Beyond the Colonial Divide:
African Diasporic and Indigenous Youth Alliance Building for HIV Prevention

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the history of and potential for solidarity building approaches in HIV prevention between Aboriginal and African, Caribbean and Black (ACB) - Canadian communities, through the utilization of arts-based research approaches. Colonization, conquest and slavery have and continue to shape the experiences of discrimination that are embodied and expressed in the health of these communities. This is exemplified by the disproportionate rates of HIV within both Aboriginal and ACB communities. In unpacking this complicated socio-historical embodied health issue, data was collected from two focus groups and a two-day mural-making workshop. Black and Aboriginal youth leaders were encouraged to think about and artistically express the possibilities for, and challenges to, HIV prevention and health promotion through cross-community collaboration. The analysis offered here situates these discussions in the history of social, political, and colonial relations between African diasporic and Indigenous communities in the Americas. It interrogates the possibilities for health promotion activism and HIV prevention that incorporates the arts as a communicative medium for honouring the lived experience of embodied health ills – a direct opposition to Western, top-down, bio-medicalized and individualized explorations of health disparities. This dissertation includes an introduction chapter, three core chapters written in manuscript format, and a concluding chapter. In the introduction, I outline my dissertation, providing context for my inquiry and situating it at the intersections of HIV, public health, critical theory and arts- and community-based research. Each of the three core chapters are written from different perspectives. Chapter 2 is intended to highlight the large breadth of scholarship that informs my work. As such, it examines the history of racial formation and anti-colonial and anti-racist aims as they contribute to Indigenous-Black relations in the Americas. Chapter 3 is a reflective paper, written as a first person account of how I reconciled my personal history, world views, and community commitments with my engagement with different qualitative arts- and community-based methods. Chapter 4 highlights the voices of the youth participants and examines the empirical findings of my arts-based approach to engaging Black and Indigenous youth in a cross-community HIV focused health promotion intervention. Lastly, I conclude with the implications of my work for theory, practice and social mobilizing between African diasporic and Indigenous communities in envisioning possible futures.

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Chapter One

Introduction

I read the statistics, and I hated them!
I hated the numbers that boxed communities into categories of high risk groups
I was in my third year of university, taking my first sociology class and it struck me…
What was I doing studying proteins and cellular biology when cells couldn't explain why niggers and Indians are dying of AIDS?...
By the age of 16 I had learned that white is always right…
I learned that I was in the land of opportunity and should consider myself lucky to have escaped the life of poverty that plagued other Jamaicans…
I started to find strength in my Blackness…
I was hired to work on an Aboriginal sexual health project.
I was terrified.
What right did I have to work with Aboriginal people? I wasn't Aboriginal, I was an immigrant.
Despite my anxieties, I took the position…
I quickly learned that Aboriginal identity is not just about race, but also connections to culture, colonialism and land.
Land and identity? I didn't have a connection to land…
But wait, I live the experience of being displaced from land every day…
We could relate to each other,
being seen and unseen
and we could build powerful alliances having experienced racism, colonialism and displacement in different ways
and devoting our life's work to erasing the inequities that caused HIV in our communities.

- Excerpt from the digital story titled "Finding Space for Me" by Ciann Wilson (Wilson, 2012)

The self-narrative in the above excerpt is from a digital story I created which conveys the essence of my doctoral research namely, a project at the crossroads of several lanes of inquiry. One about self-location, positionality, and a critical inquiry of how, as a member of the African diaspora (i.e. "stolen people on stolen land"), we can situate ourselves in relationship to the Indigenous stewards "struggling to reclaim that land" (Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009, p. 125). It is a project interrogating how perpetually displaced and Indigenous peoples have been subjected to different, yet interconnected, colonial processes in the forging of the Americas; and how African

diasporic and Indigenous communities can build relationships in the "New World" (Hall, 2001). Such relationships bring possibilities for critical consciousness-raising and social mobilizing in challenging the ill outcomes of white supremacy. However, there remains little alliance-building between these two groups both at the level of grass roots organizing and scholarship, highlighting colonially-entrenched tensions and conflicts worth unpacking and understanding. For instance, anti-racist scholarship is critiqued for perpetuating colonial narratives about the disappeared Native and their literal, symbolic and theoretical replacement with the African Slave (Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009; Lawrence & Dua, 2005; Newton, 2013). Meanwhile, Indigenous theorists are charged with conflating communities of colour as uncontested parts of white settler society (Dhamoon, 2015; Sharma & Wright, 2005). This project is, for me, a process of interrogating how cross-community partnerships might be useful for the wellbeing and promotion of health in these respective communities, while simultaneously centralizing community-based ways of knowing and doing. This is in juxtaposition to the long record of ill-intentioned bio-medical health research within the Western frame of scientific rationalism that has dishonoured and exploited black and brown bodies (Freimuth et al., 2001; Hill, 2009; Robertson, 2007).

This project is timely given the heightening of consciousness-raising and social movements in the form of mass protests against anti-black racism and police brutality (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012); neo-slavery in the carceral system (Tuck & Yang, 2012); as well as decade-long campaigns around Indigenous self-determination and rightful ownership of land (e.g. the Idle No More movement); and the truth and reconciliation process for holding the state accountable for the atrocities committed against Indigenous peoples (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012; Simpson, 2014). "There is a spirit of outrage" for a colonial system designed to destroy the "love and

humanity" of racialized and Indigenous peoples (Simpson, 2014). The fight for Indigenous and Black humanism is increasingly understood as being intertwined with intersectional struggles against colonially entrenched racialized poverty; globalized capitalism; indentured servitude; war and occupation; violence against women; health promotion; and environmental justice (Walia, 2012). The similarities between the historic and ongoing experiences of African diasporic and Indigenous communities mark important sites for mutual education and contemporary co-resistance (Simpson, 2014), and this is especially true within the HIV response, which is rooted in a long history of radical activism (Catungal, 2013).

This project is intellectually novel in its framing of historic and ongoing colonial violence as a determinant of the disproportionate rates of HIV in Black and Indigenous communities. Few studies have sought to empirically interrogate health ills, and specifically HIV, across community lines and to frame such interrogations within anti-racist and anti-colonial discourse, as well as historical and social movement literature. In fact, I can only think of the activism and programming of the Native Youth Sexual Health Network and more specifically, their engagement in the Taking Action Project (which I will unpack below) that frames health in this way. Importantly, even on a cellular and biomedical level, a metaphoric relationship between HIV and colonization can be made. In the early days of the HIV epidemic, contraction of the virus meant certain death. Left untreated, the virus slowly but surely works to stage a full scale attack on the body's foundational building blocks – DNA. The virus colonizes the very machinery of the body, appropriating this machinery to reproduce itself. On a social level, the colonial underpinnings of HIV is demonstrated in that the virus is a symptom of inequality, stigma and the material breakdown in our most intimate human relationships, including the relationship with one's own body.

Locally and globally, HIV/AIDS is a harbinger for inequity and has increasingly become a disease that disproportionately affects socio-economically marginalized communities (i.e. women, people of colour, etc.). When it comes to Black and Indigenous communities in the Canadian context, Indigenous communities account for 4.3% of the Canadian population and yet account for 15.9% of the reported HIV cases in 2013 (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2013). Similarly, African, Caribbean and Black (ACB) communities account for 2.9% of the country's population and yet account for 17.3% of the reported HIV cases (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2013). Set within a context of racialized poverty and socio-economic disenfranchisement, intravenous drug use is the main mode of HIV transmission in Indigenous communities. Meanwhile, heterosexual intercourse is the main mode of transmission in ACB communities, a factor linked to colonially entrenched heteropatriarchal gender norms that prescribe polyamory for men and monogamy for women (Ankomah, 1999; Bowleg, 2004). The disparate rates increase when the intersections of gender and age are considered, with Indigenous and Black women and youth being disproportionately impacted. Importantly, because both Black and Indigenous communities in Canada are "young populations" with disproportionately large sub-populations of youth (Richardson, 2008; Statistics Canada, 2013), the over-representation of HIV among the youth of these communities is a cause for real concern.

The focus of my doctoral research is the product of my involvement in the larger *Taking Action*! *Art and Aboriginal Youth Leadership for HIV Prevention project* (Flicker and Danforth). *Taking Action!* is a national interdisciplinary and multi-sectoral research project that is the result of a collaborative partnership between the Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network (CAAN), the Native Youth Sexual Health Network (NYSHN), Gendering Adolescent AIDS Prevention (GAAP), and

several academic institutions. My focus on cross-community partnerships was inspired by the diverse composition of the *Taking Action!* research team, which consists of Aboriginal and allied researchers, students and advocates, and the alliance building integral to the project's approach. In virtue of working on this project, I have grappled with the internal tensions of what it truly means to assume the labels of being a young Black woman, multi-racial, an immigrant, a foreigner, a citizen, a product of colonization, and a settler of colour, while doing research and building partnerships with Indigenous communities. As a result of my positionality, I have a personal investment in seeing Black and Indigenous communities combat colonial violence, genocide, racism and globalization in their efforts towards establishing improved health and wellbeing.

Second, the larger bodies of work of the collaborating agencies on the *Taking Action!* project are encouraging examples of the ways in which the work of making connections between Aboriginal and ACB communities is already under way. For instance, the NYSHN is a North America-wide organization working on issues of healthy sexuality, cultural competency, youth empowerment, reproductive justice, and sex positivity by and for Indigenous youth. NYSHN has problematized, as well as supported alliance building across community boundaries with Indigenous and Black-identifying groups in Australia, South Africa and so on. CAAN provides leadership, support and advocacy for Aboriginal people living with and affected by HIV/AIDS. CAAN is a partner on various research projects and initiatives promoting knowledge exchange and conversations between Aboriginal and ACB communities, one of which is the *Decolonizing Indigenous and Southern Methodologies Project: A Scoping Review to Develop Ways of Working Together.* Funded by the CIHR Social Research Centre, this project is aimed at creating a framework and pool of academic resources for research with Aboriginal and ACB communities. GAAP is a

community/academic partnership across two countries (Canada and South Africa). GAAP uses a variety of innovative approaches to engage youth in transnational HIV activism, awareness and curriculum development. There is a lot of support and enthusiasm for deepening this theoretical work through empirical case studies that promote dialogue.

Lastly, my doctoral work is inspired by the findings of the first phase of the *Taking Action!* project, where some youth situated HIV in larger discussions of exclusion, racism, inequality and colonization. Several youth also connected the isolation experienced on reserve to the loneliness felt by youth who become street involved in urban centres (Flicker, Danforth, Konsmo, et al., 2014; Flicker, Danforth, Oliver, et al., 2014; Oliver et al., 2015). As such, cross-community partnerships are timely, especially in an era when young people around the world are "leading the HIV prevention revolution" (UNAIDS, 2010), a fact not given adequate attention and support in the Canadian context.

Nested Dissertation

As mentioned, my dissertation was informed by the larger *Taking Action*! project, and another arts-based research project I coordinated with ACB youth – the Let's Talk About Sex (LTAS) Project. LTAS used photographs, narratives, and subsequently personal videos created by Black youth to explore the factors influencing their sexual health decisions (Wilson, 2011). In virtue of nesting my doctoral work in the *Taking Action*! and LTAS projects, I experienced a number of benefits. I had access to research funding from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and the Social Research Centre in HIV Prevention to support my graduate work, pay for travel expenses, participant honoraria, arts supplies, arts-based and elder facilitation, transcription, conference registration for participants and so on. I was able to build long-standing relationships

with larger research teams, and the youth leaders involved in the projects over the duration of my masters and doctoral studies. In this, I had access to participants (and more specifically Indigenous participants from communities across Canada) I wouldn't have otherwise. Further, I was not only able to travel to the communities of some youth, as a form of relationship building; I was a part of the process of collecting data and producing arts-based and written outputs that presented research findings which resonated with and reflected participant opinions.

This engagement in research projects involving both Black and Indigenous youth inspired my interrogation of my doctoral research questions around the possibilities for and challenges with cross-community partnerships for the health and wellbeing of these respective communities. This interrogation was slightly different from the questions around HIV prevention and sexual decision making being explored in either of the two larger projects mainly because the data collection phase of the larger *Taking Action!* and LTAS projects occurred long before the phase in my doctoral program where I was conceptualizing the research questions I wanted to explore for my dissertation. As such, I went through a few iterations of refining my research questions and approach, which utilized the arts-based outputs from both LTAS and *Taking Action!* and I went a step further to explore HIV prevention within the context of cross community mobilizing.

Dissertation Format and Research Questions

This dissertation is comprised of three core chapters, each chapter being a self-contained manuscript with unique contributions. However, together they account for the three necessary components of a dissertation, namely a critical review of literature that informs the work, an exploration of the methods employed, and a presentation and discussion of the research findings.

The chapters are organized in the following order: Chapter 2 highlights the voices of scholars and engages with a breadth of literature from anti-racist and anti-colonial discourse to social movement theory and the history of the Americas. All of this is done to contextualize and situate the project of cross-community partnerships between Aboriginal and African diasporic peoples for HIV prevention. This chapter also interrogates what these partnerships have, as well as what they can and should look like in order to fulfill the contemporary needs of both communities. My voice is highlighted in chapter 3, as it is intended to be a reflective paper that accounts for and problematizes my selection of methods, as well as my engagement with Indigenous, arts- and community-based research approaches. Lastly, chapter 4 unpacks the research findings and highlights the voices and arts-based creations of youth participants. Each core chapter is written in a different style, highlighting different voices. Each is intended for slightly different audiences in target journals in the areas of critical ethnic studies, critical methods, and decolonization, respectively. Sharing my work and key learnings with different audiences is a central reason for my choice to comprise my dissertation of three interconnected but unique manuscripts, rather than one congruent thesis.

In my doctoral research, I sought to explore the overarching research question: What is the history of and potential for solidarity building approaches in HIV prevention between Aboriginal and African diasporic communities? Towards addressing this primary question, the following sub-questions are addressed respectively in the three core chapters:

1) How have African diasporic and Indigenous communities been in conversation with each other through relationships, theoretical discourse, social mobilizing and conceptions of solidarity building?
2) What are the benefits, challenges and decolonizing potential of employing arts-based approaches in research aimed at harnessing cross-community conversations for health and wellbeing?

3) How do African diasporic and Indigenous youth leaders view the potential for alliance-building between their respective communities?
    a. In what ways do these youth leaders embrace and/or resist moving beyond the colonial divide?
    b. How can we talk about and artistically represent the benefits and challenges of these partnerships?

This interdisciplinary dissertation aims to work across the social sciences, public health, and the humanities to meld the empirical with the theoretical and historical, in an exploration of the possibilities for partnership building between the aforementioned communities. This work engages history and anti-colonial and anti-racist theories in public health discourse, contributing to the history of critical resistance in the HIV movement. This dissertation also aims to contribute to scholarship engaging and critically reflecting on community-based research.

Definitions and Frameworks That Inform My Work

Throughout my dissertation, I use and refer to terms that have a wide variety of meanings and uses. As such, I unpack the definitions and intentions behind my use of these terms here:

I use the terms Aboriginal or Indigenous and Black or African diasporic when referring to specific and distinct communities in the North American context. The contextual specificity of this distinction is important to name because the vast majority of African diasporic peoples currently living in the Americas are themselves the colonial products of displaced Indigenous peoples. Further, in contexts like Australia, the terms Aboriginal and Black are used interchangeably by Indigenous communities to refer to themselves. I use the terms "Aboriginal" and "Indigenous" interchangeably when referring to the First peoples of Turtle Island – an

Indigenous term used to refer to North America – both of which I also use interchangeably throughout my dissertation (Adelson & Olding, 2013; Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009; Hill, 2009). Indigenous communities (that is First Nations, Inuit and Metis), "peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of societies now prevailing in those territories" (Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009, p. 106). It is important to note, however, that there is inconsistent use and broad disagreement on the legitimacy of appropriate labels for the identity of Indigenous peoples in Canada and elsewhere. Likewise, I use the short term "Black" to refer to African, Caribbean and Black (ACB) communities. Similar to the term Aboriginal, Black has specific socio-historical and political significance; and homogenizes otherwise heterogeneous peoples of different cultures, geographies, languages and histories. However, this classification is consistent with much of the Canadian literature in the HIV field, which does not disaggregate data based on region of origin within ACB communities. The term Black also has a lot of political clout within ACB communities, a fact only reaffirmed through the civil rights, Black power and, more recently, the Black Lives Matter movements. As a result, the term Black is consistent with the way many people of African descent in North America refer to themselves.

In this dissertation, I define colonialism as the conquest and forceful occupation and control of other people's land, resources and economy (Loomba, 2015). Importantly however, colonialism has looked very different over time and space and, as such, has shifting meanings and nuanced manifestations in relation to historical and ongoing processes (Shohat, 1992). Pointedly, neocolonialism is the term used to regard "new forms of old colonialist practices" (Shohat, 1992, p. 106). Colonialism has meant territorial annexation in Louisiana and Hawaii; complex mixed racial hierarchies in the Philippines and the Caribbean; war and occupation in continental Africa

and the middle-east; and the decimation of Indigenous populations in the Americas (Loomba, 2015).

Colonialism has been a recurrent feature of human history, even before European expansion (Loomba, 2015). For instance, before Columbus set sail to "the west," colonialism was the undercurrent that propelled the spread of the Muslim religion across present-day south-east Europe, India, China, North Africa and Polynesia. Marxists locate the crucial distinction between European colonialism and that of other empire-building projects throughout history and in other places around the world in capitalist expansion. A Marxist analysis holds that capitalism drew colonized and colonial countries into a flow of human and natural resources to Europe, where the wealth accumulated (Loomba, 2015). "These flows of profits and people involved settlement and plantations (i.e. the Americas), trade (i.e. Africa and India), and enormous global shifts in populations," (Loomba, 2015, p. 9). Critical race and Indigenous studies scholars such as CLR James and Iyoko Day identify how this iteration of colonization is linked to racialized capitalism, where the "privileged subject" in a classical Marxian analysis – the proletariat – is conceptually replaced with the dispossession of Indigenous land and black bodies (Day, 2015, p. 114). In each instance, both Indigenous and black peoples are barred from material wealth accumulation. In other words, the empire was built from their labour and resources but not for their benefit, thereby producing the economic imbalance necessary for European capitalist expansion (Horne, 2015; Loomba, 2015). While colonial processes had nuanced manifestations in different parts of the world, in every location in which it took root, it consisted of an encounter between peoples of "conquest and domination" (Loomba, 2015, p. 7). "It locked the original inhabitants of a territory and the newcomers into the most complex and traumatic relationships in human history" and it also, as Loomba tellingly points out, drew Indigenous groups into complicated and often tension-

filled relations with one another (Loomba, 2015, p. 7). To colonize and form a settlement or community is to un-form and re-form the Indigenous communities already in existence in a region, restructuring their economies and relationships (Loomba, 2015).

In accordance with the scholarship that informs my work, I use the terms anti-colonization and decolonization interchangeably to mean an epistemic unlinking from and undoing of the colonial project of domination, power and subjugation in all of its neocolonial manifestations. It is important to note however that among many scholars utilizing the term decolonization, there is an intentional disconnection of the decolonial project from that of anti-colonization. As a result, while anti-colonization and decolonization are not mutually exclusive projects and there is a great deal of co-existence between the two frameworks, the interchangeable use of these terms has been troubled as they are thought to have critical differences, which are important to highlight (Awakening the Hoarse People, 2014; Daza & Tuck, 2014). Anti-colonization and decolonization are thought to operate from different frameworks and geo-spatial histories that have direct consequences for the solutions that arise from these respective movements in how best to confront colonization (Awakening the Hoarse People, 2014). Namely, decolonization has a more pointed history in North American Indigenous movements, while anti-colonization has long been a term utilized globally. Proponents of anticolonial – decolonial separatism posit that anti-colonization focuses on resisting colonial structures, while decolonization intends to dismantle colonization and deconstruct whiteness. Anti-colonization is thought to uphold Euro-centric ideologies, decolonization is thought to focus on reclaiming Indigenous worldviews and ways of doing (Awakening the Hoarse People, 2014). This position holds that anti-colonization does not envision a world outside of settler futures on stolen land. Meanwhile, decolonization focuses on settlers relinquishing claims to land (Awakening the Hoarse People, 2014; Tuck &

Yang, 2012). Anti-colonialism is thought to perpetuate anarchism, revolutionary autonomy and the liberation of oppressed peoples. Decolonization is thought to encourage Indigenous survival, sovereignty and self-determination (Awakening the Hoarse People, 2014). Decolonization also entails the transformation of both settlers and Indigenous communities through an appeal to humanism and healing from historic and intergenerational trauma, while deconstructing the very source of colonizing thought (Awakening the Hoarse People, 2014; Sharma & Wright, 2005). Anticolonial movements have been charged with affording settlers claims to innocence, relieving them of accountability and complicity in white supremacy for simply existing on the fringes of capitalist, colonial societies and advocating for social justice (Awakening the Hoarse People, 2014; Tuck & Yang, 2012). Proponents of decolonization hold that this conceals the integral need for settlers to relinquish claims to land, power, and privilege (Tuck & Yang, 2012); the breaking of the "settler colonial triad" (settler, Native, slave) (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 31) through the abolition of slavery in its contemporary forms; and the dismantling of the imperial, raced, nationalized, capitalist, and heteropatriarchal divides that sustain the colonial project (Sharma & Wright, 2005; Smith, 2006; Tuck & Yang, 2012). This cannot be rectified through a vague social justice project (Awakening the Hoarse People, 2014; Tuck & Yang, 2012).

Importantly, this framework of decolonization and the criticisms it poses to anti-colonialism are quite focused on the differing struggles in the North American context, where there is an intentional separation between Indigenous and people of colour movements. In an effort to highlight the uniqueness of their relationship to land, many Indigenous scholars and activists in the North American context have chosen to separate their struggles from anticolonial discourse. However, anti-colonial struggles are not homogenous and anti-colonialism has informed much of "Third World" liberation, Indigenous and people of colour struggles around the world (Hall,

2001; Newton, 2013; Shohat, 1992). Many African Indigenous struggles to retain and reclaim land, resources, culture, history and language were anti-colonial in their critique of the European imperial center (Shohat, 1992) and its control of the African continent. Further, anti-colonialism was integral to the war of independence in Mexico; and the Haitian revolution, in which African slaves acknowledged Indigenous Taino ownership of the island (hence the Taino name of the island – "Haiti") and banded together with Indigenous peoples by utilizing spiritual belief systems such as Voudou (Beauvoir-Dominique, n.d.) to defeat colonizers. Counter to the ideas forwarded by the anti- and de-colonial separatist ideas stated above, anti-colonialism is not only a challenge to European economic domination, it is a challenge to a violent world order and the dominance of Western logic (Horne, 2015). In this, anticolonial movements are as engaged in dismantling colonization, deconstructing whiteness, reclaiming Indigenous ownership of land and ways of knowing and doing, and encouraging Indigenous survival and self-determination as the decolonial movement is. As such, in addition to decolonization, I believe anti-colonization is an important framework from which to understand my work around movement building between Black and Indigenous communities for HIV prevention because it highlights the historical, theoretical and political basis for such solidarity, and frames the efforts to combat HIV within transnational criticisms of neoliberal, globalized capitalism

I chose to interchangeably use the terms anticolonial and decolonial, rather than post-colonial, which emerged in the 1980s to signify critical discourse that analyzes and responds to issues emerging from the cultural legacies of colonization and colonial relations (Shohat, 1992). However, one shortfall of the prefix "post" is its chronological interpretation. In its chronological interpretation it signifies a "movement beyond a specific point in history, that of colonialism and Third World nationalist struggles" (Shohat, 1992, p. 101). The prefix "post" signifies a spatio-

temporal "passage into a new period and a closure of a certain historical event or age" (Shohat, 1992, p. 102) – as if the processes of colonization and occupation occurred at the same time around the world and are not omnipresent and currently ongoing in their neocolonial manifestations (Daza & Tuck, 2014; Shohat, 1992). There is nothing "post" about settler colonialism since settlers don't leave (Day, 2015). Further, post colonialism often "collapses very different national-racial formations" and diverse chronologies as equally "post-colonial" (Shohat, 1992 p. 102). It assumes white settler countries and Third World nations "broke away from the (imperial) center in the same way," and that this resulted in the same implications in either context. It equates the experiences of African diasporic communities, Indigenous peoples in the Americas and settler societies (Shohat, 1992, p. 102). In this sense, it "masks the white settlers' colonialist-racist policies toward Indigenous peoples," and the materially different relationship settler societies have to the imperial center compared to Indigenous communities. It de-emphasizes neocolonial forces, and the materially different form of colonialism African diasporic communities have been subjected to in comparison to Indigenous communities in North America (i.e. external colonialism vs. settler colonialism (Tuck & Yang, 2012)) (Shohat, 1992, p. 102). Lastly, it doesn't afford any space for the struggles of Indigenous peoples throughout the Americas. As such, although I agree with some of the tenets of post-colonialism and believe that the implications of colonial processes on societal culture are worthy of study, I could not reconcile using the term post-colonial to signify the ongoing relationships that comprise the Americas.

Methodological Overview

My project of exploring alliance building possibilities between African diasporic and Indigenous youth rests on the assumption that colonized peoples have much to offer in framing our understanding of decolonization – albeit from different perspectives. Their voices, lived experiences and relationships have much to teach us about what a more just and healthy world of meaningful relationships might look like. As a result, my research design starts from the principle of understanding the knowledge embedded in their ways of being and doing, as collaboration is action oriented, as well as political and theoretical. My research draws on conversations about how African diasporic and Indigenous youth make sense of their experiences and the health of their communities in relationship to colonization. However, the English language is riddled with nuanced constructs of power, so I also employ the arts because the visual and sonic convey layered meanings in ways verbal discourse cannot.

