

BICYCLES FOR MUTUAL AID: A PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT
WITH THE TORONTO BIKE BRIGADE

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Abstract

The term “bicycles for development” (BFD) has emerged to consider bicycling for achieving similar goals to sport for development (SFD) – or the use of sport as a vehicle for social development (Kidd, 2008). This project builds on previous BFD work by forging novel directions for research on BFD, including: 1) how bicycle-related activities contribute to COVID-19 recovery, specifically in promoting a more environmentally sustainable and equitable world for vulnerable populations; and 2) the ways that cycling can be taken up by QT and BIPOC to challenge existing systems of inequality. Guided by a participatory action research project in partnership with The Bike Brigade, the data collection methods used in this project included arts-based methods and semi-structured interviews. Findings suggested that QT and BIPOC cyclists were taking up bicycling through mutual aid frameworks to support their communities and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and exacerbated inequality. Further research is needed in the fields of BFD and SFD that: 1) prioritize and center diverse perspectives on bicycling; and 2) engage with creative methodologies such as arts-based approaches.

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List of Abbreviations

Acronym	Term
BB	The Bike Brigade
BFD	Bicycles for Development
BIPOC	Black peoples, Indigenous peoples, Persons of Colour
GBV	Gender-based violence
PAR	Participatory Action Research
POC	Persons of Colour
SFD	Sport for Development
QT	Queer and/or Transgender persons
QTBIPOC	Black peoples, Indigenous peoples, Persons of Colour and Queer and/or Transgender persons
QTPOC	Persons of Colour and Queer and/or Transgender persons

Chapter 1 - Introduction

The structural and systemic violence of settler colonialism... continues to impact Indigenous sovereignty and the safety of Black communities, as well as refugees, migrants and other racialized peoples, women, trans and queer folks, and disabled people. Food insecurity and poverty remains pervasive in these marginalized communities by design. This underscores the importance of knowing that delivering food and essentials to our most vulnerable community members is only our first step towards a more equitable future in this City we call home. (Wang, 2021, from The Bike Brigade's Year in Review 2021)

This quotation indicates an urgent need for anti-oppressive work that responds to the COVID-19 pandemic and pervasive inequality in Toronto. The bicycle may play a key role in creating more equitable futures. Indeed, in May 2020, the UN formed a taskforce to better understand how to “make post-COVID-19 mobility more environmentally sound, healthy and sustainable” with an eye to “bicycles as driver[s] of post-COVID-19 ‘green recovery’ (UN, 2020a). At the same time, the UN questioned whether investing in bicycles may help achieve gender equality in post-pandemic life, while also “help[ing] save lives, protect[ing] the environment and support[ing] poverty reduction” (UN, 2020a; UN, 2020b). It is thus timely to investigate the potential for sustained benefits that support vulnerable populations and protect the environment by building on previous research that considers the potential of the bicycle to bring about social, economic and environmental change (McSweeney et al., 2020). The need to build equitable futures is particularly urgent when the COVID-19 pandemic has emerged during a pivotal moment where people across the globe are unevenly reckoning with the climate emergencies. In turn, during the lockdown periods non-governmental organizations, international organizations and governments

observed dropping pollution levels and the attraction of more flexible transport options such as bicycling as green and healthy sustainable options (UN, 2020a).

To date, most sociological literature on cycling is focused on the global North context and examines urban transport (Berney, 2018; Cochoy et al., 2019; Popan, 2018) and the benefits of cycling for one's health (Mayers & Glover, 2019). The field of study, "bicycles for development" (BFD) has emerged to consider bicycling for achieving similar goals to sport for development (SFD) – or the use of sport as a vehicle for non-sport social development (Kidd, 2008). While BFD mirrors the SFD movement (McSweeney et al., 2020), BFD is unique from SFD in its focus on bicycles as the sustainable mode of transportation and potential tool for achieving social development objectives. Even with advances in research and practice related to the emerging BFD and the 'bicycle justice' movement – which problematizes the race-, gender-, and class-based disparities involved in bicycling (Golub et al., 2016; Steinmann et al., 2021) – we still do not know how these inequities intersect with COVID-19 or its influence on and access to bicycles to support QT (queer and/or transgender persons) and BIPOC (Black peoples, Indigenous peoples, Persons of Colour) in (post-)pandemic life.

It is important to briefly note some key terms that guided and underpinned the research at hand. Firstly, I choose to use the term BIPOC due to its popular uptake in racial justice activism, and as it acknowledges the important differences between different racialized groups. Crucially, there is no 'one-size-fits-all' term, as some people may prefer the term "racialized" due to its connotations with the social process that one becomes racialized, as opposed to a category based on biological traits (OHRC, 2005). I also use the term QT to encompass those who are 2SLGBTQIA+, as Queer identities include a broad range of sexual and gender identities, behaviours, and expressions (CCGSD, 2020). The "T" refers to transgender individuals, or

individuals who are of a different gender than the gender they were assigned at birth. Transgender individuals encompass a range of gender identities, including non-binary, genderqueer, men, and women (NCTE, 2022). The term QTBIPOC is used to encompass those who are 2SLGBTQIA+ as well as Black, Indigenous, and/or Persons of Colour. In other words, QTBIPOC represents those who inhabit intersecting experiences of being BIPOC and 2SLGBTQIA+. Throughout this thesis, I expand more on these terms and the importance of working alongside those with intersecting identities, such as QTBIPOC. In the following section, I outline the research questions that guided this project.

1.1 Research Questions

This thesis takes up the UN's recent focus on (UN, 2020a; UN, 2020b) bicycles as a possible solution to the challenges of a pandemic recovery and will build on previous bicycle research – and bicycle justice scholarship more broadly. I do this by critically exploring: 1) how bicycle-related activities contribute to COVID-19 recovery, specifically in promoting a more environmentally sustainable and equitable world for vulnerable populations; and 2) the ways in which cycling can be taken up by QT and BIPOC to challenge existing systems of inequality. To carry out this research, I used a participatory action research (PAR) framework to build strong collaborative approaches to bicycle-related work; and employed arts-based methods and interviews. Specifically, this research involved community-based research with The Bike Brigade (BB), a non-profit mutual aid organization situated in Toronto. Using PAR strategies, this project considered how BB's work responded to three central – yet understudied – issues in the (post-)pandemic context: 1) gender-based violence (GBV) prevention; 2) anti-racism; and 3) environmental justice. These issues were highlighted by the organization as particularly pressing because BB community members voiced a need for anti-oppressive work that supports the needs

of QT and BIPOC community members. Further, the foci of this project builds on the previous BFD SSHRC grant titled “Cycling Against Poverty? Researching a Sport for Development Movement and an ‘Object’ in/for Development” (2016-2021; PI’s: Lyndsay Hayhurst, Brad Millington, Brian Wilson, and Rob Vanwysenberghe) which called for research that focuses on bicycles, GBV, environmental justice, and PAR approaches to BFD.

The following research questions were developed alongside BB, based on a PAR approach (which I outline in greater detail in the method/ology section):

- 1. How does the convergence between COVID-19, increased GBV and systemic racism — which all come to define our contemporary urban moment and unevenly impact communities — influence the work of BB and its membership?*

The “shadow pandemic” refers to increased GBV due to lockdowns and social-distancing rules that have made many women and girls more vulnerable to interpersonal and sexual violence (Sri et al., 2021). BB emerged to “serve isolated and vulnerable communities to deliver essentials” as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic and exacerbated inequality alongside racialized, gendered, and classed lines (The Bike Brigade, n. d. a, para 1). This research question also directly responds to the UN’s call to “make post-COVID-19 mobility more environmentally sound, healthy and sustainable” with an eye to “bicycles as driver[s] of post-COVID-19 ‘green recovery’ (UN, 2020a). As the Canadian government plans for a pandemic recovery, they have emphasized the need for a green renewal and socially-just approach to support underprivileged communities, especially those who are food insecure and experience poverty (PHAC, 2020). Using bicycles to promote gender and racial equality and safety seem all-the-more pressing to consider in the context of COVID-19, as the intersecting effects of racialized and gendered oppression have resulted in BIPOC women being disproportionately impacted by the economic strain of the pandemic

(CRIA W, 2021). Studying BB's work can thus offer key insights into current and future bicycle programming by better understanding how the bicycle can be used to support vulnerable community members (post-)pandemic, specifically those impacted by GBV, systemic racism, and environmental degradation (including more-than-humans).

2. How do QT and BIPOC volunteers of BB use bicycles in the COVID-19 pandemic context to contribute to GBV prevention, anti-racism, and the climate crisis?

The bicyclist has been constructed as “the ultimate moral citizen,” (Steinmann, p. 31, 2020) due to its associations with White-washed environmentalism and health (Aldred, 2010; Green et al., 2012). At the same time, BIPOC and low-income communities may use the bicycle out of necessity, while their perspectives are neglected in bicycle planning spaces (Hoffman, 2016). While bicycling may indeed be an environmentally sustainable mobility option in the face of a climate crisis, there is a need to address racial and gender equality within green recovery discussions, since communities with intersecting lines of racial, gendered, and classed oppression have been impacted the hardest by the climate crisis (Godfrey, 2012; UN Women, 2022). To respond to the UN's (2020a) call to study the bicycle as a tool for an environmentally sustainable pandemic recovery, I draw from literature on bicycles, GBV, systemic racism, and environmental justice, to challenge the White-washed environmentalist discourses about the bicycle. Working directly with QT and BIPOC cyclists as part of the methods of this project may thus help decenter Whiteness in current knowledge production about bicycling, as Lugo has contended that decentering Whiteness in bicycling requires “welcoming diverse perspectives and strategies” (Lugo, 2016, p. 185).

While previous feminist work has examined the gendered nature of cycling and urban space by working with cisgender women cyclists (Garvey, 1995; LaFrambois, 2019), I aim to

expand this research to include and amplify the voices of QT persons and to disrupt the gender binary that has been upheld through the settler colonial project (Lugones, 2010; Simpson, 2017). Previous research has demonstrated that cyclists are often vulnerable to GBV and racism due to their increased visibility on the streets (Lubitow et al., 2019). It stands to reason then that QT cyclists, especially QTBIPOC cyclists may be vulnerable to unsafe cycling. For example, BIPOC cyclists are particularly vulnerable to racism and unsafe cycling, due in part to a lack of BIPOC representation in decision-making and policy development for cycling (Lugo, 2016). At the same time, cycling is a potentially empowering site of resistance to GBV and racism (Lubitow et al., 2019, Meador, 2016). It is thus essential to work with QT and BIPOC cyclists to understand the ways in which they may challenge systems of oppression that result in systemic violence and oppression. Further, QT and BIPOC perspectives are essential to challenging White-washed environmental discourses when examining the bicycle as an environmentally sustainable form of mobility. When determining research questions for the project, the BB community had voiced a need to support safe cycling for QT and BIPOC community members. This question is meant to highlight the ways in which QT and BIPOC cyclists challenge systemic gender and racial inequality, to contribute to the literature on making bicycling safer and more accessible for diverse cyclists.

3. How can BB support QT and BIPOC volunteers and community members in accessing safe bicycling?

This research question was developed alongside BB and directly supports their anti-oppressive framework and commitment to improving access to their organization. Bicycling has been critiqued as being dominated by White, cis-gender men who are middle-to-upper class (Golub et al., 2017; Steinmann et al., 2021). As mentioned above, QT and BIPOC voices have

historically been excluded from bicycle advocacy and programming, and this is an issue that BB hopes to address through this research project as several BB volunteers have expressed a need for more intentional spaces for BIPOC cyclists. BB hopes that this project will inform next steps for increasing access to their programming, since it takes a certain level of privilege to volunteer with BB. This study will provide much-needed insights into how BB can support their members and make bicycle spaces more accessible for QT and BIPOC riders already in their community, as well as for potential riders. Further, this research question will shed light on how QT and BIPOC perspectives can inform bicycle programming and access to safe bicycling more broadly.

1.2 Justification and Relevance

To date, few studies have critically examined how the bicycle may be used for emergency resource provision and community-building. Several collectives have emerged to serve local communities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and rising social inequalities, including food insecurity (Wakefield, 2021) and increased vulnerability of contracting and dying from COVID for low income and BIPOC communities (Government of Canada, 2021). In response, BB pairs volunteer cyclists with mutual aid organizations that serve vulnerable community members by offering free bicycle delivery services (The Bike Brigade, n. d. a.). Other similar initiatives include the Made in Hackney project in London, UK (Forrest, 2020) and Relief Riders in Bengaluru, India (Chanda, 2021). Due to the need to socially-distance from others during the COVID-19 pandemic, many governments have implemented new bicycling infrastructure in urban areas to encourage this environmentally sustainable mode of transport that does not involve crowding, such as in public transport (Kraus & Koch, 2021). This has led to an increase in cycling during the pandemic for transport (Kraus & Koch, 2021), and for outdoor physical activity (Park et al., 2020). And yet, few studies have critically explored the potential

contributions that bicycling may make to social- and environmental- justice within the (post-)COVID-19 pandemic context.

Pre-pandemic, Steinmann's (2020) work highlighted the ways that cycling can be used to contribute to the community. In Steinmann's work with unhoused male cyclists, they found that cyclists would use bicycles to transport items for recycling. Further, Steinmann (2020) recommended that subsequent research fill "[t]he need for studies that include female recyclers and that address the cycling-related needs of recent immigrants," (p. 128) as their work focused on male cyclists. Other studies have echoed the need to amplify women, BIPOC, and other cyclists who inhabit marginalized identities to create safe cycling spaces for all (Buehler & Pucher, 2012; Lubitow et al., 2019). Through focusing on the experiences of cyclists who are QT and BIPOC, I hope to fill this gap in literature by amplifying the perspectives of cyclists with diverse identities, as well as discuss novel ways in which bicycles are used to support vulnerable communities through BB's mutual aid programming.

Chapter 1 Summary

In this chapter, I introduced my research, and situated this project within the UN's taskforce to better understand how bicycles may be used for a green COVID-19 pandemic recovery (UN, 2020a). I discussed the BFD movement, which considers bicycling for achieving similar goals to sport for development (SFD) – or the use of sport as a vehicle for non-sport social development (Kidd, 2008). I also listed the research questions guiding this project, as well as their justifications. I outlined the justification and relevance for conducting this study, especially as this study fills the gap in literature about diverse cycling experiences.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

In this section, I outline how the bicycle is discussed in sociological literature, and work done on the three foci of this project with respect to bicycles: 1) gender-based violence prevention; 2) systemic racism; and 3) environmental justice.

2.1 The Bicycle

The bicycle has been discussed as a unique tool for mobility and transportation, especially in the global North. Within leisure studies, qualitative research has examined the diversity of cyclists in urban areas (Aldred, 2010; Mayers & Glover, 2019), including negative attitudes towards cyclists (Delbosc, 2019), and how cyclists can reproduce safer cycling spaces for themselves (Mayers & Glover, 2021). Scholarship in sociocultural studies of sport and physical culture has examined bicycle riding culture using moving methods (Chin et al., 2020; Johnson et al., 2018). Other sociological studies have further studied the connection between the bicycle and various social issues. Discussions around social inequality and the bicycle include how precariously housed youth use the bicycle as cost-effective transportation that enables feelings of freedom, independence, and social inclusion (Crawford et al., 2012); and how bicycling is connected to issues of housing precarity and the opioid crisis (Steinmann, 2020). As a technology of physical culture, the bicycle is implicated within social structures of power, and McSweeney et al. (2020) used actor network theory to understand the bicycle as an agentic non-human object that responds to unequal power relations. If the bicycle can respond to unequal power relations, it can potentially be a tool for achieving development goals.

The term BFD has emerged to consider bicycling for achieving similar goals to SFD – or the use of sport as a vehicle for social development (Kidd, 2008). BFD is unique from SFD in its

focus on bicycles as a sustainable mode of transportation and potential tool for achieving social development objectives. Indeed, previous work in BFD scholarship has hailed the bicycle as a possible catalyst for social development (Ardizzi et al., 2020; Bandoles, 2018). This includes how bicycle programs can: provide a safe and inclusive space for youth (Steinmann et al., 2021); increase mobility and access to economic resources for refugee and immigrant women (van der Kloof et al., 2014); act as a development tool in the global South (Ardizzi et al., 2020); and respond to GBV for women in the global South (Hayhurst et al., 2022). The project outlined herein, in collaboration with BB, will contribute to the existing literature on BFD, since it is not a “traditional” SFD program where sport is centered as the catalyst for development (Kidd, 2008). Rather, for BB, bicycling is used as a delivery method, rather than for sport. Thus, their work can potentially build on, and extend, traditional scholarly understandings of both SFD and BFD.

Beyond developmental goals, literature on bicycle activism exists, specifically on “Critical Mass” rides (Furness, 2010; Vivanco, 2013). Beginning in 1992 in San Francisco, Critical Mass bicycle demonstrations have been used in over one hundred cities across the globe (Blickstein & Hanson, 2001). These demonstrations involve a group bicycle ride on busy streets during rush hour and are meant to disrupt automobile traffic to assert cyclist rights (Vivanco, 2013). While Critical Mass rides have been used to promote cycling as an environmentally friendly alternative to automobiles, Lugo (2016) has critiqued this “bicycle equity” movement for privileging the voices of White cyclists. Systemic racism in cycling spaces will be discussed in the latter section of this literature review.

2.2 Gender-based Violence and Bicycles

GBV can be understood as any form of violence (systemic, overt, interpersonal, etc.) that is directed towards women and other categories of gender who are targeted *because* of their

gender (Strid & Verloo, 2020). While women represent a disproportionate number of reported victims of violence and especially intimate partner violence and sexual violence (Gill & Mason-Bish, 2013), this is not representative of all victims of GBV (Haynes & DeShong, 2017). Most framing of GBV in development scholarship assumes that GBV targets women and girls, but this framing results in “the exclusion of what can be termed ‘non-binary gendered violence’ suffered by individuals who do not fit neatly into binary gender or heteronormative categories” (West, 2013, p. 111; Haynes & DeShong, 2017). Transgender individuals, for example, are one of the most vulnerable populations subject to systemic and overt violence due to transphobia and heteronormativity (Divan et al., 2016). GBV prevention should encompass and therefore target violence that stems from gender hierarchies and heteronormativity.

The role of bicycles and BFD programs in GBV are particularly important since COVID-19 has created a de facto “shadow pandemic” of GBV (UN Women, 2020), which has disproportionately impacted women and girls of colour (Khanlou et al., 2020). In particular, there has been a notable global upsurge in GBV and a resulting strain on support services promoted by non-governmental organizations and a lack of safe spaces for women and girls to seek care (IWG, 2020). For QT individuals, the COVID-19 pandemic has increased their vulnerability to experience abuse and violence from reduced social support and being forced to take shelter in unsafe housing contexts (Gibb et al., 2020). In Canada, the pandemic has made QT, BIPOC, and persons living with disabilities, among other marginalized groups vulnerable to GBV (VAWLN, n.d.). A response to the pandemic using a gender lens is thus urgently needed to focus on the specific risks and vulnerabilities women, girls and QT people face due to deeply entrenched inequalities that shape how people of all gender identities experience COVID-19 (Papp & Hersh, 2020).

There are many SFD programs that aim to prevent GBV against women and girls through sport (Beyond Sport, 2021; Inspire Indonesia 2021; UK Government 2015). SFD scholarship has reflected this in the various studies that highlight the experiences of women and girls (Hayhurst & Socorro Cruz Centeno, 2019; Hayhurst et al., 2014). Indeed, SFD programs may provide a useful space for preventing GBV, and there is evidence that bicycles specifically can help achieve this goal (Hayhurst et al., 2022). Undoubtedly, the gap in SFD programming and research that targets GBV inclusive of QT is important to address. For starters, most work on bicycles that take a gendered lens demonstrates the potential for bicycles to support women. This can be a useful departure point as for future BFD work that supports safe cycling for other gender identities.

Previous feminist work has illuminated the ways in which women in the US took up bicycling as part of the early nineteenth century wave of feminism (Garvey, 1995). The literature has examined the bicycle as a source of empowerment for women (Bussey, 2013; Macy, 2011), as well as the gendered nature of cycling and urban space (LaFrambois, 2019; Porter, 2011). Using interviews with women cyclists in Chicago, La Frambois (2019) found that many women experienced unsafe cycling due to their gender, and that women's experiences are vital to creating renewed cycling infrastructure. Women who cycle reported a heightened fear of experiencing GBV and harassment when cycling, due to their increased visibility (Lubitow et al., 2019). Lubitow et al.'s (2019) work also highlighted the ways in which women of colour experience unsafe cycling, through their gendered and racialized identities. At the same time, Gamble's (2019) ethnography of cycling in Quito, Ecuador demonstrated that cycling spaces for women can be used to reinsert feminist possibilities in urban spaces that are traditionally masculine and ridden with GBV towards women. Hayhurst et al.'s (2022) visual PAR project

demonstrated the conflicting views about women and girls who participate in BFD, due to gender and cultural norms in Nicaragua and Uganda.

The work highlighted above demonstrates that the bicycle is implicated in gender inequality and resulting GBV. In turn, BFD programming may be a useful space to challenge gender inequality while paving new lanes for safe transport and recreation in urban areas. At the same time, we still know very little about bicycle distribution and access for QT, and other marginalized genders. This is a glaring gap in the literature that holds deep implications for policy and practice. Therefore, understanding the ways that QT bicyclists experience safe bicycling in Toronto – and how BB can support QT community members – is part of this project’s research focus.

2.3 Systemic Racism and Bicycles

The COVID-19 pandemic has not only resulted in a “shadow pandemic” of GBV, but systemic racism has also been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, along with pre-existing and related socio-economic inequalities of income, housing, food insecurity, etc. (CRIA W, 2021). In Canada, women of colour have been hit hardest by the pandemic due to intersecting lines of oppression, resulting in women of colour facing disproportionate rates of unemployment, poverty, and precarious labour conditions (CRIA W, 2021). There is an urgent need for anti-racist work in thinking of a pandemic recovery, and the literature outlined below demonstrates that bicycle programming may offer a useful anti-racist space.

Bicycling has been a mode of resistance for many communities of colour. BIPOC have historically been pushed out of White and upper-class areas of the city in North America, and as a result, BIPOC bicycle activists have worked at ensuring their voices are heard in

predominantly White bicycle spaces (Lugo, 2018). For example, Cardon (2021) provided a useful analysis of how the bicycle was used by African American people in southern United States to demand freedom during the Jim Crow era. Despite BIPOC representing a significant proportion of cyclists (and often out of necessity rather than for leisure), Hoffman (2016) asserted that governments and media privilege the needs of White cyclists to increase White ridership, while BIPOC cyclists are made invisible within decision-making processes. At the same time, BIPOC cyclists may be dangerously visible in public spaces, contributing to systemic barriers that make cycling unsafe for BIPOC.

While there are many narratives about the freedom and independence associated with cycling, for BIPOC, this may not always be the case. Bernstein (2016) highlighted the experiences of Indigenous and undocumented migrants in the United States from Latin America who had to use bicycles out of necessity, and who were made more vulnerable to being deported for riding their bicycles on public streets. For Black cyclists, Lubitow et al. (2019) found that police surveillance was a significant barrier to safe cycling. Black cyclists are made more visible in public spaces than in cars, and therefore potentially more vulnerable to racial profiling. For example, Black cyclists in Lubitow et al.'s (2019) study reported biking less frequently than they would like because they were worried about police brutality and being treated unfairly by police. Further, BIPOC cyclists reported racial discrimination and microaggressions while biking on the streets, such as drivers being less likely to stop and ensure the safety of BIPOC cyclists, when compared to how they treated White cyclists (Lubitow, et al. 2019). The increased policing and attempt to control cyclists in major urban areas privileges Whiteness and the privatization of land (e.g., criminalizing bike parking onto public property) (Blickstein, 2010), which Walcott (2021) asserted is directly related to anti-Black racism, colonialism, and slavery. The bicycle is therefore

implicated in the systems of racial inequality that have inhibited BIPOC to move freely and safely across urban cities (Lugo, 2018).

BIPOC cyclist experiences are particularly vulnerable to racism and unsafe cycling due in part to a lack of BIPOC representation in decision-making and policy development for cycling (Lugo, 2016; 2018). Many BIPOC cyclists are vulnerable to unsafe streets when city infrastructure prioritizes middle- and upper-class citizens that have access to cars (Lugo, 2018). Other related social factors – including immigration and refugee status – can make the bicycle inaccessible or unsafe (Law & Karnilowicz, 2015). For example, Lee et al. (2016) highlighted the experiences of immigrant bicycle food delivery people in New York City, who, despite needing to cycle for their livelihood “are positioned as simultaneously invisible in bike advocacy and planning while visible as ‘bad’ cyclists who trespass into White, affluent neighborhoods and thus threaten social order,” (p. 125). Golub et al. (2016) explained that most cycling infrastructure planners and advocates in the U.S. are White and middle-class, meaning their efforts can reproduce inequality across gendered, racialized, and class lines.

While there has been an upsurge in cycling and safer cycling infrastructure, the barriers that BIPOC face in accessing bicycling demonstrate that infrastructure alone is insufficient for increasing cycling in urban areas (Lubitow et al., 2019). For example, bicycling resources, such as equipment to ride safely and tools to maintain bicycles, remain accessible exclusively to White and middle-to-upper class communities (Moore-Monroy et al., 2016). Although bicycles may be a relatively inexpensive mode of transportation compared to cars, bicycles, bicycling equipment (such as waterproof clothing), and bicycle maintenance are all costly and often inaccessible to low-income individuals (Lubitow et al., 2019). As poverty in North America is racialized (Creamer, 2020; National Council of Welfare Canada, n. d.), financial access to

bicycles can be a significant barrier for BIPOC. In the meantime, decision-makers such as city-planners often reinforce racial inequality by implementing bike lanes in more developed and gentrified areas of the city, neglecting upgrades for low-income communities of colour (Lubitow et al., 2019).

