, in contrast, seeks to "explicate the ruling relations that organize and coordinate the local experiences of informants" (p. 89). In other words, informants' experiences do not occur in isolation; they occur instead within discursively-organized settings--where informants live, speak, and relate is organized by extra-local institutions, often beyond the informant's lens of understanding. For instance, if an informant describes living in substandard housing, an institutional ethnographer would explicate how subsidized housing policies, real estate markets, welfare rates, city zoning/planning practices, or rural/remote housing funding jurisdictions might organize the informant's experience. While the informant may not be aware of these macro organizational influences, the institutional ethnographer starts with the informants lived experience to map and link organizational influences, organizational influences delivered by real people doing actual tasks.

[114] Creswell (1998) suggests phenomenology has been used in sociology, psychology, nursing, health sciences, and education involving various frameworks, including "reflective/transcendental phenomenology, dialogical phenomenology, empirical phenomenology, existential phenomenology,

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Hermeneutic Phenomenology, and social phenomenology" (p. 53). In addition, critical Hermeneutic Phenomenology has been used as the study of interpretation for the purpose of emancipation and empowerment (Smith J, 1993). A brief review of the literature indicates a number of scholars have used Hermeneutic Phenomenology to focus on the "richness of human experience… to understand a situation from the subject's own frame of reference" (Baker et al., 1992, p. 1355). A cursory scan of hermeneutic phenomenological research includes:

- The experience of families facing adversity and meeting with key people (Neander & Skott, 2006);
- The lived experience of people with Alzheimer's disease (Galvin, Todres & Richardson, 2005);
- The phenomena of professional practice judgment among occupational therapists (Patterson & Higgs, 2005);
- The experience of self-protection behaviour in nurses working with organ donation (Kent, 2004);
- The experience of mothering and caring for a son with AIDS (Nelms, 2002);
- The experience of caring for a family member with Alzheimer's disease (Butcher & Buckwalter, 2002);
- The dedicated drinker's lived experience of suffering (Smith B, 1998); and
- The experience of watching television (Langsdorf, 1994).

Although this tradition could potentially be used to explore phenomena as a purely academic exercise in meaning making, this cursory scan suggests that much hermeneutic phenomenological research has arisen from the health sciences for the purpose of understanding suffering and enhancing well-being.

[115] To illuminate the concept of creative imagining in reduction, Giorgi and Giorgi (2003) give as example the reduction of a black ceramic cup to its essential components. To discover the essence, one identifies and imaginatively removes elements to consider if the cup's essence is significantly compromised. Its colour and material can be replaced and are not essential, however, the nonporous materiality is. A cup can still be a cup regardless of its colour and material as long as the material is non-porous.

[116] Sampling size within exploratory research tends to be small. Padgett (1998) and Marshall (1996) contend that while sample sizes can be as small as single digits, the correct number is reached when the research question is answered and the data are saturated or no new themes emerge.

[117] Denzin and Lincoln (2005) and Padgett (1998) talk about qualitative research resulting in descriptions that offer rich descriptions of the phenomena. In contrast to quantitative research where data can be generalizable and is "a mile wide and an inch deep" (p. 2), qualitative researchers are interested in garnering rich and thick descriptions of a particular experience and are less concerned about generalizability (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

[118] Manitoba does not yet have mandatory registration of social workers. As a result, individuals without BSW degrees can and do perform social work activities. http://www.mirsw.mb.ca/site/mcsw?nav=02

[119] Panasonic Digital Voice Recorder RR-US470 Software

[120] This third party had a PhD in social work and specialized in qualitative research.

[121] http://cmap.ihmc.us/

[122] "The Inner City Social Work Program located at 485 Selkirk Avenue is an inner-city extension of the Faculty of Social Work on the Fort Garry Campus. This BSW program is an ACCESS program, designed to support students who have traditionally faced systemic barriers common to inner-city life experience such as poverty, racism, school failure and marginalization, all factors preventing accessibility to post-secondary education. Candidates for the program must have a commitment to the profession of social work." This center is also often referred to as WEC, the acronym for the William Norrie Center. http://www.umanitoba.ca/social_work/programs/icswp.html

[123] The North End of Winnipeg is known for its high rates of poverty, substandard housing, gangs, crime, and violence. The area is home to an over representation of Aboriginal people and new immigrants who experience racism and marginalization (Silver, 2010).