Qualitative health researchers frequently work across paradigms (a particular set of frameworks, beliefs, values and methods for knowledge production) and employ the methods they have at hand to interrogate their interdisciplinary scholarly interests (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Guta, 2013). Paradigms reflect a researcher's worldview and relationships to others in the research process, as well as what they consider knowable, knowledge and knowledge production. Within the framework of interdisciplinary health research, there has been a reinterpretation of the classic paradigmatic categories (positivism, post-positivism, critical, and constructivist (Guba & Lincoln, 1994)) to a more applicable set of paradigms that include 1) positivist/post-positivist; 2) the critical-social paradigm; and 3) the interpretivist or constructivist (Guta, 2013). Further, an Indigenous research paradigm has also been developed (Wilson, 2008). I locate my own work

around solidarity building between Indigenous and African diasporic communities for HIV prevention within the critical-social paradigm, as my research inquiry is reflexive, explores power relations, is political and social action oriented. In my exploration of how social institutions of power such as racism and racial hierarchy, scientific rationalism and bio-medicine have shaped knowledge about black and brown bodies, I am privileging an anti-colonial framework. In centralizing relationship-building or "relationality" in my research process, I also locate my approach in an Indigenous research paradigm (Wilson, 2008). Relationality is integral in order for research to do the work of building accountable, reciprocal, respectful and decolonial relationships that avoid the objectification of participants and their communities; and centralizes community stories and meaning-making processes (Wilson, 2008).

Data Source

Data for the *Beyond the Colonial Divide: Alliance Building Between African Diasporic and Indigenous Communities for HIV Prevention* project were collected from two focus groups and a two-day mural-making workshop. This four-consecutive-day process engaged 4 African Diasporic youth, most of whom participated in the Let's Talk About Sex Project; and 5 Indigenous youth, most of whom participated in the Taking Action! project. Data for my dissertation were drawn from the focus groups and the workshop, all of which were audio-recorded, transcribed and thematically analyzed using NVivo9 qualitative data analysis software. A detailed account of the methods employed in this project can be found in chapter 3 and 4.

Summary

This dissertation utilizes the non-linear, communicative medium of the arts to explore cross-community collaboration between African diasporic and Indigenous communities as, not only sites of historically and colonially entrenched conflict; but sites of immense possibility for transformative, community-based movement-building in the HIV response. This project aims to bridge theoretical disciplines and colonially entrenched divides between Black and Indigenous communities. In this, health disparities are framed as a result of colonial violence, anti-black racism, de-territorialization, and scientific racism. In other words, I posit that colonization is a determinant of health disparities within Black and Indigenous communities, and as colonized peoples, sharing our differentially located stakes in dismantling the white supremacist apparatus is integral for our health, wellbeing and self-determination. The following chapters each provide a unique contribution. In chapter 2, I engage with the bodies of literature and theory from anti-racist and anti-colonial scholars and activists that provide the framework of analysis in my research. Chapter 3 is a reflective piece on my methodological engagement with arts-based approaches for doing this work of building relationships. Finally, in chapter 4, I engage with both the theoretical and empirical facets of my project highlighted in both chapters 2 and 3, respectively, to unpack and contextualize the opinions and artistic creations offered by the youth participants throughout the process of working together.

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Chapter Two

Building Black and Indigenous Alliances for Health and Wellbeing

Abstract

This chapter begins by contextualizing the history of relationships between African diasporic and Indigenous peoples in the Americas within the Euro-western colonial project. Forced together through the appropriation of land and slavery, the relationships between Indigenous and African diasporic people is complex. Euro-western ideas of racial formation, theological and biological determinism prescribed the subordination of these communities to the status of animalized beings. The results of these similar and yet different forms of colonialism have left African diasporic and Indigenous peoples at risk for poor indicators of health and wellbeing. However, these communities have exhibited tremendous resilience and strength, often leaning upon each other in different ways to navigate and survive white settler society. Tracing the potential for solidarity building in critical resistance movements within and between Indigenous and Black communities, both historically (such as the people power movements of the ’60s and ‘70s) and contemporarily (such as the Idle No More and Black Lives Matter movements), this paper posits that such alliances are integral for defeating white supremacy. These cross-community alliances are also integral in efforts to reaffirm Indigenous and African diasporic humanism, freedom and possible futures.

Key Words: African diasporic, Indigenous communities, racial formation, social determinants of health, decolonization, alliance building

Introduction

In this chapter I argue that there are commonalities and a history of solidarity between Black and Indigenous communities when it comes to anti-racist and anti-colonial struggle throughout the history of the Americas. However, there are also considerable differences and historically and spatially produced tensions between these communities which I propose may be creative sites for growth and meaningful relationship building. Understanding the history of relations between African diasporic and Indigenous communities over the centuries helps to frame the potential for solidarity organizing. It also helps to support partnerships aimed at combatting colonial violence and the resulting health ills such as HIV within Black, Indigenous and Black-Indian communities. I begin by providing a history of racial formation in the Americas, which informs racial hierarchy and the way Black and Indigenous peoples have been treated (i.e. enslavement and genocide) within settler states like Canada. I then problematize Canada's contemporary claims to racelessness and multiculturalism as a conscious erasure of the violence inflicted on Indigenous and Black bodies within the borders of the settler state – the impacts of which have been embodied in health ills, and specifically HIV vulnerability, within these respective communities. I go on to name and problematize the long history of critical resistance struggles forged in partnerships between Black and Indigenous communities as examples of the potential for such timely alliances in the HIV response. Finally, I highlight the tensions between anti-racist and anti-colonial aims, landing on the position that alliances between Indigenous and Black communities in the 21st century must be simultaneously anti-racist and decolonial in order to dismantle the public health hazard that is the white supremacist apparatus.

The experiences of Black and Aboriginal communities in the Americas

Race Making and Defining the "Other"

In garnering an adequate understanding of how relationships between Indigenous and African diasporic peoples developed in the Americas, it is important to understand how these two groups were racially defined, categorized, and ultimately dehumanized within the colonial glare. The concept of race originated in the 15th century and was used to refer to a class of people, kin, or suggested likeness in character and appearance (Banton, 2000; Omi & Winant, 1994; Wolf, Kahn, Roseberry, & Wallerstein, 1994). During this period in the 15th, and subsequently the 16th century, there was a shift in conceptions of race from one that was underpinned by a "God-centered social order" to a "biologically grounded social order," deemed natural and inevitable in accordance with the scientific worldview (Horne, 2015). The central difference between the theological and the scientific lenses being that theologians defined "social others" as deviants, pagan, heathens and idolaters, whereas under scientific determinism they were biologically defective subjects in the evolutionary development of the white man (Horne, 2015; Wynter, 1995). However, both the theological framework of racial hierarchy and its secularized scientific variant were used as tools to colonially differentiate a "specific kind of human – the western (or white) man" – from other races (Horne, 2015). Race became a symbolic construct that served to hierarchically order phenotypic variations among people (Wynter, 1995).

Racial distinction was used to frame European competition with the Islamic world in the ancient east vs. west conflict over trade and resources, which was also understood as a religious war. In fact, by the 1400s the far reach of Islam prompted Euro-Christian nations to physically travel to and compete in trade for resources such as gold and spices in the project of empire-building

(Wynter, 1995). Towards this end, Portuguese colonialists made contact with present-day Senegal in 1441 and drew this and other West African nations into an already two hundred year-old slave trade, involving slaves predominantly from the western Mediterranean (Wynter, 1995). The methods for relocation and expropriation were well practised in Europe by the time they incorporated Indigenous peoples from Africa in their transnational trade of resources and empire building (Hill, 2009). This would later shape the nature of Columbus's relations with Indigenous peoples in the Americas (Wynter, 1995). Columbus's primary concern was securing his own wellbeing and that of the state through the spread of Christianity, and the expropriation of land and resources at any cost, including the murder and enslavement of Indigenous peoples (Hill, 2009; Wynter, 1995). Post-contact in the Americas, racial classifications were applied to hierarchically organize the peoples brought together through colonization (Banton, 2000; Satzewich & Liodakis, 2007; Smedley, 1998; Wolf et al., 1994). Centring their own experiences, the "great thinkers" of European states were immersed in the business of "race-making" in a project that solidified their belief that they were the sole point of reference for explaining and exploring the globe and its various peoples (Gutierrez, 2000; Wolf et al., 1994). From anthropologists and sociologists to psychologists, theologians, philosophers, biologists and politicians, all became experts in defining the foreign "other" (Said, 1979) along hierarchies thought to be ordered by God, and later nature (Horne, 2015; Smedley, 1998; Wynter, 1995). Unsurprisingly, this brand of theological determinism and genealogy prescribed the domination and governance of European men over "conquered peoples" (Omi & Winant, 1994; Smedley, 1998; Wolf et al., 1994).

The settler colonial "science" of race-making proliferated during the 18th century, as the variety of racial categories quickly outnumbered the classification schemes used to designate them

(Corcos, 1997). For instance, 18th century Swedish naturalist Carl Von Linne divided humanity into separate and static groups based on specific phenotypic or physical traits, temperament, geography, and political-moral behaviourisms (Corcos, 1997; Wolf et al., 1994): "Africans, were described as being black, crafty and governed by impulse; Americans (Aboriginal peoples) reddish in colour, obstinate and regulated by custom; and Europeans, white, gentle and governed by law" (Wolf et al., 1994, p. 4). In the early 19th century, French Anatomist Georges Cuvier employed cranial anatomy to order homo-sapiens hierarchically with "whites" at the top and "blacks" at the bottom (Miles, 1983). These hierarchal models perpetuated the long held view that superior traits were specific to "whiteness" and negative or inferior traits were linked to the peoples of the "other" racial groups – where the darker the tone of one's skin pigmentation, the less evolved, more inferior and animal-like they were (Satzewich & Liodakis, 2007). In this, whiteness marked the boundaries of humanity, racial superiority, desirability, privilege, and the various rules that govern, survey and control racialized bodies (Harris, 1993; Richardson, 2008). In contrast, non-European "others" were often labelled barbaric savages and their peoples were deemed gluttonous, stupid, aggressive, immoral and irrational – the degenerate remnants of less endowed primitive beings in the linear evolutionary development of (the white) man, the ultimate developmental goal in the Great Chain of Being (Corcos, 1997; Mawani, 2002; Razack, 2008; Said, 1979; Smedley, 1998; Wolf et al., 1994). It is unsurprising then that Indigenous peoples from around the world (i.e. Austral-Asia, Africa, and the Americas) were put on display in zoos and exhibitions, which lasted into the late '50s (David, 2013). These exhibitions dubbed "Negro Villages" displayed over 400 Indigenous peoples from "Nubians" to Inuit for European entertainment, consumption and exploration (David, 2013).

Racial classifications were necessary for constructing the "impermeable" boundaries of white settler society, protecting it from infiltration by black and brown peoples (Mawani, 2002). Defining the "other"- the Native, the African, the Asian- was a central project for the colonizer because naming the "other" was an act of discursive separation that created the "material boundaries of whiteness" (Lawrence, 2004; Mawani, 2002, p. 54). Defining the "other" rendered them visible and "subject to public administration," surveillance and control while never revealing the "source of the objectification" or power (Richardson, 2008, p. 29). The very existence of settler societies was dependant on "maintaining racial apartheid," irrespective of the lack of a scientific or biological basis for racial classifications (Jhally, Hall, & Media Education Foundation, 1996; Lawrence, 2003, p. 8). In fact, the varied classificatory systems of racial difference used over the centuries are more a product of socio-historical or cultural discourse than rooted in any tenable proof of difference (Jhally et al., 1996).

The etymology of race making highlights the important social, historical, and political context of the construct of race, which continues to inform our racial classificatory systems and social hierarchies (Sturm, 2002). It also gives some context and a brief history for my use of the terms Aboriginal or Indigenous and Black or African diasporic when referring to specific, and often distinct, communities in the North American context. As stated, I use the terms "Aboriginal" and "Indigenous" interchangeably when referring to the First peoples of Turtle Island – an Indigenous term used to refer to North America (Adelson & Olding, 2013; Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009; Hill, 2009). [1] It is important to note however that there is inconsistent use and broad disagreement on the legitimacy of appropriate labels for the identity of Indigenous peoples in Canada and elsewhere. Legislated definitions were "meaningless to Indigenous nations prior

[1] The use of the term Turtle Island is said to have origins in an Aboriginal creation story (Kurt, 2007).

to colonization;" they are thought to have homogenized hundreds of diverse Indigenous tribes (over 500- 600 distinct groups in North America alone), nations, cultures and language groups; forcibly replaced traditional Indigenous ways of identifying the self, which often relied on a relation to land and community or collective identity (Lawrence, 2003, p. 4); and they gave the Canadian government tremendous power to define Indigeneity in ways that, over time, have become "naturalized" (LaRocque, 2011; Lawrence, 2003). Likewise, I use the short term "Black" to refer to African, Caribbean and Black (ACB) communities. Similar to the term Aboriginal, "Black" has specific socio-historical significance; and homogenizes otherwise diverse peoples. However, the term "Black" is also consistent with the way many people of African descent in North America refer to themselves.

Past Colonization and Present Oppressions

In the European imagination, before exhaustive exploration for resources, the world (largely unknown to them at the time) was thought to be "uninhabitable" by humans and thus, inhabited by mythical creatures, Leviathans, and monsters of other kinds (Wynter, 1995). This mystery, exotification and fear of the unknown was extrapolated to mark and describe the bodies and cultures of the Indigenous peoples they encountered - the animalized, "monstrous races" (Wolf et al., 1994, p. 2) of other worlds (Corcos, 1997; Mawani, 2002; Razack, 2008; Said, 1979; Wolf et al., 1994; Wynter, 1995). These mysticisms framed how black and brown peoples around the globe were (and still are) perceived, treated, sexualized, dehumanized, and represented in the "New World." It is important to note that in the context of North America, African diasporic and Indigenous communities experience different forms of colonialism. Most notably, external colonialism on the part of enslaved peoples and settler colonialism on the part of Indigenous communities (Tuck & Yang, 2012). External colonialism (also known as exploitation

colonization) is a term signifying the expropriation of parts of Indigenous worlds such as land, resources, animals, plants and people to build the wealth of and meet the consumptive appetite of the colonizers (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Meanwhile, settler colonialism is different in that settlers migrate to Indigenous territories with the "intention of making a new home" on stolen territory and establishing control of the animals, resources and peoples already on that territory (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 5). Settler colonialism also signifies the elimination of "Nativeness," (Day, 2015). Both forms of colonial occupation disrupt Indigenous life (Tuck & Yang, 2012) and are interconnected, a point made more apparent when taken in the context of world history and the Atlantic Trade Triangle that connected colonial violence in the African and North American continent for the establishment of the British North American empire.

At the advent of conquest, Aboriginal communities faced bouts of germ warfare caused by the introduction of foreign-borne communicable diseases by colonialists. These sometimes accidental, but more often than not, intentional acts claimed the lives of millions of Indigenous people and contributed to the destruction of "one quarter of the earth's population within a 150 year" period. It is the largest genocide the world has ever known (Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009, p. 106; Wright, 1993; Wynter, 1995). It is estimated that roughly 2-5% of the roughly 70-100 million Indigenous peoples of present-day North and South America survived (Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009), making this relatively small group of thrivers the direct ancestors of all Indigenous peoples in the Americas today (Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009; Hill, 2009). These biological assaults were succeeded by state policies that served to control Indigenous bodies and exclude them from white settler societies.

In 1850, the newly formed Province of Canada passed the *Act for the Better Protection of the Lands and Property of Indians in Lower Canada,* which allowed for the removal of Indigenous people from "the path of white settlement;" and the creation and geographic containment of Indigenous people on reserves. Meanwhile, white settlers had the rights to occupy any other "empty space" (Lawrence, 2003, p. 7; Mawani, 2002, p. 54). In 1869 *The Lands and Enfranchisement Act* allowed for the removal of the special demarcation of Indian status from Indigenous peoples, in place of a "Canadian citizen" who had relinquished ties to their communities and Indigenous rights (Lawrence, 2004). This act relied heavily on the idea of blood quantum[2] to define Indian as "no person of less than one-fourth Indian blood" (Lawrence, 2003, p. 17) This act also stipulated that any Indian woman who married a white man would lose her Indian status and band membership – referring to the state-sanctioned legal category of "status Indian," which continues to be a defining social marker of "Nativeness" (Lawrence, 2003). In 1876 "there was the infamous *Indian Act*, which revisited the blood quantum idea, adding an increased dose of racism and patriarchy as an "Indian" was defined in this act as [a]ny male person of Indian blood reputed to belong to a particular band....any child of such a person... and... any woman who is married to such a person," (Mawani, 2002, p. 55). The Indian Act resulted in very real differences in the experiences of "Nativeness" and demonstrates how colonization was as gendered and sexist as it was a racist project (Lawrence, 2003). The *Indian Act* promoted the disruption of Indigenous ownership of territory through the control of Native women, who were more often than not, stripped of their central roles in leadership, agricultural labour and the economies of their communities (many of which were formerly matrilineal) (Sturm, 2002). Further, the Indian Act encouraged the extermination of Indigenous peoples;

[2] Supported by 19th century scientific thought, blood quantum was the idea that racial identity could be "rationally measured" to calculate the degree and type of "racial admixture" of Native-American mixed bloods (Sturm, 2002, p. 86).

assimilation; and the dissolution of Aboriginal spiritual, political and familial structures through violent state interventions such as the kidnapping of Aboriginal children to residential schools and the imprisonment of Aboriginal communities on reserves (Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009; Wright, 1993). This policy gave the federal government advantageous access to millions of acres of land for white settlement. While the controversial *Indian Act* has been amended several times over the last century, it remains on the books and continues to mandate and guide state relations with Indigenous peoples in Canada.

Stolen from their native lands, traded, bred and treated like cattle, the sexualities and humanity of African people have long been targets of subjugation by colonialists and Western Institutions. It is estimated that as many as 20 million Black people were taken from Africa during the era of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, and another 40 million perished in the miserable conditions at sea (Hill, 2009). These peoples came from all regions of Africa, and from many nations including the "Yoruba, Kissi, Senefu, Foulah, Fons, Adjas and many others" (Hill, 2009, p. 37). The slave trade was a devastating holocaust which spanned five centuries from the 1400s to the 1800s (The Historica-Dominion Institute, 2008). Unique in its global scale and focus on racial difference, the slave trade harnessed labour for industrial production, which helped to shape global relations of imperialism and the realities of the African diaspora throughout the world for generations thereafter (Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009). Canada's connection to the slave trade spans 200 years and stems from its origin as a state in the European quest for expansion. The British colony soon became a source of food and lumber for the slave ships that voyaged throughout the Atlantic (Cooper, 2006; The Historica-Dominion Institute, 2008). Canada was formally incorporated into the slave trade of British North America as early as 1628. Both French and English colonialists were slaveholders (Cooper, 2006). In 1685 slavery became a part of customary practice in New

France. France gave colonists of New France permission to keep Black and Aboriginal (i.e. members of the Pawnee Indian or as they were colloquially called – the Panis) slaves in the wake of a supposed agricultural labour shortage to outcompete their southern British Neighbors in New England (Cooper, 2006; Di Paolantonio, 2010). After committing genocidal attacks on Indigenous peoples through disease, other forms of warfare - including torture, food deprivation and enslavement (Hill, 2009), by the mid-1500s colonists developed a special appetite for Black slaves from Africa and the Caribbean. Slaves were often traded both among the Caribbean islands, as well as between the Caribbean and North- and South-America (Cooper, 2006; Wynter, 1995). This was in-part due to the fact that colonialists developed an eventual paternalistic relationship over Indigenous peoples in the Americas, whom they viewed as "child-like" and innocent (Wynter, 1995). As a result of this logic, Indigenous peoples could no longer be made a totally "disposable slave labour force" (Wynter, 1995, p. 35). Further, colonialists viewed Black people as "sturdier people" than Natives, who could "withstand the physical demands" of hard labour (Cooper, 2006, p. 70). However, all slaves died young, as they were literally worked to death. For Pawnees "the average age was 17.7 years, for Black people it was 25.2 years" (Cooper, 2006, p. 81). In 1701, slavery was officially authorized in Canada by King Louis XIV (Cooper, 2006). Slavery took off in urban centres, where 77% of all enslaved people resided, 52% of whom resided in Montreal (Cooper, 2006). Slaves were not only owned by individual farmers, but by the social elite of Canadian society such as merchants and government officials, as well as institutions like the Church. Slaves were integral parts of pioneer history in that they were domestic nannies, farm labourers, they built roads, felled trees, opened highways and so on (Cooper, 2006).

Slaves did not willingly accept their bondage, many were defiant, wreaking revenge on their owners in many ways by "running away, breaking tools, threatening their owners, organizing slave uprisings, committing suicide to escape their servitude, and in two reported cases, setting fires that devastated colonial towns" (Cooper, 2006, p. 81). It would be several years later that Canada, and specifically the province of Nova Scotia, developed a reputation as a safe haven for slaves and free Blacks (i.e. Freemen). The Underground Railroad era spanned from 1830 to 1860 (Cooper, 2006). This reputation would soon become the backdrop of a space riddled with racial tension as race riots developed between Black people and White settlers in the region (The Historica-Dominion Institute, 2008). Freedom and equality for Black people remained an elusive dream as slave owners continued to separate Black families, kidnapping and selling children (Cooper, 2006). Meanwhile, racism and discrimination continued to be a barrier for Black people in their aim to forge communities (e.g. Africville) and a life for themselves. These struggles remain relevant as African Canadian history within Canada's borders are diverse and range from years (as is the case with more recent migrants from Africa, the United Kingdom, and the Caribbean) to generations (The Historica-Dominion Institute, 2008) – a fact few are aware of as the long history of African presence in Canada has been largely erased from national discourse (Cooper, 2006).

Similarly, Indigenous communities have also been engaged in resistance struggles over the past 500 years (Hill, 2009; Simpson, 2011). However, Indigenous resistance was materially different from that of African diasporic peoples because of the differential relationships to space, place and geography. Indigenous resistance centralized cultural survival through practices of tradition, storytelling, language, singing, dancing and ceremony. The retention of these practices was essential for combatting hopelessness and transmitting cultural pride and knowledge to the future

generations of nations that, in many cases, had been displaced. This is important for erasing the shame and cognitive imperialism attributed to the stories of the weak, stupid and passive Natives who succumbed to the conquest and "progressive intellect" of the European (Simpson, 2011). Further, the retention of language is important as languages carry deep meanings and are the epistemological basis for Indigenous cultures (LaRocque, 2011; Simpson, 2011). Each word communicates values and philosophies and can be broken down into smaller words that reveal a deeper conceptual meaning (Simpson, 2011). Indigenous resistance also centralized an epistemic relationship and responsibility to land, as exemplified by the many Indigenous nations that waged fierce opposition (e.g. armed conflict against paramilitary forces, protests, marches, demonstrations, blockades, stand-offs etc.) to European occupation on and commodification of their traditional territories (Hill, 2009). These include but are not limited to the Lakota of South Dakota; the Beothuks of Newfoundland; Wounded Knee; occupations in El Salvador, Nicaragua and Guatamala; the Yamasee nation of South Carolina; The Red River Rebellion; and the alliance of the Ottawas, Algonquins, Senecas, Mingos and Wyandots forged in 1763 in opposition to British colonization (Hill, 2009).

Race and Space

Relationships between Aboriginal and Black people in the Americas were contextualized by shared as well as distinct forms of oppression, conflict, and the need for survival. Naturally, sexual relationships also developed between Indigenous and Black people. These relationships are contextualized within a larger culture of anxiety about interracial relationships (Haritaworn, 2012). Black and Indigenous relations were feared and thus discouraged in policies such as the *Cherokee Anti-miscegenation Act* of 1824 where "one drop" of African ancestry demoted one in "social standing" as Black in accordance with "Euroamerican racial ideologies" (Furedi, 2001;

Mawani, 2002; Sturm, 2002, p. 70). Likewise, the mixed-race children produced by the sexual assault of slave women by slaveholders were labelled "mulatto" but were largely unrecognized within white society as legitimate offspring and heirs. Mixed-race children inherited the dehumanizing chattel slave labels of their mothers, who had no control over their own bodies, reproductive faculties and sexualities, thereby highlighting the patriarchal nature of slavery (Cooper, 2006). Racial apartheid was integral to racial containment by geography, surveillance and control within the larger colonial project. The Canadian government attempted to legislate racial identity, while controlling women's sexual and domestic lives to prevent miscegenation or mestizaje. Ultimately, this served to prevent what they deemed illegitimate claims to whiteness (Furedi, 2001; Mawani, 2002). This is because mixed-race people embodied racial ambiguity, the arbitrariness of racial divisions, and the permeability of racial and spatial boundaries between "racial groups" (Mawani, 2002), thereby threatening the racial hierarchy, European "purity," and white settler control of land and resources (Furedi, 2001; Jhally et al., 1996; Mawani, 2002). In this, the settler positions himself as both superior, pure, normal and natural, "whereas the Indigenous inhabitant and the chattel slave are unnatural" pollutants to white purity (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 6).

Racial apartheid was necessary for defining who had access to resources and who was included and excluded from claims to nationhood, which in the colonizing sense was synonymous with "whiteness" (Banton, 2000; Das Gupta, 2009; Mawani, 2002). By the mid-18th century, the universalized version of the idealized Western Man was one whose imperative was economic survival through the maximization of sparse natural resources. This conception "came to vindicate capitalism, white supremacy and imperial expansion," while simultaneously displacing peoples and non-Western worldviews that centralized a relationship to land (Horne, 2015). This

demonstrates the integral connection between systems of production and domination (Horne, 2015) and sheds light on the rationale behind the direct and indirect attacks on Aboriginal and African diasporic communities through the appropriation of Indigenous land and the import of African slave labour. These simultaneous processes were integral for the accelerated economic development and capitalist empire building of the Americas.