Lugo (2016) recommended decentering Whiteness within bicycle advocacy, policy, and planning. Bicycle planning and programming should center BIPOC leaders to inform decisions that serve a broader group of people, and urban design must be informed about systemic racism that continues to reproduce inequality in the ways city spaces are designed (Lugo, 2016). For some low-income communities of colour who cannot afford motor vehicles, the bicycle is an object of necessity, as opposed to one of leisure or physical activity. Instead of thinking of the cyclist as “the ultimate moral citizen,” (Steinmann, 2020, p. 31) due to its associations with environmentalism and health (Aldred, 2010; Green et al., 2012), this construction must be challenged by considering how bicycling is taken up by BIPOC cyclists who may use the bicycle to potentially resist systems of racial power. For example, “bike marshals” are volunteer cyclists who keep protesters safe during demonstrations, as an alternative to having police at demonstrations (BikePGH, 2020). Bike marshals have been taken up in protest spaces that refuse police presence due to the history and risk of police violence towards BIPOC protestors. Since bike marshals are on bicycles, they have more height for visibility, and can move more quickly than marshals not on bicycles, to respond to any issues during the demonstration. Bike marshaling is just one example of how bicycling has been taken up with an anti-racist lens. Other examples include: bicycle tours to teach an area’s history of racism through bicycle tours (Deadwyler, 2016); programs that offer free or affordable bicycles to BIPOC trans and women cyclists (BikePOC, 2021); and community bike shops that address systemic barriers to cycling

by offering free or low-cost services (Charlie's Freewheels, n. d.). BFD practitioners and researchers would benefit from taking up an anti-racist framework in considering ways to make bicycling accessible and empowering for BIPOC.

2.4 Environmental Justice and Bicycles

Due to the need to socially-distance from others during the COVID-19 pandemic, many governments implemented new bicycling infrastructure in urban areas to encourage this environmentally friendly mode of transport that does not involve crowding, such as public transport (Kraus & Koch, 2021). Subsequently, there has been a notable increase in cycling during the pandemic for transport (Kraus & Koch, 2021), and for outdoor physical activity (Park et al., 2020). And yet, few studies have critically explored the potential contributions that bicycling may make to social- and environmental- justice within the (post-)COVID-19 pandemic context.

COVID-19 has underlined the crucial role of sustainable forms of mobility in achieving more equitable and 'greener' futures (Budd & Ison, 2020). Dominant discourses on bicycles tend to focus on the environmental benefits to this 'green' form of transportation (Horton, 2006), but this work has focused on White, middle-class cyclists (Green et al., 2012). The environmental justice movement works to ensure that people of marginalized social identities "have the right to live in clean, healthy, and safe environments; to have equal access to safe and healthy workplaces, schools, and recreation areas; and to have access to safe and nutritious food and clean water," (Byrne, 2013). Environmental justice involves community support and ensuring that moves towards a green future are socially equitable and sustainable, while challenging the traditionally White-dominated environmental movement spaces. For instance, Liboiron (2021) has demonstrated how pollution – a process of colonialism – involves exploiting the Land's

resources and assuming that Land can be made into privatized property. Of note, Liboiron (2021) as well as Styres and Zinga (2013) capitalize Land when referring to Land beyond its “material fixed space. Land is a spiritually infused place grounded in interconnected and interdependent relationship” (Styres & Zinga, 2013, p. 301). Meanwhile, ‘land’ when not capitalized refers to “landscapes as a fixed geographical and physical space” (Liboiron, 2021, p. 6). A truly “just” and decolonized environmental movement must consider the ways in which supporting the Land is intricately connected with supporting all the relationships we have because of the Land – including human-to-human, but also human-to-more-than-human relationships (Liboiron, 2021).

Decentering Whiteness in organized bicycling may help to challenge White-washed environmental discourses in these spaces (Lugo, 2016). Indeed, Hoffman (2013) argued that “bicycle infrastructure can be easily swept into larger projects working to cater to the upwardly mobile, creative, white demographic” (p. 123). The bicycle may play a key role in contributing to environmental justice and decentering Whiteness, as BB’s work has supported some of Toronto’s most vulnerable populations during the COVID-19 pandemic by using bicycles as the mode to deliver resources (The Bike Brigade, n. d. a). Along these lines, Steinmann (2020) suggested that unhoused and vulnerably housed persons also use the bicycle to contribute to a green future, such as through transporting items to be recycled.

Chapter 2 Summary

In this chapter, I provided a summary of the literature as it pertains to this study. Specifically, I review the literature on how the bicycle is discussed in sociological literature, and work done on the three foci of this project with respect to bicycles: 1) gender-based violence prevention; 2) systemic racism; and 3) environmental justice. Sociological studies have studied the connection between the bicycle and various social issues, and previous work in BFD

scholarship has hailed the bicycle as a possible catalyst for social development (Ardizzi et al., 2020; Bandoles, 2018). This review of literature demonstrated that the bicycle may be a useful tool in addressing GBV, systemic racism, and the climate crisis. The role of bicycles and BFD programs in GBV are particularly important since COVID-19 has created a de facto “shadow pandemic” of GBV (UN Women, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has not only resulted in a “shadow pandemic” of GBV, but systemic racism has also been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, along with pre-existing and related socio-economic inequalities of income, housing, food insecurity, etc. (CRIA W, 2021). This literature review demonstrated an urgent need for anti-racist work, and work that addresses GBV in thinking of a pandemic recovery. Meanwhile, dominant discourses on bicycles tend to focus on the environmental benefits to this ‘green’ form of transportation (Horton, 2006), but this work has focused on White, middle-class cyclists (Green et al., 2012). Thus, studying the bicycle as a ‘green’ form of transportation must involve decentering Whiteness.

Chapter 3 – Theoretical Frameworks

In this section, I outline the epistemology and theoretical frameworks that guided this project to answer the research questions listed above: decolonial feminism and feminist new materialism. I discuss the rationale and tensions associated with each theory.

3.1 Epistemology

A social constructivist epistemology was used to guide this project. Constructionists assume that all knowledge is “contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context” (Crotty, 1998, p. 42). Constructionists argue that all knowledge is “constructed” through interaction with others. In other words, subjective meanings are socially constructed through these interactions “and through historical and cultural norms that operate in individuals’ lives” (Creswell & Poth, 2016, p. 52). Researchers therefore work with research participants to interpret their interactions and sociocultural contexts.

Although a constructionist epistemology is congruent with the use of decolonial feminist approaches, it is important to note that this is not without tension. As power is embedded in all social interactions, Todd (2016) warns of the colonality of knowledge production that attempts to silence the perspectives of BIPOC thinkers. Todd highlighted the multitude of Western thinkers that have (often unknowingly but still harmfully) stolen and appropriated Indigenous theories because “to be seen as credible in the European academy, Indigenous thought must be filtered through white intermediaries. Trusty interpreters, usually male, usually middle class, can birth Indigenous thinking into the mainstream” (Todd, 2016, p.11). As an example, mainstream discussions of climate change should be credited to Indigenous thinkers and activists who have been concerned with environmental destruction for centuries, yet Western researchers and

activists have co-opted this knowledge while remaining silent about the origins of this work (Todd, 2016). Todd (2016) contended:

When anthropologists and other assembled social scientists sashay in and start cherry-picking parts of Indigenous thought that appeal to them without engaging directly in (or unambiguously acknowledging) the political situation, agency, legal orders and relationality of both Indigenous people and scholars, we immediately become complicit in colonial violence. (p. 18)

It is thus vital to be in conversation with those perspectives that have systemically been marginalized. Donald's (2009) work explained how "ethical relationality" can allow different ontologies to be in relation with one another, and "does not overlook or invisibilize the particular historical, cultural, and social contexts from which a particular person understands and experiences living in the world" (p. 6). In the work explored throughout this thesis, I aim to give credit to BIPOC thinkers, and "to pay attention to who else is speaking alongside us" (Todd, 2016, p. 19). As a second-generation settler, I have benefitted from the ongoing structures of settler colonialism that have attempted to dispossess Indigenous people of their land and culture, and I do not claim to use Indigenous theories as my own. Indeed, I have been guided by those who have had to endure challenges that I have not had to encounter to develop these theories. In the following sections, I cite the authors that Todd (2016) outlines in their "cite this, not that" cheat sheet to give credit to the various authors who have created and applied these theories, and to be cautious not to erase Indigenous theories. Additionally, an ethical relationality requires constant reflexivity and reciprocity to others (Todd, 2016), which will be elaborated on in the section on reflexivity, under method/ology.

3.2 Decolonial Feminism

Decolonial feminism is “a critique of racialized, colonial, and capitalist heterosexualist gender oppression as a lived transformation of the social” (Lugones, 2010, p. 746). Key to decolonial *feminist* theory is considering the intersections of gender, race, (dis)ability, sexuality, class, and all lines of inequality, as “intersectionality offers a conceptual lingua franca for people to engage one another about shared concerns regarding emancipation and equality” (Collins et al., 2021, p. 723). Vergès (2021) outlined how decolonial feminism responds to the downfalls of Western feminism:

The betrayals of Western feminism are its own deterrent, as are its heartless desire to integrate into the capitalist world and take its place in the world of predatory mend and its obsession with the sexuality of racialized men and the victimization of racialized women.
(p. 5)

Decolonial feminists recognize the colonial processes that have gendered and subsequently controlled and oppressed gendered and racialized communities as part of colonization and capitalism across the globe (Lugones, 2010). In turn, decolonial feminists underscore the work and labour of those impacted by the intersections of oppression in “depatriarchalizing revolutionary struggles” (Vergès, 2021, p. 10). Further, decolonial feminist Sylvia Wynter calls for an “epistemic disobedience”, which is:

A practice of rethinking and unraveling dominant worldviews that have been opened up by Indigenous and black and Caribbean thinkers since the sixteenth century in América (with accent) and the Caribbean. The decolonial option does not simply protest the contents of imperial coloniality; it demands a delinking of oneself from the knowledge systems we take for granted (and can profit from) and practicing epistemic disobedience.
(Mignolo, 2015, p. 106)

In other words, a decolonial feminism involves continuously challenging the knowledge systems that those in knowledge-producing institutions (such as the university) are taught. Decolonial feminism addresses the coloniality of power (Quijano, 2000) and of knowledge (Mignolo, 2000) that has resulted in hierarchal social categories of race that continues to justify violence towards BIPOC. Further, decolonial feminism addresses the coloniality of gender, or the colonial hierarchies of gender that make BIPOC women, QT, and other marginalized genders vulnerable to violence (Lugones, 2011).

Decolonial feminist theory has some similarities to postcolonial feminist theory, and Hayhurst et al. (2021) suggested that both decolonial and postcolonial feminist theory have value in sport for development (SFD) studies, as postcolonialism can generate “critical thinking about gender, race, nation, sexuality, class, social inequalities and social justice in and through [SFD] and beyond”. Indeed, postcolonialism provides critical examinations of colonial legacies (McEwan, 2018), but postcolonialism also has its limitations. Postcolonialism has been deemed insufficient when compared to decolonial work, as it may not move beyond critiquing colonialism, whereas decolonialism involves action to dismantle the processes of colonization (Collins, 2019). Further, Tuck and Yang (2012) asserted that decolonization cannot be a metaphorical critique but is instead directly concerned with the repatriation of Indigenous land. For this reason, I chose to employ decolonial feminist theory over postcolonial theory, to move away from critique and towards action through my research method/ology. I will expand how I employed PAR and arts-based methods as part of the decolonial feminist approach in the method/ology section.

Employing a decolonial lens has been critiqued as a way to motivate “settler moves to innocence” (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 35). I consider this project as part of a larger commitment to

doing decolonial work within my academic and professional career. Instead of moving towards innocence, my positionality as a queer settler and POC motivates this decolonial work, as I believe that dismantling colonialism, white supremacy, heteropatriarchy, and capitalism is necessary for the emancipation of myself, my communities, and beyond. Without denying my privileges (e.g., settler, heterosexual-passing, economic, and educational privileges) my orientation is concerned with the liberation of those of us with diverse intersectional identities. In following Persard's (2021) cautions about decolonial feminism, it is important to not just

declare our geopolitical privilege and shrug. Instead, we proceed with these tensions with a commitment to pedagogy and praxis that seeks to problematise traditionally oppressive structures of knowledge production and endeavour to create new knowledge formations and pedagogical practices, even as colonality and its remnants saturate and structure our feminist realities. (p. 25)

3.3 Feminist New Materialism

As a settler researcher and guest on Turtle Island, I aim to give credit to the Indigenous theories that have given way to new materialism and “avoid the reproduction of settler colonial practices of extraction from Indigenous communities” (Rosiek et al., 2020, p. 343), as new materialism and Indigenous theories are complementary areas of thought. As Todd (2016) wrote, “[w]hen we cite European thinkers who discuss the ‘more-than-human’ but do not discuss their Indigenous contemporaries who are writing on the exact same topics, we perpetuate the white supremacy of the academy”. Indeed, Indigenous communities have been engaging with ‘more-than-humans’, not only in theory but in practice, since prior to the conception of Western theories such as new materialism and posthumanism. Sundberg (2014) critiqued how posthumanist theories (which include new materialism) have universalized the Western approach

to posthumanism, while subordinating Indigenous ontologies that have engaged with more-than-human life. As I engage with new materialist frameworks, I aim to facilitate and be in ethical, mindful and respectful conversation with the various voices who have discussed more-than-human agency. Specifically, I follow Sundberg's (2014) "walking with" (and perhaps extend this to "cycling with") different ontologies, to engage meaningfully and responsibly with Indigenous ontologies in particular. Further, and as Thomas (2015) wrote, new materialism may provide a language for settler scholars to engage with more-than-human life, and "to work in solidarity with Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to support and extend political spaces for relational ethics with nonhumans" (p. 976).

A new materialist framework positions more-than-human objects, such as the bicycle, as agential beings that also act on other beings and the environment (Coole & Frost, 2010). In contrast to *old* materialisms that are anthropocentric, *new* materialists recognize that matter acts onto other matter, instead of requiring an extrinsic force, such as human action (Gamble et al., 2019). Thus, new materialists have called for theoretical approaches that center the actions of matter (Markula, 2019). *Feminist* new materialists (Haraway, 2016; Barad, 2014; Bennett, 2010) "work to uncover the gendered dimensions of the more-than-human world" (Lupton, 2019, p. 1999). Other disciplines that have taken up feminist new materialism "have voiced the situated knowledges of the dialectical and structural 'others' of humanistic 'Man'" (Braidotti, 2019, p. 38). This is an emergent approach to studying sport objects and the environment, and importantly challenges traditional anthropocentric and colonial understandings of environmental phenomena (Brice & Thorpe, 2021).

Though a fulsome outline of how SFD scholars engage with/use feminist new material approaches is too extensive to outline within the constraints of this thesis, it is important to note

that a number of SFD scholars have started to critically explore how the assemblage of SFD is taken up by a variety of more-than-human actants (Darnell et al., 2018; Bunds, 2017; Henne, 2017). Thus, this project further explores – and builds on – these studies. In particular, this project examines the assemblages that produce knowledge, inclusive of the researcher, research technologies (e.g., art materials, bicycles), data (e.g., artwork, interview transcripts), and contexts in which the research takes place (e.g., roads and places) (Fox & Alldred, 2015).

Feminist new materialist approaches help researchers critically assesses how human and more-than-human assemblages are gendered, complex, nuanced, political and part and parcel of the assemblages that shape our social and political worlds (Bastian, 2017). For example, technologies like the bicycle both constitute and are constituted by relations in which they are embedded (e.g., bodies, emotions, things, ideas, places), whereby technologies have ‘agential’ capacities to *affect* change (McSweeney & Hayhurst, in press). Taken together, I use research materials or research assemblages, which we as researchers are a part of (Lupton, 2019), to analyze the relations and assemblages in BFD comprised by both humans and more-than-humans in relation to the context of COVID-19.

As Barad (2003) asserted, “[h]umans’ do not simply assemble different apparatuses for satisfying particular knowledge projects but are themselves specific local parts of the world’s ongoing reconfiguring” (p. 829). This implies that humans are only one part of the world’s forces, and even human-constructed objects act onto other beings. Within new materialist approaches, matter is understood as “something more than ‘mere’ matter: an excess, force, vitality, relationality or difference that renders matter active, self-creative, productive, unpredictable” (Coole & Frost, 2010, p. 9). More-than-human objects, such as fitness and sport objects, shape experiences in violence, racism, and inequality (Brice & Thorpe, 2021). At the

same time, objects may be destructive, such as through the waste that is produced through bicycle manufacturing (Szto, 2022). And yet, objects also hold the potential to contribute to social and environmental justice (Fox & Alldred, 2020), such as through BB's use of bicycles.

New materialism challenges anthropocentric approaches to environmental movements by focusing on the *relationality* between all beings. The concept of relationality with all beings echoes and reinforces a prominent value in Indigenous knowledges, which is in direct opposition to colonial understandings of anthropocentrism and domination of beings. For example, in examining the connections between colonialism and environmental exploitation, Simpson (2017) wrote, “[m]y land is seen as a resource. My relatives in the plant and animal worlds are seen as resources. My culture and knowledges is a resource,” (p. 75). New materialism provides an opportunity to engage with sport and the environment in a manner that values and appreciates the agency of more-than-human matter (Brice & Thorpe, 2021). New materialists might do this differently from Indigenous perspectives, since new materialists include analysis of the materials and parts that make up beings (Markula, 2019). Indeed, examining how materials act can offer much needed synergies between sociocultural studies of the body with other sub-fields of kinesiology, such as biomechanics and physiology (Markula, 2019). Importantly, all more-than-human materials originate from the Land. In the case of the bicycle, its materials (whether made from carbon fiber, bamboo, or aluminum) were extracted from the Land. Similarly, humans were made from the Land and we continue to require resources from the Land to survive. The present research, therefore, extends theories about more-than-humans to examine how bicycles may interact with other beings. To this point, Watts (2013) asks, “[i]f I, as a human, am made of the stuff of soil and spirit, do I not extend to the non-human world beyond causal interactions?” (p.

27). Humans can therefore learn from more-than-human objects in their agencies and intentions (Watts, 2013).

Chapter 3 Summary

In this chapter, I outlined the epistemology and theoretical frameworks (decolonial feminism and feminist new materialism) that guided this project to answer the research questions. I also discussed the rationale and tensions associated with each theory. A social constructivist epistemology was used to guide this project. Although a constructionist epistemology is congruent with the use of decolonial feminist approaches, it is important to note that this is not without tension. I thus drew from Todd's (2016) work to underline how the coloniality of knowledge production attempts to silence the perspectives of BIPOC thinkers. Theoretically, I drew from decolonial feminism to examine the intersections of racialized, colonial, capitalist, and heterosexuality gender oppression (Lugones, 2010). Decolonial feminism addresses the coloniality of gender, or the colonial hierarchies of gender that make BIPOC women, QT, and other marginalized genders vulnerable to violence (Lugones, 2011). I also drew from feminist new materialists, who "work to uncover the gendered dimensions of the more-than-human world" (Lupton, 2019, p. 1999). In parallel with feminist new materialists, I cited Indigenous theorists who have discussed the more-than-human (Watts, 2013), and outline the tensions with feminist new materialism (Todd, 2016). I explained Sundberg's (2014) "walking with" (and perhaps extend this to "cycling with") different ontologies, to engage meaningfully and responsibly with Indigenous ontologies in particular.

Chapter 4 – Methodology

In this section, I outline the decolonial feminist methodology that guided my methods. I then outline the research design, including background and context to the partner organization BB, and the PAR approach used to develop the data collection methods. I provide justification for the data collection tools and methods used for this project: arts-based methods and semi-structured interviews. I follow with my approach to reflexivity. I end this chapter with details about the data analysis process.

4.1 Decolonial Feminist Methodology

Decolonial feminist methodologies allow for a critical examination of gender, race, sexuality, and the power structures that uphold patriarchy within sport and recreational activities such as cycling. Utilizing decolonial feminist methodologies provided me with a methodological framework that is attuned to different systems of oppression and the colonality of knowledge (Mignolo, 2000). In other words, this methodology challenges how colonialism has constructed superior knowledges out of Western thought, and therefore subaltern knowledges out of other worldviews, especially Indigenous thought (Mignolo, 2000; Quijano, 2000). “Seeing” those with intersectional identities, particularly those with marginalized racial and gender identities is a crucial part of decolonial feminist methodologies (Lugones, 2010). I aimed to amplify these perspectives through not only interviews, but also arts-based methods in which the expressions of QT and BIPOC could literally be “seen” through visual mediums.

Tallbear (2014) posited that research participants should be considered “colleagues” instead of “subjects” as a methodological approach to avoid treating colleagues as “data” and instead as co-creators of knowledge. Thus, decolonial methodologies involve being responsible to research colleagues and communities. As Lugones (2010) asked, “[h]ow do we learn about

each other? How do we do it without harming each other but with the courage to take up a weaving of the everyday that may reveal deep betrayals?” (p. 755) Lugones’ (2011) coalitional work is a part of decolonial feminist methodology in which we “learn about each other as resisters to the colonality of gender at the colonial difference, without necessarily being an insider to the worlds of meaning from which resistance to the colonality arises” (p. 753). Coalitional work also emphasizes the diverse ways those with intersectional identities resist systems of oppression, which Lugones (2011) explained as follows:

I am providing a theoretical framework that enables us to understand both the relations of oppression and the resources that we bring to liberation. I am moving to a way of speaking that more clearly seeks coalitions among the colonized across vast histories and spaces, always honoring the local, since resistance can be seen and understood only up close. (p. 72)

A PAR approach to this project was meant to follow Lugones’ (2011) coalition-building, in which I could build meaningful relationships with the BB community with research colleagues. Further, an “epistemological humility” can help meaningfully engage with other knowledges (Maduro, 2011). In other words, learning alongside research colleagues helped strengthen my relationships with research colleagues, and challenged my own assumption that I was the expert in this project. In reality, research colleagues were generously sharing their unique knowledges and expertise with me.

4.2 Research Design

Prior to commencing data collection, I received approval from York’s Research Ethics Board for the larger SSHRC grant titled “Wheels of Change? Exploring 'Bicycles for

Development' for Women and Girls in the (Post-)Pandemic Contexts of Canada, Uganda and Nicaragua (ethics certificate # 2021-309). The methods for this broader project had been approved by BB's executive director, Rachel Wang, who was the BB liaison and supervisor for the research project. In this section, I provide background and context to BB, describe the PAR approach, and recruitment and inclusion criteria.

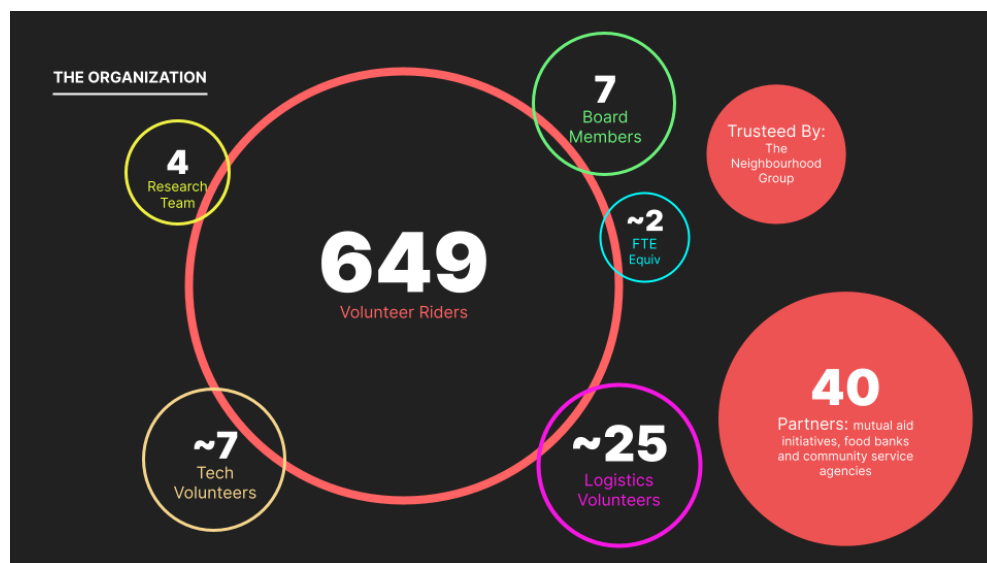
4.2.1 The Bike Brigade: Background and Context

A partnership through a PAR framework was established with BB through a larger SSHRC Insight Grant titled, "Wheels of Change? Exploring 'Bicycles for Development' for Women and Girls in the (Post-)Pandemic Contexts of Canada, Uganda and Nicaragua" (#435-2021-1188) and a MITACS Accelerate Grant in order to pursue this collaborative research project. The MITACS Grant involved a 4-month internship from November to February in which I worked directly with BB to achieve pre-determined outcomes (in this case, recommendations for their anti-oppression framework). The MITACS application involved outlining the methods, objectives, outcomes, and how BB would be supporting my position as a MITACS intern (through participating in the research process, providing resources, helping recruit research colleagues, etc.).