[124] A genogram is a pictorial description of a person's family. It can resemble a family tree but it also identifies the strength and type of relationships connecting people. It can also use words to identify illnesses or significant events. See McGoldrick, M., Gerson, R., and Shellenberger, S. (1999). *Genograms: Assessment and intervention* (2nd Ed.). New York: W. W. Norton.

[125] The Seven Sacred Teachings refer to love, respect, courage, honesty, wisdom, humility and truth. http://www.thesharingcircle.com/sacred_teachings.html

[126] Aboriginal Justice Inquiry – Child Welfare Initiative (AJI-CWI) was a joint initiative between The Province of Manitoba, The Manitoba Métis Federation, The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, and The Manitoba Keewatinook Ininew Okimowin. Between 2003 and 2005 the implementation of the restructuring of the child welfare system in Manitoba occurred, transferring child welfare services for Aboriginal children to Aboriginal organizations.
http://www.aji-cwi.mb.ca/eng/index.html

[127] Kohkom is Cree for Grandmother.

[128] "Manitoba Youth Centre (MYC), the largest youth correctional centre in Manitoba, is located at 170 Doncaster Street in Winnipeg. It can house approximately 157 young males and females. Youth admitted to MYC have been charged as young offenders. They are held in custody until the courts make a decision on their charges." http://cc.bingj.com/cache.aspx?q=manitoba+youth+ center&d=4601748375536431&mkt=en-CA&setlang=en-CA&w=9cdecd5c,2335edaf

[129] Headingley Correctional Centre is a minimum, medium and maximum security facility for up to 458 adult males, who are predominantly Aboriginal. It has a domestic violence unit, a Community Release Unit, a remand unit, and a treatment unit for men convicted of sexual offences. It was built in 1930 and is located in Stony Mountain, Manitoba, 11 km north of Winnipeg.
http://www.gov.mb.ca/justice/criminal/corrections/index.html#adultcorrections

[130] "Stony Mountain Institution is a medium-security facility located in Stony Mountain, Manitoba, about 11 km from Winnipeg. It opened in 1877 and can accommodate up to 506 inmates. The population is divided among five operational units offering various levels of supervision, including a healing unit for Aboriginal inmates (Ni-Miikana)." http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/facilit/institutprofiles/stonymountain-eng.shtml

[131] The Truth and Reconciliation Commission held its first national event June 16 to 19, 2010 in Winnipeg. "Its mandate is to inform all Canadians about what happened in Indian Residential Schools (IRS). The Commission will document the truth of survivors, families, communities and anyone personally affected by the IRS experience." http://www.trc-cvr.ca/

[132] South East Collegiate is a high school for Aboriginal students in Winnipeg, MB.
http://www.secollege.ca/about.html

[133] "The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) was formed in 1988 to act as an advocate on issues that commonly affected all of the First Nations of Manitoba. At the time when AMC began, there were 61 recognized Manitoba First Nations consisting of 64,315 First Nation citizens. Today, there are 64 First Nations, with a total of 136,616 (May 2011) First Nation citizens making up 11% of the provincial population. AMC's primary focus is political but will also fill in gaps that cannot be bridged by regional services. Two examples are the Eagle's Nest, which helps First Nations youth return to school, and the Patient Advocate Unit which helps First Nations patients navigate Manitoba's health care system. On a

national front, AMC works closely with the Assembly of First Nations which collectively represents the political interests of the 633 First Nations across the country." http://manitobachiefs.com/

[134] "Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) is one of the federal government departments responsible for meeting the Government of Canada's obligations and commitments to First Nations, Inuit and Métis, and for fulfilling the federal government's constitutional responsibilities in the North. AANDC's responsibilities are largely determined by numerous statutes, negotiated agreements and relevant legal decisions. Most of the Department's programs, representing a majority of its spending--are delivered through partnerships with Aboriginal communities and federal-provincial or federal-territorial agreements." http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ai/index-eng.asp

[135] The devolution process refers to the restructuring of child welfare services in Manitoba. In 2006, four authorities were created to provide child welfare services in Manitoba: the First Nations of Northern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority, the First Nations of Southern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority, the Métis Child and Family Services Authority, and the General Child and Family Services Authority. While these authorities, and their 23 respective mandated agencies, were granted the responsibility and capacity to administer and provide culturally relevant child and family services, all authorities still adhere to provincial standards, funding, and monitoring. Bourassa, A. (2010). *Summary review of the Manitoba Child Welfare System for the Saskatchewan Child Welfare Review Report.* http://saskchildwelfarereview.ca/Review-Manitoba-Child-Welfare-System-CBourassa.pdf

[136] See Comack, E. (2012). *Racialized policing: Aboriginal people's encounters with the police.* Winnipeg, MB: Fernwood. Elizabeth Comack's ground breaking study explores the extent of police racial profiling, brutality and harassment that Aboriginal people experience.