Irrespective of the government's prohibitions and policies, "mixed race unions" proliferated and by the mid-nineteenth century, it is estimated that "one in ten" Native women were in an interracial partnership (Lawrence, 2003; Mawani, 2002, p. 52). Today Native peoples across North America are marrying non-Native peoples at rates higher than any other group (Sturm, 2002). Canada, and North America more broadly, have become the epicentre for exhaustive diversity and identity formation due to the processes of colonialism, indentureship and forced migration, which have resulted in miscegenation between Indigenous peoples and settlers from around the world (Tuck & Yang, 2012). As such, in recent decades Canada has been marketed as a benevolent, multicultural, inclusive society which welcomes everyone seeking to make a fresh start in the "New World." Multiculturalism in Canada was in part "an outgrowth of the response to the conflict between Franco– and Anglo- colonial powers erupting in and around Quebec" (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012, p. 43). Multiculturalism and racelessness has come to represent the Canadian state's rationality and modernity in "moving beyond" ideas of theologically and biologically based racial classifications. These ideations were compounded in the country's *Multiculturalism Act* and its nation-building project (Bourhis, 2003; Boyd, 1999). The contemporary ideas of multiculturalism, diversity, ethnic pluralism, and tolerance are a counter discourse to the prejudice and apartheid that has plagued Canada's history and the past and present realities of Canada's "less progressive" American neighbour (Goldberg, 2007;

Richardson, 2008), "thereby framing Canada as an exceptional site of liberal inclusion" (Morgenson, 2014). Canada's emphasis on multiculturalism and racelessness is power evasive and denies the prevalence of anti-Black racism, and the country's relationship to slavery and Black history (Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009; Cooper, 2006; Morgenson, 2014; Sturm, 2002). The denial and erasure of blackness and Black identity in race blind Canada makes Black organizing across difference challenging and invisible. Further, the creation of the *Multiculturalism Act* coincided with the passage of the White Paper to eliminate "Indian" status and Canada's fiduciary responsibility to status Indians. The White Paper effectively absolved the Canadian government of its historic relationship with and responsibilities to Native peoples in Canada and was a giant leap towards conclusively eliminating or defining into "extinction" Indigenous peoples (Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009). This was required in order to legitimate the existence of the nation-state and settler claims to land and resources (Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009; Tuck & Yang, 2012). In this we see that the rhetoric of racelessness incites racism in nuanced ways that rely on out-dated and narrow conceptions of culture that "re-inscribe colonial essentialism" (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012, p. 43); and relies on subordinate groups surrendering their diverse identities, beliefs and histories to assimilate and adopt a singular Canadian identity (Das Gupta, 2009; Gutierrez, 2000).

The rhetoric of multiculturalism has reshaped European history and collective memory – as exemplified by a colonial education system that ignores Canada's role in ethnic genocide, slavery, and the erasure of Indigenous culture and history (James, 2001). This has silenced any public analysis or criticism of Canada's connection to colonial legacies and existing inequities, which is made worse by the government's reluctance to accept and address their continued role in these atrocities (Goldberg, 2007). In turn, this serves to make the erasure of Indigenous

peoples, their rightful ownership of occupied territories, and , cultural identities seem like a natural and inevitable phenomenon of extinction (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005; Freeman, 2010; Lawrence, 2004). It also serves to diffuse and dilute Indigenous presence as just another homogenous "cultural group within a multicultural mosaic" (Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009, p. 115), as Native people are viewed as merely "paler islands floating in a darker multicultural sea" that drowns the importance and social relevance of ongoing Indigenous struggles (Lawrence & Dua, 2005, p. 121). Similarly, it homogenizes the Black Canadian experience as one of recent migration from Africa and the Caribbean, rather than a diverse spectrum ranging from recent migrants to individuals with hundreds of years of familial history tied to the Eastern Canadian landscape (Morgenson, 2014). There has been an erasure of African presence and the existence of slavery in the national narrative of Canada (Cooper, 2006).

Racelessness and multiculturalism allows Canadian society to cherry-pick the aspects of other cultures and the types of other peoples (i.e. the perfect immigrant ideal) that are adopted (Thobani, 2007). It has meant relying on covert forms of racism such as cultural appropriation and consumption, as well as pathologizing and anthropologizing non-dominant cultures, deeming them "backwards" and inferior (Razack, 1994). Racelessness has meant ignoring how racial discrimination permeates Canadian journalism, the country's legal and health systems, immigration, employment practices, and education (James, 2001; Richardson, 2008). It has signified whitening the non-whites via the "classed colour of money" and the myth of meritocracy while still acknowledging racialized people's inferiority (Goldberg, 2007, p. 208).

The impact of systemic violence on the health and wellbeing of African diasporic and Indigenous communities

The pseudoscience of race-making and racial hierarchy has permeated all realms of Western thought, it has dominated other ways of knowing, and what we count as knowledge (Horne, 2015). This has particularly problematic implications for scientific rationalism and the field of health as they are rooted in models that cast other races as less evolved species in the linear evolution of man, of which white men are the pinnacle of biological superiority, the evolutionary goal (Wynter, 1995). There has been a long history of scientific and bio-medical practice (e.g. craniology; anthropology; physiology etc.) demonstrating the harmful results of a worldview where entire peoples - as a result of their assigned position within the operating hierarchy of race, have been deemed "irrational," "undesirable," "defective," and "devoid of humanity." Lesser beings of a different species, no ethical dilemma prohibits their exclusion, torture for scientific and medical "advancement," genocide, enslavement, sexual exploitation, displacement, and erasure from human history and future (Smedley, 1998; Wolf et al., 1994).

There is a long history of institutional racism, ill-intentioned health research, and state-sanctioned examples of attempts to control and dishonour Black and Indigenous bodies. Some examples include: biological and germ warfare on Aboriginal communities since the dawn of conquest in the Americas (Wright, 1993); the misrepresentation of Indigenous peoples from around the globe in orientalist anthropological research; and the purposeful withholding of treatment from Black men with syphilis in the Tuskegee trials (Freimuth et al., 2001). Under the false Malthusian pretext of an "over-population problem, instead of imperialism, as the cause of

mass poverty, population control (of undesirable peoples) was championed in the 1960s as the most important dilemma" (Hill, 2009, p. 54). Hundreds of millions of dollars in funding from the Agency for International Development (AID) began funding a wide range of public and private clinics for birth control programs and pharmaceuticals developed by a profitable gene and biotechnology industry in the imperialist centres. A central form of population control in the 1960s and 70s was sterilization. As history would reveal, the forced and coerced sterilization of Black women (20%); Indigenous women (42%) and men (10%) (Hill, 2009); disabled; and poor women was prominent (Browne & Fiske, 2001; Hill, 2009; Tuck & Yang, 2012). Because much of this AID funding went to South America it is estimated 1 million women in Brazil; 34% in Puerto Rico; and 40 000 women in Columbia were also sterilized in the 60s (Hill, 2009). This form of bio-medical warfare was intended to reduce undesirable populations who would be greatly diminished in their capacity to organize in opposition to colonial and capitalist expansion (Hill, 2009). Today there remain many manifestations of these racist and violent encounters as Black and Aboriginal communities continue to report receiving a lower quality of care by healthcare practitioners, who are predominantly Caucasian (Robertson, 2007; Williams et al., 2009). In turn, these experiences have cultivated within Black and Indigenous communities immense distrust of and dissatisfaction with government, research and healthcare institutions (Freimuth et al., 2001; Robertson, 2007; Smith, 1999; Williams et al., 2009).

The impact of colonial processes (i.e. discrimination, racism, systemic violence and so on) continue to foster the embodiment of many diseases including HIV/AIDS – a harbinger for inequity – in Black and Indigenous communities (Geary, 2014). HIV is the biological expression of social inequities. The virus's transmissibility is structured not by the "deviant" behaviours that people engage in, but by the unequal and violent conditions in which they are forced to live,

which weakens their immune response and their body's ability to fight infection (Geary, 2014). Much research and scholarship in the areas of the social determinants of health; community psychology; Black Feminist thought and Indigenous epistemologies demonstrate that bodies are situated at the intersection of the physical, social, cultural, spiritual, emotional, mental and so on (Geary, 2014; Mikkonen & Raphael, 2010; Wilson, 2008). In reconceptualising the body's connection to its larger environment, rather than viewing it as a self-contained vessel for controlled experimentation, these frameworks honour Indigenous models of health and humanize black and brown bodies. They frame health as an outcome of lived experience, as we embody our oppression. Within these frameworks health is inseparable from intergenerational trauma and colonial violence such as deterritorialization and exploitation, which are important factors for understanding the health outcomes and wellbeing of African diasporic and Indigenous peoples (Geary, 2014; Jones, 2001; Mikkonen & Raphael, 2010). For instance, a conversation about the rampant spread of HIV within Black communities is inseparable from a conversation of how little control enslaved African men and women had over their sexual and reproductive lives. Rape and sexual violence became a normalized part of the lives of African women, who were permitted little to no autonomy in choosing their sexual partners. Meanwhile, the physical strength and sexualities of enslaved African men were dehumanizingly advertised in one of the earliest forms of sex trafficking across the Caribbean islands. These men were traded like cattle and forced to breed with flocks of African women in the aim to create superior slaves able to withstand the brute force and cruelty they would be subjected to at the hands of their masters. These colonial practices continue to inform the sexual cultures within the African diaspora. Similarly, among Indigenous youth, intergenerational trauma, a loss of traditional knowledge, language, ceremonies, culture and connectivity to family and land is associated with feelings of alienation and affirmation seeking through risky behaviour such as substance abuse and sexual

activity (Restoule, McGee, Flicker, Larkin, & Smillie-Adjarkwa, 2010; Ricci, Flicker, Jalon, Jackson, & Smillie-Adjarkwa, 2009; Rushing & Stephens, 2012).

Over the past three decades, HIV/AIDS has increasingly become a feminized, racialized and marginalized disease, following lines of existing inequity. Globally, as well as within the Canadian context, Indigenous peoples are disproportionately infected with and affected by HIV. More than 70,000 people are living with HIV in Canada (UNAIDS, 2014) and the over-representation of Aboriginal and African, Caribbean and/or Black (ACB)-Canadians in the HIV/AIDS epidemic has been well documented in national and provincial HIV statistics. In the Canadian context, Indigenous communities account for 4.3% of the Canadian population and yet account for 15.9% of the reported HIV cases in 2013 (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2013). Similarly, African, Caribbean and Black (ACB) communities account for 2.9% of the country's population and yet account for 17.3% of the reported HIV cases (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2013). These numbers increase when the intersections of gender and age are considered, with Indigenous and Black women and youth being disproportionately impacted.

Today, Aboriginal and Black communities remain amongst the most socially, politically and economically marginalized in Canada (Robertson, 2007; Steenbeek, Tyndall, Rothenberg, & Sheps, 2006; Williams et al., 2009). Black and Aboriginal communities face high rates of unemployment; poverty and incarceration. Inherently racist policies, bureaucratic incompetence, and systemic violence operate to disrupt, displace and disenfranchise entire communities. Health inequity is but one legacy of Canada's long history of socially and geographically oppressing the "other." Pointedly, HIV vulnerability is not merely the accidental result of the "colourblind" forces of social inequality, it is the direct consequence of intersectional oppression, anti-black

racism and Indigenous erasure within a system of white supremacist violence, which structures the conditions for those able to survive and those who die (Geary, 2014). White supremacy then is a public health hazard; harm reduction and health promotion must therefore work to reduce the deep harm white supremacy has had on society over generations (Tuck & Yang, 2012).

Alliance Building

Leadership and Alliance Building Across Difference

Social mobilizing and critical resistance among communities have been an integral part of the HIV response since the dawn of the epidemic. Dissent and confrontational resistance was integral for garnering attention to the threat HIV/AIDS posed within marginalized communities (Guta, Murray, & McClelland, 2011). However, "programmatic (economic, biomedical, technological, and pharmacological) interventions" have since dominated HIV prevention, treatment and care which privileges particular ways of knowing and doing, such as positivist science and individual behaviour models and interventions (Guta et al., 2011, p. 15). This silences activism and the importance of community-based approaches (Guta et al., 2011). These institutions and structures have "become increasingly professionalized," bureaucratic spaces that are often engaged in "complex relationships with state funders" who have neoliberal interests that limit radical advocacy and resistance within the political climate of HIV (Guta et al., 2011, p. 17). Programmatic strategies do not account for, and therefore, do not address all of the injustices and forms of structural violence that drive new HIV infections (Guta et al., 2011) within African diasporic and Indigenous communities. Community mobilization sheds light on the far-reaching impact of social, political and economic domination and cultural genocide; as well as the limitations and inadequacies of individual behavioural models of "risk" (Mitchell &

Maracle, 2005). As such, naming the long history of relationships between Black and Indigenous communities is important for contextualizing and inspiring community-based responses to the HIV epidemic.

The relations between Indigenous and Black peoples in the Americas is historically and contemporarily fraught with complex commonalities, contradictions and conflicts. While some Aboriginal people were enslaved along with Black people well into the 19th Century (e.g. the Pawnee Indian nation; and Indigenous peoples in California, Mexico and the US South West (Cooper, 2006; Sturm, 2002; Tuck & Yang, 2012)); others aided the escape of slaves to lives of freedom within terrain unknown to colonialists (e.g. the Taino of the Caribbean (Beauvoir-Dominique, n.d.)); adopted slaves into their family and community structures (e.g. the Iroquois Confederacy; Caribs and Arawaks) (Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009; Brooks, 2002; Cooper, 2006; Sturm, 2002); and owned slaves themselves (e.g. the Natchez; Tawasa; Cherokee; Choctaw and Chikasaw peoples, as well as elite members of the Mohawk) (Brooks, 2002; Sturm, 2002; Tuck & Yang, 2012) – of which there was reported to be "some correlation between white racial ancestry, a higher class standing and slave ownership" (Sturm, 2002, p. 56).

Many Indigenous frameworks from around the world conceptualize bodies as being part of an ecosystem that is (literally and figuratively) connected to and in relationship with all other living beings, including the land (Beauvoir-Dominique, n.d.). As a result, solidarity building and collaboration are integral to Indigenous worldviews (Chilisa, 2012; Smith, 1999; Wilson, 2008). There are many Indigenous cultural symbols from North America and continental Africa that encourage partnership building. For instance, for some Aboriginal cultures, the Medicine Wheel is used to symbolize the role of every race of people (Black, Red, Yellow, and White) in the

circle of life and the creation of a balanced universe. Inherent to these traditional teachings of the medicine wheel is the importance of working together. The Two Row Wampum agreement is another cultural tool used historically to symbolize treaty relationships, "peace, friendship and respect" between settlers and the Haudenosaunee (Walia, 2012). The images intricately beaded into wampum belts often depicted "revolutionary notions of respectful co-existence," (Walia, 2012) stewardship of the land, and cooperation with settlers (Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009; Walia, 2012). The Nuu-chah-nulth peoples of the Pacific North-West Coast use the word "Tsawalk" to mean all living things are one and interconnected or brought into harmony through constant negotiation and mutual respect for the other (Atleo, 2011). A parallel term from South Africa that symbolizes the values of interconnection, interdependence and humanity is "Ubuntu" which means "I exist because you exist." This anti-individualistic philosophy links individual survival to group survival and humanism, the "morality of co-operation, compassion, communalism and concern for the interests of the collective" (Mokgoro, 1997, p. 3). Likewise, the West African Adinkra symbol, Nkonsonkonson represents unity, responsibility, human relationships and interdependence. Its literal interpretation means "we are linked together like a chain; we are linked in life; we are linked in death" (Nana, 2009). In this, "the unity of community can be realized if citizens see themselves as responsible to each other" (Nana, 2009). These terms from Indigenous cultures around the world depict worldviews and ontologies centered on relationship-building, interdependence and interconnections (Wilson, 2008).

Given the worldviews from which these communities hail, unsurprisingly social movements within Indigenous and African Diasporic communities in the Americas have historically informed and inspired each other. For instance, African slaves joined the communities of Indigenous Caribs on the island of St. Vincent (Marshall, 1973). These "Black Caribs" as they

would later be dubbed, were so resistant to colonial rule they waged "The First Carib War of 1773," and greatly reduced European control of their territory (Marshall, 1973). Similarly, slaves of both Indigenous Taino and African ancestry played a central role in the Haitian revolution of 1791, which offered citizenship to any Native and African peoples who desired it (Hill, 2009). Integral to the Haitian revolution were Taino and African spiritual practices and belief systems such as Voudou (Beauvoir-Dominique, n.d.). More recently, "in British Columbia, immigrants (of colour) and refugees have participated in several delegations to Indigenous blockades, while Indigenous communities have offered protection and refuge for migrants facing deportation" (Walia, 2012). The Black power movement led by the Black Panther Party throughout the 1960s caused ripples in the social structure of American society, exemplifying the power in numbers and the power of organized social action in combatting injustice and a militarized state. In 1968 the American Indian Movement (AIM) was formed and took inspiration from the Civil Rights Struggles and the Black Panthers in their organization against police violence, racism and poverty (Hill, 2009). Lee Maracle (2010) highlights how the Black Power movement and the work of Franz Fanon inspired the Red power[3] movement, the Yellow power movement, and people power movements across the Americas (e.g. the Chicano and Puerto Rican liberation movements (Hill, 2009)) and around the world (e.g. the spread of the Black power movement to Indigenous communities in Australia) (Maracle, 2010). In Indigenous protests, such as the Caledonia land dispute, Black communities were often the biggest allies who were the first to arrive in support of Indigenous communities (Madden, 2015). A more recent example of this is the support offered by the Black Lives Matter Toronto organizers for

[3] European naturalists like Carolus Linnaeus defined the world's people using colour categories such as white for Europeans, yellow for Asians, black for Africans and red for Native Americans. Importantly however, Indigenous people (especially those from the American Southeast) had long been using "redness" to define themselves according to their own creation stories of their origins from red clay; to distinguish themselves from Europeans who referred to themselves as white; and to remind Europeans of their social responsibilities to Indigenous peoples (Sturm, 2002).

the Indigenous youth of the Attawapiskat community who have demanded recreational resources, educational and employment opportunities in the wake of alarming youth suicide rates (Da Silva, 2016). Scholar Andrea Smith has argued that Indigenous movements weren't just inspired by Black movements, they were dependant on them (Smith, 2015).

Indigenous movements for sovereignty, land, cultural reclamation, anti-racism, and decolonization in North America have had a critical transnational connection to, and application in radical movements globally. These include, but are not limited to, decolonizing struggles in Continental Africa generally, and the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa more specifically (Veracini, 2007); the transnational critical consciousness building that led to the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Veracini, 2007); Third World Liberation; anti-colonial and anti-occupation struggles in the Israeli-Palestinian dispute; as well as Indigenous struggles in Australia (e.g. the Mabo and Wik court decisions (Hill, 2009; Veracini, 2007)); Aotearoa/New Zealand (e.g. The Waitangi Movement (Veracini, 2007)); and South and Central America (e.g. the Zapatista uprising in Mexico; and the worker and guerrilla movements (Hill, 2009)) (Maracle, 2010; Sharma & Wright, 2005). Connectedly, the people power movements extended beyond the limits of racial identification, nationhood (in the colonizing sense) and borders to take on Indigenous struggles in the global south (e.g. Africa and South America); deconflate and differentiate the conceptualization of race from that of nationality; and surpass the citizen, non-citizen or insider, outsider duality (Maracle, 2010; Sharma & Wright, 2005). These transnational struggles have informed and been enmeshed with each other. At times they have also been in conflict.

A central form of resistance for survival in Indigenous and African diasporic communities was intermarriage and miscegenation (or mestizaje in Spanish terms) (Brooks, 2002; Lawrence, 2004). Indigenous and Black unions are common within many communities such as the Cherokee, Creek, Lumbee, Creole, and Seminole people located in Florida (Brooks, 2002; Jolivette, 2007; Sturm, 2002). For instance, Black Seminoles are a tribe of Native and African Americans who, after intermarrying and exchanging their cultures and identities, became a single people. The Seminoles would go on to carry out one of the strongest resistance struggles in the U.S. namely, the 30 year Seminole Wars that began in 1812 after colonists attempted to re-enslave and separate African members of the community from their Indigenous brothers and sisters (Hill, 2009; Sturm, 2002). In the Caribbean, African and Indigenous Carib unions proliferated on the islands such as St. Vincent; and Jamaica where the Maroons – a group consisting of escaped slaves who intermarried with the Arawak people - reside (Veracini, 2007). In fact, there has been a recent resurgence of communities throughout the Caribbean reasserting their once hidden Indigenous heritage and identification (Forte, 2006). Similarly, Black-Mi'kmaw intermarriage in Nova Scotia proliferated as a form of resistance to extermination policies against Mi'kmaw people and the marginalization of Black loyalists (Lawrence & Dua, 2005). These unions have produced Native children who "phenotypically look" Indigenous, Black, Asian etc. reaffirming "Nativeness" as a cultural, rather than a racial or phenotypic identity (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005; Lawrence, 2004). This cultural, rather than racial, identity must be asserted for the survival of Native communities, Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005; Lawrence, 2004). In this view, it is imperative to understand being Indigenous as "a way of life, which is intricately connected to a relationship to the land and all of its inhabitants" (Walia, 2012).

It is important to note, however, that the colonially informed coupling of Native identity with skin colour and phenotype to take on a racial signification proliferates in Indigenous communities and helps to perpetuate lateral violence, internalized racism, and the pressure for Native people to identify and perform in accordance with how they phenotypically appear, (Lawrence, 2004; Sturm, 2002). In this, there is a conflation between blood, the colour of one's skin and racial identification (Sturm, 2002). Dark skinned Native people have little choice in assuming an Aboriginal identity because Nativeness, "darkness" and "full bloodedness" have become inseparable notions signifying a "higher blood quantum," "traditionalness" and a shared history of racial oppression (Lawrence, 2003, 2004). Meanwhile, light skinned/white-, Black- or "other" looking Aboriginal people are often deemed "in authentically Indian"(Lawrence, 2004), which leads to some mixed-race Aboriginal people (and especially those with "undesirable" Black ancestry) being alienated and disconnected as they struggle to come to terms with their cultural identities (Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009; Brooks, 2002; Lawrence, 2004; Sturm, 2002).

Much of the concern about the racial signification of Indigeneity is an attempt to secure the survival of Aboriginal communities, scarce resources, group membership, culture and history, the loss of which are legitimate concerns for some communities whose ancestry is perceived as being compromised or "less authentic" with each successive generation of miscegenation (Lawrence, 2004). In this, mixed-race Aboriginal people are made to disappear, as intermixing with "whiteness" and "colouredness" are used as weapons for the dilution of Indigenous identity (Smith, 2008; Tuck & Yang, 2012). This is opposed to Blackness, where the "one drop" of Black blood indelibly makes one Black, an approach to the politics of blood quantum that historically increased the wealth of slave owners with each slave they owned and still has racial signification

today. However, a paradox arises whereby relying on notions of Indigenous identity as "timeless," raced and static also has "genocidal implications" (Smith, 2008, p. 84).

HIV Activism in Black and Indigenous Communities

When it comes to HIV specifically, some racialized and Indigenous scholars have framed advocacy and programming within larger conversations about racism and colonization, due to their unbridled impact on HIV transmission and the sexual cultures and health of these communities (Mikkonen & Raphael, 2010; Morgenson, 2009; Robertson, 2007; Simpson, 2004). Further, communities have long been advocating for the importance of contextualizing the disease within anti-racist and anti-colonial struggles (Catungal, 2013). In Toronto, ethno-specific AIDS Service Organizations such as the Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention (Black CAP), "emerged out of community-based struggles to respond in culturally appropriate ways to the mounting crisis of HIV in the 1980s" (Catungal, 2013, p. 260). They were formed as "safe houses" where racialized people could find mutual support, belonging and culturally appropriate services along the axes of race, sexuality and health. They aimed to disrupt "ubiquitous whiteness" within the AIDS service sector (Catungal, 2013, p. 258); provide culturally and linguistically relevant health promotion messaging; and foster spaces for sexual health services "for people of colour by people of colour" (Catungal, 2013, p. 63).

Although plagued by claims of racism towards people of colour within its larger national organizational structure, the AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power's (ACT UP) chapter in Philadelphia operated from an understanding that intersectional oppressions like racism, colonialism, and homophobia accumulate and it is precisely this layering that constituted "government inaction on AIDS" in the 80s (Kerr, 2013). ACT UP mobilized and utilized

discourses around AIDS to shed light on a broader understanding of inequality and intersectional oppression (Kerr, 2013; Mbali, 2005). The group originally attracted gay rights activists not located in the apolitical bureaucracies of mainstream gay rights groups; women mobilizing against gender-based violence (Kerr, 2013); queer and trans people of colour linked to the Black Panther movement (Gosset, 2010); Indigenous activists fighting imperialism; and civil rights and anti-apartheid activists (Kerr, 2013).