BB is a Toronto-based non-profit mutual aid organization that pairs volunteer cyclists with community organizations that serve vulnerable community members to deliver food and supplies (The Bike Brigade, n. d. a). The organization was recently founded in March 2020 in response to exacerbated inequalities from the pandemic, including increased food insecurity GBV (Wang, 2021; see also Appendix A for notes on BB origins). BB was founded by one individual, which quickly grew to a team of individuals within the first month of operations, after a call was put out through social media to form a logistics team. By June 2020, BB's team had

created an application to improve processes around sign-ups and sending out delivery details. Since March 2020, BB's team has evolved to include approximately: 649 volunteer riders; 25 logistics volunteers (delivery scheduling, communications with partners and riders); 7 tech volunteers (managing the delivery dispatch application); 7 board members (leadership and advisory); 4 research team members; and 2 full-time paid staff.

Figure 1. BB organizational structure (shared with BB's permission).



Over the first year of operations, BB has already had a significant impact, reporting 12 940 deliveries completed, partnering with 38 community organizations, and reducing 9.23 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions (The Bike Brigade, 2021). Some of BB's current partners include: East York Meals on Wheels, FoodShare Toronto, Avenue Road Food Bank, Maggie's The Toronto Sex Workers Action Project, and the Encampment Support Network (The Bike Brigade, n. d. b).

Most of BB's operations take place virtually, as their partners are located across the entire city of Toronto. The co-founder of BB offers his legal office space (The Biking Lawyer in

West Toronto) as a base for some BB activities, such as pick-ups and storing equipment. Since BB's operations took place during the COVID-19 pandemic with social distancing regulations in place, most of my interactions with BB were virtual through their online SLACK platform, which I expand on below. In addition, I would meet with BB at a community workspace to go over research updates, but this space was not owned by BB.

4.2.2 Participatory Action Research

Through PAR combined with arts-based methods (described below), I hoped to challenge the colonality of traditional Western research practices, as decolonial feminism “provides an epistemic reconstitution for feminist thought and yields new methods for consideration” (Purewal & Loh, 2021, p. 128). As Lugones (2010) contended:

One does not resist the colonality of gender alone. One resists it from within a way of understanding the world and living in it that is shared and that can understand one's actions, thus providing recognition. Communities rather than individuals enable the doing; one does with someone else, not in individualist isolation. (p. 754)

PAR is therefore a useful framework for co-resisting the colonality of gender and co-creating knowledge to share within and beyond communities.

PAR has emerged as a response to calls for more democratic and horizontal knowledge production practices (Seppälä et al., 2021). PAR mechanisms are especially useful for: 1) challenging hierarchical power relations, 2) grounding gendered experiences while dismantling patriarchy; 3) upholding intersectional perspectives while recognizing voice and difference; and 4) heightening new forms of representation (Reid & Frisby, 2008). When combined with a decolonial feminist praxis, PAR is especially helpful for: 1) prioritizing intersecting relations of

race, gender, class, sexuality and colonialism in knowledge production; 2) honouring diverse forms of action; 3) amplifying often overlooked forms of representation and diverse voices; and 4) ensuring ethical engagement with communities most impacted by the issues under study (Hayhurst, 2017). A decolonial praxis is necessary for dismantling unequal power relations that have historically been embedded between the researcher and researched (Smith, 2021). To diminish power imbalances, a “participatory reciprocity” (Kuokkanen, 2007, p. 118) should be used to treat knowledges as gifts, and to make room for care within research. Using PAR, I aimed to co-create knowledge alongside BB community members by following Kuokkanen’s (2007) “participatory reciprocity”. Beyond providing financial compensation, this is an epistemological approach that inherently treats all knowledge (and knowledge-holders) with respect and responsibility (Kuokkanen, 2007).

To build trust and respectful relationships with research colleagues as part of PAR (Frisby et al., 2005), I regularly communicated with BB through their SLACK channel to collaborate on the research process, namely designing research questions and methods. After the MITACS application and the research proposal for York University were accepted, I provided updates to Rachel and had biweekly meetings to discuss the research progress. To facilitate relationship-building with the BB community, I have been volunteering with BB since June 2021 as a delivery person. While this was not officially part of the internship, I wanted firsthand experience as a delivery person to understand what it was like to volunteer. Additionally, I wanted to demonstrate my commitment to BB and their work.

As part of the relationship-building process, I also supported with planning workshops for BIPOC volunteers. Specifically, BB was interested in hosting arts-based workshops (e.g. sculpting and zine-making workshops) for their BIPOC community, which aligned with the arts-

based methods I describe below. While this was not part of the MITACS internship, these workshops were a useful opportunity to support BB's work. The workshops acted as a form of training for potential research colleagues who hoped to contribute to the arts-based portion of this project. Consenting research colleagues also shared their art pieces created during the workshops as part of this research project. In addition to helping plan these workshops, I would also attend and participate in the workshops to meet and build relationships with potential research colleagues. To note, I did not conduct research or collect data during the workshops, since not everyone participating in the workshops consented to being part of this project. However, the workshops were part of the time I spent with the community, and inevitably informed my research process and reflections. The workshops will be explained further in the arts-based section of the method/ology.

Despite building close relationships with the BB community, I may still consider myself an "outsider" researcher since I had entered the community with the goal of conducting research. However, I aimed to build rapport with research colleagues through arts-based workshops, volunteering as a delivery person, and attending BB events such as workshops and social gatherings. I was also mindful that I may have "insider access" to some experiences that research colleagues shared with me, as I am QTPOC myself. Some research colleagues who were QTPOC may have felt more comfortable sharing experiences about their identity due to this "insider access". There are numerous challenges to having "insider access" to a community, including having to navigate unequal power between researcher and researched (Tom & Herbert, 2002). Tom and Herbert (2002), for instance, found that research colleagues who trusted "insider" researchers shared more difficult stories of pain, making them more vulnerable. While working with research colleagues, I was mindful to ensure informed consent was obtained, especially

when deciding what to share as part of the research findings featured in the document herein. Through reflexive processes, I followed Simpson's (2007) practice of refusal during data collection. While Simpson's work on ethnographic refusal was specific to protecting Indigenous sovereignty over knowledge, I believe that applying a lens of refusal can be beneficial as a researcher, as it can avoid the unethical extraction of knowledge from research colleagues and provide colleagues with control over their stories. In practice, I was mindful of when to stop probing research colleagues, and when to refuse the sharing of particular stories of research colleagues, and experiences that may be harmful to the BB community.

There were limitations to the PAR approach. For instance, due to time constraints, it was difficult to employ PAR during every step of the research process. Stanton (2014) has critiqued PAR researchers for this reason, since many researchers who employ PAR only involve the community during data collection. Zavala (2013) explained that this is because research institutions "are inevitably interlocked in the set of historical contradictions between the colonial-capitalist state and the interests of Indigenous, colonized peoples" (p. 66). That is, because this study was funded by both a SSHRC and MITACS grant, I was under time and financial constraints that did not allow for perhaps more collaboration and compensation to BB community members to work together more meaningfully. Given the time and resource constraints for this project, I mainly worked alongside Rachel. I would be in communication with Rachel on a weekly basis, providing Rachel with research updates and seeking feedback on the project. Rachel also supported during interview transcript analysis, providing thoughts and guiding themes that would be useful to include in the final recommendation report for BB's use. In terms of knowledge dissemination, I will be working with Rachel and any other interested BB member for writing up publications in peer-reviewed journals and sharing findings within the BB

community to begin implementing new procedures for their anti-oppression framework. In recognizing that academic publications may be inaccessible to research colleagues and other potential audiences (Frisby et al., 2005), I have created an executive summary with recommendations for BB's use.

Given the limitations with capacity (on my end and on BB's end), I was unable to recruit other BB members to work closely with, and thus mostly worked with Rachel in carrying out this research. Initially, I proposed to create a Community Advisory Board that would include two to three BB members to meet with regularly and discuss the research project. As the project moved forward, potential Board members expressed that they no longer had the capacity to support the project in this way, which is why project communications and decisions primarily stayed between Rachel and me. However, during June 2022, I presented the findings with the BB logistics team, requesting feedback and ongoing discussion about how to better support QT and BIPOC community members. I plan to host a community evening with the wider BB community (including volunteers) to share the research findings and facilitate discussion about supporting BB's diverse community. While Rachel remained the primary liaison for this project, these community engagements are part of the PAR strategy to maintain open communication and dialogue about the research.

4.2.3 Inclusion Criteria and Research Colleague Recruitment

When recruiting research colleagues for data collection, inclusion criteria stated that colleagues must be: age 18+, have been volunteering with BB for at least 1 month, and identify as 2SLGBTQIA+, and/or BIPOC (see Appendix B for recruitment email/post). For research colleague recruitment, I used BB's internal communications to allow interested and eligible members to participate in arts-based methods and semi-structured interviews. Recruitment

efforts thus included emails and social media posts in the closed BB Facebook group to recruit interested volunteers. BB supported this approach by sharing recruitment emails and posts. BB also worked with me to recruit research colleagues through word-of-mouth, and by providing me with the contact information of potential research colleagues.

4.3 Data Collection

I worked with 7 research colleagues (n=7), aiming to amplify the experiences of QT and BIPOC volunteer bicyclists (see table 1 for research colleague information). Only those who identified as BIPOC or QTBIPOC ended up responding to the recruitment email, and no White-identifying research colleagues responded. Due to numerous conversations with BB, we decided that focusing on the experiences of BIPOC colleagues would align well with their goals, since many BIPOC volunteers had voiced a need for more inclusive space within the BB community. Danielle, Fox, Nico, and Tiff consented to having their real names shared, while Gia, Kira, and Nat used pseudonyms to remain anonymous. Each research colleagues' role in BB is also clarified as a delivery volunteer, internal team member, or community member. Delivery volunteers are research colleagues who sign up to deliver food and essential items to community members. Internal team members are those who either volunteer or are paid to support BB's internal operations. Community members are those who are part of the BB community and do not deliver or support on the logistics end.

Table 1. Research colleague chart.

Name	Pronouns	Gender	QT-identified?	Participation	Racial identity	Position in Bike Brigade
Danielle (real name)	They/them	Non-binary		Arts-based and interview	POC	Delivery volunteer

Fox (real name)	They/them	Non-binary	Yes	Arts-based	POC	Delivery volunteer
Gia (pseudonym)	She/her			Arts-based and interview	POC	Delivery volunteer and internal team member
Kira (pseudonym)	She/her	Cisgender-woman		Interview	Indigenous	Delivery volunteer
Nat (pseudonym)	She/her	Cisgender-woman		Interview	POC	Delivery volunteer and internal team member
Nico (real name)	He/him	Cisgender-man		Arts-based and interview	Indigenous	Delivery volunteer
Tiff (real name)	They/them	Non-binary	Yes	Interview	POC	Community member

Some research colleagues explicitly self-identified as QT. Most research colleagues did not identify their gender or sexuality at all. I wanted to ensure that all research colleagues felt they were able to share as much or as little as they wanted about their identity. I recognize the importance of allowing everyone to self-identify, or not, as they please. Especially given our current culture of identity politics, potential trauma associated with existing outside of heteronormative identities, and potential issues with research colleague safety, I included only the identifiers that research colleagues wanted included in the research. For racial identity, while my research focus was meant to be inclusive of BIPOC perspectives, there were no research colleagues who identified as Black. When referring to research colleagues individually, I use the term that they personally identified with, such as QTPOC, POC, or Indigenous. As the aim of this research continues to be to support QT and BIPOC in accessing BB and bicycling more broadly, I use these terms when referring to the goals of enhancing this access.

A combination of data collection methods was used: 1) arts-based methods [giving research colleagues the option to use any form of art and creativity to share their knowledge, including photographs, visual art, poetry, etc. (Jones & Leavy, 2014)]; and 2) semi-structured interviews. I suggested these methods to BB since these methods are meant to provide research colleagues with more agency in how they wanted to contribute to this project. BB approved these methods, and especially supported the arts-based methods since they aligned with their goal to offer arts-based workshops to BIPOC community members. Research colleagues were invited to partake in one, or both data collection methods. Within our email communication after recruitment, I would ask research colleagues how they wanted to contribute to the project, and we would either email, text message, or have an informal phone call to further explain the project. Four research colleagues participated in the interview alone, while one research colleague contributed through an arts-based project and no interview. Two research colleagues completed both an arts-based project and an interview.

I aimed to let research colleagues be in control over what they shared and how they would be represented. By checking in with research colleagues and asking how (and if) they wanted to be involved in the project, I hoped to leave space for refusal and consent. As Simpson (2016) wrote, refusal and consent are “symptomatic of truth itself and a mechanism for other possibilities” (p. 330), such as respectful knowledge-production and relationship-building. Research colleagues were able to opt out of any part of the project, including interviews. Further, researchers should refuse to share information that might be protected by the community (e.g., to avoid being misrepresented, or for tactical purposes).

Following Kemmis et al. (2014), I kept a journal of reflexive notes throughout the research project to track how the research was progressing, including notes about my interactions

with the BB community. Kemmis et al. (2014) recommend that PAR researchers journal regularly throughout the research process to record critical reflections, such as how research priorities change over time. Reflexive journaling was thus useful to keep track of my reflections since I did not take field notes while relationship-building or spending time with the community. Indeed, Gold (1958) suggested that when researchers prioritize being an observer more than being a participant with the research community, the depth of knowledge shared by research participants can be compromised. Reflexive journaling meant that I could fully engage with BB community members, and instead I could take reflexive notes after I left interactions.

4.3.1 Arts-based Methods

Consenting research colleagues for arts-based methods were asked to produce an art creation of their choice. Any costs associated with purchasing art supplies and materials were covered through the SSHRC Insight Grant and York University's Research Cost Fund. Jones and Leavy (2014) pioneered arts-based methods "as any social research or human inquiry that adapts the tenets of the creative arts as a part of the methodology," (p. 1). Art creations can include (but are not limited to) visual art (painting, sculpture, quilting), audio-visual art (film), and performative arts (theatre, music, dance) (Jones & Leavy, 2014). Using arts-based approaches to research can: 1) provide researchers and research colleagues more tools to expand their mode of thought and communication; 2) provide a different perspective than is available through traditional methods; and 3) disseminate knowledge beyond the academy for a wider audience (Jones & Leavy, 2014).

Arts-based methods are particularly relevant for decolonizing participatory research, as it centers the research colleagues, and heightens their agency to interpret and produce knowledge in their own way. Using art can help the research become a "mutual initiative as opposed to a

hierarchical, one-way flow of information” (Liebenberg, 2009, p. 445). By creating art pieces, research colleagues were able to challenge the coloniality of knowledge production, by creating knowledge in their own way. For instance, in writing about using Japanese forms of art for research design, Akama wrote, “[t]hese are not theories with a capital T, or philosophies with a capital P, but they are intimately woven into the social fabric, having endured through centuries to shape how people inhabit and always-become-with-many worlds” (p. 108). Such literature relates to Mbembe’s (2016) work on decolonizing knowledge production in universities, where he contended that “the dualistic partitions of minds from bodies, meaning and matter or nature from culture can no longer hold” (p. 42). Arts-based methods are thus a potential avenue for overcoming this dualistic partition, by fostering creative means of producing and sharing embodied knowledge (Seppälä et al., 2021). In other words, art can mirror the motions and feelings of the body, such as the experiences of cycling, and (re)claiming space in the city. For QT and BIPOC especially, reclaiming space in the city (such as through cycling) is needed given the Whiteness and heteronormativity that pervades urban spaces (Ramirez, 2018). Art can be a material expression of the body reclaiming space.

As an expression of embodied experiences, art can produce knowledge and challenge colonial knowledge production through what Lugones refers to as “active subjectivity”, or:

A minimal form of agency that includes habit, reflection, desire, the use of daily practices, languages, ritual knowledge, a thinking-feeling way of decision making, which may not be part of the meanings of the institutional and structural meanings of the society but may be part of the meanings in the resistant circle. (Lugones, 2020, p. 34)

Art is thus a “thinking-feeling” expression that is often not taken seriously in Western institutional paradigms. In this way, research colleagues who created art for this project directly

challenged colonial knowledge production through their work. Challenging colonial knowledge is vital to decolonial feminism, since dominant worldviews originating from the West have deliberately constructed hierarchies of life to displace Indigenous bodies and justify the exploitation of Black bodies. In Oyěwùmí's (1997) work on Yoruba gender constructions, she demonstrated how the West's privileging of sight (or "worldview") has resulted in assumed universal gender categories. The West's reliance on the visual and quantifiable has resulted in hierarchal categories of gender, race, and ability, since "The differentiation of human bodies in terms of sex, skin color, and cranium size is a testament to the powers attributed to 'seeing'" (Oyěwùmí, 2005, p. 4). Oyěwùmí (2005) highlighted how Yoruba people, may rely more on a "world-sense", or a combination of senses as "a more inclusive way of describing the conception of the world by different cultural groups" (p. 4). Arts-based methods can perhaps help researchers and research colleagues move from a "worldview" into a "world-sense" of understanding phenomena such as bicycling. This is just one of the ways in which art can decolonize dominant epistemology, as there is an array of cultures that use art to share knowledge to challenge dominant worldviews (Seppälä et al., 2021).

Arts-based methods are one way that research colleagues can share input on bicycles and systemic issues in a way that makes sense to them. For instance, Blodgett et al. (2013) found that arts-based methods "generate knowledge that resonates more deeply with marginalised [e.g. Indigenous] community members" (p.325). In this study, research colleagues were able to share knowledge about bicycles, mutual aid, and emancipatory possibilities for QT and BIPOC through art that was perhaps more culturally relevant to their unique identities (Blodgett et al., 2013), and then further share those perspectives in a potentially more accessible way that challenges the colonial elitism of the academy (Seppälä et al., 2021). The knowledge produced

“can help envision new ways in which to create connections, reciprocity and care,” (Seppälä et al., 2021, p. 11) through more diverse forms that often involve a more emotional and personal perspective. Arts-based methods can be transformative through creating “avenues for envisioning alternative futures and working towards social change” (Seppälä et al., 2021, p. 11).

Two arts-based workshops were held with BB’s BIPOC community members to provide a form of training for those who were interested. The arts-based workshops were open to all BIPOC community members, with the hopes that some workshop participants would be interested in contributing to this research project with their art pieces. Rachel and I worked together to recruit BIPOC art facilitators to hold the workshops, by reaching out to community art spaces and personal contacts for recommendations. We emailed several BIPOC art facilitators to ask if they would be available to host a BIPOC-exclusive workshop for the BB community. Facilitators were compensated through York’s Research Cost Fund since the workshops would help with the arts-based methods portion of data collection. When recruiting workshop participants, an email was sent out to the BB community through BB’s weekly emails, with an RSVP for the workshop. Once workshop participants RSVP-ed, I emailed to follow up and provide more information about the workshop and this research project. Workshop participants were not obliged to participate in the research project, but rather this was a useful way to recruit research colleagues for the research project. I chose not to take field notes during these workshops, since not all workshop participants consented to being part of the research project. Additionally, the workshops were meant to be part of building a relationship with BB, meeting community members, and supporting BB’s work outside of this research project. Following Tallbear’s (2014) Feminist-Indigenous approach to relational inquiry, “It is also helpful to think creatively about the research process as a relationship-building process, as a professional

networking process with colleagues (not ‘subjects’), as an opportunity for conversation and sharing of knowledge, not simply data gathering” (p. 2). While I did not take field notes during the workshops, my experiences during the workshops inevitably informed many of the ideas that emerged in this project, including how BIPOC BB community members needed safe spaces to gather, and how arts-based methods align with PAR and decolonial approaches. Throughout this write-up, I share notes about my own experiences as both a researcher and volunteer with BB, while focusing on the data that emerged from research colleagues who consented to being part of the project. As Tallbear (2014) explained:

Research must then be conceived in less linear ways without necessarily knowable goals at the outset. For the institutions that employ and fund us, we will articulate specific goals but these are only guideposts. A researcher who is willing to learn how to “stand with” a community of subjects is willing to be altered, to revise her stakes in the knowledge to be produced. (p. 2)

Though the workshops were off the record for data collection, they were still part the relationship-building process in this project, as well as the knowledge production. Similar to Blodgett et al.’s (2013) findings, taking part in these workshops alongside workshop participants helped to build rapport and comfort with research colleagues. For example, during the November workshop, I began building relationships with some of the workshop participants, and many workshop participants ended up taking part in this research project. It was likely helpful for the research colleagues to have been able to meet me in person prior to agreeing to participate in the project. One workshop, held in-person in November 2021, was a sculpting workshop hosted by an independent BIPOC artist. During this session, workshop participants learned to sculpt by bandaging parts of their bodies with plaster of Paris (a bandage-like material that can be

moistened and dried to fit a mold). Another workshop was held in March 2022, which involved a virtual zine-making workshop for BIPOC BB members to learn about the history of zines, and how to create their own zines (mini, self-published magazines). This workshop was hosted by Cyclista Zine, a zine collective made of “BIPOC + Women, Trans, Femme, and Non-binary voices in cycling aiming to dismantle the mainstream narrative of who cycles” (Cyclista Zine, 2021, para. 4). Through zines, Cyclista Zine critiques the mainstream cycling industry, and its ties to capitalism and colonialism. The rationales for using each art form (sculpting and zine-making) will be outlined below.

Research colleagues in this study used sculpting, and zine-making (from the workshops), and poetry to express their thoughts and experiences pertaining to the research questions provided. Nico sculpted and painted a mask after the sculpting workshop, as part of his contribution to this project. To sculpt the mask, during the workshop, the facilitator instructed us to pair up with another workshop participant and ask our partners to place moistened plaster of Paris strips on our chosen body part to create a mold of that body part. The facilitator also encouraged us to speak with our workshop partners about why we chose the body part, along with discussions about self-care in White-dominated space. In Kriger’s (2019) research on embodied health, she demonstrated sculpting as a useful method of knowledge production:

Sculptures are things to which we must relate, things we must position, and forming a sculpture to which we must subsequently relate is a great methodological tool to find out about how we make sense of embodied concepts from our own lifeworlds. (p. 10)

The sculpture itself acts as a producer of knowledge. For instance, during the workshop, the act of sculpting and the sculpture itself sparked discussion between pairs. Further, during data collection, Nico was able to speak to the sculpture and its significance within his worldview.

Akama (2021) explained that these art objects can “enhance the qualities of interrelatedness” (p. 109) between humans and more-than-humans, which aligns well with both decolonial feminist and new materialist theories.

Another research colleague, Gia, created a zine from the zine-making workshop to contribute to this project. Zines emerged in the 1930s as mini self-published magazines and have since been used as “an alternative outlet for niche topics, or writers and writing, that are ignored by mainstream media” (Bold, 2017, p. 216). In Spiers’ (2015) research on the culture of the Riot Grrrl zines, Spiers highlighted the ways in which zines were used to reflect on and share alternative issues, particularly by zinesters (those who make zines) who inhabited marginalized identities. Additionally, zines offer a creative means to express oneself, since they “often contain radically experimental creative work, both textual and graphic, using cut-and-paste techniques and collages to create meaningful juxtapositions” (Spiers, 2015, p. 9). Zines may facilitate the sharing of subaltern knowledges that Mignolo (2000) refers to when discussing the colonality of knowledge.

Fox shared a series of poems as part of their contribution to the project. Akama (2021) described poetry as a “*ko*-ontological encounter” (p. 106), emerging from the Japanese concept of *kokoro*, “a resonant quality of being and becoming-with” (p. 106). *Kokoro* involves relations with place as well as “with sentiency of more-than-humans” (p. 106), which Kasulis (2002) explained as follows:

The poet’s *kokoro* resonates with the *kokoro* of the actual mountain mist and the *kokoro* of the Japanese words. Through the interpenetration and common responsiveness of these *kokoro*, the poem is produced. From this perspective, the poet alone does not write a

poem about the mountain mist. More precisely, the mountain mist, the Japanese words and the poet write the poem together. (p. 26)

Using poetry as a decolonial arts-based method can thus “invoke alternative imaginaries” (Akama, 2021, p. 106) that can involve knowledges from human relationships with more-than-human beings.

4.3.2 Semi-structured Interviews

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all interviews took place over a virtual Zoom meeting. Even when restrictions lifted and York University approved in-person research, I would check in with the research colleague to ask if they preferred a virtual or in-person interview, and all research colleagues preferred a virtual interview. While in-person interviews are often considered the “gold standard” of qualitative research, virtual interviews pose several benefits to the researcher and research colleague. Virtual interviews can: allow interviewees to be in the comfort and safety of their own home; facilitate more flexibility with scheduling; and put interviewees at ease by seeing the researcher in a more casual environment such as their own home (Self, 2021). When conducting interviews, I noticed that a virtual interview made participation more accessible for some research colleagues, such as Kira who was taking care of her child during the interview.

Semi-structured interviews involve an organized interview that is usually scheduled in advance. This involves creating an interview guide that covers the main topics to be explored based on the research questions, but the interviews are meant to be flexible and open to new dialogue based on the conversation (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Interview methods are the most widely used qualitative method to help researchers understand how social phenomena

are constructed through the everyday lives of people (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995; Fontana & Frey, 2005). The interview guide for this project included open-ended questions for research colleagues to explore themes of community support, meanings of the bicycle, access to the bicycle and BB, benefits and challenges they face as volunteers, how their personal identities influence their experiences with the bicycle, and the potential contribution of bicycles – and the act of cycling in and of itself – to anti-racism, GBV prevention, and environmental (see Appendix B for interview guide). While I followed an interview guide, semi-structured interviewing allowed me to probe research colleagues based on their responses. Semi-structured, or in-depth interviews are used when “[t]he information likely to be obtained from each subject is expected to vary considerably, and in complex ways” (Veal & Darcy, 2014, p. 257).