[137] The Bear Clan Patrol was a volunteer force operating in the 1990s that protected vulnerable peoples in North End Winnipeg from violence and exploitation. Volunteers received 20 hours of training in first aid, safety precautions, and conflict resolution. It was noted for working to protect Aboriginal peoples from police harassment. http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/LOP/researchpublications/mr131-e.htm#SUICIDE%20PREVENTION:%20%20SOME%20COMMUNITY%20INITIATIVES%28txt%29

[138] Headingley Correctional Centre is a minimum, medium and maximum security facility for up to 458 adult males, who are predominantly Aboriginal. It has a domestic violence unit, a Community Release Unit, a remand unit, and a treatment unit for men convicted of sexual offences. It was built in 1930 and is located in Stony Mountain, Manitoba, about 11 km from Winnipeg. http://www.gov.mb.ca/justice/criminal/corrections/index.html#adultcorrections

[139] Doing good has been linked to the helping and social service professions. For example, see Acker and Feuerverger (1996) and Pellegrino (2001).

[140] Core principles of the strength-perspective include:

- Every person, group community has strengths;
- Trauma and abuse may be injurious but also source of challenge and opportunity;
- Everyone has inner wisdom and ability to make good choices;
- the upper limits of the capacity to grow and change are more that we can know;
- Collaboration is the best way to serve; and
- Every environment is full of resources (Saleeby, 2005).

[141] A recent study suggests evidence that more privileged individuals may in fact be less well-suited to altruistic pursuits. Piff, Stancato, Côté, Mendoza-Denton, and Keltner (2012) found that higher class is correlated with anti-social tendencies, unethical decision-making, and greater propensity to engage in behaviours that harm others. They surmise that increased wealth is obtained by greed-based behaviours, that in turn influence and shape social interactions.

[142] This lack of systemic inclusion is in part attributable to the prevalent consumer approach to service user input (Barnes et al., 2000). The consumer approach was flawed as it occurred often only post facto resulting in limiting the power and influence service users had over the implementation of recommendations. The consumer approach operated under a broader empowerment model where it was service users who were encouraged to change – change that was not expected of the existing oppressive structures. By extension, service providers, not at the receiving end of change expectations, responded with reluctance and interpreted the feedback service users provided as a "challenge to professional expertise" (p. 190).

[143] Convict criminologists offer an extensive understanding of the effects of the criminal justice system and a strength and determination for simply surviving prisoning. As Irwin (2003) describes: "Their contact with the prison world has been close up rather than armchair, and thus they keenly appreciate the astonishing gulf between what they see (human beings) and what mainstream criminologists, policy makers, and the public see (animals, scum)" (p. xxii). Distinguished scholars include John Irwin from the Department of Sociology at the University of California, Berkley; Charles M. Terry from the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice, University of St. Louis; Stephen Richards from the Department of Sociology and Criminology at Northern Kentucky University; and Richard Jones from the Faculty of Sociology at Marquette University (Ross & Richards, 2003a). See also http://www.convictcriminology.org/index.html

[144] http://www.convictcriminology.org/index.html

[145] Publications by convict criminologists include: *The Journal of Prisoners on Prisons,* Irwin, J. (1970). *The felon.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall; Irwin, J. (1980). *Prisons in turmoil.* Boston: Little, Brown; Irwin, J. (1985). *The jail: Managing the underclass in American society.* Berkeley: University of California Press; Irwin, J. (2005). *The warehouse prison: Disposal of the new dangerous class.* Los Angeles: Roxbury; Irwin, J., & Austin, J. (1994). *It's about time: America's imprisonment binge.* Belmont, CA: Wadsworth; McCleary, R. (1992). *Dangerous men: The sociology of parole.* New York: Harrow and Heston. (Original work published 1978); Ross, J. I., & Richards, S. C. (2002). *Behind bars: Surviving prison.* New York: Alpha/Penguin; and Ross, J. I., & Richards, S. C. (2003b). *Convict criminology.* Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

[146] See for example government documents in Milloy, J. (1999). *A national crime: The Canadian government and the residential school system 1879 to 1986.* Winnipeg, MB: University of Manitoba Press.