Indigenous activists in the US and Canada have conceptualized HIV and AIDS vulnerability in a similarly holistic way as the result of colonization, which has had unbridled impact on Indigenous sexual cultures, public health and spiritual and traditional life (Mikkonen & Raphael, 2010; Morgenson, 2009; Simpson, 2004, 2011). Indigenous-led AIDS activism has stressed Indigenous control and management of health systems, culturally sensitive programming, and "access to their own languages" and traditions to "address the physical, social, mental, emotional and spiritual dimensions of health" that are necessary to prevent HIV (Morgenson, 2009, p. 50). Organizations such as the Native Youth Sexual Health Network (NYSHN) focus on sexual and reproductive health in a holistic way to include culture and traditional ceremony and healing practices; environmental justice; cultural survival; Indigenous sovereignty; self-determination; human rights and arts activism. The NYSHN has also built alliances across community boundaries with communities of colour and various Indigenous groups in Australia and South Africa, broadening the scope of how HIV is understood within Indigenous communities around the world. Similarly, in an effort to challenge colonial sexual cultures, a transnational Aboriginal partnership has surfaced in the form of the Toronto Charter: Indigenous People's Action Plan on HIV/AIDS. The Toronto Charter is aimed at holding settler states (Canada, US, New Zealand,

and Australia) responsible for the ill health effects of colonization; and to affirm Indigenous self-determination over "all aspects of their lives" and health (Morgenson, 2009, p. 50).

Tensions in Solidarity

The parallels in the unique global levels of devastation in African diasporic and Indigenous communities, as well as the political and social struggles experienced by both groups has not fostered a lot of cross-community partnership building, whether within our outside the Canadian context. Racial boundaries are a colonial legacy that furthers the project to "divide and conquer" (Mawani, 2002) and obscures the complex relationships within and between African diasporic and Indigenous communities (Sturm, 2002). When African diasporic and Indigenous communities are able to forge partnerships, they are not unproblematic, but are instead filled with tensions. Colonialism, and subsequently neoliberalism, have worked to replace notions of community with individualism, segregation, competition and division between racial and ethnic groups (e.g. Black, Aboriginal, White, etc.) and within them (e.g. Metis, "status" and "non-status" Indians etc.). These divisions limit our ability to build partnerships that are essential for confronting imperial power. This makes the project of solidarity-building across community lines an important, but challenging one. Below, I unpack some of the theoretical tensions that inform the social tensions inherent in cross-community partnerships between African diasporic and Indigenous communities.

Indigenous and critical race scholars and activists have raised questions about the potential for alliance building across communities from different political frameworks. Some scholars question the anti-colonial and decolonial politics of diasporic people of colour living in

white settler colonies (Lawrence & Dua, 2005; Tuck & Yang, 2012). Key discussions surround whether or not people of colour are settlers, what their place is in the structure of white settler colonialism, and what kinds of anti- and de-colonial alliances they can form with Indigenous peoples in white settler colonies. Some scholarship suggests that anti-racism, much like other leftist narratives or social justice frameworks, "compartmentalize Indigenous struggle," subsuming Indigenous peoples into broader discourse about systemic oppression (Walia, 2012). The contention here is that these frameworks often render Native peoples a racial or "ethnic group suffering racial discrimination" that coincides with that of all people of colour, rather than diverse and sovereign "nations undergoing colonization" (Smith, 2008, p. 66).

Lawrence and Dua (2005), in their article "Decolonizing Antiracism," critique the anti-racist movement and affiliated scholars for failing to ground their criticisms in the original and ongoing colonial violence against Indigenous peoples of the lands they now occupy. In this view, antiracist theorists fail to take-up the question of "land as contested space" (Lawrence & Dua, 2005, p. 126). They argue that anti-racist theory and practice uphold and sustain colonial discourse, and that people of colour are complicit in ongoing processes of settler colonialism and nation-building by participating in practices such as the erasure of Indigenous presence through theories of race and racism that exclude Indigenous peoples, some of whom may not visibly "pass" as racialized. People of colour are also accused of focusing on the history of slavery, which in anti-racist scholarship seems to take priority over Indigenous experiences of colonization and perpetuates colonial violence (Lawrence & Dua, 2005; Smith, 2008). For instance, African Americans fight for civil rights, humanism and inclusion within the laws, economies and institutions of the very colonial settler state responsible for their oppression (Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009). In this, the colonial "promise of integration and civil rights is

predicated on securing a share of settler-appropriated," capitalist wealth and citizenship (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 7) as the solution to colonial violence (Hill, 2009; Tuck & Yang, 2012). The position here is that critical race scholars overlook the fact that Native genocide and settler colonialism are not only historic, but ongoing processes. Because race scholars lack an analysis of settler colonialism, many critical race theorists do not imagine alternative forms of governance not founded on the pillars of the nation state (Smith, 2008).

Critical race scholars have challenged Dua and Lawrence by critiquing their conflation of settler colonialism, with forced migration (e.g. slavery) and immigration – which in some cases have been linked to Aboriginal participation in the Euro-western military industrial complex (Smith, 2008). They argue that scholars such as Dua and Lawrence ignore the role of globalization, western imperialism and slavery in the disenfranchisement of Black-led nations around the world, which contributes to the forced transnational migration of people of colour from war torn and impoverished nations. Proponents question the relevance of a decolonial logic and project in contexts where displaced people struggle to make their colonization visible (Veracini, 2007) – a point which complicates Lawrence and Dua's tendency to conflate people of colour as an uncontested part of white settler society (Sharma & Wright, 2005). Secondly, "settlers are not immigrants," (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 6). Immigrants lead diasporic lives and are "beholden to the Indigenous laws and epistemologies of the lands they migrate to. Settlers become the law, supplanting Indigenous" governance structures, autonomy and history (Day, 2015; Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 7). Throughout the history of the United States and Canada, even being granted immigrant status was often "conditioned by race" (Day, 2015, p. 106). In many cases racialized people face temporary, refugee or migrant workers status, and are thus, subject to deportation. This precariousness and disposability furthers the settler colonial project (Day, 2015). Further,

for many Black people in particular, they are not afforded humanity, autonomy, or sovereignty in the way whites are, and are thus landless and selfless (Day, 2015). As such, uniformly applying the term "settler" to refer to people of colour – and more specifically Black people - projects whiteness and white settler colonial responsibility and guilt onto bodies of colour, thereby presuming "post-racialism" (Day, 2015, p. 102; Morgenson, 2014; Sharma & Wright, 2005) and erasing the significance of race and "the white supremacist violence of anti-blackness" (Morgenson, 2014) .

Third, critical race scholars critique Indigenous scholars for overlooking the fact that while in the United States slavery and anti-black racism have signified white supremacy, in the Canadian context white supremacy is signified by the colonial dispossession of Indigenous peoples (Day, 2015). Canada has ignored and erased its long-standing relationship to anti-blackness and slavery. This has resulted in a singular and strategic project by the nation state of aspirations for pseudo Indigenous solidarity, while "casting Black peoples… as secondary and irrelevant to the colonization of Indigenous peoples" (Morgenson, 2014). "By insisting that the moral claims" of Aboriginal communities are central, "the claims of others are rendered as peripheral to the realization of decolonization" (Sharma & Wright, 2005, p. 126). In this, the project of decolonization is posited to have community-specific, nationalistic and geographic boundaries. To build on this point, a further criticism is that Lawrence and Dua (2005) perpetuate xenophobia and racism, positioning the racialized migrant in competition with the Native for recognition by settler states and the allotment of scarce resources presumed to "properly belong to the Native" (Sharma & Wright, 2005). Anti-racist scholars argue that the expansion of the category of "settler colonizer" in Indigenous nationalistic projects to include unwanted "foreigners" is neo-racist because it discourages the mixing of different cultures. This framework

is anti-miscegenist because it denies the numerous past and present alliances and relationships across Native and non-Native divides; it also perpetuates colonial definitions of Indigeneity (Sharma & Wright, 2005; Sturm, 2002). In this view, "different" people are presumed to belong in their "own place," which coincides with the arbitrary territorial borders drawn up by colonial powers and which are intermeshed within global capitalist hierarchies (Sharma & Wright, 2005, p. 124). A good example of the inherent tensions of these aims is the fact that a quarter of migrants to the United States are from Mexico and are thus "Indigenous" (Sharma & Wright, 2005, p. 132). Their territories were not historically limited by the US-Mexico or North American-South American border. However, some Native American groups view the "transnational migration" of Mexican peoples as conflicting with their aims (Sharma & Wright, 2005) and the racism and xenophobia faced by many southern American people within the United States remains a struggle untouched by Indigenous communities in North America.

Anti-racist scholars critique Indigenous nationalist movements for being unable to realize the aims of decolonization because "their struggles for visibility have to overcome a number of "conceptual blockages" associated with an inclination to separate "First" and "Third" Worlds (Veracini, 2007); commoditize land as something that can be owned and controlled by one group of people; and their inclination to become recognized (and funded) by settler states in ways that relegate them to the status of a "racial minority," which does not allow for Indigenous sovereignty and autonomy (Smith, 2008, p. 73; Veracini, 2007). This politics of recognition then presumes the continuance and governance of the settler state and narrowly defines Indigenous struggle as merely claims to a "special status" (Smith, 2008). Even within the Red Power movement, scholars and activists "did not question the existence, legitimacy," or the political, economic and white supremacist organization of the Americas (Smith, 2008, p. 77). Further,

critical race scholars argue that Indigenous movements often replace the settler with "elite Natives" (those who already have concentrated power) atop the colonial world, rather than transform that world and the relations (racial and otherwise) therein. In turn, this has shaped how Indigenous movements, spaces, and alliances are imagined or enclosed (Sharma & Wright, 2005; Sturm, 2002).

These anti-racist arguments have stirred counter-responses from Indigenous studies scholars, who posit that the term "settler" does include people of colour, even those from other colonial contexts. In this view, dispossessed people brought onto seized Indigenous land through other colonial projects (e.g. enslavement, military recruitment, low wage-migrant labour recruitment, displacement/coerced immigration) "still occupy and settle on stolen land," contributing to Indigenous subjugation and erasure (Day, 2015; Smith, 2008; Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 7). The ability to immigrate and "settle in a new place" (Dhamoon, 2015), even when it is against one's own will, is premised on colonial structures that dispossess Indigenous peoples of their territories and claims to nationhood (Day, 2015; Dhamoon, 2015). Proponents of this argument highlight that Aboriginal people have had to contend with genocidal colonialism by various White, Black, and even Creole nationalist projects (Sharma & Wright, 2005). They argue that settler colonialism is a "structure not an event" that can incorporate people of colour in processes of colonial dispossession (Day, 2015, p. 104). Proponents argue that anti-racist scholars deny and depoliticize the difference between Indigenous peoples and people of colour, much like they conflate the difference between racism and colonialism (Dhamoon, 2015). As a result, this establishes the imperialistic aim of naturalizing the erasure of Native selfhood, which is the basis for settlement on Indigenous territory (Day, 2015; Dhamoon, 2015). The lack of acknowledgement of this is in itself genocidal and "resistant to decolonization" (Veracini, 2007).

Further, some scholars have highlighted that Indigenous nationalist organizing focuses less on migrant exclusion and land ownership, and much more on the transformative relationships between Indigenous people and land (Smith, 2008). "Consequently, the migrant is not the problem" but rather, migration and the movement of people of colour can occur only "through processes of land commodification" (Smith, 2008, p. 84), white supremacist capitalism and regulation by a global web of interconnected nation-states and corporations in the service of settler colonialism (Dhamoon, 2015; Smith, 2008). Counter to the anti-racist conflation of Eurocentric modalities of nationalism with Indigenous nationalism, Indigenous nationalisms are decolonial and based on conceptions of collectively sharing land, rather than controlling, exploiting and commodifying it (Dhamoon, 2015).

While I believe both anti-racist and Indigenous studies scholars make some strong arguments for the shortcomings of the alternative perspective, I side with Indigenous studies scholars such as Lee Maracle and Andrea Smith, who have challenged the friction, competing priorities, and "oppression Olympics" between Indigenous communities and people of colour - whereby both Black and Indigenous people insist on the primacy and uniqueness of their own oppression and suffering as being so all-encompassing that it challenges the possibility of "maintaining relationships of oppression relative" to the other groups (Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009, p. 105; Maracle, 2010; Smith, 2006). Maracle and Smith argue that white supremacy benefits from the colonial project to divide and conquer through state-imposed policies and structures (i.e. scarce funding allocations and social supports) that encourages marginalized communities to splinter and inflict violence on one another (Maracle, 2010; Smith, 2006). There is much historical evidence to suggest this divide and conquer approach, as European colonialists lived in growing fear of an alliance between Natives and slaves (Newton, 2013; Sturm, 2002). In response,

colonialists intentionally sowed seeds of hostility, hatred and suspicion within and between the two groups in a variety of ways. They promoted the anti-black ideologies that Africans were in the theological sense "cursed" ancestors of the biblical figure Ham (Wynter, 1995, p. 28); and in the biological sense a different racial and species category altogether, lower in developmental capacity than even the Native. In this view, Africans were devoid of humanity and thus "legitimately enslavable" (Wynter, 1995, p. 11). Colonialists also provided incentives for some Indigenous communities to round up runaway Black slaves (i.e. members of the Cherokee nation and other tribes in the Southeastern U.S.); they threatened Indigenous groups who formed partnerships with slaves; and recruited African Americans for military campaigns against Indian nations in the U.S. (Sturm, 2002).

Other challenges to solidarity-building include the fact that most Indigenous and ACB communities are constantly in survival mode, concerned about the next paycheque, putting food on the table, having shelter and so on. These every-day concerns of maintaining resources for survival debilitate their ability to reach across community lines. Secondly, a true testament to the effectiveness of the colonial project in the Americas is the ignorance among the majority of African diasporic people of the Indigenous cultures in Africa (and elsewhere) from which they hail, and the impact of colonialism on their lived realities (Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009; Wilson, Flicker, & Restoule, 2015). Lawrence and Dua write that non-Natives, including people of colour, are reluctant to acknowledge the ongoing colonial project and the fact that although we all share the same land base (i.e. the Americas), we have materially different relationships to this land and the terms on which we occupy it (Lawrence & Dua, 2005). Some of this reluctance is also indicative of the thorough project of erasure of Indigenous presence in wider Canadian society, which is perpetuated through a colonial government, health care and education systems.

Further, there remains racism and segregationist ideologies within both Black and Aboriginal communities that prevent alliance building. This is because, although Black and Indigenous peoples share a similar history of being colonized peoples, these different groups have different experiences of white supremacy; are pitted in competition with each other for scarce government resources; and in one way or another contribute to the oppression of the other (Smith, 2006). Smith has argued that there is insufficient dialogue between anti-racist and Indigenous thinkers and organizers. As a result, scholars and activists engaged in race struggles fail to pay attention to how settler colonialism intersects with white supremacy in the Americas (Smith, 2008). Meanwhile, Indigenous struggles fail to pay attention to the importance of race and white supremacy within a decolonization framework. Without a critique of the settler state as simultaneously white supremacist and racist, all "settlers" become "morally undifferentiated," irrespective of the fact that migration is racially differentiated (Smith, 2008, p. 77). Thus, on either side of the conversation, both Black and Indigenous people can "recapitulate the logics of white supremacy even as they contest it" (Smith, 2008, p. 78).

For Smith, White Supremacy is upheld by separate and distinct, but interrelated logics that she dubs "pillars," namely, slavery/anti-black racism, which anchors capitalism; genocide, which anchors colonialism; and orientalism, which anchors war (Smith, 2008). Smith posits that within White supremacy, racial Blackness becomes a necessary condition for enslaveability (Day, 2015; Smith, 2008). In this process, black bodies becomes chattel, non-human property or a commodity for the economic and capitalist gains of the state (Smith, 2008). The logic of genocide holds that Indigenous peoples must disappear and must "always be disappearing" in order to enable non-Indigenous people's legitimate inheritance and ownership of land within the nation-state (Smith,

2008, p. 69). The logic of orientalism marks "other" peoples or nations as inferior and deems them a permanent, foreign "threat to the wellbeing of the empire" (Smith, 2008, p. 69). Smith argues that we are all differently oppressed in relation to white supremacy, while at the same time participating in it from points of difference and through anti-racist and anti-colonial struggle (Smith, 2006). For instance, all non-Native people are able to "join the colonial project of settling on Indigenous lands" (i.e. the Indigenous – settler binary) (Smith, 2008, p. 69); owning property; accumulating wealth and aspiring for their share of settler appropriated wealth – i.e. the "American dream." Meanwhile, "all non-Black peoples are promised that if they comply, they will not be at the bottom of the racial hierarchy" and will not be a commodity, devoid of humanity and autonomy (Smith, 2008, p. 69). This is demonstrated most vividly by the social distancing from Black ancestry that is reported to occur within groups like the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma and Indigenous groups in New England (Brooks, 2002; Sturm, 2002). Further, all non-immigrants of colour can rest assured of the security of their citizenship and belonging to the nation-state. They don't have to fear immigration reform, deportation, or becoming targeted as foreign threats during times of war (Smith, 2008). Importantly, these categories are not mutually exclusive and an individual can occupy more than one pillar. Further, these pillars are not equitable to each other. "Blackness is neither reducible to Indigenous land, nor is Indigeneity to enslaved labour," (Day, 2015, p. 113)

It is important to conceptualize white supremacy as simultaneously operating through these multiple logics, which are in a dialectical relationship with each other (Day, 2015), rather than through any single one because there are inherent problems with any "totalizing approach" to accounting for the difference between anti-blackness or Indigeneity in settler colonies (Day, 2015, p. 110). Such approaches run the risk of simplifying the white supremacist apparatus,

heeding to the idea of a singular and totalizing form of white supremacist power, and conflating the different logics (Smith, 2008). Further, failing to develop a critical apparatus for dismantling all of the logics will fall short of creating an alternative to the existence of the racializing, colonizing, and orientalising nation-state (Smith, 2008).

Creating new collaborative health promotion possibilities between Black and Indigenous peoples

Today, we see the heightening of consciousness-raising and transnational social movements in the form protests against anti-black racism, racial profiling and police brutality (e.g. Black Lives Matter), which perpetuates stereotypes of Black bodies as sites of imminent danger, risk and criminality (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012); neo-slavery in the carceral system (Tuck & Yang, 2012); the appropriation of Black and Indigenous cultures (e.g. Indigenous mascots in sports); as well as decade-long campaigns about Indigenous self-determination and rightful ownership of land (e.g. the Idle No More movement); and the truth and reconciliation process for holding the state accountable for the atrocities committed on Indigenous bodies and territories (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012; Simpson, 2014). "There is a spirit of outrage within Black and Indigenous communities for a colonial system designed to destroy Black and Indigenous love and humanity" (Simpson, 2014). In opposition to the colonially entrenched racial hierarchies discussed at the start of this paper, the fight for Indigenous and Black humanism must be understood as an anti-colonial project, one connected to struggles against racialized poverty; war and occupation; violence against women; environmental justice; and health promotion – to name a few (Walia, 2012). As demonstrated by the collaboration between Idle No More and Black Lives Matter protesters in combatting youth isolation and suicide in the Attawapiskat community (Da Silva, 2016), the similarities between the historic and ongoing experiences of African diasporic and

Indigenous communities mark important sites for contemporary co-resistance (Simpson, 2014), and this is especially true for situating the HIV response.

The HIV response has focused primarily on a state-funded treatment and prevention apparatus that has emphasized a biomedical model, which individualizes risk as a consequence of personal behaviour (Geary, 2014). This approach has ignored the social determinants of HIV and injustice, and has disregarded critical resistance and activism as integral parts of the HIV response (Guta et al., 2011; Wilson, Flicker, & Restoule, under review). As such, decentering the management of disease and the surveillance of particular bodies, and refocusing on community mobilization, empowerment and solidarity-building is significant for HIV prevention efforts within and between Aboriginal and ACB communities. In seeking ways of working together as a source of mutual empowerment and co-resistance, it is worthwhile to spend some time unpacking what decolonizing cross-community collaborations might entail.

In his paper titled: "Decolonization and the pedagogy of solidarity," Gaztambide-Fernández (2012) reflects on three shared features of most definitions of solidarity namely, "solidarity always implies a relationship among individuals or groups, whether as a way to understand what brings people together for civic or political action" (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012, p. 50). Second, solidarity implies an obligation to what is "just or equitable" (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012, p. 50). This can include a "notion of human rights, a social contract" or struggles against oppression (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012, p. 50). A pedagogy of solidarity must begin from the premise that the process is uneasy, unsettled, and even tension-filled. It "neither reconciles present grievances nor forecloses future conflict" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 3). Third, solidarity

always implies a set of responsibilities or "duties between those in the solidarity relationship" (e.g. treat others as you would like to be treated) (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012, p. 50).

Within a decolonizing framework, genuine collaboration begins by acknowledging that different groups of people have varied relationships to the white supremacist apparatus. Strategic alliances are not solely based on similarities and shared victimization because these differing relations to white supremacy are not equal or equitable to each other (Smith, 2006). Counter to our neoliberally informed culture of individualism and rationalistic calculations of self-interest, collaborations entail re-imagining human interactions premised on the relationship between difference and interdependence (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012). As such, people of colour organizing must be premised on making alliances based on where we are each situated within the larger white supremacist apparatus. This entails organizing to combat the ways we are each complicit in the oppression of each other (Smith, 2008).

One proposed approach is to focus on creating a "decolonizing treaty" by turning from an understanding of treaty as a historical artifact toward understanding a treaty as a decolonizing process of making and keeping good relations, where power is negotiated (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012). It is to center relationality between land, environment, people and the state (Walia, 2012). Such a relational solidarity demands that we recognize the complex and sometimes contradictory personal histories that bring us together. It is to conceptualize a common destiny where the formerly separated "races" of the world have been brought together in the epicentre of exhaustive diversity to transform social structures based on "trans-racial altruism," beyond the boundaries of the nation-state (Sharma & Wright, 2005). It entails an active orientation towards others. "To think of solidarity relationally is to ask the questions: how

am I being made by others? and 'what are the consequences of my being on others?" (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012, p. 52).

Strategic alliances entail that each ally is accountable for their contribution to the oppression of others; responsive to the experiences, voices, needs and political perspectives of others; acknowledges their stake in the struggles of the others; refrains from appropriating the voices of others; challenges colonial hierarchy; and de-centers whiteness by generating theories and movements that humanize and centre Indigenous worldviews and the ties between Indigenous and racialized peoples (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012; Morgenson, 2014; Smith, 2006; Walia, 2012). The colonial system benefits from the fact that Black and Indigenous communities are in "perpetual states of crisis," compete for scarce resources and struggle for daily survival (Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009 p. 131). These daily and more proximate battles must be taken into consideration to effectively organize co-resistance struggles between Indigenous and African diasporic communities (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012; Smith, 2008). A decolonizing pedagogy of solidarity is the process through which we intend and create the conditions we want to live in and the social relations we wish to have (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012). This requires supplanting the "colonial logic of the state itself" (Walia, 2012) and challenging existing social arrangements (Sharma & Wright, 2005; Walia, 2012). In particular, this requires opposing the very idea of what it means to be human, denouncing ideologies that view peoples as less evolved sub-humans, and challenging the logics of inclusion and exclusion that enforce social boundaries (Horne, 2015).

Decolonizing processes of alliance building require mutual education of ACB and Indigenous communities on each other's histories and realities. This entails mutually interrogating how

"stolen people (i.e. African diasporic people) on stolen land" can situate themselves in relation to Indigenous peoples who are "struggling to reclaim their relationships to that stolen land," (Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009, p. 125). Decolonization is more than merely the liberation of "nations" along homogenous racialized and "ethnicized" boundaries (Sharma & Wright, 2005, p. 133). Instead, decolonization consists of the liberation of people from hierarchical social relations within the larger system of globalized capitalism. It requires decolonizing the mind through critical consciousness building; reflecting on what it means to build allyship between Indigenous and Black struggles in the Americas; and reflecting on how communities hold each other accountable so as to not evade our complicity in white supremacy and our responsibilities to each other in a settler colonial state. For Tuck and Yang in their article "Decolonization is not a Metaphor" (2012) decolonization entails more than a vague social justice project of decentering settler perspectives and encouraging alliance building. In this view, decolonization is the specific command to break the "settler colonial triad (settler, Native, slave) through the abolition of slavery in its contemporary forms" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 31); repatriation of Indigenous self-determination and land; and dismantling the imperial, raced, nationalized, capitalist, and heteropatriarchal divides that sustain the colonial project (Sharma & Wright, 2005; Smith, 2006; Tuck & Yang, 2012). According to Tuck and Yang (2012), "when metaphor invades decolonization, it kills the very possibility of decolonization" (p. 3), making the term an "empty signifier" (p. 7), re-centering whiteness; and absolving settlers inhabiting Indigenous territories of responsibility (Tuck & Yang, 2012).

The project of decolonization is not accountable to settlers. It cannot be "grafted" onto pre-existing "justice frameworks" (e.g. human rights, civil rights, or social justice) (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 3), nor can it recapitulate Western ideas of social change or "assimilationist models of

liberal pluralism" (Walia, 2012), whereby Indigenous and Black resistance is forced to fit within existing narratives of activism (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012; Tuck & Yang, 2012; Walia, 2012). It must challenge the ideas and existence of the nation-state, imagining alliances and liberation within other possible worlds, outside of the confines of white supremacist settler states (Smith, 2008).

Lastly, while there is a lot of money funnelled into the HIV surveillance and management apparatus, which focuses on the regulation of bodies and communities, there are very few resources to support critical resistance, confrontation and civic engagement that disrupt structures of power (Guta et al., 2011). Decolonizing alliances for HIV prevention may entail looking "beyond the non-profit and academic industrial complexes" (Guta et al., 2011, p. 24) when doing decolonial organizing for Black and Indigenous communities around their health and wellbeing. Solidarity and relationship building free from state influences is after all, integral to self-determining liberation.

Conclusion

Understanding the interconnected histories of ACB and Indigenous peoples in the Americas helps to make sense of their ongoing experiences of institutionalized racism, dehumanization and their respective resistance struggles. Cross community partnerships established on an understanding of different experiences of oppression and mutual respect are integral for forging a collective future better than our collective past. This is especially important for improving the health and wellbeing of African diasporic and Indigenous communities in a way that acknowledges the importance of decolonization and the dismantling of white supremacy in all its forms.