Using interviews within new materialist approaches have been critiqued, since interviews continue to center the human experience (St. Pierre, 2011). Feminist new materialisms posit that “the relational engagements of people with nonhumans as well as with other people,” (Lupton, 2020, p. 984) are worth discussing. Studying the ways in which cyclists with intersectional identities interact with the bicycle can thus significantly contribute to knowledge that challenges the White supremacist, ableist, cisgender, and heterosexual domination of more-than-humans and humans. Further, new materialism “entails paying attention to the material, historical, and sociological structures of international political economy that lend context as well as practical inertia to identities that entail unequal life chances” (Coole & Frost, 2010, p. 27), making more-than-human objects inextricable from the systems of inequity embedded and constructed in human life. Therefore, studying how humans make meaning of themselves and others through interactions with objects is one way that new materialists can collect data. “For critical materialists, society is simultaneously materially real and socially constructed: our material lives

are always culturally mediated, but they are not only cultural,” (Coole & Frost, 2010, p. 27).

Thus, as a researcher, I hope to position this work as only one part of what can be understood and translated, keeping in mind that human perspectives do not provide a full picture of how objects interact with and influence other beings.

4.4 Reflexivity

I followed reflexive methodology during the research, which embraces my position as a researcher and how that may inextricably influence and contribute to conversations with research colleagues (Dupuis, 1999). “[R]esearchers make an interpretation of what they find, an interpretation shaped by their own experiences and background” (Creswell & Poth, 2016, p. 52), and practicing reflexivity can help explore and make transparent the biases researchers carry into their work. For example, Boylorn discussed race reflexivity within qualitative research, as our own racial identity will influence the way we interpret ourselves, others, and the research process (2011). McGuire-Adams (2020) further contended that “it is necessary to understand how colonization has personally affected oneself to then resist ongoing colonization and foster decolonization” (p. 38) within research methodology. For instance, the coloniality of knowledge (Mignolo, 2020; Quijano, 2020) has resulted in the systematic devaluing of BIPOC knowledges by the Western world. While I am a POC, I am still personally affected by the process of colonialism, and therefore through constant reflexivity, I aimed to constantly challenge the ways in which colonialism has socialized my own beliefs and what I deemed as important knowledge. Following Genoe and Liechty (2016), I used a journal to track my reflexive field notes through data collection to be reflexive of my own worldviews and how that may influence both the process and outcomes of this project. Employing reflexivity strengthened my PAR approach, as I was able to build meaningful relationships with research colleagues and the BB community

while challenging my preconceived assumptions about my position as the “expert”. Through reflexivity, I could be mindful of when I might be making judgments about the knowledge being shared with me. Further, being reflexive meant I could regularly turn to the BB community (mainly Rachel) to review my work and provide feedback. Being reflexive meant that I could reflect on my motivations for the project, and center the needs of the BB community, following Smith’s (2021) questions, “Whose interests does it serve? Who will benefit from it?” (p. 10). Creating an executive summary for BB’s use was an important outcome that I made sure I could offer BB, since I wanted to engage in PAR to support BB’s work and ensure they benefited from the project.

4.4.1 Relational Ethics

In addition to using reflexive practices, I followed a relational ethics based on Indigenous and feminist ethics of care. As Gilligan (2014) explained,

The ethic of care guides us in acting carefully in the human world and highlights the costs of carelessness. It is grounded less in moral precepts than in psychological wisdom, underscoring the costs of not paying attention, not listening, being absent rather than present, not responding with integrity and respect. (p. 103)

Within the context of PAR research, an ethic of care and relationality are needed to avoid co-opting PAR from its roots in transformative and relational praxis. Haverkamp (2021) explained that PAR has been co-opted by Western researchers seeking

a more rational agenda through instrumentalist and disembodied (objective) reasoning that seeks to employ PAR for the purpose of better science (i.e. increasing knowledge production, scientific accuracy) and for obtaining consensus and community buy-in for

expert-led interventions – all things that do nothing to redress longstanding power imbalances and social inequalities. (p. 4)

To practice a true relational ethic within PAR involves principles of love, care, and responsibility towards the communities in which we work (Haverkamp, 2021). A relational ethic has transformative potential, as it is founded on the care that is required to dismantle systems of oppression (Haverkamp, 2021, p. 4). Ethics of care and relationality are thus essential within decolonial feminist research frameworks concerned with transforming social structures through research. By employing an ethic of care, I found that my motivation for conducting this research shifted from completing my MA thesis, to sharing the knowledge of research colleagues in a way that might improve cycling spaces for them and QT and BIPOC cyclists more broadly. I learned that love, care, and responsibility can be motivational feelings on their own, and they are essential to conducting research concerned with dismantling systems of oppression. Some strategies I used to practice care included showing care through interactions with research colleagues, e.g., communicating with them in a way that centered care. Although research colleagues were offered financial compensation for their time, I practiced care by being mindful of their time and energy, such as through prioritizing the research colleague's schedule when conducting interviews.

I also learned that research colleagues were practicing relational ethics as well. For example, at the end of Tiff's interview, they said, "I'm not fully sure what you need for your research. But, hopefully, the way the conversation took place helped in some ways for you to gather the information you need". It struck me then that Tiff (as well as other research colleagues) were supporting *me* in my research project, despite my assumption that I was doing

the project to support BB. I always left my interactions with research colleagues filled with gratitude from their generous sharing.

Admittedly, I am still working on how to show care to research colleagues in a way that is genuine, while not overstepping boundaries. I found that each research colleague may need care in different forms from one another, and some research colleagues may not want to engage in explicit care at all (and respecting that boundary *is* a form of care for the research colleague). Thus, while practicing an ethic of care is complex, communication with research colleagues can be a useful strategy, e.g., through expressing gratitude towards the research colleagues.

4.5 Data Analysis

By the end of February 2022, I had completed all interviews and research colleagues had shared their artwork with me. I transcribed interviews during the beginning March 2022 using Otter.AI, an online software that transcribes audio files into text. I manually edited the Otter.AI transcripts by listening to the interview recordings and typing edits directly into the downloaded Otter.AI transcripts. After interviews were transcribed, I emailed the transcripts to each respective research colleagues to invite them to review transcripts, by the mid-March 2022. During the end of March 2022, I used Nvivo, a qualitative data analysis software to analyze the data. I included final interview transcripts, artwork, captions that research colleagues wrote for their own art, and my reflexive journal notes as part of the data to be analyzed using Nvivo. NVivo software is used to manage and organize qualitative data (Bazeley, 2007; Bonello & Meehan, 2019).

To follow PAR, I asked Rachel if we could both analyze the data. We decided to analyze the data on our own time, and then share the codes and themes that we both came up with to

compile together. I shared the anonymized interview transcripts and artwork with Rachel, so that Rachel could compile a document of themes that stood out to her from the data (see Appendix D for Rachel's themes and data analysis notes). For my analysis, I inputted the data into Nvivo to code for themes. Coding was an iterative process that I repeated for each piece of data collected. For textual data, initial coding involved line-by-line coding, which involves labelling each line with a general theme or description that represented my interpretation of the data (Charmaz, 2006). Inductive coding was used "to allow research findings to emerge from the frequent, dominant or significant themes inherent in raw data, without the restraints imposed by structured methodologies" (Thomas, 2006, p. 238). In other words, inductive coding involves codes that emerge from the data itself, without the creation of preconceived codes.

When coding, I turned to my theoretical framework to interpret the data. A decolonial feminist framework meant that I could be attuned to "racialized, colonial, and capitalist heterosexualist gender oppression as a lived transformation of the social" (Lugones, 2010, p. 746). A feminist new materialist framework meant I could also be attuned to the gendered ways in which more-than-humans were acting within the research colleagues' experiences (Lupton, 1999). Some examples of codes were "White-dominated organization" and "the bicycle as a tool" (see Appendix C for list of codes and themes). For artwork, I was mindful of my position as a researcher that was attempting to represent research colleagues, so to avoid misrepresenting the artwork created by research colleagues, I requested that research colleagues include a written caption for their piece, so that I could input and analyze their own statement about the art using line-by-line coding in Nvivo. The poem was inputted as text, in a similar way to interview transcripts and captions. Following initial coding, I used axial coding, which involves categorizing initial codes into larger themes (Charmaz, 2006). Themes were then analyzed using

“thematic analysis” (Clarke & Braun, 2017). Using thematic analysis was an accessible and flexible way for me to “identify patterns within and *across* data in relation to participants’ lived experience, views and perspectives, and behaviour and practices,” (Clarke & Braun, 2017). To use my examples of codes above, I classified these codes into broader themes, such as “need for anti-oppression work within BB” and “the bicycle” (see Appendix C for codes and themes). Following a relational ethic, I narrowed down themes that I hoped would demonstrate care and reciprocity towards research colleagues and the BB community that I was building relationships with. I decided to center themes that are change-oriented, to make BB and cycling spaces more accessible for QT and BIPOC. This follows decolonial feminist theorists who posit that research methodology should move beyond critique and into action that dismantles harmful systems (Collins, 2019).

Coding took approximately two weeks. By mid-April, Rachel and I shared with each other the themes that emerged through our unique data analysis processes. I combined the themes that the two of us came up with to synthesize findings. While only Rachel and I conducted this step of analysis, in June 2022, I presented the executive summary of this project to the BB logistics team to point to the findings and recommendations of this project. I also requested feedback from the BB community, to add to the executive summary. BB hired a program coordinator in June 2022 to begin implementing these recommendations, and I have been in close contact with the program coordinator to continue the conversation about these findings and how they may be taken up practically within BB.

Chapter 4 Summary

In this chapter, I outlined the decolonial feminist methodology that guided my methods, to allow for a critical examination of gender, race, sexuality, and the power structures that uphold

patriarchy within sport and recreational activities such as cycling. I then outlined the research design, including background and context to the partner organization BB, and the PAR approach used to build a relationship with BB and develop the data collection methods. PAR was employed as a response to calls for more democratic and horizontal knowledge production practices (Seppälä et al., 2021). I described the inclusion criteria for data collection, and how research colleagues were recruited for this project. I provided justification for the data collection tools and methods used for this project: arts-based methods and semi-structured interviews. I expanded on the specific art methods used by research colleagues in this study (sculpting, zine-making, and poetry). I also described the arts-based workshops that I supported with as part of PAR relationship-building and volunteering with BB. I follow with my approach to reflexivity. I ended this chapter with details about the data analysis process, and I described how I used Nvivo software to analyze the data.

Chapter 5 – Findings

In this section, I synthesize the findings from the semi-structured interviews and arts-based methods data collection to answer the following three research questions:

1. *How do QT and BIPOC volunteers of BB use bicycles in the (post-)pandemic context to contribute to gender-based violence prevention, anti-racism, and environmental justice?*
2. *How does the convergence between COVID-19, increased GBV and environmental crises—which all come to define our contemporary urban moment and unevenly impact communities—influence the work of BB and its membership?*
3. *How can BB support QT and BIPOC volunteers and community members in accessing safe bicycling?*

In response to research question 1, research colleagues critiqued White, heteronormative, and cis-male dominated cycling spaces, and how QT and BIPOC navigate and challenge these spaces. In further response to RQ1, the research colleagues discussed the utility of bicycles as a useful mode of transportation and delivery, as well as how bicycling facilitates independence, and how bicycling is environmentally sustainable.

In response to research question 2, research colleagues spoke to how BB facilitated a safe space for some of them, in contrast to the White, heteronormative and cis-male dominated spaces they encountered in their daily lives. Research colleagues also discussed the importance of BB's mutual aid work within the context of exacerbated inequality during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In response to research question 3, research colleagues discussed how BB might still maintain White, patriarchal structures, and offered suggestions for how BB can support community members in accessing safe bicycling.

The first half of the findings section outlines how research colleagues experienced cycling through the following themes: White, heteronormative, and cis-male dominated cycling spaces; the utility of bicycling; bicycling for independence; and bicycling for the environment. The second half of the findings section outlines how research colleagues took up BB's work through the following themes: The Bike Brigade and safe space; mutual aid; White patriarchal structures within The Bike Brigade; and how BB can support its community members in accessing safe cycling.

5.1 White, Heteronormative, and Cis-male Dominated Cycling Spaces

Many research colleagues critiqued mainstream bicycling spaces as being White, heteronormative, and cisgender-male dominated. Both Danielle (they/them, delivery volunteer) and Tiff (they/them, community member) described experiences of microaggressions in bicycle spaces. Tiff spoke to their experiences working in a bicycle store, in which their knowledge about bicycle mechanics was constantly being doubted by cis-men. They described “this sort of insistence that their experience is more valuable than mine. Or more probable, than mine, or some weird, sort of, like, ‘you don't know what you're talking about. Trust me,’ type of attitude. That comes up”. Danielle expressed similar microaggressions from their experience working in bicycle shops:

You know, being able to fix a bike and check over a bike is strangely something that I've had to fight for, like I have to fight for people to trust me saying that, “no, I can check over your bike. I've been doing this for a long time. And also, it's not that hard. Why do you have such a problem with this?” (laughs) And I've seen how a lot of that is related just purely to gender. Like I hate that I have all these examples. (Danielle)

Feminist work on bicycling has demonstrated that bicycle shops are inaccessible to women because of the patriarchal culture in the environment (Abord de Chatillon, 2021). Abord de Chatillon (2021) explained how the patriarchal nature of both sport and technical work has resulted in sexist bicycle shop culture, that may also affect QT as well as women. Both Danielle and Tiff's experiences demonstrated that despite having background knowledge in bicycle mechanics, their skills are still doubted, namely by cis-men. As Danielle and Tiff are persons who transcend the heteronormative gender binary, as well as being POC, this is perhaps an unsurprising pattern. This finding is confirmed by work from Bacchetta et al. (2015), which states that QTBIPOC and BIPOC knowledges are often dismissed and devalued in contrast to White, cis-male knowledges.

Neither Danielle nor Tiff expressed shock or anger at these patterns of being devalued, but rather Danielle would laugh at the incredulity of their situation, and Tiff even described, "having joy out of it, because if I'm expected to endure *that* much microaggressions constantly, from all directions then, you know, I'm gonna have to try and find ways to at least disengage and not be so emotionally invested". As a coping response to gendered and racialized microaggressions that QTBIPOC may face in everyday spaces, Tiff described how they found joy, or laughter from these encounters. Tuck and Yang (2014) posited that those with marginalized identities are too often represented through stories of pain and suffering, which makes invisible the stories of joy (Tuck & Yang, 2014). Tiff finding joy out of microaggressions is an alternative expression to the ways in which QT and BIPOC are homogenized through stories of suffering.

Other research colleagues discussed the ways in which they navigated White, heteronormative and cis-male-dominated spaces in their daily interactions. As a POC woman

working in tech, a White and cis-male-dominated field, Nat (she/her, delivery volunteer and internal team member) alluded to microaggressions and being devalued as an employee due to her social position. Nat said:

[Y]ou can be smart and accomplished and be the head of a prestigious department. Right? Like, it isn't my lack of skill, or my lack of ability. I mean, some of it is that (laughs) but it's also just like, there is an environmental factor here. And if there's an environmental factor, what can we do to address it? (Nat)

Many research colleagues spoke of the pattern of gendered and racialized microaggressions in their workplaces. In addition to gendered and racialized experiences, Tiff illuminated heteronormative practices embedded in the mainstream cycling industry:

What I think is funny is that people are like, “I don't want the frame that you know, is meant for, for women or whatever”. And usually, when I hear that I'm like, “do you mean you would rather not have a frame where it's easily for you to step through or step over?” (Tiff)

The assumption that women are built differently from men, and therefore require a different bicycle geometry is based on heteronormative gender constructions that assumed a binary gender hierarchy in which women's bodies are inherently different than those of men. This argument is traditionally used in sport to justify male superiority, while policing bodies that do not fit mainstream understandings of “woman” (Cooky & Dworkin, 2013). Tiff pointed out that different bicycle frame geometries are meant for different practical uses, such as a lower top tube (the bar that connects the seat and the handlebars) which makes it easier to step through. The assumption that women need a different frame is based on misguided biological understandings

of gender that attempt to essentialize women's bodies and therefore marginalize those who may not fit the cis-gendered and able-bodied construction of what a woman "should be". Further, gendered bicycle geometry reproduces a gender binary, which excludes cyclists who are non-binary.

In addition to the heteronormativity present in mainstream cycling spaces, Whiteness and class privilege were discussed. Several research colleagues critiqued the mainstream cycling industry, as well as those who participate in it. Privileged cyclists, or "*bike people*" were named by several research colleagues. In fact, several studies have alluded to the "'typical' White male bicyclist" (Lubitow et al., 2019, p. 1185; Steinmann et al., 2022). Gia (delivery volunteer and internal team member, she/her) observed, "I imagine, a White male riding, he's like, almost superior, because he's like, 'I'm elevated. I'm better than driving a car. Like I don't have to do this. I *choose* to do this'". The critique of mainstream cycling is not new: Lugo (2018) has contended that mainstream cycling spaces, including urban planning and cycling advocacy, have historically privileged the perspectives of wealthy White cis-men. Despite White-washed discourses about bicyclists being the "ultimate moral citizens" who *choose* to cycle for health and environmental reasons (Steinmann, 2021), many low income BIPOC riders cycle out of necessity. Kira (she/her, delivery volunteer) explained having to take up cycling due to financial reasons:

How the biking came up was just the money. It was just cheaper, I found it safer, I found it faster than the TTC like, way faster. I could walk, it would take half an hour, I could speed walk and run, it would take like 20 minutes, but if I can bike it would take like 12. Like I had everything down to the science if you have like work, or school, or you have somewhere to be at a certain time. (Kira)

The research colleagues would often poke fun at “*bike people*” who may take cycling for granted, whereas many research colleagues had experienced firsthand having to cycle out of necessity.

The final finding related to critiquing the White, heteronormative, and cis-gender dominated mainstream cycling scene in Toronto was illustrated through Gia’s zine (see images 1-2). This zine emerged from a zine-making workshop that BB hosted for BIPOC volunteers. The zine facilitator, Christina Torres from Cyclista Zine took us through the history of using zines for dismantling racism and colonialism. Gia’s zine was in response to an article about unsafe streets for Black community members in Toronto.

Image 1. Gia’s zine, first page.

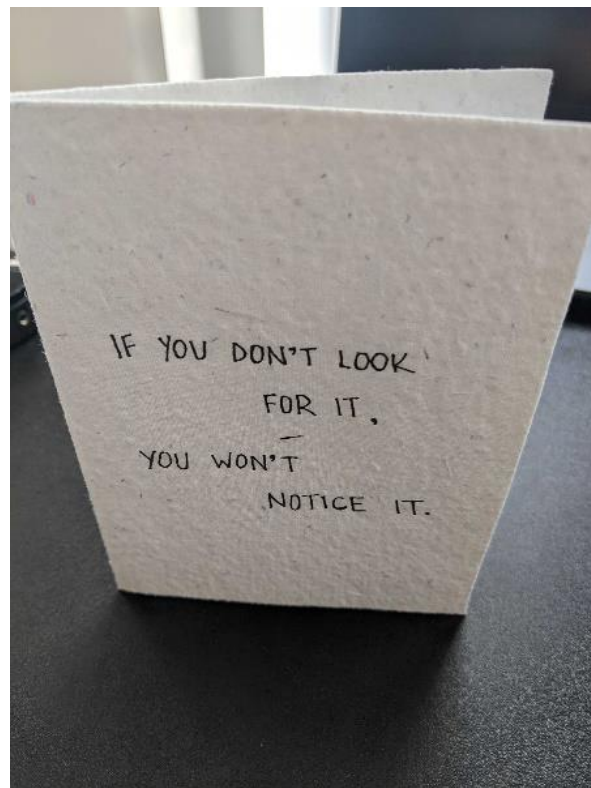
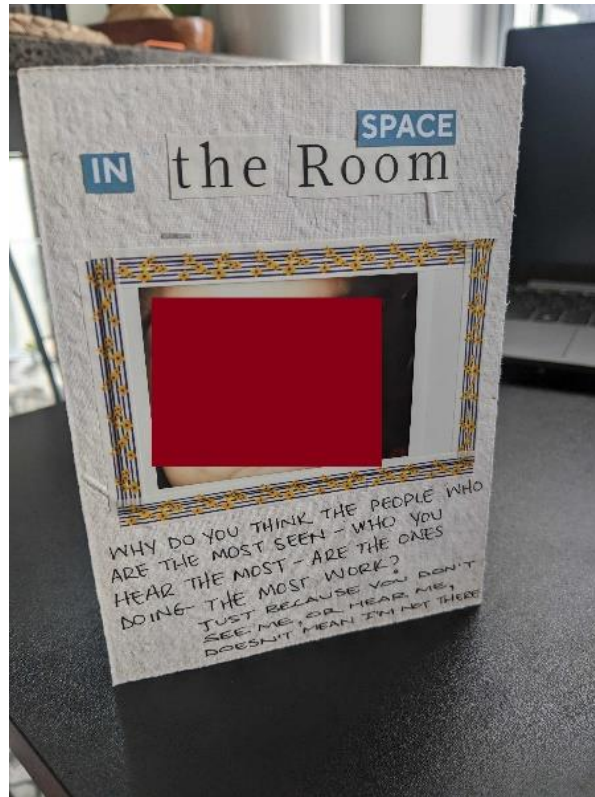


Image 2. Gia's zine, second page.



Image 3. Gia's zine, third page.



[Gia's written caption:] *Those middle-class white folks (particularly men) [the article] refers to really do establish the dominant culture, not just in influencing transportation planning, but also on the streets. I get that when we get cut off or are put in dangerous situations, we get mad; and we have every right to yell at the driver and say what we want to say. I remember one of the first times I was riding in downtown Toronto (at the peak of COVID - I didn't ride in the City before), I was following behind a white man-presenting cyclist. The passenger of a parked vehicle was slowly starting to open their door (into the bike lane) - literally at a glacial pace - and this poor woman had to receive all the swearings and physical aggressions of this rider as he passed by her. Obviously not having ridden in the City, I just didn't understand why that terrible man acted that way; I now know it's never an isolated event. While I do believe a trauma-informed lens is important, some of these riders just act as they do throughout life -*

without consequence. They don't think about a large man getting out of his car and attacking them, they know police and legal aid is accessible to them, they don't care about how they're influencing this driver's perception of Toronto cyclists... I think of my sister when I interact with drivers. I'm not perfect, I too get mad at the stupid ones. But I consciously try to be kind to them (all about that positive reinforcement lol), so that maybe when they're deciding whether to pass my sister dangerously or not, they will be kind to her too. It's a scary place out there for new, not-super-confident riders!

Gia's zine involved a critique of White- and cis-male-dominated cycling spaces that have continually resulted in unsafe streets for BIPOC. The story that Gia shared illuminated White privilege in the context of cycling in Toronto. For cyclists with identities that afford them more privilege, such as access to legal aid, they may not experience firsthand what it is like to navigate unsafe streets as BIPOC and QTBIPOC do. In Gia's third photo, she included a photograph of her sister to show that she worries for her sister's safety on the streets. Lastly, Gia's zine demonstrated how the coloniality of knowledge (Mignolo, 2000; Quijano, 2000) continues to make invisible the voices and work of POC, through her writing, "WHY DO YOU THINK PEOPLE WHO ARE THE MOST SEEN – WHO YOU HEAR THE MOST – ARE THE PEOPLE DOING THE MOST WORK? JUST BECAUSE YOU DON'T SEE ME, OR HEAR ME, DOESN'T MEAN I'M NOT THERE" (see image 3). Gia illuminated how the work and perspectives of BIPOC have been silenced, such as in bicycling advocacy and decision-making, despite their continued work to resist systems of oppression (Lugo, 2016).

5.2 The Utility of Bicycles

A common theme that was discussed was how common-sense biking is. Danielle outlined this as follows:

Having a bike in an urban area is incredibly economical. You can carry *so much* stuff on a bike, you can move around, you know, get yourself where you're going, maybe even get your kid where you're going. And you're not paying for gas, insurance, fixing your engine, when the engine craps out of your car. You're not even paying for a PRESTO Card, which I think probably costs like \$150 a month or something if you were taking it every day... And, put simply, even though things go into lockdown, you can still go out there and you could still ride your bike, and it will still give you that 20 minutes of cardio that you need, it'll give you the fresh air, it'll give you the ability to get your essential supplies. (Danielle)

With the need to social distance during the COVID-19 pandemic, bicycling may have become an even more appealing mode of transport to avoid crowding and catching the virus. Indeed, in Canada, we saw an influx in bicycle ridership due to social distancing recommendations during the COVID-19 pandemic (Stats Canada, 2020). At the same time, low-income areas in Ontario, were experienced the highest rates of COVID-19 cases, in part due to many low-income individuals needing to take public transportation (Draaisma, 2022). For those who have access to bicycles, bicycling may be a safer alternative to avoid exposure to the virus. However, safe cycling depends on a number of factors, such as bicycle lane infrastructure, being trained or experienced in how to bicycle safely, and being able to afford bicycles, parts, and safety equipment for bicycling – all resources that remain accessible exclusively to middle-to-upper class communities (Moore-Monroy et al., 2016). Making bicycling more accessible and safer for low-income neighbourhoods may be a worthwhile investment in community health, particularly within the context of a pandemic recovery.