Future research should focus on highlighting the strengths of existing grassroots collaboratives that bridge Indigenous and African diasporic struggles - as well as transnational struggles opposing violent global systems. Examples include the youth-led Idle No More and Black Lives Matter collectives that have been effective at mobilizing entire communities and garnering national and international attention and sparking conversations about Indigenous sovereignty, globalized colonial capitalism, and anti-black violence (Day, 2015; Simpson, 2014). Future work should also centralize the voices of individuals and communities that identify with both an Aboriginal and African Creole heritage. These important voices that document the complicated history of race relations and cross-community interactions in the Americas have often been silenced and subsumed into either Indigenous or African diasporic identities, effectively erasing the lateral violence and erasure experienced by people of mixed race ancestry. It is imperative that research be used as a tool to narrativize these movements and realities so as to write and speak our alternative and possible futures into existence and create healthful communities.

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Chapter Three

It's about relationships: The decolonizing potential of digital storytelling and collaborative mural making as research methods

Under review at the Journal of Critical Anti-Oppressive Social Inquiry

Abstract

This reflective paper explores my engagement with different qualitative, arts-based approaches to inciting solidarity building between African diasporic and Indigenous young people for HIV prevention within the Canadian context. Herein, I reflect on how – as part of the African diaspora - I reconciled my personal history, worldviews, theoretical and community commitments with my methodological approaches. I will unpack: a) where I started – my personal process; b) the methods employed in this project and the criticisms thereof; c) the reasons I chose to engage digital storytelling and collaborative mural making as tools for research and knowledge exchange between communities; d) the benefits and challenges afforded by these methods; e) their decolonizing potential; f) important lessons learned from my process and outstanding questions for further interrogation. I share these reflections to make visible the ways in which our methodological choices matter, as they impact research possibilities and their transformative potential.

Key Words: arts-based research process, African diasporic and Indigenous communities, decolonizing knowledge production

Introduction

In this reflective paper, I take you through my engagement with different qualitative, arts- and community-based methods that I employed in my doctoral research. My dissertation focused on exploring the utility and potential for cross-community solidarity building between Indigenous and African diasporic youth for HIV prevention. Here, I reflect on how I reconciled my personal history, worldviews,[4] as well as theoretical and community commitments, with the methods I chose to engage. I worked with youth from these two communities in a process of thinking about the impact of colonization on the health and wellbeing of their respective communities, as well as their relationships with each other as young leaders. I will unpack: a) where I started – my personal process; b) the methods employed in this project and the criticisms thereof; c) the reasons I chose to engage digital storytelling and collaborative mural making as tools for research and knowledge exchange between communities; d) the benefits and challenges afforded by these methods; e) their decolonizing potential; and f) important lessons learned from my process and outstanding questions for further interrogation. I share these reflections to make visible the ways in which research processes are as important as their products. Our methodological choices matter, as they impact research possibilities and their transformative potential in community-based research.

In as much as research can be used as a tool for social justice and politics, there is an important aspect of engaging in research that makes the process a very personal one as well. In order to

[4] I define worldviews as the ways of knowing and understanding reality and the world around us, as well as ways of doing and being in the world.

honour my research process, I must start by positioning myself. Who I am, my background and lived experience help to contextualize my path and my journey.

Situating Myself

My story begins in the Caribbean on the island of Jamaica, which is the Hispanic form of the Taino name for the island meaning ”the land of wood and water” (Hall, 2001). Jamaica, being part of the Americas, is a country still reeling from the impact of centuries of violence. The massacre of Indigenous peoples; the importation of African enslaved labour – and subsequently Asian indentured workers - for the creation of mass production and a plantation society within the larger British North American empire; and colonial violence in the form of globalized capitalism and structural adjustment programs have all impoverished the nation. It is within this geopolitical context that I come into being within a multi-racial family of African, South Asian (Indian) and European ancestry in the Jamaican parish of Westmoreland. The erasure of Indigenous presence from the historical narrative of the Americas has been so widespread that I am unsure of whether or not there is any Aboriginal ancestry in my own family history. Beyond the influence of Aboriginal presence in Jamaican nationalism, such as the image of two Arawak figures in our Coat of Arms; the presence of Native American words within the Jamaican vocabulary – a Creole language; and racist tales of the cannibalistic barbarism of the island’s first inhabitants - the Taino, very few of our popular stories acknowledge the presence of Aboriginal peoples. Indigenous presence on the island is often relegated to museums and archeological sites – “part of the barely knowable or usable past” (Hall, 2001, p. 235; Newton, 2013). In fact, much as the predominance of white bodied people has led to Canada being dubbed a “white man’s land” in the eyes of first generation immigrants, the predominance of

Black people has led to Jamaica being dubbed a "Black man's country." Albeit a country on loan from the British monarchy, Jamaica "graduated in status" from a British colony to independence on August 6th, 1962 (Jamaica Information Service, n.d.). This so called independence does not indicate economic or political freedom as the island remains economically dependent on externally controlled capital. Like a traumatized person blocks out certain experiences of pain, erased is the collective and intergenerational memory among many African diasporic peoples in the Caribbean of the suffering endured on the daunting passage to the Americas; the locations and Indigenous cultures in Africa from which they hail; and the interactions with the Indigenous peoples on the lands to which they were dragged. In this process, both pre-slave trade Africa and the Aboriginal Caribbean emerge and subsequently disappear (Loomba, 2002; Newton, 2013). "Colonization is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip… by a perverted logic it distorts, disfigures and destroys" the past of oppressed people (Fanon, 1963, p. 170).

It is important to acknowledge that my understanding of my identity is also situated within a larger Caribbean diasporic cultural identity, which lays claim to one shared (and often assumed to be homogenous and fixed) culture, as well as a form of unity and connectivity to a shared history of slavery and ancestral connections to Africa (Hall, 2001). It is a kind of "new Africa of the New World, one grounded in an old Africa" (Hall, 2001, p. 231). Such conceptions of cultural identity and connectivity to Africa as a key signifier of Anglophone Caribbean identity emerged in the 1970s during the civil rights struggles; the surge of Rastafarian culture, politically entrenched music and religion; as well as the post-colonial revolution, from which the Pan-African movement was derived (Hall, 2001). It is within this period that an African-Indigenous revolution among African diasporic peoples gained traction in the Caribbean, spurring a "key tension in mid-twentieth-century anticolonial nationalism" (Hall, 2001; Newton, 2013, p. 119).

This has informed scholarship and popular culture within the Caribbean, which often contributes to the perpetuation of colonial narratives about the disappeared Native and their replacement with the African slave (Newton, 2013). For instance, the work of David Scott reflects ideas about the plantation societies created in the Caribbean being "modernizing forces" of progress that are tied directly to and made possible through Aboriginal absence (Newton, 2013, p. 111). In his works, Barbadian novelist and historian Kamau Brathwaite writes about the total destruction and extinction of Amerindians and their replacement with the enslaved African as the new colonized Native and "bearer of Indigenous culture" (Newton, 2013, p. 113). In this, the death of the Native is imperative for the legitimization and belongingness of African culture on the Caribbean islands (Newton, 2013). Such narratives were often written in tandem with proclamations of creolization and creole nationalisms, which on the one hand serve to reimagine Indigenous languages and cultures as constantly evolving and forming innovative fusions with white settler and people of colour cultures (Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009). Meanwhile, on the other hand much like multiculturalism in Canada, creolization in the Americas has also been understood to usher Caribbean nations into modernity as hubs of diversity and hybridity, which has simultaneously signified the erasure of Indigenous peoples (Hall, 2001; Newton, 2013). Noticeably however, the presence of Afro-Aboriginal communities, and scholarship from countries such as Trinidad (Forte, 2015; Forte, 2006), Guyana and Belize, in which there is cautious use of the term Indigenous, reflect acknowledgement of Aboriginal presence in the Caribbean (Forte, 2015; Newton, 2013). It is worth noting that in parts of Jamaica such as St. Elizabeth and Westmoreland, as well as throughout Trinidad and Guyana there remain people who self-identify as Taino descended. Further, in their oral histories, the maroons of the Caribbean frequently acknowledge their debt to the Tainos whose mountain guerrilla activities predated and informed their own resistance and community mobilization (Newton, 2013). In

fact, there is much speculation of the Arawak and African diasporic ancestry of Maroons (Veracini, 2007). The work of scholars like Jose Barreieros and others have begun to demonstrate that Taino cultures have both survived and continue to exert agency in the contemporary moment.

Given this socio-historical and geographic context which complicates the use of the term "Indigenous," in this paper I use the term intentionally to refer to Aboriginal peoples or the First peoples (First Nations, Inuit, and Metis) of Turtle Island. Herein, I also utilize the United Nations definition of the term meaning "peoples and nations which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of societies now prevailing in those territories" (Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009, p. 106). I use the short term "Black" to refer to African diasporic, or more specifically African, Caribbean and Black (ACB) communities. Similar to the term Aboriginal, "Black" has specific socio-historical significance; and homogenizes otherwise heterogeneous peoples of different cultures, geographies, languages and histories. However, this classification, and more specifically identification with the politicized term "Black" is consistent with the way many people of African descent in North America refer to themselves.

The relationship between fragmented history, identity and displacement from land are recurring threads that surface in my narrative quilt, as Caribbean peoples more generally seem to be signifiers of migration –modern "nomads" of the New World (Hall, 2001, p. 234). Upon migrating as a child to Canada with my family, I was largely ignorant of Indigenous history and presence and, given the deficits of Canada's colonial education system, did not come across information about Indigenous peoples until my tenth grade history class. It would be several

years later, during my masters studies, that I was confronted with the implications of the images in my tenth grade history book that depicted Aboriginal children in residential schools, assimilation and reserves. I became involved in the *Taking Action: Art and Aboriginal Youth Leadership for HIV Prevention* project that utilized community-based and Indigenous research praxis, along with arts-based methods to explore the links between colonialism and HIV risk in Aboriginal communities across Canada (Flicker, Danforth, Konsmo, et al., 2014; Flicker, Danforth, Oliver, et al., 2014; Monchalin et al., n.d.; Oliver et al., 2015; Wilson et al., under review). Through youth-created art media (e.g. video, mural making, music etc.) and HIV prevention messaging, the project also explored the factors that inspire some young people to become active around HIV prevention in their communities. Through my experience in this project, I was confronted with my position as a settler of colour and all of the complexities that come with such a position when working with Aboriginal communities; my own fragmented familial history with all of its frustrating silences, uncertainties and erasures; and my geographical and historical displacement from land and, in some ways, culture. Furthermore, depending on the community I was visiting as part of the field work for the Taking Action project, my visibly black body was deemed "foreign" and confronted subtle and often nuanced forms of xenophobia and anti-black racism[5].

While working on *Taking Action!* as a graduate research assistant, I was simultaneously conducting research for my master's thesis project: *Let's Talk About Sex* (Wilson & Flicker, 2015; Wilson, In press; Wilson, 2011). This was also an arts-based project which engaged young Toronto-based African, Caribbean and Black women in a Photovoice process (Flicker, 2006;

[5] I define anti-black racism as a specific form of racial discrimination or prejudice prevalent in societies around the world that is geared at Black people or people of African descent who are presumed to be at the bottom of the racial hierarchy. Anti-black racism can also be geared at people of darker skin complexion who are mistaken for being or "pass" as Black such as some people of South Asian descent.

Wang & Burris, 1997) to identify and visually represent their community and perspectives on factors impacting their sexual agency.

Through my work on these two projects, I began to see the similarities and differences in the struggles and social inequities faced by Indigenous and African diasporic youth that have led to their over representation in the HIV epidemic in Canada (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2013). For instance, Indigenous communities account for 4.3% of the Canadian population and yet account for 15.9% of the reported HIV cases in 2013 (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2013). Similarly, ACB communities account for 2.9% of the country's population and yet account for 17.3% of the reported HIV cases (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2013). These numbers are exacerbated at the intersections of gender and age, with Indigenous and Black women and youth being disproportionately impacted by HIV (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2009). As such, I started to understand that an adequate account of HIV rates and the overall health of Indigenous and African diasporic communities required an explanation of historic and ongoing institutional racism and colonial violence (Geary, 2014; Kogan et al., 2010; Robertson, 2007, 2007; Rushing & Stephens, 2012; Steenbeek et al., 2006; Williams et al., 2009). Much research demonstrates that we embody our oppression and it surfaces in our health (Geary, 2014; Jones, 2001; Mikkonen & Raphael, 2010; Wilson, 2008). As such, context is important for de-stigmatizing black and brown bodies as "diseased" or "at risk"; for centralizing the histories, realities and narratives of communities in knowledge making processes such as research (Wilson, 2008); and for honouring alternative worldviews that have a holistic understanding of health and its connection not only to the physical body, but to history, spirituality, culture and intersectional identity (Geary, 2014; Mikkonen & Raphael, 2010; Wilson, 2008).

I am personally invested in seeing Black, Indigenous and "Black-Indian" communities come to terms with their different and similar struggles against colonialism, genocide, racism and globalization. The colonial project is, after all, established on a divide and conquer mentality (Simpson, 2014; Smith, 2006, 2008). Oppressive social relations cannot be transformed without alliances between groups, even though the specific form these relations take, may vary. As such, there is something to be said for approaches that oppose this trend and value unity and collaboration as strengths. Moreover, in virtue of identifying as a Black woman, I began to understand my personal connection to this work. For all my frustrations with racial violence on the bodies of black and brown people in North America, I could not legitimate fighting against this form of state violence without simultaneously fighting for Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination, which the nation-state of Canada needs to erase and silence in order to exist (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Lastly, in being several generations removed from my own Indigenous ancestry, I feel an obligation to not only connect to the knowledge systems and wisdom of the Indigenous communities I live in close proximity to, but also to ensure my scholarship stands in solidarity with the communities on whose land I reside. Work by scholars of colour such as Patricia Hill Collins, Kimberle Crenshaw and other feminists of colour in the global south have theorised that oppressive relations are interlocking (Dhamoon, 2015). That is, they depend on each other even when they sometimes appear to be in contradiction. Dismantling one axis of domination (economic, gendered, racial, spatial, religious etc.) is only secured by attending to the myriad of ways in which domination reproduces itself. Struggles for Indigenous liberation, like the struggle against racism, are not just a struggle for one group of people but are rather issues that affect the claims to the freedom of all humans. As a result of the interconnection and interdependence of oppression, dismantling them may require collaboration and the act of struggling together.

Drawing On The Arts and Community-Based Research

Centralizing the voices and experiences of participants in my research process and product is important to me because research has historically played an integral role as a vector for colonialism in dismissing the validity of the first-hand accounts, stories and agency of communities. Research has inherently deemed knowledge and what is knowable as the domain of the "trained/educated" researcher (Horne, 2015; Wynter, 1995). Research has also been instrumentalized to concoct racist and orientalist depictions and definitions of black and brown peoples (Freimuth et al., 2001; Said, 1979; Wynter, 1995). These values around the superiority of Western scientific rationalism and its conjunction with racial hierarchy have permeated all realms of dominant thought and what is considered knowledge or knowable (Horne, 2015). This has had particular implications for the field of health and health care, which casts the bodies of "other" races as less evolved, inferior biological specimens in comparison to the "naturalized," heteronormative, white male body – the pinnacle of biological superiority (Wynter, 1995). In health research no ethical dilemma has prohibited the torture and exploitation of black and brown peoples for scientific and biomedical "advancement," and there is a long history of ill-intentioned health research demonstrating this (Christopher, Watts, McCormick, & Young, 2008; Freimuth et al., 2001; Smedley, 1998; Wolf, Kahn, Roseberry, & Wallerstein, 1994; Wright, 1993). In turn, these experiences have cultivated within Black and Indigenous communities immense distrust of and dissatisfaction with government, research and healthcare institutions (Christopher et al., 2008; Freimuth et al., 2001; Robertson, 2007; Smith, 1999; Williams et al., 2009).

In virtue of the long history of colonial research; the fact that racialized youth are rarely the arbiters of their own narratives, representations and knowledge-making processes (Gubrium & Harper, 2013); and my own identification as a woman of colour, I am protective of the ways in which communities of colour are spoken about in dominant discourse. As such, a central question that guides my work is how do we decolonize knowledge and knowledge-making processes? For me, the answer to this question entails breaking the cycle of problematic and violent health research by honouring the perspectives of communities. Towards this end, I sought engagement with research approaches that privileged the voices, texts and artistic expressions of communities historically spoken about and (re)presented. Specifically, I used arts-based methods (Cole & Knowles, 2008; Gubrium & Harper, 2013; Mitchell, 2014; Mitchell et al., 2010; Ridgley, Maley, & Skinner, 2004; Strack, Magill, & McDonagh, 2004; Wang & Burris, 1997; Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001) within a community-based research (CBR) framework (Fals Borda & Rahman, 1991; Flicker, 2008; Gaventa, 1993; Salehi, 2010).

Research methods matter because they are each socially, historically and politically oriented. Arts-based approaches are no exception. Arts-based approaches can afford participants power in the research process and outcomes. They have the potential to honour lived experience, as everyone is an "expert" on their own life, their journeys and identities (Chilisa, 2012; Wallerstein & Bernstein, 1994; Wright, 2011). Arts-based approaches make both the research approach and findings more accessible and evocative for engagement and response, which is significant for communicating to a broad audience of diverse literacies and languages (Cole & Knowles, 2008; Weber, 2008). This is because Arts-based approaches employ a variety of modalities. Working through narrative, poetry, images, sound, video, and music appeals to diverse aesthetic tastes,

cultural symbols, and layered meaning-making that is not dependant on English (or any other colonial) language skills the way traditional methods such as interviews might. These creative approaches also afford participants, and especially young imaginative minds, process based ways of thinking about and expressing ideas which cannot be easily condensed into clear arguments. Often insights which are emerging are tentative and easily articulated in clear sentences. Process-based work allows for projection of ideas on to a medium and in so doing it allows for a gradual, sometimes faltering emergence of what the participant does not know that they know. It allows for non-linear approaches with which to engage in expressing youths' complex and layered understandings of the world. CBR takes an empowerment approach to social change (Wallerstein & Bernstein, 1994), and is premised on the notion that local communities ought to be full partners in the processes of knowledge creation, dissemination and social transformation (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995; Wilson et al., 2007; Wright, 2011).

In these approaches, participants are able to negotiate their power within the research environment, thereby breaking down the distinctions between the researcher and the researched, while generating relevant research with actionable outcomes (Gaventa, 1993; Wallerstein & Bernstein, 1994; C. Y. Wright, 2011). On the individual level, arts-based approaches can transform personal lives and actions, making engagement with the arts a form of intervention (Wilson et al., under review). However, the extent to which arts-based methods work depends on the detailed work with the precise form and content used by the facilitator. I will therefore elaborate on my approach in the case study which follows.

In many respects, my research marries arts- and community-based research approaches with the theoretical underpinnings of critical race and ethnic studies, and some of the tenets of an

Indigenous research paradigm. Making connections across such diverse disciplines allows for the intellectually liberating and transformative potential of this work, but such interdisciplinary research praxis also comes with its share of challenges and questions for interrogation, which I explore in this paper.

My Project and Methods

My doctoral research brought together the Indigenous and African Diasporic young people from *Taking Action!* and *Let's Talk About Sex* (which evolved into the *Sex and YOUth* project). Youth leaders from both projects participated in separate digital storytelling workshops. In the *Taking Action!* project the digital storytelling process was a one-week intensive workshop in July, 2012, in which 18 Indigenous youth from communities across Canada participated. Much more localized in scope due to budgetary constraints, the digital storytelling process for the *Sex and YOUth* project consisted of 5 ACB youth who resided in the Greater Toronto Area. This process took place once a week throughout July and August of 2012. Digital storytelling consists of the making of short (3 – 5 minutes) visual narratives that synthesize images, video, audio recordings of oral storytelling, music, and text to create compelling accounts of experience (Gubrium, 2009). Aptly titled *Beyond the Colonial Divide: Alliance Building Between African Diasporic and Indigenous Communities for HIV Prevention,* my dissertation brought together youth from the two communities and their stories to explore identity, resistance and solidarity building for HIV prevention (C Wilson et al., 2015).

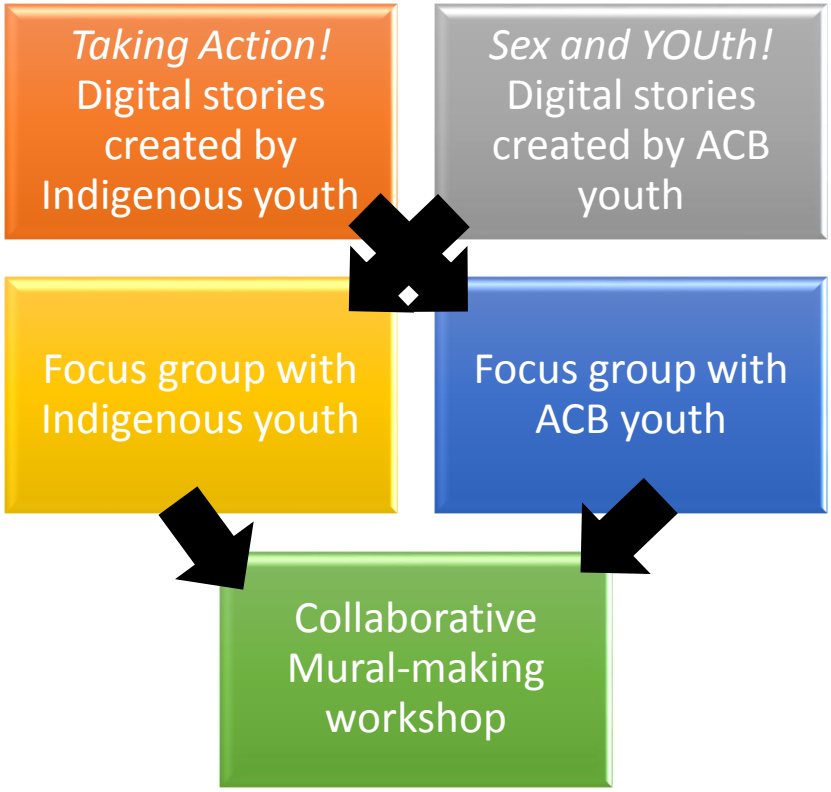

Figure 1: The stages of the process employed in the Beyond the Colonial Divide project

As illustrated in *Figure 1*, the project used the digital stories created by the youth leaders to springboard two focus groups, held a day apart on a Thursday and Friday evening in March, 2014 (Wilson, 2008). In each focus group participants, an elder (an individual skilled at translating culturally specific knowledge in each of the respective communities), and myself – the facilitator, had the chance to watch the videos together and take uninterrupted turns at discussing our reflections on the digital stories we were watching and share our thoughts about partnership building.

The first focus group consisted of four ACB youth leaders engaged in sexual health promotion. Most had created their own digital stories as a part of the Sex and YOUth project. To encourage dialogue, I screened several digital stories created by Aboriginal youth leaders in the *Taking*

Action! project. The videos selected dealt with issues such as HIV, colonization, and environmental degradation. The second focus group consisted of five Aboriginal youth, some of whom had participated in the *Taking Action*! project. There, I screened four digital stories made by the ACB youth in the first focus group. In comparison, the videos of the ACB youth dealt with issues such as healthy relationships; the role of religion in defining identity and sexuality; and youth engagement in transactional sex (see *Table 1*). The range of topics covered in the digital stories from both the *Taking Action!* and *Sex and YOUth* projects provided a great starting point from which to discuss the similarities and differences of Black and Indigenous youth experiences and realities in Canada when it comes to topics such as the factors impacting their sexual health; identity politics, and Black-Aboriginal relations.

Table 1: Digital Story Theme Comparison

Taking Action! Video Themes	**Sex and YOUth Video Themes**
Colonization	Parent-Youth Communication
Racism	Teen Pregnancy
Violence	The Role of Religion
Alienation	Healthy Relationships
Environmental Degradation	Transactional Sex
Substance Use	

Importantly, in both focus groups I also screened my own digital story titled "Finding space for ME," (Wilson, 2012). I did so to artistically share with the youth my positionality and framework of understanding; as well as my personal interest in the topic of alliance building for HIV

prevention. The digital story represents my journey to the research questions I am currently asking around alliance building, settler colonialism, displacement, racism, community survival and relationship to HIV. Many of these young people had worked with me at different times over the course of my graduate studies and had witnessed my growth as a researcher and the development in the kinds of questions I was exploring. All of those questions converged and led me to the current inquiry. In an act of accountability, it was important for me to share my journey with the witnesses of, contributors to, and participants in this work.

The focus groups were immediately followed by a two-day mural-making workshop held on a Saturday and Sunday, concluding the four-consecutive-day process of the *Beyond the Colonial Divide* project (see Appendix for a schedule breakdown of the four-day project). The mural-making workshop was co-facilitated by myself and trained artist, Brit McKee, whose work I was very familiar with as we studied together during our Masters. In this interactive forum, the youth were encouraged to collaboratively and artistically express their thoughts. The mural-making workshop began with a collective discussion. Brit then showcased images of community murals from around the world. These murals were chosen to demonstrate a variety of social issues (e.g. HIV, racialized poverty, homelessness etc.), aesthetic styles, textile and composition, which were meant to inspire the youth in their creative thinking about their own mural. Along with images provided by Brit and I, the youth contributed a variety of images - some taken from the still images in their digital stories. The youth selected and traced the images they liked and these trace-drawings were projected onto the blank canvas in a collaboratively agreed upon arrangement, which was subsequently painted onto the canvas by the group.