Bicycling can meet our well-being needs, as well as providing more affordable access to

the city. If equipped well, the bicycle can help transport essential supplies from point A to point B (McSweeney et al., 2020). BB facilitated a network of deliveries through the bicycle's transportation and cargo uses. On an individual level, research colleagues used the bicycle for their own personal needs outside of BB. While no research colleague spoke to this, I found myself bicycling more due to my participation with BB. Instead of taking public transport, I found that bicycling provided me with the physical activity I wanted, but more importantly, knowing there was a community of cyclists through BB who were using the bicycle every day motivated me to cycle more frequently. The utility of the bicycle became more apparent the more I learned about how QTBPOC and BIPOC volunteers may use the bicycle on a day-to-day basis. I learned that most research colleagues would ride their bicycle almost every week, during all seasons. One day, I had taken public transit to meet with a research colleague to hand off equipment for their arts-based contribution. I chose to take public transit because it was winter, and I found the cold weather and wind alone was enough to put my bicycle away for the season. The research colleague had bicycled to meet me, despite the cold (Reflexive notes, January 16, 2022). Danielle voiced hoping that more people who ride their bicycles in the winter:

[Some cyclists are] afraid that if they ride their bikes through the winter, you know, it's going to get all covered in salt, and that's going to cause problems. I want to make sure that people know that that is an issue, but you can take care of it. Here's how! You can still ride all winter. We still need people to be out there, you know. (Danielle)

Hearing how research colleagues would use their bicycles even through the winter months motivated me to try bicycling in the cold (Reflexive notes, February 13, 2022). Other research colleagues expressed cycling less (or not at all) in the winter because of the slippery and hazardous road conditions. As Danielle suggested, bicycling in the winter required more

maintenance, planning (checking the weather and avoiding routes with slush/ice), and proper equipment (wearing more layers, gloves that would not slip from the handlebars), but other research colleagues used their bicycles year-round because of how useful it was. While no research colleague explicitly mentioned the connection to climate change, colleagues noted being more aware of the weather, especially during the winter, and how that prevent them from bicycling, or how that might affect their cycling route. With climate change and resulting extreme weather conditions (such as heat waves and greater snowfalls) (Environmental Defense Fund, 2022), cyclists may need to be more cautious and mindful of cycling conditions and how to navigate their routes safely.

In addition to personal transportation, Tiff spoke to their experience both as a bicycle mechanic and as a bike marshal, explaining how the bicycle is like a machine and tool that can be used to support activists:

As a mechanic, I obviously love bikes as like a tool, as a machine... But then also learning about the fact that now we're using bikes as tool to add on to marshaling, in order to support, local activist causes, that to me was like really exciting. (Tiff)

Bike marshals volunteer to ride to support the safety of protestors by blocking intersections and supporting where needed (BikePGH, 2020). Since bike marshals are on bicycles, they have more height for visibility, and can move more quickly than marshals who are not on bicycles. Tiff was excited to be able to use the bicycle to support their own activism work, as well as to support the safety of other activists during protests:

The fact that now we're using bikes as a tool to add on to marshaling, in order to support local activists causes, that to me was like really exciting, because independently both are

already very interesting topics for me. And so the possibility of experiencing them together as like an activity became even more exciting. (Tiff)

Given the utility of the bicycle for transportation, cargo, well-being, activism, and supporting the safety of others, bicycle infrastructure should be made more widely accessible. However, bicycling in Toronto was seen as physically dangerous. Kira said:

I want to live to 100. But if I don't, it's probably because I'm going to get hit by a car [while bicycling]. And I know that's really like morbid and awful but, I've had so many close calls that it's just (baby noise) I don't find the city safe. (Kira)

I included Kira's baby's noises because the baby would often chime in during the interview, almost as if emphasizing or responding to Kira (Reflexive notes, Jan 28, 2022). Here, the baby seemed to be responding to Kira's worry about getting hit by a car, perhaps showing worry for their parent. In including the baby's response, I hoped to emphasize the importance of the safety of bicyclists, not only for their personal well-being, but for our connected well-being. If Kira is injured, this impacts a whole network of individuals who are within (and beyond) Kira's network of care. Other volunteers reported feeling unsafe while cycling particularly during the winter season, and this can be a result of not having access to proper equipment, as well as bicycling infrastructure being extra unsafe during cold and icy weather. Advocacy groups such as 8 80 Cities and Cycle TO have been working on demanding safer cycling infrastructure in Toronto (8 80 Cities, 2020; Cycle TO, n. d.). 8 80 Cities' Danforth project, for example, involved an installation of safer street design to directly prevent pedestrian and cyclist injury and death from automobile collisions, while putting forth examples of safer streets for the City of Toronto to implement more widely (8 80 Cities, 2020).

5.3 Bicycling for Independence

Bicycling can offer riders a sense of freedom and control. Nat described how she felt cycling as a woman:

Being tall and fast was like, so freeing? Especially being told, “oh you have to be lady-like, you have to do this, you have to do that,” but for some reason being on that bike made me feel so powerful and free. (Nat)

Similar to Hayhurst et al.’s (2022) findings, women who cycle have reported feeling more empowered, especially through challenging gender norms and expectations. Further, some research colleagues reported feeling like the risk of GBV was lower while cycling. Gia and I discussed this as follows:

Gia: When I come home at night, I would never walk past [intersection], which is the most direct route to get to my place. But if I was biking, I would go through there. So it's a lot safer for me to do that. And I feel safe doing it... I think that for me, a huge thing for safety, like when I'm riding fast, like “no one can touch me!” Yeah, well, at least that's how I feel. Red lights are another thing when you have to stop (laughs) but at least you can bike away really fast.

Jess: I relate very much to this, definitely feels like, “you don't have time to cat call me, like you don't have time to process my gender!” (laughs)

Bicycling may help some individuals feel safer from GBV than walking or taking public transport, due to increased mobility and speed. This of course does not address the systemic issue of GBV, as it is not the “victim’s” responsibility to evade GBV or spaces in which they are more vulnerable to GBV. This finding in fact supports the notion that systemic GBV must be urgently

addressed, since cyclists are reporting having to navigate and avoid spaces in which they may experience violence. Bicycling may be a potential avenue that some women or QT cyclists use to evade GBV in public. At the same time, there is also evidence that QTBIPOC and BIPOC women cyclists may face forms of aggression while sharing the road with drivers and other cyclists (Lubitow et al., 2019) due to the intersections of racism, sexism, and/or queerphobia. Lubitow et al. (2019) illustrated how riding a bicycle as a woman can “oscillate between being empowering in one moment and stressful or frightening in the next” (p. 1194). On the one hand, bicycling can be empowering for those who do not fit the “typical male cyclist” archetype, but simultaneously cyclists must navigate public spaces in which systemic GBV continues to put women and QT cyclists at risk of experiencing violence. In my interaction with Gia, we both acknowledged that while cycling may enable a quicker escape, there still remains a risk of violence.

Although more research is needed on the experiences of QTBIPOC cyclist experiences (Lubitow et al., 2019), Fox (they/them, delivery volunteer) demonstrated a similar push-and-pull of empowerment/embodying their identity, as well as facing violence as a QTPOC in their poem, “#Stop Asian Hate & Homophobia” (see image 4).

Image 4. Fox's poem "#Stop Asian Hate & Homophobia".

#Stop Asian Hate & Homophobia

I

myself
have experienced
racism
and
homophobia
since
I
belong
to the
LGBTQ+ Community

and

I'm Asian

QTBIPOC cyclists may be more vulnerable to racism and queerphobia while cycling in public spaces. In Canada, QTBIPOC are disproportionately vulnerable to violence, including police violence (Dadui, 2018; Maynard, 2017; Ramirez, 2018). Cycling in public spaces may thus reflect these patterns, due to the increased visibility.

5.4 Bicycling for the Environment

Most research colleagues did not explicitly suggest that bicycling for the environment was a primary motivation. Instead, supporting the environment was often an assumed effect of cycling. Through bicycling with BB, research colleagues spoke first and foremost about bicycling to support others in their communities. Kira, for example, mentioned that during her

initial volunteering, she drove her car to pick up and deliver items. She said, “I had to get food to people. It was like, ‘screw the environment. This is shopping lists, I have to go buy these things, and they must eat’, right?” Kira’s priority was to ensure that her community members would have access to food. Supporting food security is in fact one tenet of environmental justice, despite common discourses that separate food security and environmental justice (Gottlieb & Fisher, 1996). Kira knew the importance of ensuring community members had access to food, since community empowerment and nourishment is a necessary precursor to supporting the environment (Gottlieb & Fisher, 1996). Kira’s experience is telling of how car-centric Toronto has become, due to settler colonial expansion. Gia further suggested how far-removed humans have become from the Land due to settler colonialism:

Are we going to actually figure out how to act in accordance with this mutual reciprocal exchange with not just people, but the Land? Like what do I know about this Land, I’m so far disconnected in my current state that I don’t even know how to be connected to the Land and have reciprocity with the Land. (Gia)

Colonialism involves processes that disconnects human relationships from the Land. Land “is about relations between the material aspects some people might think of as landscapes – water, soil, air, plants, stars – and histories, spirits, events, kinships, accountabilities and other people (beings) that aren’t human” (Liboiron, 2021, p. 43). However, settler colonialism assumes that Land is for extraction and capitalist profit (Liboiron, 2021; Simpson, 2017). In Liboiron’s (2021) work about pollution and colonialism, they described current day colonial relationships to the Land: “[w]e no longer work from the premise that the carcasses and guts (of the Land) are waste, to which we have exclusive and uncomplicated access” (p. 45). This lack of relationship and accountability to the Land that the Canadian state has facilitated may explain why Gia felt so

disconnected from the Land, despite the popularized discourse that bicycling is environmentally-friendly.

Lastly, Nico's (he/him, delivery volunteer) art project demonstrated a world-sense (Oyěwùmí, 2005) in which we can approach the environment and our connections with respect (see image 5 and 6).

Image 5. Nico's mask, front.



Image 6. Nico's mask, back.



[Nico's written caption:] *The mask's colours and patterns are connected to my ancestry. The triangle at the back represents our inner vision and perception of the world, also connected to what our eyes are able to see. This is also a reminder that there are many things that we cannot perceive through our limited human senses since there are more things (not visible) that influences and can change our perspective of life. Green and blue are our connection to the natural elements (water & nature); dark purple, the universe (inner and outside); orange is the light that is inside and outside; and red-brown, is the colour of the ground and our blood.*

According to Nico's mask and caption, our world-sense is important, since there are so many forces that influence our lives that we cannot perceive through our vision. A worldview that approaches the environment through White-washed and colonial discourses are not enough to truly live in relation to the Land. Nico demonstrated how humans are inherently connected to all beings, including water, nature, and the rest of the universe. Indeed, Indigenous scholars have

asserted that all beings – including more-than-human beings and objects – are produced from the Land, and therefore have the agency to influence other life (Sundberg, 2014; Todd, 2017).

Bicycles may be one of the more-than-human objects – and forces – that influence life as a more-than-human object that has been produced by materials from the Land. For instance, Nico mentioned that bicycling can feel like a political message, saying “when you’re biking, you’re also telling society another message. It’s like, we need mobility for people, like for real people, for bikes, right? Instead of buying a car”. In this example, the actual presence and visibility of the bicycle is what conveys the message to others, about the need for more sustainable mobility.

5.5 The Bike Brigade and Safe Space

For some research colleagues, The Bike Brigade offered a safe space within a cityscape that is unsafe for many QT and BIPOC due to systemic racism and GBV. Danielle and Nat described feeling a contrast between their experience within the BB community and their experience in other spaces:

I feel the opposite of that [other spaces] with the Bike Brigade. I know that the trust is really there. Maybe that's what it is, that might be the best example is that I know that there's a genuine trust. And it's not tokenizing. It's not like, “we just want you to be here to make us look good”, it's, “we want you to be here, because you are good, because we know that you are, and we trust you. And we know that you have skills”. (Danielle)

In any other space, it would be like, “oh, you're being too sensitive [when calling out oppressive behaviour]”. But in this space, it feels like, “oh, we're glad you caught that, or you noticed that”. Yeah. And so instead of it being like a burden, feeling like it's a skill is really lovely. (Nat)

Both Danielle and Nat expressed feeling like their skills were valued in the BB community, and for Nat, her ability to call out oppressive behaviour was supported in the BB community. Having had negative and harmful experiences in previous workspaces, Danielle and Nat appreciated a space in which they did not feel tokenized as POC, and where their skillsets and identities were genuinely respected.

For some research colleagues, BB facilitated a safe space within their everyday experiences in the city, by explicitly showing support for marginalized communities. As Nico stated:

Why I really enjoy this interaction in the Bike Brigade, I really like taking part in their programs on just like all they're doing because it's like, how I feel myself respected, how I feel that they're... like my identities are recognized there. Right? And it's all of like, the language, the interactions, the programs, how they reframe many things regarding like, the messages that they want to communicate, right? I feel that this is the way how I connect maybe my identities with the Bike Brigade. There's in some, like, in many ways, could be a safe space for you. (Nico)

BB partners with mutual aid organizations in Toronto that support a range of community members, including sex workers, Indigenous persons, unhoused and vulnerably housed persons, 2SLGBTQIA+ persons, and persons with limited mobility in Toronto. Nico was drawn to volunteering with BB because of these partnerships, since this meant BB recognizes systems of oppression that need to be attended to. Kira similarly said:

I saw some of the [social media] posts, that other agencies it was supporting, that it was diverse, so I don't think I ever questioned or ever worried about my cultural safety being

questioned or anything like that... But it's also grassroots, so I don't think I would have expected that. (Kira)

Kira echoed that seeing the diverse partners that BB worked with made her feel culturally safe, and that her identity was supported by BB. She further explained:

What I appreciate about the Bike Brigade is that they'll speak out about stuff that isn't always popular, do you know what I mean? Like BLM, where you wouldn't always find that in like really White grassroots, not-for-profit spaces. Like it's very like, "Oh, we're getting funding, and we don't want to piss off our funders," right? I don't find that type of energies there, and that's what I like. Because not-for-profit spaces, grassroots spaces, it can be very much like, "Oh, our board of directors," like it's very top-down, they're very like, "We don't wanna run out of funding, because we don't want to get our funding cut," because they want the agency to exist. So they do watch what they say. (Kira)

In contrast to some non-profit organizations that may not speak out against systemic issues due to the limitations of funding, Kira appreciated that BB actively and explicitly showed support for equity-seeking groups. Kira pointed to BB's social media posts, BB's bike marshaling presence, which contributed to a feeling of safety volunteering with BB.

Another way that BB worked to facilitate safe space for BIPOC was through offering arts-based workshops for BIPOC volunteers, including a sculpting workshop and a zine-making workshop. Since BIPOC riders had expressed a need for BIPOC-exclusive spaces, BB decided to hold this type of space instead of a narrower focus on QTBIPOC for initial workshop programming, to first address the need for BIPOC-safe space. Many research colleagues from this study had been involved in the workshops and expressed how valuable BIPOC-exclusive

spaces were for them. One sculpting workshop that was held involved pairing up and bandaging each other using plaster of Paris (a bandage-like material that can be moistened and dried to fit a mold) to provoke discussion on caring for each other in White-dominated spaces. Having this activity as well as being able to create art with other research colleagues allowed for a co-creation of knowledge about healing and trauma specific to BIPOC that may otherwise not have been possible. Importantly, facilitating a BIPOC-exclusive space and having a trained facilitator was necessary for creating a safe space for this knowledge co-production (Reflexive notes, Nov 3, 2022).

5.6 Mutual Aid

All research colleagues spoke to the importance of mutual aid, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. As de Loggans (2020) asserted, mutual aid frameworks involve: 1) ensuring that all community members can thrive, not merely survive; 2) the sharing of skills and knowledge within the community; and 3) a long-term commitment to reallocating wealth and resources. Research colleagues acknowledged that a mutual aid framework is needed for long-term systemic change.

5.6.1 Thriving, Not Surviving

Danielle described mutual aid as follows:

I think that that's beautiful, it's probably the best way to put it, is that you're not giving aid because you feel like somebody needs you to provide for them. You're giving aid because you feel like that other person is equal to you and deserves everything that you get to have. (Danielle)

Danielle compared mutual aid to charity, explaining that mutual aid involves the inherent belief that others deserve the same that you deserve. Nico described mutual aid as treating each other as “peers in this world”. While the charity model involves a temporary reallocation of wealth and resources (otherwise known as “philanthropy”), mutual aid involves a long-term commitment “to re-allocate for equitable access to resources, education, and needs” (de Loggans, 2020, p. 2). Mutual aid organizing has been used throughout history as a way to build community-based systems to care for one another (Spade, 2020). This involves a completely different mindset towards aid, one that involves treating all members in a community as “peers”. Being peers with each other also assumes that there are no power imbalances, but rather that we exist respectfully alongside one another.

Research colleagues voiced feeling like volunteering helped *them* thrive themselves. In these poems, Fox demonstrated how they personally benefited and felt happiness from doing mutual aid work in the poems “Happiness” and “About Me” (see Image 7 and Image 8).

Image 7. Fox's poem, "About Me".

ABOUT ME

I AM A *CHRISTIAN*

I AM *COMPASSIONATE*

TOWARDS MYSELF

AND

OTHERS

I AM A CARING

AND

LOVING

PERSON

I FEEL GOOD

IF I HELP

CHANGE

AND

TOUCH OTHERS LIVES

LIFE IS PRECIOUS

WONDERFUL

POWERFUL

TRUST AND BELIEVE GOD

Image 8. Fox's poem, "Happiness".

Happiness
Friends who respect
and
care for me
accept me for
who I am
that makes me happy
I LOVE
talking to people
I LIKE
spending time with friends & family
I CARE
about PEOPLE
It MAKES ME HAPPY
if I did good things
for other people

Being able to do mutual aid work, in addition to having conversations with people, is part of what made Fox thrive. This is one way in which mutual aid work is founded on reciprocity, intersubjectivity and relationality – that our own well-being is connected to the well-being of others, and we require fluid understandings of what being in relation can look like. Further, focusing on supporting the well-being and thriving of community members is an important way to resist the discursive narrative of suffering associated with those affected by systems of oppression (Tuck & Yang, 2014). In contrast to narratives about “suffering” QT and BIPOC, the research colleagues demonstrated how they themselves thrived and experienced joy out of

engaging in mutual aid with BB. This finding echoes decolonial feminist works that prioritize liberation through being in relation with one another (Lugones, 2010).

Further, Kira described the importance of *good* food and going beyond the survivance of marginalized community members to ensure they are thriving:

Pow Wow Cafe got involved at one point and that's like, I love that food, I love that place. I know they would interact with different agencies, it wasn't just, "we're getting food from the Food Bank and then we're delivering it". Sometimes food bank food isn't always the most equitable, it's not the most diverse, sometimes it's expired. Like they were getting delicious food with flavour, with seasoning, you know what I mean? Like, that might sound weird, but that's important. Why can't people have good food? (Kira)

Kira emphasized that everyone should have access to *good* food, not just the basic necessities. BB partners with other mutual aid organizations that prepares food for their recipients so that BB volunteers can deliver the food. For example, one of the partner organizations, East York Meals on Wheels' vision statement is: "older adults and people with health challenges should receive delicious and nutritional food, along with dedicated social support to live well independently at home" (East York Meals on Wheels, 2020, para. 3). Good and nutritious food is a key resource that BB makes more widely accessible through partnering with these mutual aid organizations. This finding, however, may be better supported if delivery recipients felt they were thriving from receiving good food. Since I only worked with BB volunteers, this is outside the scope of the project. However, Kira's quotation still points to the importance of ensuring those involved in mutual aid can thrive, beyond providing the basic necessities of survival.

5.6.2 *Sharing of Skills and Knowledge*

All research colleagues had expressed the different ways in which they used their unique skillset and capacity to support BB's work and their own communities. For example, while Fox preferred not to be interviewed, they supported this research project by first creating a GoPro video of their deliveries, and when they were unable to continue editing the video due to capacity limitations, they shared several poems that they created. Likewise, while Tiff did not do deliveries with BB, they offered support for other BB community members, such as by fixing flat tires. Tiff also appreciated being invited to the BIPOC-exclusive workshops so that they could share space with other BIPOC community members.

A key tenet of mutual aid is that community members should always have the option to participate in whatever capacity they are able, to "break ageist, ableist, labor hierarchy" (de Loggans, 2020, p. 3). Some research colleagues expressed feeling guilty for not being able to do deliveries as much as they might have liked to, despite supporting their communities in other ways. Barriers that limited the research colleagues' ability to do deliveries included: not being equipped for winter riding; not feeling confident riding their bicycle; balancing school/work life; and needing to stay at home with their children. When discussing capacity limitations, Nat said that bicycling in the winter "is so daunting to me. Anything on wheels in the winter is like, ugh, I can't even walk down without slipping on my feet. [Laughs] Can't imagine being on a bike." For Nico, being a student limited his capacity, despite wanting to support BB's work:

Sometimes I feel I'm not contributing *that* much because I just disappear sometimes because of school, because of stuff, because of all this kind of adult's life. But I really, really would like to take a more active role in the Bike Brigade in terms of like, helping them. (Nico)

For Kira, being a new parent meant she was unable to volunteer with BB, saying “now I can't just sign up anymore because I gotta like, worry about who's gonna watch [the baby] and whatnot”. Given the multitude of barriers that research colleagues faced in working with BB, there is potential for BB to follow a mutual aid framework and support BB members’ unique capacities. Nat questioned, “what is the structure [that] I need to support the Bike Brigade in a way that makes me feel like I'm an equal player?” The organizational structure of BB should therefore value each volunteer’s unique skillset and capacity, including skillsets that do not involve bicycling.

Research colleagues demonstrated the unique ways they could contribute to their communities. As an example, Kira’s lived experience as an Indigenous woman informed her knowledge about cultural sensitivity when doing deliveries, describing Anishinaabe cultural protocol for handling items to deliver:

I want to be in a good headspace, because I know these items, whenever you're holding them, you got to be in a good headspace when you're handling them. Like, I wouldn't be drinking or something and then touching them because that's something you're not supposed to do, and I knew that... Because you also can't be on your time [menstruating].
(Kira)

Kira recognized the importance of including Indigenous perspectives in discussions around BB’s work and cycling in Toronto more broadly. Traditional Indigenous practices and protocols may not be known or discussed enough in BB if there is a lack of representation within the BB community. For example, since menstruating is considered a spiritually sacred time (LaPier, 2020), Kira mentioned that the person menstruating should not be handling sacred items. Kira assumed that she was one of few Indigenous BB volunteers or internal team members, so these

protocols might not be well-known within the BB community. She discussed the feelings around self-identifying as an Indigenous person within BB:

I know I made a point to not self-identify when I pick up the items. And I don't know why. Not that I was hiding it. It was just when they're like, "oh, like, there's feathers in here". And I was like, I was like, "I'm aware". But I didn't say "Oh, I'm Indigenous, like, I'm doing this to help my fellow people." Like, I didn't do that. And I can't even tell you why, and it's not that I felt unsafe, I think it's just I didn't want to have the bad taste in my mouth in case it didn't go well. Because you know, if you if you meet someone if you're in a space, and then someone says something really culturally insensitive and appropriate, you're like, "okay, I don't want anything to do with you now," and I didn't want to have that experience. (Kira)

Kira's quote demonstrated that it may be difficult for BIPOC to share cultural knowledge with an organization and its members if there is a risk of experiencing microaggressions, discrimination, or their knowledge being devalued. While research colleagues had a wealth of unique knowledges to offer BB, this is a key finding that needs to be addressed by BB to support the sharing of diverse knowledges.

Since some of BB's partners serve Indigenous-led organizations and community members, BB staff and volunteers must also consider the safety of recipients, particularly within the context of settler-Indigenous dynamics. When discussing the safety of Indigenous recipients, Kira said:

I don't know how [BB] can make spaces safer for Indigenous folks. But I know if they're still there helping I think that's a good thing, if that makes sense? It's like, maybe *some*

help, like the White saviour stuff I know that they're really trying to battle that, I think, but I think still being there as an ally is still help, even though it may not be the help that they think it should be. (Kira)

Kira suggested that the White Saviour Complex may be present within the BB community, and thus doing work to challenge the White Saviour Complex is an important part of ensuring the safety of delivery recipients. The White Saviour Complex was coined by Teju Cole (2012), who asserted in a series of Tweets, “[t]he white savior supports brutal policies in the morning, founds charities in the afternoon, and receives awards in the evening”. Indeed, other research colleagues critiqued BB’s structure for continuing to follow charity frameworks despite calling itself a mutual aid organization, which will be further discussed in “White Patriarchal Structures Within The Bike Brigade”. Kira’s quote demonstrated that supporting Indigenous organizations and communities requires challenging the White Saviour Complex and being an ally. Through speaking about cultural safety, Kira offered important knowledge that settler BB staff and volunteers can learn from.

Fox also demonstrated the many ways in which knowledge can be shared through mutual aid. In the poem “Advice to Youth”, Fox had done an informal “interview” or conversation with a community member who Fox had been delivering to regularly (see image 9). They used the text message conversation to create free verse poems. This poem includes advice that the recipient (who identified as a senior) wanted to share with youth.

Image 9. Fox's poem, "Advice to Youth".

Advice to Youth

Don't stop

LEARNING

and

gROWING

as a person

SAVE

for your

FUTURE

Always be POSITIVE

LOVE OTHERS

Be THANKFUL

FOR WHAT YOU HAVE

Providing advice or teachings through conversations is one of the many ways in which knowledge can be shared (Kovach, 2021). The recipient shared values of learning, planning, positivity, love, and gratitude here, and Fox shared this knowledge through their artwork. This also challenges the “have and have nots” binary that charity models assume (de Loggans, 2020, p. 2). In other words, this poem shows the wealth of resources and knowledge that every community member has to offer, rather than assuming those with more privilege and power are the only ones with things to share (de Loggans, 2020). Fox had asked the recipient if they had any advice for youth, demonstrating that Fox was already embodying this mutual aid value. Fox knew that – despite being the one to deliver resources to the recipient – the recipient had their own knowledge and skills to share with Fox, as demonstrated in the poem lines, “LOVE OTHERS” and “Be THANKFUL FOR WHAT YOU HAVE”.

5.6.3 Reallocation of Resources

Fox's poems outlined the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on marginalized community members, and how delivering food is one way to reallocate resources, particularly during a time of exacerbated poverty and food insecurity. The following poem, "How Covid Changed My Life" features Fox's text message conversation with the recipient they delivered to (see image 9).

Image 10. Fox's poem, "How Covid Changed My Life".

"How Covid Changed My Life"

My life
before Covid
very good

my senior years
I was very active
physically, emotionally, mentally
when covid hit
my life changed dramatically
lost my job
stuck at home
lockdown
devastated
my mental health
physical and emotional
well-being worsened
depressed
anxious
paranoid
still worried

Here, Fox showed how the pandemic had devastated the recipient's life, notably through unemployment and social isolation. Indeed, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in increased unemployment rates, particularly for visible minority groups (Stats Canada, 2021). For 2SLGBTQIA+ people in Canada, mental health challenges have worsened since the outbreak of COVID-19, although this demographic have been vulnerable to mental illness since prior to the pandemic (MHRC, 2021). Fox also shared a series of poems titled "519", which demonstrated how BB and the 519 helped support the recipient during the pandemic (see images 11-13).

Image 11. Fox's poem "519".

519

Help for seniors

and

community
once a week

in order for

me

not to be

HuNgRy

519

is

very much

appreciated

big help

to

community

and

people

who need it the most

thankful

for these blessings

Image 12. Fox's poem, "519 pt. 2".

519 pt.3

These deliveries
helped me a lot
instead of
buying food
I can
save money
to
buy my meds
my brother and 519
I rely most

Image 13. Fox's poem, "519 pt. 3".

519 pt. 2

Since October
been receiving
deliveries
hoping and praying
that
they continue
delivering
and
servicing
those in need

The 519 is a Toronto-based agency that supports 2SLGBTQIA+ communities through various programs and partnerships (The 519, n. d.). In the three-part poem titled 519, Fox demonstrated how the BB deliveries from the 519 directly supported this recipient. Having access to food even allowed this recipient to support their own family member.

In Toronto, as one in five household experience food insecurity (City of Toronto, 2019) there is undoubtedly a need to reallocate resources within the city. This trend motivated Kira to volunteer with BB at the start of the pandemic:

The Bike Brigade wasn't the first place that I approached, I actually went to my building. I put up a sign in the lobby being like, "does anyone need food, or errands or whatever," right? Yeah, no one responded (laughs) [...] But it really came out of a need for me that, I felt like I had so much, and so much security that I had to help other people. Like, if this wasn't the time to help people, when was it? I felt like I had food, I had a home, I had a job, I knew I was getting a paycheck. When else would you help people, right? (Kira)

Kira hoped to reallocate resources, acknowledging that she was in a position where she had the capacity to deliver food or other resources to community members. Kira also recognized that there was an urgent need to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic by ensuring her community members were supported during the state of emergency. While Kira had tried to support her community alone initially, BB offered a larger and structured effort to respond to food insecurity in Toronto. Tiff further discussed the need to respond to inequality in Toronto, due to state abandonment of vulnerable community members, in mentioning the work of a different Toronto-based organization, Maggie's, a sex worker justice organization that works to provide accessible resources to sex workers in Toronto (Maggie's Toronto Sex Workers Action Project, 2022):

Mutual aid support was very important and necessary in a city that has such high homelessness rates and such important things that are lacking in this city [...] To know that the government has kind of dragged their feet every step as far as making this rather easy task for everyone to take on [...] But then you turn around and you see this like community of sex workers [Maggie's] who put the time and energy in into organizing and collaborating with nurses and doctors into providing low-barrier clinics and knowing the numbers of people being vaccinated during that time.

Tiff's quotation demonstrates that the state has failed to support Toronto's most vulnerable community members. Indeed, Ontario's unhoused population have been at an increased risk of contracting and dying from COVID-19 due to a lack of government support and precarious conditions in government-funded shelters (McGillivray, 2021). Tiff illuminated how grassroots organizations such as Maggie's has responded to this state abandonment, such as through providing low-barrier health clinics and COVID-19 vaccines. Likewise, through delivering resources, BB has responded to the lack of state action to support those who are food insecure in Toronto.

With respect to reallocating resources, Nico spoke to his own experiences with BB that challenged his biases and helped shape his world-sense:

I find that when you are biking and you are taking part in the Bike Brigade, you are also going to some places that there are many stereotypes around them, right? For example, there is something that I've just been reflecting and it's why I really appreciate the experience of the Bike Brigade, and I'm not ashamed to talk about that in terms of my own biases, because it's how I just been challenging my biases and deconstructing them. And for example, going to some buildings that there are like many people who live there

in these buildings. And they have very difficult conditions to live, right? Because they have no job, they have like mental health conditions, they are like marginalized people. Like from different ethnicities or equity groups, like they are LGBTQ+, old, or they're like sexual workers, or like all these things that we really don't know about these people. So it's like how you deconstruct all of these things. For example, I have couple experience[s], like when I visited some buildings – and how this bias that I have, like how some people who can afford to living here have like this food insecurity, it's like, okay, well, that's something that we need to reflect as a society. (Nico)

Nico described deconstructing biases that perpetuated the wealth binary – that you either have it or you do not (de Loggans, 2020). Initially, he felt that recipients who lived in certain housing situations may not have been deserving of deliveries, because of an assumption of their wealth. Upon further reflection, he realized that as part of mutual aid, there should not be gatekeeping of wealth and resources. Indeed, a key part of mutual aid is solidarity, in which “members learn about experiences that are not their own and build solidarity” (Spade, 2020, p. 137). Nico’s reflection offered insight into learning about those who were part of his community, to move towards being in solidarity with them.

Gia further built on unlearning collective ideas about aid in her reflection on mutual aid:

It extends, I think, politically as well in terms of like, how we want to retain our wealth, and how we want to distribute it. Like we're very – even myself – like, we're still very much like, “who's deserving of my wealth?” And, “how much should I give them? Are they deserving? Are they just gonna spend it on, you know, the typical narrative where people like, don't want to give money if they're gonna spend it on drugs?” I don't know what that is. It's like this interesting sort of – stemming from from like, the roots of

mutual aid I think that people aren't grasping, including myself, but I don't think that they're grasping that they're not grasping (laughs), which is the step that's needed, because no one's ever going to know fully anything, or be like, perfect in anything. (Gia)

Gia admitted that she is still unlearning socialized biases about aid, and who is deserving of resources. She further contended that acknowledging these biases is a vital step towards unlearning, and reimagining social structures that are aligned with mutual aid frameworks of resource reallocation. Gia hoped BB members could engaged in reconceptualizing dominant understandings of aid, not to “be perfect”, but to move towards doing good work in solidarity with others. Gia said, “I think everyone is up for it, which is why it's so right for like- with opportunity and potential which is having people that are actually interested in and hopefully willing to do some work.”

5.7 White Patriarchal Structures Within The Bike Brigade

The White and patriarchal nature of BB was illuminated through various conversations that were not necessarily documented through interviews, but captured through my reflexive field notes. It was pointed out that the demographic of BB volunteers may be representative of a more privileged social demographic, “because [those with more privilege] have a safety net. They have a support system. Like ultimately they can have a shitty day and know that their future is okay” (Nat). As an example, Nat referred to another BB internal team member’s position as a White, cisgender man with economic privilege, stating:

I know [team member] is doing a lot of this work and is very involved and can put a lot of his time and energy into this work. But ultimately, he has had sort of the opportunity to quit his job and work on this full-time and, you know, be as present. So I acknowledge

that I have a full-time job, and a home and like, a lot of other responsibilities, and, like, the thought of quitting my job is like, not feasible. (Nat)

For Nat, having to balance her full-time job and personal responsibilities limited her capacity in being able to commit time and energy to volunteering with BB. Meanwhile, she pointed to a co-worker who was able to dedicate more time and energy to BB than she was able to, due to various layers of privilege. As mentioned in the previous section on mutual aid, other research colleagues listed barriers to volunteering, including Kira needing to stay at home with her child, and Nico who was a student. One BB member responded to the recruitment email, but upon setting up an interview, they had shared with me that they were dealing with significant financial stressors and would be unable to participate in this study (Reflexive notes, Feb 12, 2022). These were just some examples of how those with intersectional identities may not have the capacity to volunteer in the same way that BB members with financial privilege were able to.

Given the dynamics of privilege in BB, some research colleagues expressed tension with BB's slogan, "solidarity, not charity." Gia explained:

I don't think that half the people [in BB] understand ["solidarity, not charity"]. I don't even think many people can live it. I think our community is largely representative of the cycling community in Toronto, despite what some people will say. I think that means that there are the same problems that exists around, I would say specifically like classist narratives. I think that's a huge problem. (Gia)

Gia implied that BB's demographic is White and cis-gender male dominated, similar to the mainstream cycling community in Toronto that has been critiqued by so many research colleagues. Further, Gia brought up privilege along class lines, which echoed Nat's statement

about volunteering requiring a certain level of class privilege. Gia also spoke to a lack of lived experience that can help volunteers be in solidarity with the community members they serve. While BB's slogan emphasized that they do not follow a charity model, Gia implied that it requires a lot more unlearning to truly be in solidarity with communities whose lived experiences do not match your own. Instead, it is possible that some BB volunteers are perpetuating the White Saviour Complex (Cole, 2012). Cole (2012, para 1) asserted, "[t]he White Saviour Industrial Complex is not about justice. It is about having a big emotional experience that validates privilege." In contrast to acting in solidarity, the White Saviour Complex originates from a place of helplessness, merely reproduces privilege by alleviating guilt and accountability from those who have White privilege. Gia expressed a concern that BB may be reproducing the White patriarchal structure by not having a deeper understanding of solidarity, while being stuck in a charity mindset.

To challenge White patriarchal structures within BB, there have been ongoing conversations about leadership representation and structure within the organization. For example, there was a recognition early in the conception of BB that having diverse representation in leadership roles was essential to meeting the needs of such diverse demographics in Toronto's communities. For instance, Gia stated, "I think that [the founders of BB] as like cis White males, they knew that they couldn't be in that position. Like they know that they wouldn't be able to direct or guide the direction of where the Bike Brigade is going and how things are being done". Gia also recognized the importance of avoiding tokenizing BIPOC leaders in BB, asserting, "I'm not being supplanted to just still uphold the White patriarchy but then you put a female [POC] face on it!" Lugo (2016) contended that "[w]e're not experts on some foreign race; we're fellow

activists with complex perspectives,” (p. 185) reminding us that QTBIPOC and BIPOC representation must be meaningful and not tokenizing.

Tiff further supported a diverse representation in leadership by stating:

In an organization, if leadership roles are not reflective of the makeup of the membership, I think it becomes very challenging for the members, especially the ones that are marginalized because they don't see their experiences or their voices being even spoken about at all. (Tiff)

Leadership in bicycle spaces has been critiqued as being White and cis-male dominated (Lugo, 2016). Having a lack of diverse voices in these spaces has historically and continually resulted in bicycle infrastructure that privileges the needs of White cis-men, instead of creating infrastructure that facilitates safe bicycling for all (Lugo, 2016). Decentering Whiteness in bicycling requires “welcoming diverse perspectives and strategies” (Lugo, 2016, p. 185), and so meaningfully including the perspectives of BIPOC and QTBIPOC volunteers is essential to decentering Whiteness in BB’s structure. Tiff’s quote is particularly important within the context of Lugo’s (2016) work on decentering Whiteness in bicycle spaces. Gia also suggested having more diverse representation in BB’s leadership:

I think the main thing is we need to create, and I don't know who “we” is, (laughs) but there needs to be created a space that attracts [BIPOC] to be in leadership roles. That is the only suggestion I have, because I think from there, whatever they imagine or create, it will be in pursuit of in supporting others be more welcoming to this space. Even their very existence or presence would be welcoming, I think. And similarly with, you know,

those that exist, like out of heteronormativity, or like, the gender binary [...] As it intersects with like, BIPOC volunteers and stuff? If that makes sense. (Gia)

Gia suggested that having a more diverse representation in BB's leadership can help support and welcome BB community members with intersectional identities. While the mere presence of leaders with diverse identity can be welcoming, Gia also mentioned that diverse representation means having diverse knowledges amplified within BB.

5.8 How BB can Support its Community Members in Accessing Safe Cycling

Research colleagues spoke to several accessibility issues within the BB community. For one, Nat recognized the labour and difficulty that potential volunteers may face when they offer skillsets that are not bicycling. She asked:

How do we make opportunities for volunteering that's not just taking a box from one location to the next, more available for people who want to get involved? Like, can we scope it? Can we give it a definitive beginning and an end? Can we tell someone, "this will take two hours"? How can we think about all of the work that needs to be done and make it accessible to members of the community that might have the capacity to participate, but don't really know how to? (Nat)

This echoed the mutual aid value of skill-sharing, that may be difficult if potential volunteers do not know how to offer their diverse skillsets. Placing boundaries on certain tasks may help reduce labour if some volunteers have limited capacity. Nat also hoped that there would be more opportunities for volunteers who may prefer not to cycle or do deliveries. Nico echoed this, saying, "[w]hen I'm not on my bike, I can *also* volunteer, I can *also* do things, like share information, like inviting people". Bicycling in Toronto is not always accessible. During the

winter months, some volunteers may not have access to safe cycling, due to unsafe streets and not being equipped for safe winter cycling. Further, many research colleagues may not cycle at all. Nico stressed the importance of sharing other skills, such as knowledge-sharing and inviting more people to the community.

Several research colleagues acknowledged that prioritizing bicycle deliveries as the primary way of volunteering made work with BB particularly inaccessible for people with disabilities. Kira said:

I'm hoping some folks who aren't necessarily able-bodied or who have anxiety, who don't want to leave their house can still participate. I'm hoping things will still be accessible for people virtually, if they can't get into stuff. This is something bad on my part, but I never really noticed accessibility stuff. Now that I have a stroller to push, I'm like, "oh my gosh, like why didn't I see this before?" It's hard to get in spaces. I think it's for some people, if they can stay home, still be involved, have the Bike Brigade deliver stuff to them, they can still go on virtual things to have that sense of community in a city that you *can* be really isolated with COVID. (Kira)

The need for a sense of community may have increased for those with disabilities due to increased social isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic (Pettinicchio et al., 2021). On the flipside, there are now more options to be involved virtually. Having virtual options to volunteer for BB for those who may not be able to leave their homes, or who may have limited mobility, can make participating in the community more accessible. Kira illuminated the challenges of not having sufficient representation of those with disabilities in the community, since able-bodied volunteers may not have the lived experience and therefore lack the knowledge about creating a

more accessible space. Nat suggested hiring professional disability justice workers to inform solutions:

I think with disability, no amount of reading for me is going to make me a better advocate. Like, this is something where we need to pay someone to come in. And so, I would say that my responsibility, or our responsibility [as a community] is to think about how we fund that. And how do we fund it sustainably and equitably? (Nat)

Nat adamantly said that the BB community cannot expect those with disabilities to volunteer their time to offering recommendations on making BB more accessible. Paying disability justice workers is a vital component for informing BB's potential future accessibility plan. To further support this contention about supporting the representation of diverse perspectives, I want to reflect on the challenges of research colleague recruitment for this project. One research colleague had to withdraw from the project completely due to their personal financial stresses. While this research colleague wrote to me saying they really wanted to be part of this project, even with the research colleague compensation available, they did not have any capacity to be able to share their knowledge. This research colleague had informally shared that they were not only dealing with financial stresses, but that they also lived with a disability (Reflexive notes, February 24, 2022). These intersections would have been important in providing recommendations for BB, but their inability to share their knowledge speaks to how much capacity is dependent on various systems of oppression.

Being mindful of different levels of capacity when working within the BB community is an important way to increase accessibility. Another research colleague wanted to share a photograph that they took for the project, but upon further reflection, this research colleague shared with me that they were still processing the trauma associated with the photograph. This

story speaks to how trauma, particularly in response to experiences of racism and GBV, can limit the capacity of QTBIPOC and BIPOC individuals. Having opportunities for sharing space with one another can be one way to increase accessibility and safety for QTBIPOC and BIPOC volunteers. A number of research colleagues wanted a physical space to gather, and they would often draw from previous experiences in White and male-dominated spaces as reasons why safe space was needed. Nat specified that a space would be beneficial:

To not just do bike things, to do art and community outreach, and a space for talking about public policy. To meet and gather, and talk about the things that are important... I would love a welcoming, non-pretentious space to be apart of. (Nat)

Creating a physical space to gather can promote safety for volunteers, when safe space is cultivated through physical, psychological, sociocultural, political, and experimental safety (Spaaij & Schulenkorf, 2014). Being able to mobilize in safe spaces can promote equity and inclusion (Spaaij & Schulenkorf, 2014). Further, creating safe spaces is not only a mode of survival for QTBIPOC, but a mode to resist White, heteronormative and patriarchal spaces that are in every mainstream institution (Haritaworn et al., 2018).

Chapter 5 Summary

In this chapter, I synthesized the findings from the semi-structured interviews and arts-based methods data collection to respond to the guiding research questions of this project. I expanded on the following themes that emerged from the data, including: 1) White, heteronormative, and cis-male dominated cycling spaces; 2) the utility of bicycling; 3) bicycling for independence; 4) bicycling for the environment; 5) The Bike Brigade and safe space; 6)

mutual aid; 7) White patriarchal structures within The Bike Brigade; and 8) how BB can support its community members in accessing safe cycling.

Chapter 6 – Discussion

In this section, I put the main findings of this project in conversation with relevant literature. I provide an overview of my overall findings of this study that were examined in the preceding chapters, providing brief summaries of the major themes that came into focus throughout the research at hand, including: bicycles for mutual aid, the bicycle as an extension of the Land; decolonial knowledge through art; and recommendations for BB. I also discuss the scholarly implications and key contributions of this study, including how it contributes to the contemporary field of BFD and SFD more broadly. I then put Indigenous feminist theories in conversation with feminist new materialist theories to discuss how the bicycle was implicated in social structures of violence and inequality.

In Chapter 1, I explained how my research questions would guide my empirical work into the study of BFD, which included the following research questions:

- 1. How do QT and BIPOC volunteers of BB use bicycles in the (post-)pandemic context to contribute to gender-based violence prevention, anti-racism, and environmental justice?*
- 2. How does the convergence between COVID-19, increased GBV and environmental crises—which all come to define our contemporary urban moment and unevenly impact communities—influence the work of BB and its membership?*
- 3. How can BB support QT and BIPOC volunteers and community members in accessing safe bicycling?*

Although I largely responded to these questions in the findings chapter using the data collected through arts-based methods and semi-structured interviews, in the sections below, I summarize my findings and explain how the questions outlined above were examined and answered. I then

summarize the major themes that emerged through my PAR research with BB: bicycles for mutual aid; the bicycle as an extension of the land; and decolonial knowledge through art. I also share the recommendations offered to BB based on the findings, to inform their anti-oppression framework.

6.1 Bicycles for Mutual Aid

As a mutual aid organization, BB's work is an example of how bicycles can be used to build supportive and sustainable communities, particularly in response to the convergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, a shadow pandemic of GBV, systemic racism, and the climate crisis. The resulting effects of these systemic phenomena have resulted in an urgent need to support vulnerable community members, especially those who are QT, BIPOC, live with (dis)ability, and low-income. One of the key tenets of mutual aid work is a long-term commitment to re-allocating resources (de Loggans, 2020), and BB has been providing deliveries of good and nutritious food since March 2020. Spade (2020) illustrated how mutual aid organizing can create collective and alternative systems to support those who have been failed by mainstream colonial systems. Indeed, colonial systems – which are based on the dispossession of Indigenous peoples and the exploitation of BIPOC and natural resources - have resulted in systemic GBV, racism, and a climate emergency (Liboiron, 2021; Simpson, 2017).

In response to these systemic issues, mutual aid involves collective and structured work that is sustainable because it “builds new social relations centered in solidarity” (Spade, 2020, p. 9). The bicycle became an interesting focal point for this project, since the BB (and the bicycle) was the intermediary between mutual aid organizations that provided resources, and the recipients of the resources. Compared to walking, the bicycle potentially facilitated bigger quantity deliveries to farther locations, due, in part, to its carrying capacity and ability to travel

relatively far distances. Compared to driving a car, the bicycle was a more environmentally sustainable mode of transporting resources. In comparison to taking public transportation, the bicycle allowed for safe social distancing. Since BB's partners are located all around the city, the bicycle was able to connect the organizations with recipients. In turn, and within the wider context of COVID-19 and the need to social distance, there was a pressing need to connect vulnerable community members to mutual aid organizations that were already working to reallocate resources. BB's work and the bicycle largely facilitated that connection, through an environmentally sustainable and COVID-safe means of transport.

Indeed, in the wake of COVID-19, there has been an urgent need to reimagine our social systems and move away from exploitative and unsustainable capitalist systems that continue to harm BIPOC communities, communities in the Global South, and more-than-human beings (Azmanova, 2020). Spade, for example, described the use of mutual aid frameworks to respond to various crises throughout human history:

Mutual aid projects providing relief to survivors of storms, floods, earthquakes, and fires, as well as those developed to support people living through the crises caused by poverty, criminalization, housing costs, endemic gender violence, and other ordinary conditions, produce new systems that can prevent harm and improve preparedness for the coming disasters. (p. 139)

A decrease in available social services, and food insecurity on the rise, BB's work responded to the failure of the welfare state to support Toronto's most vulnerable communities during the COVID-19 emergency. An increasingly neoliberal Western world has resulted in a need for mutual aid organizing, as Azmanova (2020) wrote:

Responsibility was thus offloaded onto individuals (as citizens, professionals, entrepreneurs) under the guise of “participatory democracy,” while societies were becoming more precarious as they were made to rely on businesses’ good will and individuals’ self-sacrifice for critical public services such as emergency healthcare. (p. 100)

BB’s work, following the work of other mutual aid organizations, potentially cultivated an alternative to capitalist systems that have failed to support Toronto’s diverse communities. BB’s work may have also contributed to the political education of their community members, by exposing how the state has abandoned vulnerable community members. Indeed, research colleagues spoke to the importance of mobilizing to do mutual aid work within the context of exacerbated inequality during the pandemic. Further, for systemically marginalized communities such as women in the Global South, bicycles can facilitate access to social services and resources (Hayhurst et al., 2022). BB’s work supports the idea that bicycles may play an active role in connecting systemically marginalized communities, especially those vulnerable to GBV, systemic racism, and the effects of the climate crisis to essential resources.

When considering how QT and BIPOC volunteers experience cycling and volunteering with BB, it is significant that several research colleagues pointed to a need to dismantle privilege within BB. In a recent survey conducted by another BB researcher through a different research project about ridership, BB found that the half of their highly engaged riders (who had been on 6 or more rides within a period of 6 months) were in households with incomes that exceeded \$100,000. Meanwhile, this was only the case for 10-15% of passively engaged riders (who had been on no rides but were signed up with BB).

Figure 2. Table outlining household income based on rider engagement (shared with BB's permission).

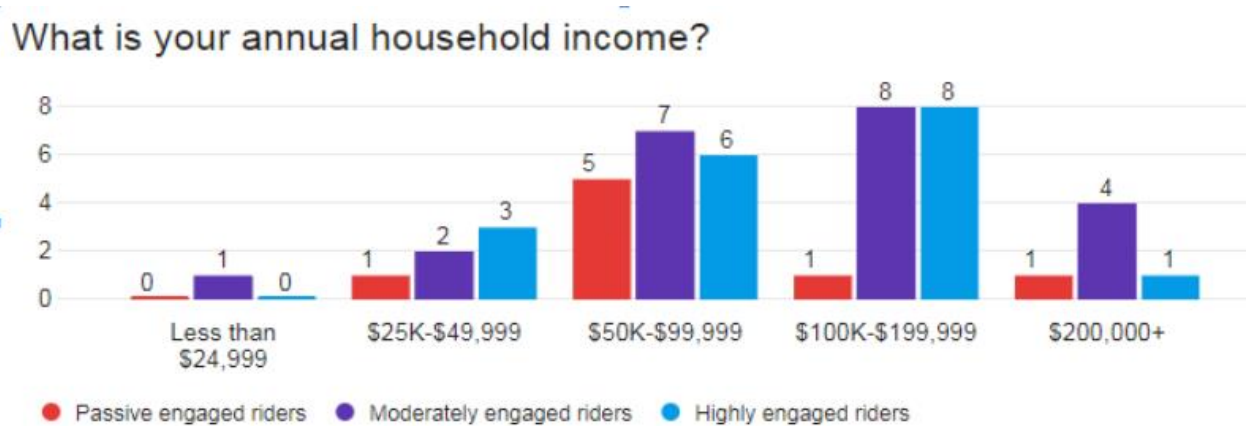


Figure 2 is particularly telling in terms of who can access bicycling in the first place, and who has the resources to regularly volunteer with a mutual aid bicycling organization such as BB. Due to systemic GBV, racism, and unequal impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and climate crisis, QT and BIPOC BB volunteers may not be able to access safe cycling or volunteer spaces in the same way that White, cisgender male, middle-to-upper class cyclists do. This is crucial for BB to address especially as a mutual aid organization that partners with other mutual aid organizations that serve diverse communities in Toronto. As Fox demonstrated through their poetry, and as other research colleagues voiced, QT and BIPOC use the bicycle to support their own communities, understanding the importance of living in reciprocity with one another.