For their participation and time, each youth was given a $150 honorarium, they were provided tokens for their commute and meals with snacks during the focus groups and mural-making workshops. Ethics approval for this project was provided by the Research Ethics Board of York University. The digital stories and mural produced, as well as transcripts from recorded conversations during the focus groups all became "data" for my dissertation. In addition, I kept a journal with field notes throughout the process. This paper draws largely on those reflections.

Reflections on Process

The benefits and challenges of digital storytelling and collaborative mural making

Table 2 summarizes some of the benefits and challenges of using digital storytelling and mural making as research methods, which I will explain further.

Table 2: The Benefits and Challenges of Digital Storytelling and Mural Making	
Digital Storytelling	**Mural Making**
Benefits • Honouring of youth/individual voice • Speak back to dominant discourse • Clever knowledge exchange • Layered meaning in the multiple modalities of text • Easy dissemination and engagement	**Benefits** • A collaborative process • Layered meaning in the art • A spatial intervention that can be displayed and engages audience • Historical fit
Challenges • Need technological access/know-how • Costly	**Challenges** • Tensions in collaboration • Narrow dissemination

Digital Storytelling

Utilizing digital stories was a form of honouring the insight, perspectives and individual voice of young Indigenous and Black people (Gubrium & Harper, 2013), and the complex connections they've made between their health and their social, physical, political, and historical environments. This is a contrast to the individual models of "risk" often perpetuated in dominant discourse and public health practice, which presents black and brown bodies as public health hazards, vectors of disease and pollutants stripped of the very socio-political context that diminished their health in the first place (Jones, 2001; Mikkonen & Raphael, 2010). In this, the digital storytelling approach reinforces relationship-building by encouraging the storyteller to

critically interrogate and represent social reality and health as s/he views it. It encourages a holistic narration of self (in connection to family, community, spirituality, culture) and confidence to overcome silences, including those aspects of one's life that might be sensitive and difficult to be related in words (Bagnoli, 2009; Carroll, Herbert, & Roy, 1999; Eisner, 2008). Digital storytelling can be simultaneously "historical" (creating a counter-narrative), and "aspirational" (providing powerful tools for self-assertion and empowerment) – as evidenced by the self-affirming narratives in the stories of some of the youth) (Adelson & Olding, 2013).

Sharing digital stories also facilitated mutual education between the two groups of young people. The stories provided a window into the struggles going on in the respective communities of the youth in the workshop. Both Aboriginal and Black young people really connected to the digital stories that spoke about personal redemption and walking a positive or "good" path after negative and/or life-changing experiences. In particular, Indigenous youth leaders really connected to the narratives in the ACB youth stories that discussed honouring women, which resonated with the centrality of women in their respective communities; and lateral violence and internalized racism, which for many of the Indigenous youth leaders was a painful form of violence they'd grown accustomed to given their mixed European and Indigenous ancestry. One youth leader really struggled to make connections to the ACB youth stories as he found it difficult to share the oppression and the painful intergenerational trauma he'd experienced with another community. When the discussion turned to focus on the similar experiences of residential schools by both Indigenous and Black (albeit on a much smaller scale relegated primarily to Eastern Canada) youth, this participant reflected on his struggle in wanting to accept that another community could lay claim to similar oppression.

In the residential school…Because I am third generation residential school survivor. You know. What about the languages, you know. I don't know but this is the first time I heard about this but

Black people being in residential schools. I don't know how to take it but I've been dealing with it ever since I was born. …. and this is the first time I am hearing about this Black residential school like it brings questions. It brings up lots of questions and maybe a little bit of anger too but not racism or nothing like that. But just a lot of question especially coming from an Indigenous aspect. I just, I don't know it's weird or not weird, just an eye opener (Aboriginal youth leader, focus group)

Meanwhile, the digital stories linking HIV to colonization, racism, substance use and environmental violence were eye opening for ACB youth, many of whom had never been exposed to Indigenous realities and histories in Canada. This made for interesting comparisons between the lived experience of ACB youth and that of their Indigenous counterparts, and left them with many questions. For instance, one ACB youth found it hard to believe that alcohol could have violent and detrimental impacts on entire communities and that this was linked to historical oppression and intergenerational trauma, rather than individual choices and behavior. Another youth expressed his inability to relate to the Aboriginal youth stories that spoke of connectivity to nature and land, as he found being "out in nature" and camping boring. He was unaware of the significance of land for Aboriginal identity, and the fact that the connection to land the Aboriginal youth spoke of in their stories went beyond engaging with nature for recreation. Connectedly, through the digital stories of the Aboriginal youth, all of the ACB youth were learning about, and left quite disgruntled by, the environmental disasters wreaked by oil and gas pipelines across Canada. As a result, along with the community elder, I had to provide these youth some of the socio-historical context to help them better understand the importance of what the Aboriginal youth were naming in their stories. All of the ACB youth were really surprised by the history of Indigenous peoples and the links to African diasporic people in the plantation societies that developed in the Caribbean, as well as the similar colonization of Africa. They were upset that they had not learned about this histo-geographic web of interconnections in school.

Utilizing digital stories as an important vehicle for knowledge exchange demonstrates that they are more than just data. They are also useful knowledge mobilization resources that can help to interrogate research questions and concretize complex ideas for diverse audiences (Wilson & Flicker, 2014). The vast appeal of digital stories is in part due – as their name suggests – to the ease with which they can be broadly (digitally) disseminated over the internet or audiovisual media for wide audiences across cultures and geographies. Further, because each digital story may contain the layering of a visual story, on top of a textual story, on top of an auditory story (and so on) that can each tell congruent or divergent narratives, they capture the complicated, non-linear ways different people understand the world.

For all of its benefits, digital storytelling, does have its methodological challenges. While low-cost alternative options may be increasingly available-- this approach requires access to technology, which usually includes computers, video-making software, cameras, and audio-recorders that allow for the incorporation of different forms of media. Digital storytelling is a facilitated (and somewhat codified) process (Center for Digital Storytelling, n.d.), requiring the skills and know-how of someone who is trained and versed in walking participants through the development of their films; putting these personal videos together; and editing the videos as required with relevant software. These various technical requirements of digital storytelling means the process can be quite inaccessible and costly ($300 - $1200 CAD per participant). Fortunately, this project was supported with funding from the Social Research Centre in HIV Prevention, which helped to cover the costs of this entire arts-based project.

Mural Making

The mural-making process was informed by the discussions created around the screening of the digital stories, and the use of some of the images from the videos in the mural. Mural making is an approach that has a rich history in work with children, young people and people of diverse artistic skill (Conrad, 1995; Marschall, 2002). I chose to engage with mural-making because in contract to the often individualized process of storytelling, it was an approach that promoted collaboration, dialogue and working together. It therefore provided me with an opportunity to study, on a micro level, the dynamics I was interested in interrogating. Mural-making helped to layer my exploration of inter-community collaborations: on one level I was bringing these youth together to express (through conversations and art) their perspectives on the potential for collaborations between their communities; and on a deeper level, simply in virtue of bringing them together and facilitating the creation of a mural, I was creating a "simulated collaborative environment" where I would be able to explore, first hand, the dynamics of relationship-building and conversations that surface in the interactions between Indigenous and African Diasporic young people. Collaborative murals are considered a model for deeper understanding because they engage people from different backgrounds who are learning to work together closely, respect each other's personal qualities and diverse world views (Conrad, 1995). *Figure 2* depicts an image of the mural – *All Directions* - produced from this collaborative process.

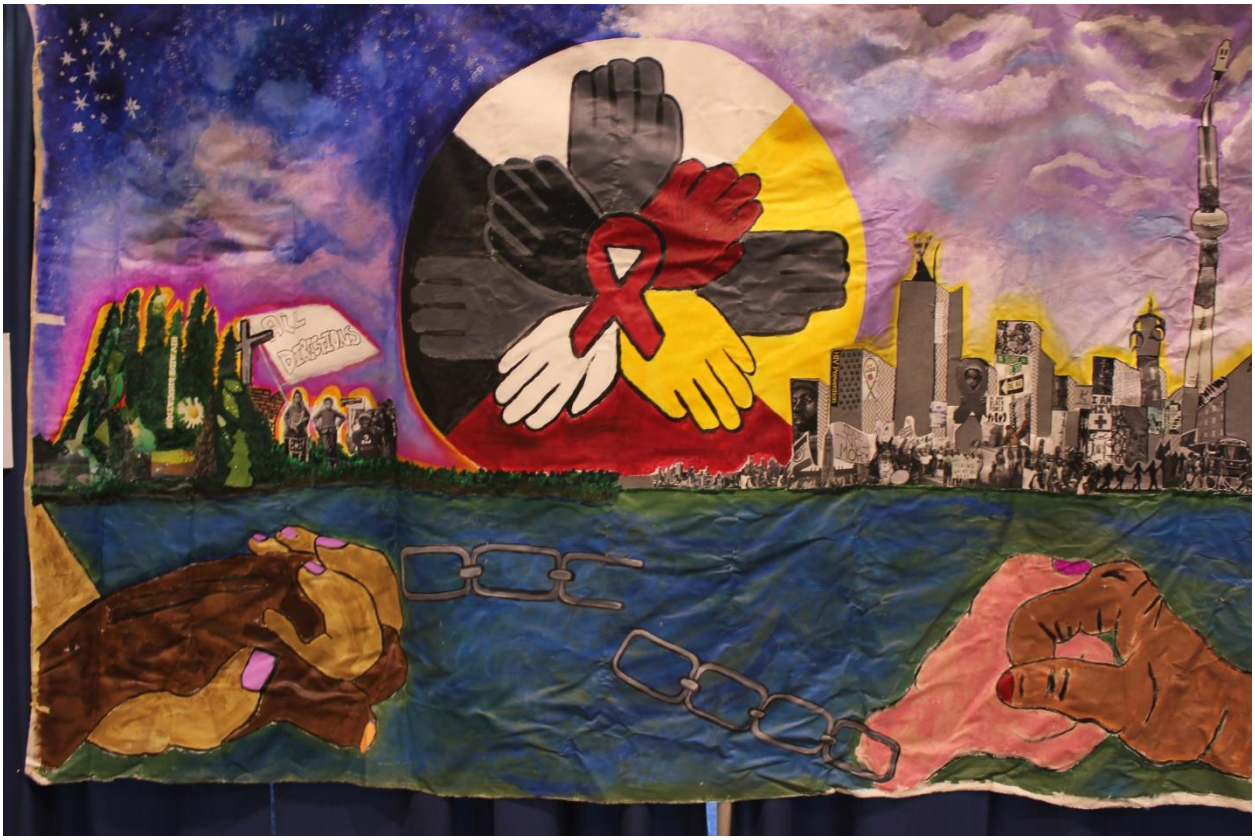

Figure 2: Collaborative Mural – All Directions

Secondly, there was a social and historical fit between the mural-making approach and the research questions I interrogated. While community murals like graffiti art are often political statements for public viewing as a claim to ownership or territory. More formally created murals have been used to publicly memorialize, demonstrate community pride, demonstrate commitments to justice, and artistically represent a cause, a social or community movement (Conrad, 1995; McKee, 2014). Murals serve to educate, provoke, "aesthetically challenge and ask profound questions" (Conrad, 1995, p. 98). The community mural movement has a long history in different cultures (Conrad, 1995; Ford-Smith, 2010; Marschall, 2002; McKee, 2014; Perera & Razack, 2014). In the U.S., much of the mural making movement began in Black colleges in the South (e.g. Hampton University, Talledega College etc. (Conrad, 1995) in the 1930s to document and artistically archive the rich and varied history of African Americans with

images of Black cultural icons such as artists, musicians, athletes and so on (Conrad, 1995). These early murals helped shape the movement of how murals were created to celebrate different cultures and how they were publicly exhibited thereafter (McKee, 2014). Murals have also been used to commemorate and memorialize different causes and peoples. "Early mural themes included historical events like the Mexican Revolution and Native American and Chicano history; portraits of leaders like Cesar Chavez and Martin Luther King Jr.; political issues like police brutality" and the prison industrial complex (Conrad, 1995, p. 100). Some great examples include, but are not limited to: the AIDS Memorial Mural, which commemorates the hard won battles of people infected and affected by HIV in San Francisco; The Wall of Respect in Chicago, which honours Black heroes (Conrad, 1995); the murals of Kingston Jamaica, which were created to memorialize victims of urban violence who acted as community leaders (Ford-Smith, 2010; Perera & Razack, 2014); or Indigenous-made murals such as "Gilakasla," a mural honouring traditional west coast Indigenous art, which was painted at the Victoria Native Friendship Centre to thank elders for their strength, guidance and contributions to creating healthy Aboriginal communities (Zuroski, n.d.); and the community mural in Allan Gardens in Toronto titled "All My Relations," which represents First People life and culture in Toronto (Nahwegahbow, 2013).

Much like digital storytelling, mural-making has a similar appeal and layering of imagery, as the visual, textual, and textural come together to convey specific messages in a mural. These layered stories may have convergent or, as demonstrated in the mural produced in this project, divergent meanings. The "All Directions" mural depicted various tensions and conflicts highlighted by the youth throughout the workshop. For instance, tensions of competing priorities were represented in the collage-filled landscape on the mural (*see Figure 3*). These pictures and messages were cut

from magazines and newspapers, as well as images the youth brought from their own collections, and they represented the different social movements that resonated with the youth. The HIV Movement; the Idle No More Movement; The People Power Movements of the 60's and 70's; Civil Rights; Indigenous Sovereignty protests; slavery and prison abolition movements were all represented in the images the youth chose to include in the collage to symbolize community resilience, strength, healing and unity. Interestingly however, these images of radical protest and transformative, community-mobilized justice, were often simultaneously depicted next to, and in juxtaposition with, images of conformist practices such as religion (e.g. Holy Crosses); assimilation (Indigenous Children in European garb); and enslavement (e.g. Shackles and chains or people of colour in bondage). Moreover, some of the social movements depicted had conflicting histories, political approaches, and priorities, such as the civil rights movement – which fought for the inclusion of African Americans within the legal protection of the American nation-state, a state that requires the suppression of Indigenous sovereignty and nationalism in order to legitimate its very existence (Lawrence & Dua, 2005).

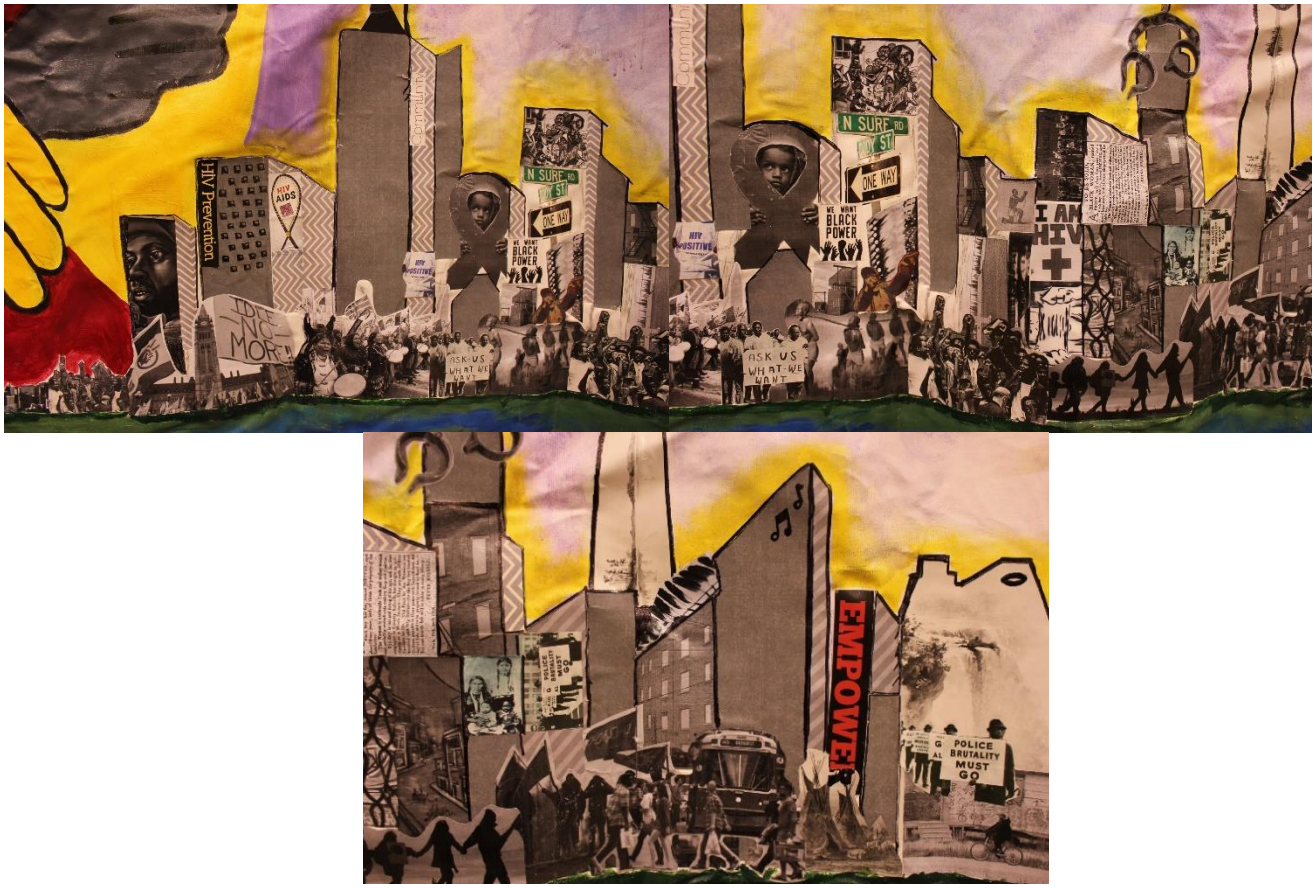

Figure 3: All Directions Mural – the use of collage.

The goals of murals are to express or tell a story through images and text; to be accessible in publicly owned spaces such as libraries or community centers; and to educate people about the story or community movement being represented in the mural. Murals can help bring people together and encourage social change (Conrad, 1995; Ford-Smith, 2010; McKee, 2014; Perera & Razack, 2014). Many community murals are not commissioned and are instead painted in public as intentional forms of artistic and social resistance to the powers that be. In this, murals are spatial interventions that command attention and evoke audience response and engagement – irrespective of the setting (Conrad, 1995). Creating a mural on a free form canvas, as was the case in this project, meant the canvas could be folded up and moved to different locations for display or "intervention." For instance, this mural was displayed at the Critical Ethnic Studies

Conference at York University in May, 2015 during a panel on the relationships between Black and Indigenous communities as a form of resistance. In many ways the mural encompassed a creative expression of the various issues with and possibilities for collaboration discussed by the panelists. The mural was well-received by conference attendees who appreciated the way the art spoke back to the panel conversations around Black and Indigenous solidarity. Importantly however, the mural created from this process is bulky and often difficult to transport and display. Further, murals do not translate well through photos, making their digital display challenging and narrowing their reach in terms of dissemination. One possibility may have been to make a video about the collaborative mural-making process in which the conversations and creative journey of the youth were captured. Such a video about the arts-based process, rather than the product, could be engaged with digitally and provide a more nuanced understanding of cross-community collaborative processes.

Murals, much like digital stories, may require the provision of some context for meaningful engagement in understanding their purpose and representational meaning. Further, much like with digital stories, the mural making process employed in this project was facilitated by a skilled mural facilitator, which greatly aided in capitalizing on the limited time available for the collaborative process; and for producing a mural that was not only aesthetically appealing, but also symbolically meaningful and representative of the youth's ideas. However, engaging a mural facilitator in an arts and community-based research process may raise questions, as these approaches are intended to be accessible to community members with little to no artistic expertise. I would argue that Brit's experience as a mural facilitator made the process more accessible for those youth apprehensive about their artistic ability. Rather than have the youth draw images directly onto the canvas from the very start, which my inexperience would have

prescribed and which would have been intimidating for the youth, Brit had the youth select images from their digital stories and other sources that they wanted to include in the mural. The youth then traced these images onto translucent wax paper, which were projected and traced onto the canvas to create the mural composition the youth devised. This clever approach was far less unnerving for the youth and, as a result, made the process much faster than other approaches would have been.

The decolonizing potential of this work

My selection of methods is informed by a number of Indigenous scholars from around the world (Chilisa, 2012 (Motswana); Kovach, 2009 (Plains Cree and Saulteaux); Smith, 1999 (Ngāti Awa and Ngāti Porou iwi); Wilson, 2008 (Opaskwayak, Cree)) who have articulated the need for resistance to Euro-Western research methodologies and suggest that arts- and community-based approaches may be more appropriate approaches for decolonizing and dismantling stark power imbalances in research with racialized and Indigenous communities. In this, I define decolonizing research approaches as those methods that support the self-determination of participants and communities; and which challenge colonial dynamics in research and knowledge-making processes.

While I do not pretend my research approach embodies an Indigenous research paradigm, by centralizing relationship building in my research process, I am privileging an integral component of an Indigenous research paradigm – what Indigenous scholar Sean Wilson (2008) refers to in his book *Research is Ceremony* as "relationality." For Sean Wilson, the goal of any research process and outcome should be to build relationships, which affords a higher level of

understanding and awareness by all involved (researchers and participants alike) of the research question/topic (Wilson, 2008). For Wilson, the researcher is inseparable from the subject of their research and the relationships built to formulate that research because the intentions and process of data collection is as important as the knowledge acquired (Flicker et al., 2015; Wilson, 2008). This is integral in order for research to do the work of building accountable, reciprocal, respectful and decolonial relationships that avoid the objectification of participants and their communities (Wilson, 2008). Relationality is the basis of employing research methods that meet community needs for new information and documentation; and for centralizing community stories and meaning-making (Wilson, 2008). The importance of "relationality" in research with communities can be drawn from the works of Indigenous scholars such as Margaret Kovach (2010), Linda T. Smith (1999) and Baegele Chilisa (2012), who privilege Indigenous worldviews of holistic interconnectedness and collaboration. Relationality is also a view that is in-keeping with the tenets of CBR (Markus, 2012; Salehi, 2010).

Relationship-building and relationality was exemplified in this research process through the presence and insight of community elders; and the sharing of my digital story. Elders are respected, culturally knowledgeable individuals who are skilled at translating knowledge within communities (Flicker et al., 2015). Elders provided ceremonial and ethical guidance to assist the research process . I invited an elder from the African diasporic community, as well as an Indigenous elder to partake in the respective focus groups. Both elders opened and closed the communal space with ceremonies and prayers involving gifts (i.e. tobacco, an eagle feather, medicines and herbs) to the ancestors and smudging. They took part in the focus group conversations, providing socio-historical context to help the youth better understand the subject matter, and closed these focus group conversations with insight on the relevance of the

collaborative project for honouring the ancestral spirits and the tenets of the Medicine Wheel, which for some Aboriginal cultures, symbolizes the equal role of every race of people (Black, Red, Yellow, and White) in the circle of life and the creation of a balanced universe. Inherent to the traditional teachings of the Medicine Wheel, is the importance of interconnectivity working together, unity and strength. The contributions of elders helped to ground the discussions and arts-based knowledge making processes engaged in this project, and the ceremonies helped to build stronger relations between participants and facilitators alike (Flicker et al., 2015).

Digital storytelling provided a useful platform for me to share my own story and the place from which I come to this research inquiry and process. In many ways, sharing my digital story was an act of creating communal social space, breaking down hierarchies, and being vulnerable in the same way the youth had been vulnerable by sharing their stories. In sharing my story I provided the youth some context on my lived experience and narrative; and reciprocated and honoured their trust and courage in being present and open to the collaborative process by also being open and honest myself. In this, the digital storytelling approach can be "recuperative" (engaged in a process of healing and decolonization) (Adelson & Olding, 2013), and can lead to the researcher, participant, research process and findings becoming more accessible and evocative for engagement, response and relationship-building (Adelson & Olding, 2013; Cole & Knowles, 2008; Weber, 2008).

Many Indigenous scholars have written about the importance of art and narrative - storytelling, oral histories, and testimony – as a form of Indigenous methodology (Anderson, 2011; Chilisa, 2012; Kovach, 2009; Simpson, 2011; Smith, 1999; Wilson et al., under review; Wilson, 2008; Dunbar, 2008). In her book *Indigenous Research Methodologies*, Botswanan scholar Bagele

Chilisa (2012) credits participatory research methods for including the voices of marginalized people, promoting empowerment, and engaging communities in actively analyzing, finding solutions for and taking action to address the concerns in their daily lives. Telling, sharing, and gathering stories is both a historical and political process (Dunbar, 2008), and one of the most salient forms of Indigenous resistance (Simpson, 2011). Storytelling can be an act of healing and be understood as medicine for some Indigenous communities, as it allows one to honour and showcase their own worldview (Anderson, 2011; Kovach, 2009).

Methodological Challenges

Arts-based processes and products are not always unifying. Sometimes they are uncomfortable, heavily fraught with tension and reinforce stereotypes and colonial thinking. However, tensions are an important part of collaborative processes that don't always need to be resolved within these collaborative contexts or the scope of a project. As mentioned, in this collaborative process, tensions surfaced throughout the project, from the discussions around the digital stories to the collaborative mural-making process. These tensions ranged from what to name the mural; to ignorance of settler colonialism on the part of some Black youth leaders; and anti-black racism on the part of some Indigenous youth leaders (Wilson et al., 2015). For some youth, the process of sharing (social and historical) space in this project with young people of different communities was the start of a personal journey where they faced their own internal struggles with race, racism and shared histories of oppression. This demonstrates that sometimes sitting with tension and allowing time for an organic process of reflection on the conflicts is the best "solution." These tensions were expressed artistically in the collaborative mural. In addition to the collage, other depictions of these tensions included the many hands that were painted on the

mural to symbolize messages of partnership-building and working together. Wrapped around the hands were broken chains to symbolize not only the histories of enslavement for Indigenous and African diasporic peoples, but also the racial, cultural and socio-historical conflicts and loss of conscious connectivity between these communities (see *Figure 4*).