Another related key theme that emerged throughout the findings was how BB potentially provided the structure for QT and BIPOC – demographics who are discursively constructed as marginal in North American cities – to create their own system of support. It is vital to illuminate the alternative systems that have been built in response to state abandonment of vulnerable communities in Toronto, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Research collaborators demonstrated the range of ways in which they challenged the narrative of marginalization and

suffering (e.g. through finding joy in microaggressions, or through themselves thriving when supporting their communities). In imagining possibilities for a more equitable and sustainable future for Toronto, the research collaborators, BB, and other mutual aid organizations are already doing the work to build equitable spaces founded in relationships.

Mutual aid through bicycles may be one way to meaningfully be in relation with our communities. Fostering a new understanding of “humans in relation” involves anti-oppressive work and unlearning beliefs produced by the colonial matrix. Sheppard-Perkins et al. (in press) found that SFD organizations have been using a South-to-South Cooperation framework to address power dynamics within the funding of development initiatives. The authors found that there is a need for mutual accountability and benefit to all stakeholders in these development initiatives, to be an effective framework. Similarly, BB’s mutual aid approach involves the key tenets of mutuality and reciprocity to diminish power dynamics within resource exchange (e.g. through building relationships with other mutual aid organizations). At the same time, there is a need to do anti-oppressive work within BB to understand and dismantle ongoing power dynamics such as the charity framework. While BB volunteers are undoubtedly hoping to support vulnerable community members through their work with BB, the community may benefit from more anti-oppressive work, particularly in challenging charity frameworks. Charity frameworks are a mere arm of capitalism: “mutual aid is also a commitment to anti-capitalism. Capitalists cannot practise mutual aid; they can practise temporary reallocation (i.e. philanthropy) which is not the same as an anti-capitalist commitment to community thrivance” (de Loggans, 2021, para 3). For Lugones (2020), we must reject and surpass colonial frameworks, such as charity, and move into new understandings of *being in relation*. In the latter

section of this discussion, I offer a list of recommendations for BB to further enhance their anti-oppression work, based on the literature and the findings of this research.

6.2 The Bicycle as an Extension of the Land

In considering BB's work and how QT and BIPOC BB volunteers respond to the convergence of the pandemic, GBV, systemic racism, and the climate crisis, the bicycle may play a key role in addressing *and* augmenting these issues. As they are produced from materials from the Land, bicycles may be acting onto human and more-than-human life. Drawing from Indigenous feminist theories, the bicycle is implicated in "place-thought", which "is based upon the premise that land is alive and thinking and that humans and non-humans derive agency through the extensions of these thoughts" (Watts, 2013, p. 21). Since both humans and bicycles are extensions of the Land,

then we have an obligation and responsibility [to] denote a commitment to the land, not just because it is a part of me (or you) but also because it continues to be removed, cemented, or ignored. Listening to what she [the Land] tells us is not only about a philosophical understanding of life and the social realm, rather it is about a tangible and tacit violence being done to her – and therefore to us. (Watts, 2013, p. 32)

To understand sport and physical culture objects - such as the bicycle - as implicated in social systems (e.g., GBV, anti-racism, and environmental justice), is to challenge anthropocentric understandings of agency, and make humans more accountable to relations with more-than-humans. For instance, in Brice and Thorpe's (2021) application of feminist new materialism in sport studies, they suggested that "rethinking the activewear phenomenon as more-than-human phenomenon might encourage women to reconsider their consumption

practices” (p. 13). Further, decolonial feminists call for an understanding of relations “that move away from dichotomous understandings of being that divide the human from non-human, the gendered from non-gendered, colonizers/‘white’ from colonized/‘people of color’” (Abazeri, 2022, p. 3). In other words, addressing violence and oppression (such as GBV, anti-racism, and the climate crisis) requires moving away from dichotomous and hierarchical categories of life. Indigenous theories and feminist new materialist theories of more-than-human life may offer a framework for “intersubjective knowledges, practices, and relations” (Abazeri, 2020, p. 3) needed for building more equitable futures.

Within this project, the bicycle was an actor within various contexts: supporting protestors through bike marshalling; enabling a sense of independence for research colleagues to travel around the city; helping research colleagues avoid violence; and delivering emergency resources through a mutual aid organization. At the same time, the bicycle may be destructive and implicated in perpetuating violence. That is, the production and consumption of bicycles can be detrimental to the environment by adding to landfill waste (Szto, 2022). Research has also demonstrated how bicycles can make QT and BIPOC more vulnerable to violence, due to their visibility on public streets (Lubitow et al., 2019). In other words, the bicycle as an actor must be understood within its various tensions and how it continues to be implicated within harmful systems. Approaching more-than-human life such as the bicycles with Indigenous theoretical lenses and feminist new materialist lenses can thus have significant implications for how we approach more-than-human life with respect and reciprocity.

As Watts (2013) contended, it is necessary to practice being in ethical relation with objects such as the bicycle, and the Land on which we ride. As an example, constructing bicycle infrastructure on Indigenous land must be critically interrogated to address continued settler-

colonial land theft. Building bicycle infrastructure may not be in coherence with Indigenous treaties. The decades-long Algonquin Land Claim negotiations in Ontario will be the first constitutionally protected treaty in Ontario (Ontario Government, 2021). This will mean that the provincial government will legally recognize the rightful claim over Algonquin land by the Algonquins of Ontario, so that land use planning and development will need to be approved by the authorities of the Algonquins of Ontario (Ontario Government, 2021). This brings to light the question of all land use planning, including bicycle infrastructure, that may not have been built in coherence with treaty agreements. Indeed, with the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), Indigenous communities have been asserting their rights to legally protect their Land and respective natural resources, in the face of land development projects (Gilbert & Lennox, 2019). While mainstream discourses assume that bicycling inherently supports the environment, Indigenous activists and scholars have posited that taking care of our environment requires decolonizing how Land has been turned into government-owned or privatized property to be extracted and polluted upon (Kimmerer, 2013; 2020; Liboiron, 2021; Simpson, 2017). Further, the extraction of bicycle materials may involve colonial processes, such as the history of rubber extraction through European rubber plantations in Southeast Asia (Ross, 2017). Thus, the bicycle as a tool for responding to the climate crisis is not without tension, and BFD programmers as well as bicycle infrastructure planners must consider the ways in which bicycles are implicated within systems of violence towards colonized bodies and Land. In other words, it is insufficient to position the bicycle as a development tool (to respond to GBV, racism, and the climate crisis) without also addressing its role– and the continued violence and injustice – within these very same systems.

The bicycle, the bicyclist, the Land, and any other beings involved in cycling are entangled with/in one another. As Barad (2007) posited, “to be entangled is not simply to be intertwined with another, as in the joining of separate entities, but to lack an independent, self-contained existence” (p. ix). Understanding humans as inherently connected to life in way that that extends to more-than-human life can shape our values, commitments, and practices.

Lugones (2020) explained:

In relations to understandings of self, relations to the spirit world, relations to other people in the communities, nations, tribes, groups, communities that they call their own, they do not separate the human and the non-human, or the human from nature, that Modern/colonial invention. (p. 39)

Research colleagues demonstrated this interconnectedness through their relationship with the bicycle and subsequent experiences of feeling unsafe (due to being vulnerable to GBV and racism), and also using the bicycle through BB as a means to deliver essential resources to their communities (a tenet of environmental justice). For example, Fox’s poetry exemplified Lugones’ aforementioned concept of relationality, by expressing their relations with the delivery recipient, their spirituality, their identity, and the Asian and queer communities. While their poetry did not explicitly mention the bicycle, Fox’s volunteer work as a bicycle delivery person with BB facilitated some of these relations, and thus the bicycle remained part of their entanglements. Returning to Watts (2013), the Land – as it extends through the bicycle and the environment in which these relationships take place – plays an active role in these relationships and perhaps in addressing GBV, systemic racism, and the climate crisis.

As Watts (2013) further contended, the violence that emerges within these entanglements with the Land must be attended to as part of our responsibility to the Land on which we live. The

research colleagues of this study illuminated the ways in which bicycling spaces continue to perpetuate GBV and racialized violence, echoing Golub et al.'s (2016) work on dismantling social systems of oppression and violence within bicycle spaces. The research colleagues' critique of mainstream cycling spaces as White, heteronormative, and cis-male dominated is unsurprising given the systemic ways in which bicycle spaces have privileged certain bodies (Steinmann et al., 2022). The research findings demonstrated that QT and BIPOC research colleagues experienced microaggressions in cycling spaces, critiqued how wealthy White cis-men dominated the mainstream cycling scene in Toronto, and challenged the structures of privilege that facilitate volunteer access to BB (e.g. through being critical of BB's slogan "solidarity not charity"). Research colleagues explained how certain practices within BB made them feel safe and that their identities were supported, such as having BIPOC-exclusive spaces within BB, and through BB's diverse partnerships with other mutual aid organizations. It stands to reason, then, that dismantling systems of oppression and violence (e.g., of GBV and systemic racism) within the context of a green pandemic recovery can make our communities, inclusive of more-than-human life and the Land, healthier and more sustainable.

6.3 Decolonial Knowledge Through Art

The purpose of this study was to demonstrate the ways in which QT and BIPOC use bicycles to respond to GBV, anti-racism, and the climate crisis. In addition, informing BB's anti-oppression framework was a guiding research question for this project, and arts-based methods allowed research colleagues to provide valuable input for transformative change within the BB community and beyond. As explained in the method/ology chapter, arts-based methods "can help envision new ways in which to create connections, reciprocity and care," (Seppälä et al., 2021, p. 11). For example, Nico was able to share his cultural knowledge through sculpting a mask,

demonstrating human relations with more-than-human life through the colours that represented beings such as water and nature. Nico's mask thus offered a powerful metaphor: art can shift our perspectives and provide us with new understandings of the world. That is, art can involve a "becoming-with" more-than-humans, including the art piece itself, and the environment in which the research colleague lives and interacts (Akama, 2021). Nico's mask demonstrated how art can shift our worldview into world-sense to illuminate the forces that influence our environments, including more-than-human life (Sundberg, 2014; Todd, 2017). Further, art provides a new means of expression that challenges what we in Western institutions understand as "valuable knowledge".

Since this project was meant to illuminate the diverse perspectives of QT and BIPOC to inform BB's anti-oppression framework, the art findings offered perspectives that may not have been possible through interviewing alone, especially since arts-based methods gave research colleagues the opportunity to express what was important to them through a means of expression that made sense to them (Blodgett et al., 2013). Nico's discussion about more-than-human life is an example of how art can evoke knowledge that is relevant to the research colleague, since the interview guide did not include explicit questions about more-than-human life and relations. Instead, Nico shared with me how his mask related to more-than-human life, such as through the colours he chose and the mask representing a way in which you view the world. In addition, the arts-based methods demonstrated the diversity of skills and knowledges that QT and BIPOC have to offer to the BB community, to BFD spaces, and to literature on bicycling more broadly. This finding supports the discussion on mutual aid: that there is a need to reimagine what being in relation means. Whereas a capitalist framework assumes that there are communities who are

“in need”, a mutual aid framework assumes that every community and individual can offer a wealth of knowledge (de Loggans, 2020). Art is one way to share diverse knowledges.

Challenging colonial knowledge production is an essential part of building more equitable futures, especially when colonialism has resulted in systemic issues of GBV, systemic racism, and a climate crisis (Liboiron, 2021; Simpson, 2017), all outcomes that have been exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic (CRIAW, 2021). While bicycling has been hailed as a potential tool towards a green, equitable pandemic recovery tool (UN, 2020a), this will not be possible without addressing the same systems of GBV and systemic racism that have permeated bicycle spaces. In response to Lugo’s (2016) call to decenter Whiteness in bicycle spaces, prioritizing diverse perspectives (including diverse expressions of perspectives) are needed to inform pressing issues within bicycle spaces and beyond. Namely, art can be used by QT and BIPOC to address issues of GBV, systemic racism, and environmental justice, as Gia demonstrated through her critical zine.

Gia’s zine also demonstrated how art can be used to disseminate knowledge that directly challenges oppressive systems, specifically GBV and systemic racism in cycling spaces. Her zine was reminiscent of decolonial zines that have been used throughout history by BIPOC to resist dominant structures of capitalism and White supremacy (Keller, 2017). Of note, zines are designed to be portable and easy to share with others. Unlike scholarly articles that often need to be purchased by the reader, and are written in inaccessible language, zines may be a more accessible means to share knowledge. In informing BB’s anti-oppression framework, Gia’s zine offered valuable input about her tensions with privilege in cycling spaces, as well as the importance of amplifying QT, BIPOC, and marginalized voices in decision-making.

The art materials themselves can be analyzed using feminist new materialist theories. In this project, Nico's mask, Gia's zine, and Fox's poems were directly involved within the research process and knowledge production. A feminist new materialist lens "enables us to consider how the human is only one part of a research assemblage and how other materials are also active in research" (Coleman et al., 2019, para. 9). Indeed, the art facilitated reflection that may not have been possible through interviews alone. Further, the art may have led directly to decolonial processes for some research colleagues. For example, Fox's poems involved a "becoming-with" others and more-than-humans (Akama, 2021). Fox's poetry was born out of a conversation with a delivery recipient. Their poems demonstrated their various relations, or assemblages that affect one another (McSweeney & Hayhurst, in press), including with the delivery recipient, the 519 organization, the delivery recipient, the LGBTQ+ community, their friends and family, their spirituality, and themselves.

In combination with decolonial feminism and feminist new materialism, art can illuminate diverse knowledges in creative ways that make the most sense to research colleagues. Since one of the research questions guiding this work asked how BB can support their QT and BIPOC volunteers, the decolonial knowledge produced through art demonstrated that BB should support the diverse knowledges that QT and BIPOC have to offer. Art can be one avenue for QT and BIPOC to share valuable input about their experiences and world-senses.

6.4 Recommendations for The Bike Brigade

Based on the findings from this research project, a list of recommendations was synthesized along with BB to inform BB's anti-oppression framework for supporting community members with intersectional identities. This was created during April to May 2022, since an outcome BB and I established through the MITACS internship included an executive summary of the research

with recommendations for BB's use. As I wrote up the findings for this thesis, I synthesized my work in a Google Document that BB logistics members could read, add to, and provide feedback. In June 2022, I presented the executive summary to the BB logistics team to point to the findings and recommendations, while requesting feedback from the BB community. BB has also hired a program coordinator through the Canada Summer Jobs program, and BB's goal is for the program coordinator to begin implementing these recommendations. Below, I discuss the justification for each recommendation for the purposes of this thesis, but for BB's purposes, I created a more succinct report with just the numbered recommendations. The following recommendations were put forth:

- 1. Create leadership opportunities/positions to prioritize the diverse knowledges and experiences of members with historically marginalized identities (e.g. racialized, 2SLGBTQ+, newcomers, living with disability, etc.).**

To make BB more inclusive and safer for community members with intersectional identities, having diverse leadership representation should be a priority. Leadership in bicycle spaces has been critiqued as being White and cis-male dominated (Lugo, 2016). Having a lack of diverse voices in these spaces has historically and continually resulted in bicycle infrastructure that privileges the needs of White cis-men, instead of creating infrastructure that facilitates safe bicycling for all (Lugo, 2016). Decentering Whiteness in bicycling requires “welcoming diverse perspectives and strategies” (Lugo, 2016, p. 185), and so meaningfully including the perspectives of BIPOC, QTBIPOC, and others with historically marginalized identities is essential to decentering Whiteness, heteronormativity, and patriarchy in BB's structure.

- 2. Hold intentional spaces for community members with intersectional identities to gather. This might look like workshops, regular meetups, or having a designated physical space for volunteers.**

Research colleagues expressed a need for safe spaces to gather, particularly within BIPOC-exclusive spaces. This recommendation is supported by Steinmann et al.'s (2021) work, which found that offering intentional safe spaces exclusively for equity-seeking groups can help make cycling more accessible for those who have systemically been unable to access mainstream cycling.

- 3. Create opportunities to connect and be part of The Bike Brigade community for those not partaking in cycling or deliveries. This might include facilitating arts- or skills-based workshops, having an advisory committee on anti-oppression, mentoring, inviting new Bike Brigade volunteers, etc.**

Following the mutual aid tenet of skill-sharing (de Loggans, 2020), all BB members have unique skillsets to offer, but may not have the opportunity to share these skills. As demonstrated by the research colleagues, individuals with diverse identities offer diverse perspectives and skills beyond partaking in delivering by bicycle. This is also important for making BB's operations accessible for individuals with diverse abilities and ensuring that those who do not ride bicycles can contribute to the community in the way they please. As the research methodology of this project demonstrated, allowing research colleagues to choose how they wanted to contribute (i.e. through interviews, and/or through their choice of art project) illuminated knowledge that challenged dominant and colonial perspectives. Similarly, BB should facilitate opportunities for BB community members to participate in ways that are meaningful to each person.

4. Create volunteer tasks that can be scoped so that volunteers can assess their capacity. Specify skills and resources needed, duration of task, and deadline of task.

Nat made this recommendation during our interview when discussing how to make volunteering and working with BB more accessible. This aligns with the mutual aid tenet of skill-sharing and respecting that every member has a diverse capacity. Providing clear descriptions of tasks may help volunteers assess if they have the capacity to support this task. To help address the dynamics of privileged within BB that research colleagues critiqued, scoping out tasks may be useful for volunteers that have limited time and capacity to volunteer.

5. Hire a disability justice worker to inform an accessibility framework to support those with diverse accessibility needs.

Nat had also provided this recommendation during our interview. Since other research colleagues had expressed that BB is not accessible for those with (dis)abilities, BB should consider hiring a disability justice worker to further inform their anti-oppressive framework and create an accessibility action plan.

6. Facilitate the sharing of affordable/free equipment and trainings to support rider safety (e.g. winter equipment, high visibility clothing).

This recommendation is meant to address financial barriers that some volunteers may face in accessing equipment for safe bicycling. While writing up my thesis, BB recently opened a “gear library” where volunteers can sign out to borrow free equipment such as delivery bags and trailers. This gear library can be expanded to include more equipment to ensure rider safety for those volunteers who may not be able to afford it. Offering free equipment is part of addressing the dynamics of privilege within BB that research colleagues were critical of.

7. Improve cultural competence specific to partners (e.g. knowing protocols for delivery and handling items). Having partnerships that support diverse community members is important for our diverse volunteers.

Several research colleagues had mentioned that BB's diverse partnerships made them feel their identities were supported by BB. Some of these partners included East York Meals on Wheels, FoodShare Toronto, Avenue Road Food Bank, Maggie's The Toronto Sex Workers Action Project, and the Encampment Support Network (The Bike Brigade, n. d. b). This recommendation is meant to support continued relationship-building with diverse mutual aid organizations that are working with underrepresented groups in Toronto, such as sex workers, individuals with (dis)abilities, QTBIPOC, and vulnerably housed individuals. Kira's interview stressed the importance of understanding cultural competency when delivering for diverse communities in Toronto. BB may consider offering cultural competency trainings for volunteers to ensure the safety of all recipients.

8. Offer regular trainings on anti-oppression for all community members. This might include topics on decolonizing mutual aid practices, anti-racism, and addressing the White Saviour Complex.

Some research colleagues in this project expressed contention with BB's use of the slogan "solidarity, not charity" when many BB members came from positions of privilege. To address privilege within BB, such as a charity mindset and the White Saviour Complex, BB can offer regular anti-oppression trainings for volunteers to develop a deeper understanding of these complex structures. Trainings can help volunteers challenge the universality of Western epistemologies, following Wynter's "moving towards pluriversality" since "Decolonial thinking and living are not to assimilate but to deny the universal pretense of humanitas" (Mignolo, 2015,

p. 120). In other words, anti-oppression trainings can help volunteers move towards unlearning socialized understandings of relations (e.g., charity and saviour frameworks); and move towards learning about other ways of being that are anti-oppressive and decolonial. Since BB is operating within the structures of a settler colonial government, BB may consider trainings to learn about decolonizing practices.

9. All community members in The Bike Brigade should feel equally valued. Moving away from a top-down approach into a horizontal approach can be useful. A

Landscape of Practice may be a viable option (see Climate Justice Toronto, 2021).

To move towards a true mutual aid framework, all BB community members should be equally valued. A Landscape of Practice is an organizational structure in which different communities with unique practices function to achieve a shared goal (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2014). Climate Justice Toronto (CJTO), a youth-led grassroots organization who work to target the climate crisis, shared a similar approach in their restructuring plan, which involved creating “pods” where members were designated to more specialized tasks and decision making (Climate Justice Toronto, 2021). CJTO proposed this organizational structure to address systemic racism, accessibility issues, and a failure to equally distribute resources and decision-making power to all members within the organization. A Landscape of Practice can help distribute power more equally, while maintaining organization within the community. BB has started implementing a Landscape of Practice to facilitate a more horizontal approach to operations, including “pods” or “communities” such as the research team, tech volunteers, logistics volunteers, board members, and volunteer riders (see figure 1 for BB’s organizational structure). BB may consider strengthening this framework so that volunteer riders are aware of their opportunities to participate.

10. Implement participatory measurement, evaluation and learning tools to track anti-oppression work. This might include self-identification surveys to evaluate volunteer demographics, questionnaires to receive feedback, interviews, etc.

This recommendation is meant to support the implementation of BB's anti-oppression framework, and to be able to evaluate how the implementation is being taken up by BB community members. Having measurement and evaluation processes would also keep BB accountable to implementing recommendations, and reporting on implementation progress. Assessing self-identified volunteer demographics over time is one way to determine the representation within BB. As Hayhurst et al. (2021) discussed, measurement and evaluation processes should follow a decolonial feminist approach to center community knowledge and needs, and to avoid a top-down approach to measurement and evaluation. This might look like co-creating measurement and evaluation practices alongside the intended beneficiaries (Hayhurst et al., 2021; Mayoux & Chambers, 2005).

Chapter 6 Summary

In this chapter, I put the main findings of this project in conversation with relevant literature. I also provided an overview of my overall findings of this study that were examined in the preceding chapters, providing brief summaries of the major themes that came into focus throughout the research at hand, including: bicycles for mutual aid, the bicycle as an extension of the Land; decolonial knowledge through art; and list the recommendations (and their justification) for BB's anti-oppression framework. As a mutual aid organization, BB's work provides an example of how bicycles can be used to build supportive and sustainable communities, particularly in response to the convergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, a shadow pandemic of GBV, systemic racism, and the climate crisis. The bicycle as an extension of the

Land, may play a key role in addressing and augmenting these issues, as understood through Watts' (2013) "place-thought". Challenging colonial knowledge production is an essential part of building more equitable futures, especially when colonialism has resulted in systemic issues of GBV, systemic racism, and a climate crisis (Liboiron, 2021; Simpson, 2017). Namely, art can be used by QT and BIPOC to address issues of (and disseminate knowledge about) GBV, systemic racism, and environmental justice.

Chapter 7 – Conclusion

In this section, I discuss the scholarly implications and key contributions of this project. First, I add to the literature that critically assesses claims pertaining to the utility of bicycles as tools to achieve development goals (Ardizzi et al., 2020; Hayhurst et al., 2022; McSweeney et al., 2020). To do this, I discuss how bicycles may be taken up by BFD organizations to prioritize mutual aid. I then identify some of the challenges and limitations involved in this study and suggest ideas for future research and methodological approaches in the field of BFD and SFD more broadly.

7.1 Scholarly Implications and Key Contributions

This project was funded by a “Bicycles for Development” grant, to explore “the bicycle’s capacity to respond to pressing social issues (e.g., gender inequality, access to education) and facilitate social change,” (Bicycles for Development, n. d.). Bicycles are indeed implicated in developmental pursuits, social entrepreneurship (McSweeney et al., 2021), including GBV prevention (Hayhurst et al., 2022; Hayhurst & del Socorro Cruz Centeno, 2017), increasing access to bicycles for women and girls (Ardizzi et al., 2021), social entrepreneurship, and creating safe spaces for youth (Steinmann et al., 2021). Throughout this research, it became apparent that BB’s work targeted various UN (n.d.) developmental goals, especially those focused on food insecurity, reducing inequalities and facilitating sustainable transport/delivery modes through bicycling. Through building relationships with other mutual aid organizations, BB: 1) facilitated the delivery of food and resources to address rising food insecurity in Toronto; 2) built solidarity with equity-seeking groups through partnering with diverse organizations and demonstrating explicit support; and 3) promoted environmentally sustainable deliveries through using bicycles.

While this work was made possible through BB's human community members who organized and facilitated these operations, the bicycle – as a more-than-human object and technology – was an essential component of BB. Using bicycles allowed for longer-distance deliveries (when compared to delivering by foot or using mobility-assisting devices that are not bicycles) without needing to use automobiles for transportation. In fact, many more-than-human beings were essential to BB's work, including the food and resources being delivered, delivery bags and trailers to transport the items, the physical spaces where pickups and deliveries took place, the streets on which volunteers cycled, and computers and cell phones to coordinate deliveries and logistics. Art materials facilitated thoughtful reflections and sharing for BIPOC BB members through this research project and through the arts-based methods.

In turn, Watts' (2013) "place-thought" demonstrated how these more-than-human beings are agential extensions of the Land, and therefore are worth listening to and accounting for. The bicycle, then, is not merely being "used" for mutual aid, but may be actively involved in the alternative and supportive systems that mutual aid offers, often with unintended effects (e.g., the bike may get a flat tire or break down). Thus, while the bicycle has agentic capabilities, we cannot place the responsibility on this object to ignite mutual aid. This builds on McSweeney et al.'s (2021) work on the agency of objects such as the bicycle within BFD programming. Indeed, objects and the environment have "agentic and disruptive potential" (McSweeney et al., 2021, p. 209) that are worth examining within the context of BFD programming and SFD more widely.

Theoretically, following Sundberg's (2014) "walking with" or cycling with different ontologies, I put the work of decolonial feminists in conversation with feminist new materialist perspectives. This allowed me to think alongside scholars that have theorized on more-than-human agency within sport sociology (Brice & Thorpe, 2021; McSweeney et al., 2021) and how

this offers a language for other areas of kinesiology to take up understandings of the more-than-human, such as biomechanics and physiology (Markula, 2019).

Watts' (2013) work on more-than-human connectedness to the Land further provided me with the vital understanding of *why* it is important to understand the agency of more-than-humans: objects such as the bicycle are extensions of the Land the same way that humans are, and thus we must treat objects (the Land) with care and respect. In recognition of the tensions between new materialism and Indigenous theories, vital tensions emerged during this research process. Namely, discussions about the co-optation of Indigenous theories emerged when presenting my work in an academic conference, and in discussions with my committee members. I chose to “stay with the trouble” (Haraway, 2016) and discuss how multiple theories have guided my work, while giving credit to Indigenous thinkers (Todd, 2016). As Mayes (2019) posited, to engage with theoretical tensions their “entanglements with past troubles and present frictions, is a response-ive mode of ethics” (p. 1205). For future BFD and SFD work, this project points to the tensions of “cycling with” multiple ontologies, as well as the possibility for ethically engaging in Indigenous and Western theories.

Decolonial feminism combined with feminist new materialist and Indigenous theories made it possible to situate – and better understand – how the bicycle is implicated within, and possibly (re)produces structures of violence, colonialism, sexuality, heteropatriarchy, capitalism and inequality. At the same time, these theoretical lenses also highlighted how the bicycle is also an active agent that may disrupt and resist these very structures. Taken together, these frameworks created a robust theoretical foundation that was essential for considering how humans are responsible for the relationships we have with more-than-human life, such as the bicycle. This is especially pertinent as humans reckon with the effects of the COVID-19

pandemic and climate change. Overall, then, the findings of this project demonstrated how QT and BIPOC challenge White, heteronormative and patriarchal cycling spaces, and the ways in which the bicycle is implicated in QT and BIPOC experiences, such as feeling independent, avoiding GBV, and supporting their own communities. These findings also point to an overarching systemic issue that other mobility justice scholars have noted: that cycling spaces continue to reflect the social structures that inhibit QT and BIPOC to move freely and safely in North American cities (Golub et al., 2016; Lubitow et al., 2019; Lugo 2016; 2018). The systemic issue of GBV, for example, must therefore be addressed on a wider scale: it is not the “victim’s” responsibility to avoid GBV using the bicycle. Similarly, the research colleagues of this study as well as BB as an organization demonstrated the potential for using the bicycle to support vulnerable community members. And yet, at the same time, using the bicycle in this way does not address the systemic issue of inequality and food insecurity that has resulted in a need for mutual aid organizations. Thus, the findings of this project underline the bicycle’s potential role to (re)produce inequalities within systems of violence, such as GBV, systemic racism, and environmental destruction that unequally targets those who are QT and BIPOC.

Methodologically, a decolonial feminist PAR approach was used to amplify diverse perspectives that have been systemically silenced through colonial processes (Mignolo, 2000) as well as in bicycling spaces (Lugo, 2016). Indeed, highlighting the perspectives of QT and BIPOC illuminated the ways in which communities that have been discursively constructed as “marginal” (such as QT and BIPOC) actively participate in alternative systems that meaningfully support their communities. Within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, this project demonstrates how QT and BIPOC cyclists have responded to exacerbated systemic racism, GBV, and the climate crisis.

As an insider researcher with BB, I was able to build meaningful relationships with the community and the research colleagues, and potentially become a co-resister alongside research colleagues (Lugones, 2010). Following Kuokkanen's (2007) participatory reciprocity, a decolonial feminist PAR approach meant I could treat all forms of knowledge shared during this project with respect. In combination with a decolonial feminist PAR approach, using arts-based methods was a novel contribution to the field of BFD and SFD more broadly, and provided QT and POC research colleagues with an opportunity to share their vital input and experiences. Through arts-based methods, research colleagues were able to express and share their ideas around creating better futures (Seppälä et al., 2021, p. 11) that target GBV, systemic racism, and the climate crisis.

Substantively, this project offered new insights for BFD, including (but not limited to): 1) a better understanding of how bicycling may contribute to the achievement of development goals and build solidarity with equity-seeking groups through mutual aid frameworks; 2) improved knowledge pertaining to the multiple and diverse ways decolonial feminism and feminist new materialism may be valuable theoretical lenses that can expose systems of violence and shape our relationships with more-than-humans such as the bicycle; 3) recognizing how arts-based methods can facilitate reflection and knowledge sharing of decolonial possibilities that might not be possible with interviews alone; and 4) novel approaches for amplifying diverse perspectives, particularly the perspectives of those who have been systemically silenced in bicycle spaces, is a preliminary step towards achieving bicycle justice (Golub et al., 2016) – equitable and safe access to bicycling for all.

7.2 Challenges and Limitations

Throughout this project, I was met with several challenges. As this project took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, I had to adhere to social distancing regulations. This meant that most interactions with BB and research colleagues took place virtually. In building a relationship with BB, I was in contact mainly with Rachel, who agreed to supervise this project on BB's end. Had this project taken place in person, I may have had more opportunities to connect with BB community members to discuss the research project and receive their input. At the same time and ironically, BB emerged *because* of the COVID-19 pandemic, so virtual relationship-building was inevitable, and the BB SLACK channel as well as using Zoom meetings were valuable virtual platforms to connect with the BB community. In addition, I was still able to conduct virtual interviews and collect arts-based data despite COVID-19 regulations. As mentioned in the method/ology section, virtual data collection seemed to be accessible and most comfortable to the research colleagues during the pandemic.

Secondly, due to capacity limitations, I was only able to recruit 7 research colleagues. While the arts-based methods allowed for a rich set of "data", having more research colleagues contribute to this project may have offered more recommendations for BB. One research colleague had to drop out due to capacity limitations, despite initially voicing their interest. Despite sending the recruitment notice to over 600 volunteers (see Figure 1), it is telling that only 7 research colleagues chose to participate given the inclusion criteria (being QT and/or BIPOC). This pointed to an urgent need for BB to assess the demographic of their community. Indeed, issues of privilege within bicycling spaces emerged in the findings and speak to other research in this area (Golub et al., 2016; Lugo 2016; 2018).

Thirdly, working as both a MITACS intern and a researcher with BB also had its challenges. The MITACS internship was meant to be a 4-month paid role, with certain expected outcomes, namely an executive summary with a list of recommendations for BB. Meanwhile, this project was also my Master's thesis, with an expected outcome of writing up a full thesis for academic approval. In addition, as a PAR researcher, I spent time building relationships with the BB community, through volunteering as a delivery person and supporting the arts-based workshops. It was difficult to draw the line between my role as a researcher/intern, and as a volunteer trying to build a good relationship with the community and support BB's work. Initially, I hoped to track my hours to maintain my own work boundaries so that I would not be working "over hours". In practice, it was difficult to discern when I was "working" versus when I was "volunteering" my time to support BB.

Another challenge pertained to the arts-based workshops, which were not part of the research proposal, although they were part of relationship-building and contributed to the data collection for the research. Ultimately, my priority was to build a good relationship with BB and try to maintain boundaries when tasks were not within my capacity. In this sense, I followed Tallbear's (2014) relational inquiry, which suggests a non-linear approach to research that centers relationship-building. Additionally, while data collection ended in March 2022, I continue to work closely with BB to disseminate the findings from this project. The informal feedback and conversations that have emerged from sharing this research continues to inform this project and how I write up this thesis. As part of relational inquiry, I believe this project will continue to evolve as the knowledge is disseminated and taken up in BB's community.

As a strategy to balance researcher/intern/volunteer roles, it was useful to find synergies between the roles: for example, I was able to pull out recommendations for BB through writing

up the findings of the research for my thesis. Other times, the goals of my thesis were not directly relevant to the MITACS internship: for example, engaging in decolonial feminism and feminist new materialism supported the scholarly goals of this project, yet when communicating with BB about the project, these theories were not always accessible or directly practical developing recommendations. Knowledge dissemination was a key strategy. For example, when sharing findings with BB, I avoided heavy theoretical discussions and instead focused on receiving their input and feedback on my initial findings from the research. In following decolonial feminist PAR, I aimed to develop practical applications (such as offering the list of recommendations), to move into actively engaging in dismantling harmful structures (Collins, 2019). Meanwhile, sharing the results of this study through academic avenues such as conferences and with committee members involved more discussion about theories and method/ology.

My positionality as an academic researcher was at times a limitation to working with BB. My volunteer work with BB began *because* of this research project, and so I felt the need to enter BB's community with caution and reflexivity, to not overstep my boundaries. When I was invited to community events, I felt like I was navigating two different positions: one as a paid researcher and one as a community member. It was humbling to be welcomed into the community in this way, and I hope to show my gratitude in my writing. Through decolonial feminist methodologies, my writing is meant to represent the wishes and experiences of the research colleagues that have so generously shared with me. I have also been privileged enough to receive funding to conduct this research and be part of the BB community, whereas others volunteer their time and energy to this community and the communities that BB partners with.

While the MITACS internship funding has ended, I hope that I will continue supporting BB's work, whether through future projects or through volunteering.

7.3 Future Research Ideas

Given the methodological advances within BFD and SFD more broadly, I hope that more scholarship within BFD and SFD take up decolonial feminist approaches to method/ology. Namely, arts-based methods in this project demonstrated the diversity of knowledge that QT and BIPOC can offer BFD programming and scholarship on bicycles. Giving research colleagues the choice in *how* they want to participate in a PAR project can diminish power hierarchies between researcher and researched, while illuminating ideas that might have otherwise not emerged through interviews alone. Within SFD studies more broadly, decolonial methodologies may help address problematic power relations embedded within development studies (Kay, 2009). While some SFD scholars have engaged in arts-based methods for data collection (Blodgett et al., 2013; Forde, 2015; van Ingen, 2016), these methods have yet to become more widely used within the field. Within BFD more specifically, the use of arts-based methods and other creative methods may align well with overarching developmental goals through bicycling.

Another future research direction may involve a focus on geographic space through bicycling, and how communities vulnerable to violence navigate safe space through bicycling. Similar to Steinmann et al.'s (2021) findings, research colleagues in this project spoke to the need for safe spaces that were possible through BFD programming. Mobile methods in which the researcher collects data while bicycling along with research colleagues may illuminate observations around spaces and bicycling, as shown through Steinmann's (2020) mobile interviews with unhoused cyclists. Similarly, visual methods to capture footage of bicycle rides can help provide a new lens into cycling and space (see Chin et al., 2020). Research using

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) can also provide a valuable lens that maps out safe spaces and mobility routes (Villanueva et al., 2012).

In addition to methodological directions, I hope this project serves as a reminder to center the perspectives of those who have been systemically silenced in knowledge production on bicycling and beyond. Employing decolonial feminism and feminist new materialism in this project has highlighted the ways in which systemic GBV, systemic racism, the climate crisis, and the COVID-19 pandemic makes QT and BIPOC vulnerable to violence. Future research on bicycles should address the gaps in literature about issues such as ableism in bicycling, and how ableism intersects with GBV, systemic racism, the climate crisis, and the COVID-19 pandemic. I also hope that future research will consider a more in-depth and focused analysis on issues such as anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism, and violence against transgender persons within cycling spaces. Centering diverse perspectives in research can illuminate how those with systemically oppressed identities create systems and relations that challenge dominant structures (such as neoliberalism, capitalism, heteronormativity, colonialism) that continue to harm our communities.

Chapter 7 Summary

In this chapter, I discussed the scholarly implications and key contributions of this study, including how it contributes to the contemporary field of BFD and SFD more broadly. I added to the literature that hails bicycles as tools to achieve development goals (Ardizzi et al., 2020; Hayhurst et al., 2022; McSweeney et al., 2020) by discussing how bicycles can be taken up for mutual aid. I then identify some of the challenges and limitations involved in this study and suggest ideas for future research and further methodological approaches in the field of BFD and SFD more broadly.

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Appendix A

Notes About BB Origins

By Rachel Wang

- March 2020: Dave put the initial call-out to the cycling community to deliver essentials/supplies to vulnerable folks (particularly seniors). He leveraged his existing contacts in his neighbourhood Parkdale (e.g. Parkdale People's Economy) and with folks at the People's Pantry. He also had a UHN contact to help guide some safety protocols for delivery.
- April 2020: A call went out to form a Logistics Team. 10+ people answered the call and the first meeting was April 10th! [Cecily hosted us on her work's WebEx]
 - The first priority was improving processes around sign-ups and sending our delivery details.
 - A small grant was used to test out the app Onfleet to see if this improved logistics and would allow us to grow our deliveries and delivery volunteers.
 - This pilot and evaluation led us to recruiting Max to help us integrate various software. He ended up starting to build a new Application for us (from scratch) as part of his "retreat" at the Recurse Centre.
- June 2020: Application was in full operation. Our biggest campaign FoodShare and other campaigns were moved to this app. This is where our data tracking starts.
- Media features (mostly of Dave) were peak over of first year, which helped us reach more volunteers, as well as partners.

Appendix B

Recruitment Email/Social Media Post for Research Colleagues

Hi X,

We are a team of researchers working with communities locally and globally to understand how to help make bicycles more accessible. To do this, we are recruiting BIPOC and 2SLGBTQIA+ cyclists for a research project. We'll encourage you to share your experiences, photos, videos, and art to investigate how bicycles can be used for social and environmental justice. Researchers from York University will be leading interviews, photography, and arts-based activities with riders who are interested in taking part. The research project is meant to help support The Bike Brigade's equity for BIPOC and 2SLGBTQIA+ volunteers, as well as inform the ways in which The Bike Brigade and volunteers are contributing to anti-racism, gender-based violence prevention, and environmental justice.

We anticipate that your participation will require up to 4 hours of participation at maximum, which will include an in-person, Zoom, or telephone interview and then the review of the interview transcript. Participation for this project is based on a first-come, first-served basis. Participants will be provided with gift cards or honorariums for their time.

If you are interested in participating or have any questions, please respond to this email or contact Jess (jessnach@yorku.ca) for further details.

Thanks so much for your time!

Warmly,

Jess.

Appendix C

Interview Guide

Arts-based methods questions

1. How did you make this? Why did you choose this particular art form?
2. What does this piece mean to you?
3. How does this piece connect with your experience as a volunteer rider with The Bike Brigade?

Interview Questions

4. Can you tell me about yourself and your life (Probes: Can you share some of the challenges that you have experienced? Can you share how you approached or dealt with these challenging or difficult experiences? What are the things that make your life enjoyable?)
 - a. How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted your life?
5. How did you become involved with The Bike Brigade? How have you experienced this program? (Probes: Challenges/ problems with the program? Benefits of the program?)
Why?
 - a. How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your experience with The Bike Brigade?
 - b. Why do you volunteer?
 - c. How will a post-pandemic future affect your engagement with The Bike Brigade?
6. What does The Bike Brigade mean to you?

7. What do you enjoy the most about volunteering with The Bike Brigade and why? The least?
8. Has volunteering with The Bike Brigade augmented and/or contributed to social justice in Toronto?
 - a. How do you think the bicycle, if at all, addresses gender-based violence?
 - b. How do you think the bicycle, if at all, addresses systemic racism?
 - c. How do you think the bicycle, if at all, addresses environmental justice?
 - d. How do you think the bicycle, if at all, addresses the COVID-19 pandemic?
9. How does your identity as a BIPOC volunteer affect your experience with cycling? The Bike Brigade?
 - a. How does The Bike Brigade support this identity?
 - b. Are there ways The Bike Brigade can increase accessibility for 2SLGBTQIA+ volunteers?
10. How does your identity as a 2SLGBTQIA+ volunteer affect your experience with cycling? The Bike Brigade?
 - a. How does The Bike Brigade support this identity?
 - b. Are there ways The Bike Brigade can increase accessibility for 2SLGBTQIA+ volunteers?
11. Are there other parts of your identity that you want to speak to?
 - a. How does The Bike Brigade support this identity?
 - b. Are there ways the Bike Brigade can increase accessibility for other identities?
12. Do you use the bicycle on a day-to-day basis? In what ways?

13. Are there any other specific/organized bicycle programs that you participate in outside of The Bike Brigade?
14. How does the presence of bicycles impact community life? Who has access to the bicycles, and who does not? Why do you think this is the case?
15. What is your role in your community? Has your role changed since your participation with The Bike Brigade? Has your role changed since the start of the pandemic? (Probes: If so, how? If not, why?)
16. Do you have any other ideas for how The Bike Brigade can continue to support its volunteers and community members?
- a. In terms of physical space? Community safety? Other?
17. What would you like to see out of this research project?

Appendix D

List of Data Analysis Themes and Codes

Theme	Code
Accessibility issues within BB	Guilt for not doing deliveries
	Comparing capacity to others in BB
	Less confident with riding
	Privileged volunteers
	Uncertainty with accessing BB community
	Winter bicycling
Need for anti-oppression work within BB	Lack of BIPOC representation
	Experienced racial stereotypes
	Experience with poverty
	Labour of educating others
	Labour of volunteering
	BIPOC representation as checkbox
Future directions for BB	White-dominated organization
	Cultural sensitivity with Indigenous items
	Making Indigenous community members safer
Positive interactions within BB	Enjoying BIPOC-exclusive spaces
	Inspired by other BB volunteers
	Liking people in BB

	Solidarity within BB
Being part of systemic change through BB	Social inequality in Canada
	Supporting other mutual aid organizations
	Making up for lack of government support
	Rising to the challenges of the pandemic
	Machinery of logistics team
	BB using unique resources
	Using unique skillsets within BB
	Importance of providing food
	Supporting community
	Critique of charity work
	Connecting with recipients
Personal life	Living in Toronto
	Job status
	Family relationships
	Changes from the pandemic
	Personal growth
	What brings you joy
	Experiences with racism
Gendered experiences with cycling	Past experiences as BIPOC woman
	Using femininity for safety while riding
	Comfort with other BIPOC women
	Skills being questioned by others

The bicycle	Bicycling makes sense
	Feeling of independence
	The bicycle as a tool
	Bike marshalling
Unsafe riding	Experience with poverty
	Risk of injury
	Navigating streets to stay safe
	Risk of GBV
Critique of mainstream cycling	Gender inequality in mainstream cycling
	Privileged Toronto cyclists
	Heteronormativity in bike shops
Connections to the environment	More-than-human life
	Reducing carbon footprint
	Environment as an afterthought
	Contention with labelling BB as an environmental organization

Appendix E

Rachel's Themes and Notes for Data Analysis

Common Themes	Transcript Notes
Imposter Syndrome	• Imposter syndrome re being a "cyclist" • Common feelings about not riding enough with BB, e.g. in comparison to others, during the winter, etc. • Cycling for fun doesn't have to be races or triathlons, but is the dominant cycling culture/narrative
Volunteering is a Privilege	• Time is a barrier for sustained/regular commitment (e.g. due to school, work, life) • Need security to volunteer (e.g. food, employment, body, child care)

Space Creation and Accessibility	• Accessing the space and volunteering (and community, in general) is important ○ Should scope volunteer opportunities (incl. skillset needed or desired, the task(s) and timeframe) ▪ Figure out how skills match with needs of org (i.e. easier to be told what to do and by when, and self-assessing capacity to take things on) ○ Need to address ableism lens (need accessibility strategy), heteronormativity, and hierarchy • General feelings about safe spaces ○ Common feelings of not “owning” space ○ Want non-pretentious space ○ White male allies are important and needed ○ Avoiding a top-down approach ○ Spaces to be present in, not necessarily needing to interact (i.e. just sharing space; e.g. watching a documentary) ○ Microaggressions and emotional divestment (protection) common approach; sometimes awkward to self-identify sometimes or not shared to pro-actively avoid bad situations ○ Hierarchy of experiences and dismissiveness (from white cis males)
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	○ Spaces need recognition and be genuine ○ Spaces that make people feel respected ○ Recognition and trust important • More BIPOC-exclusive spaces wanted ○ Need physical reminders of work done (i.e. to remind us of why we may have feelings of depletion) ○ Isolating and lonely in anti-colonial work (such a big task) ○ DIY culture important to cultivate and support narrative for marginalized identities ○ Common experiences of being patronized in bike shops as racialized woman
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Bikes as an Tool for Independence	• Freedom, control and power (riding a bike) ○ Independence (e.g. re gender-based violence, access to resources/services and employment in the City) ○ Bike is environmental, emotional, political, physical, mental, affordable ○ Poverty and access to transportation = bike ○ Affordable (even compared to PRESTO card) ○ Less opportunities for harassment (sexism, racism) on transit (interactions so quick!) • Tool should be more accessible in communities (financial support + awareness and resources) ○ Bikes are expensive + maintenance ○ Youth access programs are important
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Social Justice is Environmental Justice	• Environmental justice is social justice (access to bikes, biking safety and workers' rights) ◦ Environment is third down! • Climate action is intersectional (it cannot be isolated; it crosses all silos of daily action) • Environment is a good byproduct of deliveries - food security comes first • Last-mile deliveries (single bike riders) won't provide significant environmental impact ◦ Indicators of success need to be more systemic change vs. quantitative short-term results
Opportunities Outside of Deliveries	• To feel part of the community and not needing to ride so frequently (e.g. inviting people, sharing information via word of mouth) • Volunteering in other capacities, e.g. Board of Directors, arts workshops • Important for folks that want to engage in different ways and/or seasonally (not being a winter rider)

Leadership Structure is Important	• Leadership should be reflective of the community or membership • No hierarchy • No fear in BB speaking out • No top-down BOD approach • Shouldn't be tokenistic • All members of the community feel equal
Bike Safety (Physical)	• Fear of getting hit by cars • Bike lanes (e.g. Bloor) feel safe • Really lacking bike infrastructure • Changing appearance for drivers to be nicer (e.g. femme-presenting, not a courier, etc.)
Partners and Cultural Competency	• Culturally safe (diversity in partners is important to riders with marginalized identities) • Cultural competence specific to partners could be improved, e.g. when delivering sacred Indigenous items, knowing what protocols are, even for days leading up to delivery) • Culturally appropriate foods and kitchens is important for food security of diverse communities

Acting in Solidarity	• Being self aware isn't good enough anymore • Challenging biases and deconstructing them (through delivery experiences) • Intersectionality, Discourse and Curiosity! • Not expecting anything back from recipients = solidarity • Changing the dominant narrative of "charitable" work • Avoid news (mainstream narratives) • Vision is important (your eyes, to see yourself in relation to the environment, animals, other people, etc.) • Volunteering helps explore the city and interact with many people, change perspective, see privilege
Winter is the Pits	• Winter a barrier • Equipping and preparing people for winter riding is important

Appendix F

Letter of Permission from The Bike Brigade



The Bike Brigade
828 College Street
Toronto, ON M6H 1A4
info@bikebrigade.ca
www.bikebrigade.ca

July 28, 2021

York University
Office of Research Ethics

Re: Ethics Review

QT and BIPOC volunteer rider experiences with The Bike Brigade

Dear Members of the Review Board,

The Bike Brigade is pleased to formalize our partnership with graduate student Jessica Nachman and supervisor Dr. Lyndsay Hayhurst of York University's School of Kinesiology and Health Science. This research proposal reflects The Bike Brigade's anti-oppression framework as we work with volunteers on bicycles to provide emergency resources to Toronto's vulnerable communities.

The Bike Brigade is a non-profit organization located in downtown Toronto that serves partner organizations who work with vulnerable communities and individuals. Our organization emerged as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic to provide community solidarity efforts and mutual aid around food justice in Toronto.

The collaboration with York University will allow us to enhance our capacity to support our volunteers, as well as our partner organizations and communities. The process and resulting learnings will enable The Bike Brigade to incorporate evidence-based best practices into our equity and anti-oppression strategies and expand our relationships with respected academic partners. This project is a natural extension of our work to meet the emerging and rapidly changing needs of the communities we serve.

The Bike Brigade is pleased to support this proposal.

Sincerely,

Rachel Wang
Executive Director
The Bike Brigade
t. 647 244 8307
rachel@bikebrigade.ca