Figure 4: All Directions Mural – Many Hands. Broken chains painted to symbolize both partnership and tensions/conflict.

Decolonizing processes of alliance building require valuation and honouring of the process and the time required for meaningful relationship building (Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009). Although I had a couple of years to build relationships with these youth, from the creation of their digital stories to the creation of the collaborative mural, a shortfall of the collaborative process was that it followed a very tight timeline. Due to limitations on the project budget and the time commitments of the youth and facilitators, the mural was completed in a weekend, immediately following the two days devoted to the focus groups. It might have been strategic to devote time to unpacking and exploring inter-community tensions in a mixed focus group involving both Aboriginal and ACB youth prior to beginning the creation of the collaborative mural, or organizing weekly workshops over the period of a couple months. More relaxed timelines could have aided in building rapport between the youth and helped to buffer, as well as highlight and discuss the youth perspectives on the surfacing tensions.

Secondly, in focusing on the positive tenets of community-based processes (e.g. focus groups to discuss the digital stories and collaborative mural making) for engaging youth and collecting data, an oversight in my research design was underestimating the persistence of power imbalances in this CBR process. As a Black, female researcher of middle class status working with this group of youth, I occupied complex and layered "insider and outsider" spaces within this collaborative process. My positionality and lived experiences allowed me to be more attentive to how gender, race, age, class status and educational background impacted the research process, the view-points offered by differently located youth, and the interactions therein (Wright, 2011). However, my class, cis-gendered identity, sexual orientation, and my role as a facilitator with particular research interests in this project were sources of domination that guided the conversations engaged in by the group (Wright, 2011). For instance, a notable absence from the conversations in the focus groups was any real engagement with ACB and Indigenous youth who identify as sexual minorities (i.e. queer, two-spirited, LGBT, etc.). This silence demonstrates the focus of my research interrogation, namely one posited around racial and cultural differences, which could have used a more expansive lense to encompass intersectional identity across the differences of sexual identity, ability, gender and so on (Haritaworn, 2012). In overlooking an interrogation of intersectional identity, this demonstrates how cisgenderism and heterosexism can surface in conversations, places and spaces to erase the realities of sexual minorities. This also demonstrates the ways in which research can often be a reflection of the personal and socio-political project(s) of the researcher.

Further, while digital storytelling provided participants a platform with which to challenge dominant messaging by dictating the representations relevant to their own sexual health and wellbeing, I selected a subset of the digital stories used to spark discussion in the focus groups.

Although I selected stories that dealt with a variety of issues touched on by both Indigenous and ACB youth (see Table 1), the very act of refining which digital stories were engaged with in the focus group discussions reflects a bias. Further, in the group processes – the focus groups and the mural making workshop- participants may not have had an opportunity to expand upon their ideas and opinions in a space free of censorship and surveillance from their peers (Hydén & Bülow, 2003). Following up with individual interviews may have helped to elucidate the root of some of the tensions that surfaced in the collaborative interactions, or highlight some of the other images and messages the youth would have liked to incorporate in the mural.

These examples demonstrate that while arts-based CBR processes have transformative potential, power and hierarchy in the voices and view-points that are privileged and represented still persist and these imbalances cannot simply be wished away. Power is complex, layered, and fluid (Allen, 2008) and such dynamics of power have direct implications for the research process and outcomes.

Lessons learned

In looking back at my research process there are some key reflections that merit sharing. Firstly, arts-based processes are resource intensive and require collaboration and funding to properly carry-through. As a youth programmer with several years' experience developing youth-based curriculum for Toronto Community Centres, I know my strengths – namely youth engagement, community organizing and helping to create sex-positive, accepting spaces that honour difference and encourage allyship. However, I am far less versed in arts-based facilitation or ceremony and acknowledging the skills I do and do not possess for carrying out this project was

important and necessary. I required the technical and experiential expertise of trained artist facilitators such as Brit, as well as community elders who could bring their skills and wisdom to this shared process.

Secondly, while scholars in different research traditions such as cultural production, hermeneutics, and visual anthropology spend decades engaged in visual analysis of images, this is a training not yet mastered and emphasized in the arts-based CBR for health tradition (Boydell, Gladstone, Volpe, Allemang, & Stasiulis, 2012). There does not currently exist a great deal of training and practice in arts-based CBR around how a researcher should go about interpreting arts-based products or "texts." Importantly, Indigenous scholars such as Dr. Lynn Lavallee have engaged with and developed relevant approaches for arts-based analysis worth considering. Dr. Lavallee's "Anishnaabe Symbol-Based Reflection" method holds that creative processes such as painting, crafts, beading and so on are spiritual processes whereby the artist imbues their artistic creation with their energy at the time of making the art and this process of creating artistic symbols is a spiritual and healing one. As a result, each individual develops an intimate understanding of the issues, topics and symbols encompassed in their artistic creation (Lavallee, 2005).

The Anishnaabe Symbol-Based Reflection approach incorporates sharing circles so individuals have an opportunity to express to others involved in the creative process the stories behind the meanings of their chosen symbols (Lavallee, 2005). This highlights that it is never immediately clear how images, symbols and other arts-based representations, whether in digital stories, murals or otherwise, are to be interpreted or read and what meaning can or should be garnered from them. For instance, does the recipient take away the intended meanings, resist them or

negotiate some new meaning from them? Stuart Hall takes this analysis a step further as he argues in his essay titled "Encoding/Decoding," that the messages contained in representations are never open to just any reading or interpretation by an audience, because each stage of creating or encoding a message for communication limits the subsequent stage (During, 1993; Hall, 1973). This is because at each stage of the communicative system (which Hall discusses a four-step communicative system; production, circulation, distribution/consumption and reproduction), a message is imprinted by institutional power relations with meanings and ideas so, in the end, the message that is communicated often reproduces a pattern of domination in order to be meaningfully decoded by the person or people receiving it (During, 1993; Hall, 1973). A message must be meaningfully decoded and draw on signs and ideologies within dominant society in order to have influence, instruct, and persuade (Hall, 1973). There is power wrought into every image.

In this work, I am unwilling (due to my commitment to centralizing participants voices in the research process and outcomes) to offer a visual analysis or critique of the choices of images and symbols reproduced by the youth in the mural. I have chosen instead to analyze the images created by the youth in the context of the discussions that transpired during the mural making workshops in order to grasp meaning from and the operation of power within the production process. For instance, while many different symbols and texts could have been used to symbolize unity and working together, including West African Adinkra symbols, the youth leaders chose the medicine wheel even though prior to the project many of the ACB youth knew very little about what this cultural symbol meant. The medicine wheel was introduced into our focus group conversations both by an Indigenous elder and I, and its symbolism resonated with a lot of the youth. Through the discursive process within this project and learning about and

collaborating with Indigenous youth, ACB youth felt the medicine wheel an important symbol to reproduce on the shared mural in capturing the collaborative project and relational discourse they were engaged in. This highlights how the ideas, meaning-making and images selected for inclusion in the mural are informed by discursive formations situated within a larger socio-cultural and political landscape (During, 1993; Hall, 1973).

Some important questions for consideration include: on what way of knowing or epistemology does arts-based research depend? What rules about knowledge production does knowledge making through images foreground and how is it linked to the undoing of racism and colonial violence? How do visual images make way for the decolonization of knowledge? Proponents of arts-based research posit that through the creation of visual and other texts, communities can share their understanding of the world around them. These approaches situate communities as knowledge producers with ideas, value systems, embodied knowledge and lived experiences that can be shared in a variety of modalities beyond the confines of the English language or written text. This is imperative as peoples without writing have been invisiblized and erased through colonial processes (Taylor, 2003). Writing has been a guarantor of existence and power within the Western view, however written culture has been much easier to re-write, manipulate and control than embodied culture which has withstood the test of time through stories, art, ceremony, culture and so on (Taylor, 2003; Wilson, 2008). As such, arts-based approaches may have particular appeal to the artistic, oral, expressive, non-linear ways of thinking and doing of peoples from diverse cultures and backgrounds. Arts-based approaches can be collaborative and relational in nature and these qualities lend themselves to highlighting a plurality of perspectives which provides a viable alternative to colonial, top down, individualistic knowledge making processes (Chilisa, 2012; Smith, 1999; Wilson, 2008). However, my analysis sheds light on the

differences between the study of art as an end itself, as exemplified in scholarship in the fine arts or arts-based practice, versus the use of art to expound upon social science research inquiry, where there are historic and ongoing tensions and cautions around power and politics in the research and knowledge production process. A potential shortfall of this approach to arts-based processes is they cannot stand on their own without explanation, written text, or conventional approaches to knowledge creation (i.e. interviews, focus groups etc.) to contextualize their meaning or the process of their making. This begs the questions: what is gained or lost when art is accompanied by written text? For whom does text make community arts practice more intelligible and how does power operate in this process?

Arts-based approaches are historically rooted in scholarship that aimed to break away from colonizing research that fetishized communities, denying participants agency and excluding them from the dissemination of the knowledge created about them (Taylor, 2003). Arts-based approaches also link youth media to the promotion of community development, critical literacy, social activism and empowerment (Mitchell, 2014; Mitchell et al., 2010; Ridgley et al., 2004; Strack et al., 2004). Nowhere was the transformative potential of arts-based approaches better exalted than in the focus groups and workshops where youth leaders spoke of their experiences engaging in the creative process. Some youth reflected on how sharing their digital stories helped them come out of their shell, mature, gain confidence and act as leaders and mentors in their communities and among their peers. For others, engagement in arts-based processes such as mural making provided spaces for engaging in personal and political struggles that were important to them and their communities (Wilson, 2008). As some youth offered:

My (digital story) that I did with Ciann was about relationships … Ever since I done that project, I became a better person because I was able to speak out and speak in a mature way or in a

mature tone. I've been able to kind of say, hey I am not a kid no more. …There will just be me talking good to people. I sort of bring it back to pay it forward….Same way I had done with my friends and my friends are now doing the same thing (ACB youth, Focus Group).

It (making the mural) was awesome usually I'd be like lying in my bed but I pushed myself come on you can do this (Aboriginal youth, Mural Workshop)

Well we worked as a team all of us and seeing this mural through one idea, one mind-set and I guess I would say kudos to everybody (ACB youth, Mural Workshop)

These reflections demonstrate the overwhelming appeal of arts-based approaches for evoking youth response and engagement, beyond conventional research approaches involving written text (Flicker, Danforth, Oliver, et al., 2014). Engaging with the arts encourages youth to reflect on their lived experiences, challenge stereotypes, and affirm self-identity, making arts-based research an important form of community intervention.

Conclusion

My motivation for engaging with arts-based processes in this project began with my deep-seated commitment to using research methods as tools for disrupting dominant narratives and incorporating historical and cultural context, while honouring community voices in conversations about their own health and wellbeing. For me, methods matter. They are more than research approaches. Methods are instruments through which one can transmit their world view. Arts-based research approaches are diverse tools for community engagement; intervention; and multi-modal avenues for collecting layered and qualitatively rich data. While I am not prescriptive about the use of arts-based approaches for community-based work, I do believe these methods allow for insightful, layered and new ways of thinking differently about HIV prevention and health promotion. These approaches may also have particular appeal to the oral and expressive cultures of different communities; as well as the circular and relational, rather than linear, epistemologies of these groups.

As technology evolves, arts-based processes will need to evolve to incorporate different (and perhaps less costly) modalities that continue to decentralize written text and English language, while providing an entry point for youth and community engagement. It will also be important for scholars interested in decolonization to continue to interrogate their methods, the new challenges presented by digital approaches (Taylor, 2003), and be open and willing to adapt and innovate in garnering more accessible research processes and outcomes.

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Chapter Four

Beyond the Colonial Divide: African Diasporic and Indigenous Youth Alliance Building for HIV Prevention

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Abstract

African Diasporic and North American Indigenous communities have both been greatly impacted by the colonization of the Americas. Historic and contemporary relations between these communities have been fraught with complex commonalities, contradictions and conflicts. These communities have remained connected across time and space through their shared and distinct histories of resistance and oppression. Both communities have suffered the embodiment of systemic violence in the form of elevated rates of communicable and chronic diseases such as HIV. This paper examines the decolonizing potential of collaboration between these two communities in their response to HIV. It begins by unpacking the history of racialized subjugation faced by Indigenous and African, Caribbean and Black communities in the Americas, with a focus on Canada. This background contextualizes empirical findings of an arts-based intervention that explored notions of identity, resistance and solidarity building between young people in these groups.

Keywords: Black; Indigenous; youth, HIV Prevention; art and community-based research; solidarity

Introduction

African Diasporic and North American Indigenous communities have felt the harmful impacts of colonization for generations. They have remained connected across time and space through their shared and distinct histories of resistance and oppression. As a result of systematic violence, both communities suffer elevated rates of communicable and chronic diseases, for example HIV and diabetes. This paper examines the utility and decolonizing potential of collaboration between Black and Indigenous youth in the HIV response. It begins by highlighting some of the central forms of colonial oppression faced by Black and Indigenous peoples in the Americas, and specifically in Canada. This background contextualizes empirical findings of an arts-based intervention that explored notions of identity, resistance and solidarity building between young people in these groups.

We use the terms "Aboriginal" and "Indigenous[6]" interchangeably when referring to the First Peoples of Turtle Island.[7] It is important to note however that there is inconsistent use and broad disagreement on the legitimacy of appropriate labels for the identity of Indigenous peoples in Canada and elsewhere (Lawrence, 2003). Legislated definitions were meaningless to Indigenous nations prior to colonization. They are thought to have homogenized hundreds of diverse Indigenous tribes, nations, and cultures; forcibly replaced traditional Indigenous ways of

[6] "Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of societies now prevailing in those territories or parts of them" (Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009, p. 106).

[7] Turtle Island is the Indigenous term used to refer to North America. The name is said to have origins in a Haudenosaunee creation story (Kurt, 2007).

identifying the self, that often relied on a relationship to land and collective identity (Lawrence, 2003); and these legislated labels gave the Canadian government substantial control over Indigenous identification and community structures (LaRocque, 2011; Lawrence, 2003). Furthermore, we use the short term "Black" to refer to youth of African Caribbean (ACB) ancestry. Similar to the term Aboriginal, "Black" has specific socio-cultural significance and homogenizes otherwise heterogeneous peoples from different cultures, geographies, languages and histories. It is also important to note that in many cases African diasporic peoples are themselves displaced Indigenous peoples. However, the labels Black or ACB are consistent with much of the Canadian literature in the HIV field, which does not disaggregate data based on country of origin within ACB communities. The term "Black" is also consistent with the way many people of African descent in North America refer to themselves.

Historically entrenched oppression and health

Understanding the historic forms of oppression faced by ACB and Indigenous peoples in the Americas helps to make sense of ongoing experiences of institutionalized racism. It also helps us understand the forms of resistance struggles these communities have been engaged in, specifically around health, wellbeing and HIV, and the persistent tensions of cross-community partnerships between these two groups.

For Aboriginal people in Canada, precipitous health declines were noted as early as the 18th century. This was due in part to policies that legislated their extermination and marked them as targets for biological warfare through the intentional spread of communicable diseases, as well as dishonoured treaties that disrupted Indigenous ownership of their territory and traditional ways of life (Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009). Genocidal attacks on Indigenous peoples in the Americas

represents "the largest holocaust the world has ever known," decimating one quarter of the earth's population over a span of 150 years (Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009, p. 106). It is estimated that roughly 2-5% of the Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island survived, making this relatively small group of thrivers the direct ancestors of all Indigenous peoples on the continent (Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009). Later, the patriarchal *Indian Act* became one of the first statutes in Canada that promoted assimilation and legislated violent state intervention (Wright, 1993). As examples, these policies were detrimental to Aboriginal spiritual, political and familial structures through the kidnapping of Aboriginal children to residential schools and the imprisonment of Aboriginal communities on reserves (Wright, 1993). While the controversial *Indian Act* has been amended several times over the last century, it remains on the books and continues to mandate and guide state relations with Indigenous peoples in Canada.

Stolen from their native lands, traded, bred and treated like cattle, the sexualities and humanity of African people have long been the targets of subjugation by colonialists and western institutions. It is estimated that as many as 20 million Black people were taken from Africa during the era of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, a devastating holocaust which spanned five centuries (1400s - 1800s) (The Historica-Dominion Institute, 2008). "Unique in its global scale" and its focus on the construct of racial difference, the slave trade harnessed labour for production and wealth accumulation for the British North American Empire in the Industrial Revolution (Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009, p. 106). This helped to "shape global relations of imperialism" and the realities of the African diaspora throughout the world for generations thereafter (Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009, p. 106). Canada was formally incorporated into the slave trade of British North America as early as the 1600s. In 1685, France gave colonists of New France permission to keep Black and

Aboriginal (i.e. members of the "Pawnee Indian" nation) slaves in the wake of a supposed labor shortage (The Historica-Dominion Institute, 2008).

The relationship of Aboriginal people to slavery in the Americas is a complicated one. While some Aboriginal people were enslaved along with Black people well into the 19th Century (e.g. the Pawnee Indian nation (Cooper, 2006; Sturm, 2002), and Indigenous peoples in "California, Mexico and the US South West" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 6)), others aided the escape of slaves to lives of freedom within terrain unknown to colonialists (e.g. the Taino of the Caribbean (Beauvoir-Dominique, n.d.)); adopted slaves into their family and community structures (e.g. the Iroquois Confederacy; Caribs and Arawaks) (Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009; Brooks, 2002; Cooper, 2006; Sturm, 2002); and owned slaves themselves (e.g. the Natchez; Tawasa; Mohawk; Cherokee; Choctaw and Chikasaw peoples). As a result, the relations between these two groups are historically and contemporarily fraught with complex commonalities, contradictions and conflicts.

There is a long history of institutional racism, violent and ill-intentioned health research, and state-sanctioned examples of attempts to control and dishonour Black and Indigenous bodies. Some examples include: biological and germ warfare on Aboriginal communities since the dawn of conquest in the Americas. Some examples include: biological and germ warfare on Aboriginal communities since the dawn of conquest in the Americas (Wright, 1993); forced and coerced sterilization of Aboriginal women in Canada (Browne & Fiske, 2001); and the intentional withholding of treatment from Black men with syphilis in the Tuskegee trials (Freimuth et al., 2001). These experiences have cultivated immense distrust of and dissatisfaction with government research and healthcare institutions (Freimuth et al., 2001; Robertson, 2007; Smith, 1999; Williams et al., 2009). There still remain modern manifestations of these encounters, as ACB and

Aboriginal communities continue to report receiving a lower quality of care by healthcare practitioners, who are predominantly white (Sarah Flicker et al., 2010; Prentice, 2007; Robertson, 2007; Williams et al., 2009).

Inherently racist policies, bureaucratic incompetence, and systemic violence are the continuation of colonialism and the dishonouring of treaties and land claims. They operate to disrupt, displace and disenfranchise entire communities. Health inequity is but one legacy of Canada's long history of socially and geographically oppressing the "other." Left to cope with hardships such as poverty, violence and racism, Black and Aboriginal communities are placed at elevated risk for poor health. These oppressions literally become embodied in the form of diseases like HIV/AIDS.

The history of interconnected resistance struggles and HIV

It is important to name the worldviews of Black and Indigenous communities, as well as the long history of collaboration between these groups, which contextualizes and inspires the importance of cross-community responses to the HIV epidemic. Many Indigenous and Black feminist frameworks consist of a holistic understanding of the body situated at the intersection of the physical, social, cultural, spiritual, emotional, and mental (Dhamoon, 2015; S. Wilson, 2008). Bodies are understood to be part of an ecosystem and are (literally and figuratively) connected to and in relationship with all other living beings. As a result, relationships and collaboration are integral to Indigenous worldviews (Chilisa, 2012; L. T. Smith, 1999; S. Wilson, 2008). With respect to cultural symbols that encourage partnership-building, for some Aboriginal cultures the Medicine Wheel is used to symbolize the role of every group of people in the circle of life and the creation of a balanced universe. Inherent to these traditional teachings of the medicine wheel, is the importance of working together. The wampum belt is another cultural tool used historically to

symbolize treaty relationships, mutual peace, respect and agreements for groups such as the Haudenosaunee (Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009). A parallel term from South Africa that symbolizes the values of interconnection, interdependence and humanity is "Ubuntu" which means "I exist because you exist" (Mokgoro, 1997). Likewise, the West African Adinkra symbol, Nkonsonkonson represents unity, responsibility, human relationships and interdependence (Nana, 2009). These terms from Indigenous cultures around the world depict worldviews and ontologies centered on relationship-building, interdependence and interconnections (S. Wilson, 2008).

Given the worldviews from which these communities hail, unsurprisingly social movements within Indigenous and African Diasporic communities have historically informed and inspired each other. For instance, Lee Maracle (2010) highlights how the black power movement and the work of Franz Fanon inspired the red power movement, the yellow power movement, and people power movements across the Americas and around the world (Maracle, 2010). "When the African revolts occurred, our folks plugged into that and watched it on television together. It was clear that you were allowed to demonstrate whatever injustices existed... we rose up… particularly urban Aboriginal people," recalls Maracle about the start of the Red Power movement (2010, p. 361). Similarly, Indigenous movements for sovereignty, land, cultural reclamation, anti-racism, decolonization and human rights in North America have enjoyed a critical transnational connection to radical movements globally, including the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa, Indigenous struggles in Australia and South America, and Third World liberation (Maracle, 2010). Within Canada more specifically, Black-Mi'kmaw intermarriage in Nova Scotia represented resistance to extermination policies against Mi'kmaw people and the marginalization of Black loyalists from settler society (Lawrence & Dua, 2005).

Today, we see the heightening of consciousness-raising and social movements in the form of mass protests against anti-black racism and police targeting of people of colour, decade-long campaigns to bring awareness to the appropriation of Indigenous land and culture (e.g. the Oka resistance and Idle No More movements); and the "ongoing resistance of Indigenous women and Two Spirit peoples to all forms of colonial gendered violence," (Simpson, 2014). These movements mark a critical moment for consciousness-raising about the violence against "unwelcome" bodies in the continued colonial nation-building project of the Americas. It is a moment for intersectional mobilizing that challenges the raced, gendered, classed and hetero-patriarchal organization of society. In her essay titled, *Indict The System: Indigenous and Black Connected Resistance*, Anishinaabe scholar Leanne Simpson recognizes the spirit of outrage within Black and Indigenous communities for "a colonial system designed to destroy Black and Indigenous love" and humanity (Simpson, 2014). As Simpson highlights, the similarities between the historic and ongoing experiences of African diasporic and Indigenous communities mark important sites for co-resistance, and this is especially true within the HIV response.

Social mobilizing and critical resistance have been an integral part of the HIV movement since the dawn of the epidemic. Dissent and confrontational resistance was integral for garnering attention to HIV/AIDS globally (Guta et al., 2011). However, programmatic (economic, biomedical, technological, and pharmacological) interventions have since dominated HIV prevention, treatment and care that privilege particular ways of knowing and doing, and silences activism (Guta et al., 2011). These institutions and structures have become increasingly "professionalized, bureaucratic" spaces that are often engaged in "complex relationships with state funders" with neoliberal interests that limit radical advocacy and resistance within the political climate of HIV (Guta et al., 2011, p. 17). Programmatic strategies do not account for and therefore do not address

"all of the injustices and forms of structural violence" that drive new HIV infections within African diasporic and Indigenous communities (Guta et al., 2011, p. 24).

Challenging these hegemonies, some racialized and Indigenous scholars have framed advocacy and programming within larger conversations about racism and colonization, due to their unbridled impact on HIV transmission and the sexual cultures and health of these communities (Mikkonen & Raphael, 2010; Morgenson, 2009; Robertson, 2007; Simpson, 2004). Further, communities have advocated for the importance of contextualizing disease within anti-racist and anti-colonial struggles (Catungal, 2013). In Toronto, ethno-specific AIDS Service Organizations, such as the Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention, emerged out of community-based struggles to respond in culturally appropriate ways to the mounting crisis of HIV in Black communities in the 1980s (Catungal, 2013). They aimed to disrupt ubiquitous whiteness within the AIDS service sector; provide relevant health promotion messaging; and foster spaces for culturally appropriate sexual health services "for people of colour by people of colour" (Catungal, 2013, p. 263). Similarly, Indigenous-led AIDS activism has stressed Indigenous control and management of health systems and health care to prevent and care for people impacted by HIV (Morgenson, 2009). Organizations such as the Native Youth Sexual Health Network (NYSHN) focus on sexual and reproductive health in a much more holistic way to include culture and traditional ceremony and healing practices, cultural survival, Indigenous sovereignty, human rights and arts activism. The NYSHN has also built alliances across community boundaries with communities of colour and various Indigenous groups in Australia and South Africa. Broadening the scope of how HIV is understood within African diasporic and Indigenous communities; and linking it to the convergence of other inequities and ongoing movements may be integral to information dissemination, community mobilization, and ultimately community survival.

Tensions in solidarity

Solidarity building between African diasporic and Indigenous communities is not unproblematic. These spaces are filled with tensions and contradictions that remain unresolved, making the project of partnership-building across community lines an important but challenging one. Indigenous and critical race scholars and activists have raised questions about the potential for alliance building across communities from different political frameworks. For instance, some scholars question the anti-colonial and decolonization frameworks taken up by diasporic people of colour living in white settler colonies (Lawrence & Dua, 2005; Tuck & Yang, 2012). Some key discussions include whether people of colour are settlers, what their place is in the structure of white settler colonialism, and what kinds of anti- and de-colonial alliances they can form with Indigenous peoples in white settler colonies. Some scholarship suggests that anti-racism, much like other leftist narratives or social justice frameworks, compartmentalize Indigenous struggle, subsuming "Indigenous peoples into broader discourse about systemic oppression" (Walia, 2012). The contention here is that these frameworks often render Native peoples a racial or ethnic group suffering racial discrimination that coincides with that of all people of colour, rather than diverse and sovereign nations undergoing colonization (Smith, 2008)

Lawrence and Dua, in their article *Decolonizing Antiracism* (2005), critique anti-racist theory, practice and affiliated scholars for failing to ground their critiques in the original and ongoing colonial violence against Indigenous peoples of the lands they now occupy. In this view, antiracist theorists fail to take up the question of "land as contested space" (Lawrence & Dua, 2005, p. 126). They argue that anti-racist theory and practice upholds and sustains colonial discourse, and that people of colour are complicit in ongoing processes of settler colonialism and nation-building by

participating in practices such as the erasure of Indigenous presence through theories of race and racism that exclude or marginalize Indigenous peoples, relegating their experiences and colonial processes to the past (Dhamoon, 2015). Similarly, Indigenous activists have critiqued the fight for civil rights, humanism and inclusion within the laws, economies and institutions of the very colonial settler state responsible for their oppression (Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009). In this, the colonial "promise of integration and civil rights is predicated on securing a share of settler-appropriated, (capitalist) wealth (and citizenship) as the answer to all problems (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 7). This overlooks the fact that Native genocide and settler colonialism are not only historic, but ongoing processes. When race scholars lack an analysis of settler colonialism, many racial theorists fail to imagine alternative forms of governance not founded on a racialized settler state (Smith, 2008).

In response, critical race and anti-colonial scholars Nandita Sharma and Cynthia Wright (2005) agree with Lawrence and Dua on the importance of highlighting the failures of the civil-rights and multicultural frameworks. However, along with other scholars, they've challenged Lawrence and Dua by critiquing their conflation of settler colonialism and immigration, and the perpetuation of xenophobia and racism within many Indigenous movements (Sharma & Wright, 2005). According to Sharma and Wright (2005), Lawrence and Dua ignore the role of globalization, western imperialism and slavery in the disenfranchisement of Black-led nations around the world. In turn, this contributes to the often forced transnational migration of people of colour across geopolitical and cultural borders (Sharma & Wright, 2005). Sharma and Wright refuse the idea that all migrants are settler colonialists because ironically, in many cases, migration is one response of people who have been colonized and dispossessed (Sharma & Wright, 2005). This complicates Lawrence and Dua's tendency to conflate people of colour as an uncontested part of white settler society.

Proponents of this argument hold that settlers are not immigrants because "immigrants are beholden to the Indigenous laws and epistemologies of the lands they migrate to. Settlers become the law, supplanting Indigenous governance structures, autonomy and history," (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 6). As a result, people of colour have materially different experiences than white settlers. Uniformly applying the term "settler" to refer to people of colour – and more specifically Black people – projects whiteness and white settler colonial responsibility and guilt onto bodies of colour, thereby erasing the white supremacist violence of anti-blackness (Morgenson, 2014; Sharma & Wright, 2005).

Indigenous studies scholars like Lee Maracle and Andrea Smith have challenged the friction and "oppression olympics" between Indigenous and anti-racist/people of colour activists and scholars (Smith, 2006, p. 66) – "whereby groups are positioned as if they are competing for the mantle of the most oppressed, without disrupting hegemonies of power" (Dhamoon, 2015). Maracle and Smith argue that White Supremacy benefits from the colonial project to "divide and conquer" through state-imposed policies and structures (i.e. scarce funding allocations and social supports) that encourages marginalized communities to splinter and inflict violence on one another (Maracle, 2010; Smith, 2006). For Smith, White Supremacy is upheld by separate and distinct, but interrelated logics she dubs "pillars," (Slavery/Capitalism; Genocide/Capitalism; and Orientalism/War). Smith argues that we are all differently oppressed in relation to white supremacy, while at the same time we are structurally implicated in upholding these hegemonies of power (Dhamoon, 2015; Smith, 2006). This is because "distinctive systems of oppression such as racism, patriarchy and heteronormativity need each other in order to (develop and) function" (Dhamoon, 2015). They are co-produced and depend on each other even when they sometimes appear to be in contradiction. Smith has argued that there is insufficient dialogue between anti-

racist and Indigenous thinkers and organizers. As a result, scholars and activists engaged in race struggles fail to pay attention to how settler colonialism intersects with white supremacy in the Americas (Smith, 2008). Meanwhile, Indigenous struggles fail to pay attention to the importance of race and white supremacy within a decolonization framework (Smith, 2008). Without a critique of the settler state as simultaneously white supremacist and racist, "all settlers become morally undifferentiated," irrespective of the fact that migration is racially differentiated (Smith, 2008). Thus, on either side of the conversation, both Black and Indigenous people can recapitulate the logics of white supremacy even as they contest it (Smith, 2008).

Dismantling one structure of domination (economic, gendered, racial, spatial, religious etc) is only secured by attending to the myriad of ways in which domination reproduces itself in relation to other structures of domination across axes of differentiation. A politics of solidarity and collaboration through the act of struggling together against interrelated social issues may provide important sites to simultaneously challenge the multiple dimensions of what Patricia Hill Collins refers to as the "matrix of domination" (Dhamoon, 2015; Smith, 2006). Collective organizing necessitates coalitions across communities and issues. This perspective provides an intersectional framework that is simultaneously anti-patriarchal, anti-racist, anti-capitalist and decolonial for building alliances and mobilizing diverse groups (Dhamoon, 2015).

The following questions still remain: What might solidarity-building between these groups look like on the ground? Where do we go from here? To begin to explore these questions, we engaged a group of young Black and Indigenous youth leaders who have been involved in HIV prevention work in a series of facilitated group conversations and guided arts-based activities. Together we asked: How do African diasporic and Indigenous youth leaders view the potential for alliance-

building between their respective communities? In what ways do youth leaders embrace and/or resist moving beyond the colonial divide? How can we talk about and artistically represent the benefits and challenges of these partnerships?

Methods

This project brought together a small group of Indigenous and ACB youth leaders, most of who had previously participated in separate HIV prevention-focused digital storytelling research projects. Digital Storytelling is a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach that consists of the making of short visual narratives that synthesize images, video, audio recordings of voice, music, and text to create compelling accounts of experience (Gubrium, 2009).

The *Taking Action: Art and Aboriginal Youth Leadership for HIV Prevention* project engaged seventeen Aboriginal youth leaders from across Canada (Flicker, Danforth, Konsmo, et al., 2014; Flicker, Danforth, Oliver, et al., 2014; Oliver et al., 2015). The *Sex and YOUth* project engaged a smaller cohort of four ACB youth from the Greater Toronto Area (Wilson & Flicker, pending publication). Further methodological details on these projects are contained in previous publications (Flicker & Nixon, 2014; Wilson, 2011; Wilson et al., under review; Wilson & Flicker, pending publication). In both projects, participants created digital stories or short personal videos that explored their relationship to HIV prevention and activism and took part in a variety of discussions and activities related to health promotion and decolonization. A subset of the original youth leaders in these two projects were re-contacted two years after their initial involvement to participate in focus groups/talking circles and a mural making workshop (see Figure 1). Importantly, all of the young people who participated in the Beyond the Colonial Divide project

were already involved in some leadership capacity within their communities. Many were already mobilizing their communities around issues related to sexual health and HIV.

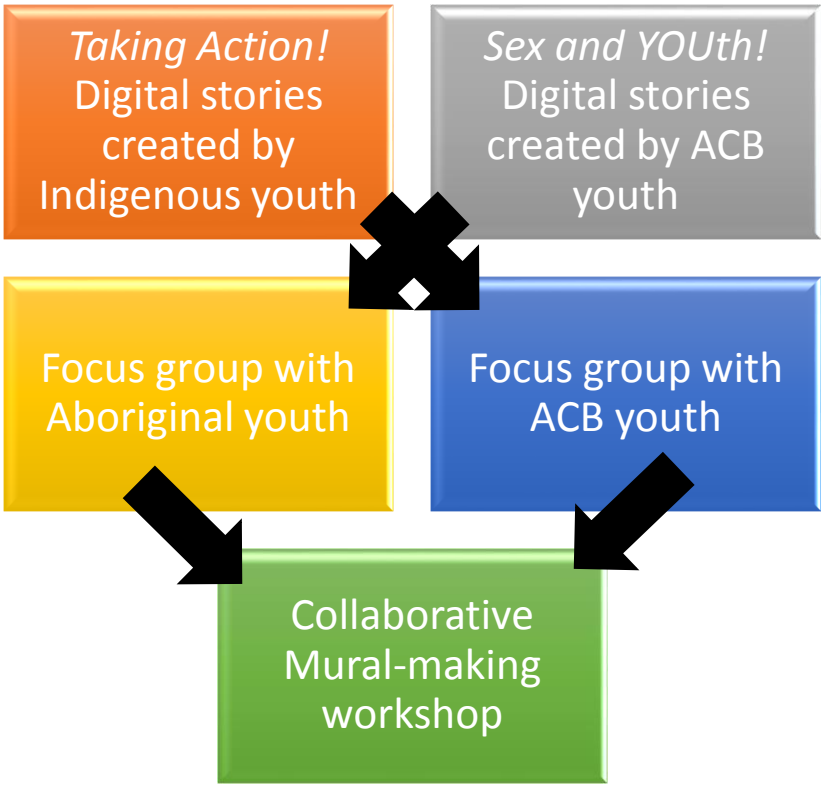

Figure 1: The stages of the process employed in the Beyond the Colonial Divide project

The first talking circle consisted of four ACB youth leaders engaged in sexual health- and HIV-related research and health promotion. Three of these young people had previously created their own digital stories as part of the Sex and YOUth project. To encourage dialogue, I screened a few of the Taking Action digital stories created by Aboriginal youth leaders. The videos selected dealt with issues such as colonization, racism and violence, alienation, environmental degradation and substance use. The second talking circle consisted of five Aboriginal youth, two of whom participated in the Taking Action project. In this forum, I screened the four Sex and YOUth digital stories made by the ACB youth. In comparison, the videos of the ACB youth dealt with issues such as parent-youth communication; teen pregnancy and preparing for parenthood; the role of

religion in defining identity and sexuality; healthy relationships; and youth engagement in transactional sex. While the digital stories selected for screenings were not meant to speak for all youth of a particular community, they provided a meaningful starting point from which to discuss the similarities and differences between Black and Indigenous youth experiences in Canada when it comes to topics such as the factors impacting their sexual health, identity politics, and Black-Aboriginal relations. During the talking circles we discussed the digital stories created by youth of other communities; similarities and differences in the issues faced by other youth; and the relevance and practicality of building cross community partnerships. These discussions lay the foundation for a two-day collaborative mural making workshop, wherein the youth leaders worked together to visually depict what alliance building might look like and artistically express their thoughts on the conversations had during the talking circles.

Youth participants ranged in age from 18 to 25 years. Half of those who participated identified as male (n=5) and half as female (n=4). Data for this paper are drawn from the two focus groups and collaborative mural-making workshop conducted with the youth leaders, which were audio-recorded, transcribed and thematically analyzed using NVivo qualitative data analysis software. Detailed field notes were also taken. In unpacking the research findings, I conducted a content analysis where I used themes such as "partnership building between Black and Aboriginal communities," "challenges to partnership building," and "benefits of partnership building" to categorize the data.

Results

Many of the youth leaders were very optimistic about the potential for solidarity building across community lines. This optimism was expressed artistically in the mural (See Figure 2). Connecting

urban and rural landscapes is a centrally located Medicine Wheel, with an HIV ribbon in the middle. The Medicine Wheel was included in the mural to symbolize the setting sun (which itself symbolizes a life giving force in some cultures (i.e. Egyptian, Iroquois and Plains cultures (Agarwal, 2013) cast against the larger landscape. According to teachings associated with the Medicine Wheel, there is a role for every race of people within the greater circle of life in order to create a balanced universe. In this vein, each group of people, hailing from "All Directions" or the different regions of the globe (North, West, South and East), have a role to play in the stability and balance of the natural world. All people hold an equal place in the circle so the domination of any one people wreaks havoc and imbalance. Youth really wanted to highlight this point, as they located their community struggles in systems of white supremacy. Participants also chose to use many images of multicultural hands, in the Medicine Wheel and elsewhere, to symbolize interconnection and the work required to build partnerships and alliances.

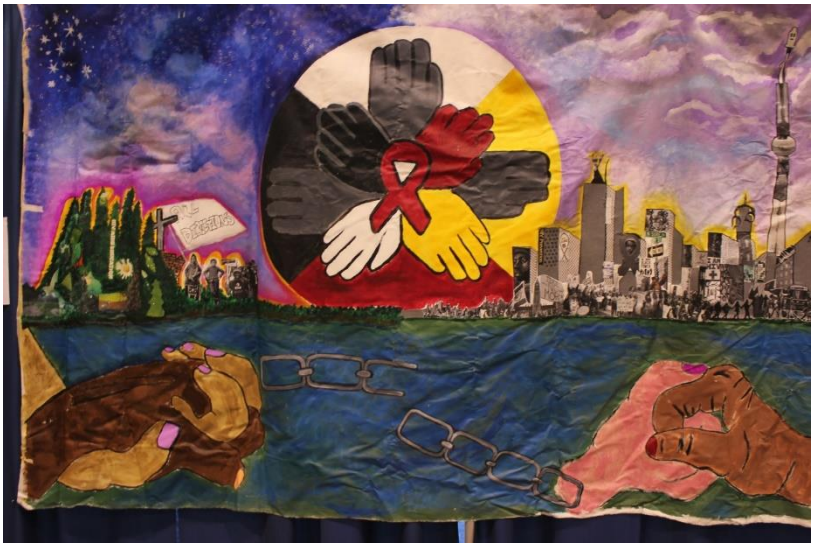

Figure 2: Collaborative Mural – All Directions

In the talking circles, many youth expressed this positive sentiment about the utility of such alliances for progressing the fight against HIV in communities with similar, yet distinct experiences of oppression. These participants identified with the struggles of colonization and

marginalization experienced by youth from different communities and cultures, and they were optimistic that working together would mean that more people could be mobilized if they would understand the cross-cultural underpinnings of the social determinants of HIV.

> *..I don't think (working together) should be too much [of] a challenge because we are all coming here with the minds being open anyways or somewhat being open into taking opinions of other people and working toward something. So right there we already want to work together (ACB youth, focus group)*
>
> *…like it would be great ummm [if] we could partner up together, there would be more of us. We could understand each other's issues that we are going through (Aboriginal youth, focus group).*
>
> *I think it is going to be a heart to heart connection to bring our minds to one while making this big mural. I think it will take close to an hour for each and every one of us to actually like connect on one level and I was saying before, if we were all connected one mind sense.... for us to actually see each other (ACB youth, focus group)*

An important element of this optimism was the discussion among participants about the history of collaboration between African diasporic and Aboriginal peoples in the Americas, and particularly in the United States where one youth highlighted the history of Seminoles who share both African and Aboriginal heritage (LaRocque, 2011). This same young person also talked about the ways that both Aboriginal and African diasporic communities share a history of using the arts (e.g., music and dance) to mobilize social movements, promote healing and challenge oppression. The arts were also regarded as an important form of cultural exchange and partnership building. Many of the Aboriginal youth leaders were especially excited about the potential for the exchange and sharing of cultural knowledge and the potential utility of such knowledge exchange with regards to health, the body and healing as an alternative approach to combatting HIV in their communities. Inherent to these discussions was the notion of the exchange of culture as a useful process for cultural survival.

> *Amazing music…I initially learned about the Seminole people when I took a first year music class at York and it was like this really cool mesh of call and response and it was a condition*

> *of slavery and escaping oppression and things like came into this really neat musical place and then just the roots of all jazz and rock all come from that (Aboriginal youth leader, focus group).*
>
> *That's the most common thing of like Aboriginals and Blacks is dance (ACB youth, focus group)*
>
> *I think what could connect us through that is our different cultural experiences …the idea that people coming together to share what they know and to share their cultural knowledges… let's say for example to connect the Aboriginal community with the Black community, to share our cultural traditions with healthy sexuality and healthy body and what that means through different cultures and connect it through that and then to meet on the level of HIV and AIDs and to say "you know what we have our understandings of the body and you have your understandings of the body like how do we work together to protect these understandings for everyone (Aboriginal youth, focus group).*

These discussions were represented artistically in the mural through collage (see Figure 3), where the youth opted to fill-in the landscape with pictures and messages cut from magazines and newspapers that depicted the different social movements that resonated with them. The HIV Movement; the Idle No More Movement; The People Power Movements of the 60's and 70's; Civil Rights; Indigenous sovereignty protests; slavery and prison abolition movements were all represented in the images the youth included in the collage. Interestingly, these images of radical protest and transformative, community-mobilized justice, were often simultaneously depicted next to, and in juxtaposition with, images of religion (e.g. holy crosses); assimilation (Indigenous children in European garb); and enslavement (e.g. shackles and chains, people of colour in bondage) – which are important parts of African and Indigenous histories and realities in North America.

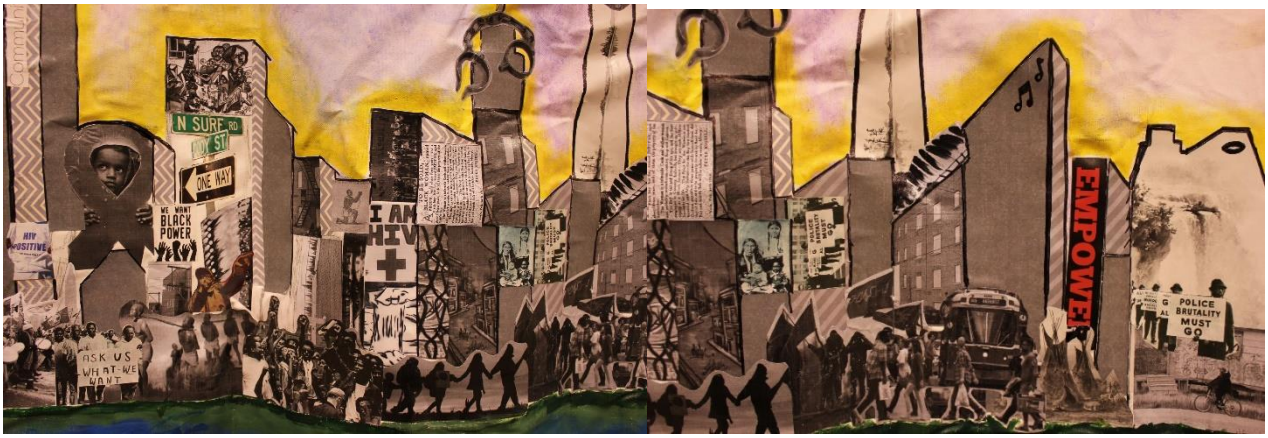

Figure 3: The use of collage.

In the focus groups, the process of sharing digital stories was an important step in mutual education and bridging connections between the groups of young people. This process helped them gain insight into each other's narratives and experiences. This platform of sharing also provided each youth insight into the struggles going on in the communities of other youth in the workshop. The youth had a lot to say about each other's stories and the ways in which they connected to these narratives. For instance, both Aboriginal and Black young people really related to the digital stories that spoke about the sexuality and self-esteem of young women in their communities, teen pregnancy, lateral violence and internalized racism, and narratives of personal redemption and walking a positive/good path.

While collaborative spaces were important for educating each other and learning about the other's struggles, histories of oppression, and breaking down barriers between communities, some youth saw these spaces as important for sharing resources and confronting stereotypes. This was of particular importance for Aboriginal youth who reported being frequently confronted with stereotypes and assumptions held by non-Aboriginal people. Aboriginal youth discussed the importance that non-Aboriginal partners open their minds and decolonize the way they understand

the world and approach relations with Indigenous people, so as to not perpetuate violence. This preparatory work was seen as vital for such partnerships to be productive and conducive to meaningful alliances and positive change. Youth identified appropriation; pity for Indigenous struggles; and colonial education of Indigenous realities, as some of the challenges that regularly hinder meaningful partnership building.

> *I think the Aboriginals and the African Canadians, they are view[ed] in this very bad way. Like when you ask them [people in the general public] about the Aboriginal, about how they think, like HIV/AIDS, or alcohol addiction, those things, they think Black, they think gangs. Then if you tell to think Africa then they think hunger but they don't know about the beautiful things about the cultures…I think us blacks and Aboriginals and brown [people] are in the same situations (ACB youth, focus group)*
>
> *A little bit mixed emotions with multicultural people. I don't know it was kind of weird yesterday at this workshop I went to. It was every culture that was feeling sorry for Indigenous people and the residential school and what was happening to us today with Stephen Harper and all that stuff… we are trying to get those issues addressed, we are not having other people trying to feel sorry for [the] Indigenous movement at all. (Aboriginal youth, focus group)*
>
> *Non-Indigenous need to decolonize on so many different levels. But [I] know for the fact that there is a lot of misappropriation that is taking place …so it has pros and cons. …. At the same time it has to be done properly so that people aren't just being exploited … … I think that as long as people are coming within a good space like a good heart and a good head then I am all for you know community and working together but it all has to be done in a good way. (Aboriginal youth, focus group)*

These points had particular salience in the focus group with ACB youth who struggled to understand the impact of historical and ongoing trauma on Indigenous communities, as many had never been taught this history in school. This made for interesting comparisons and questions about the issues raised in the digital stories of Aboriginal youth. For instance, one ACB youth found it hard to believe that alcohol could have violent and detrimental impacts on entire communities. Another youth really struggled to understand the importance placed on nature and land emphasized in many of the Aboriginal youth stories, as he did not like camping or being outdoors. Meanwhile other youth were learning about the environmental disaster wreaked by pipelines for the first time

through the digital stories. As a result, the facilitator and community elder had to provide these youth some of the socio-historical context to help them better understand the importance of what the Aboriginal youth were naming in their stories. All of the ACB youth were really surprised by the history of Indigenous peoples and the colonial links to African diasporic people in the Caribbean. They were upset that they had not learned this history in school. This highlights the many ways settlers of colour, and specifically members of the African Diaspora, are often socially, educationally, and historically distanced from Indigenous struggles in Canada.

The tensions around the disconnect of people of colour, as well as some Indigenous youth, from Indigenous history and culture was exemplified during the mural-making workshop when on the second day, a couple of the Indigenous youth voiced their concern that the colours on the medicine wheel were not painted by the larger group in the correct, culturally appropriate places in accordance with Mississauga tradition. This is important because the Greater Toronto Area is situated on the traditional territory of the Mississauga's of New Credit.

> *We're on Mississauga territory, but this is the Cree Medicine Wheel. We're on Mississauga territory though, there's only one, an Anishinabe territory…this kinda seems messed up. Doesn't make sense because the white is supposed to be in the north and the red is supposed to be in the south. (Aboriginal youth, workshop)*

While the colours on the medicine wheel were eventually corrected, this instance highlights some of the historical-cultural barriers to partnership-building within and across community lines. In this vein, reasonably, some of the Aboriginal youth leaders stressed the importance that Indigenous communities work on healing themselves first, and uniting their own voices as diverse communities fighting for Indigenous struggles before building partnerships with other groups across cultural and racial lines.

Know why it's going to be a challenge? Because we are still working on the Indigenous people ourselves. We are still, look how long we've been doing this you know. It's probably going to continue for a while yet. How are we going to collaborate with others, it's so difficult for us as one to get our own voices heard…So it's going to be kind of difficult (Aboriginal youth leader, focus group)

We have so much healing to do within our own peoples that might be a challenge that we need to heal ourselves before we partner up with other communities…cuz umm if we can't take care of ourselves, how are we going to help other people? (Aboriginal youth, focus group)

Youth discussed some of the challenges to partnership building across community lines, which included tensions in the issues different groups may prioritize and fight for; challenges in agreeing on one issue that represents the concerns and realities of multiple groups; and as articulated above, different cultural values and knowledge. In this, youth expressed from personal experience the struggle different groups may have if they have competing interests and are expected to share their platform of oppression or histories with others, which may create barriers to understanding each other and working together. Youth also identified the role of colonialism in contributing to the struggle different groups face in trying to relate to each other and find common ground in working together.

I think the challenges would be both of us think that we deserve better, so it will be hard to listen to someone who says "I went through something worse than that." (ACB youth, focus group).

What about our language then? In the residential school… Because I am third generation residential school survivor. You know. What about the languages, you know. I don't know but this is the first time I heard about this but Black people being in residential schools. I don't know how to take it but I've been dealing with it ever since I was born. …. And this is the first time I am hearing about this Black residential school like it brings questions…and maybe a little bit of anger too but not racism or nothing like that. (Aboriginal youth leader, focus group)

Everyone is fighting their own issues. I just feel like we are both fighting just different things. I don't know too much about the Black culture. However, I know they went through so much and I know it's the same deal for Native Americans. However, we are all still going through those fights and struggles but although it's very similar, I feel like it's different in a way…Maybe it is more similar than I think but I think it's just because the Native culture has just been so isolated and the white culture has been so racist towards the black culture

and it kind of isolating them into their own group. It didn't really give a chance for Black and native communities to kind of mesh together yet. Maybe that's why I am thinking they are fighting different battles. (Aboriginal youth, workshop)

While Black youth alluded to concerns about racial tension in the talking circle discussions, they were optimistic about working together and presented less critical opinions on partnership-building. Comparatively, the Aboriginal youth leaders offered personal struggles with anti-black racism as a barrier in their own communities to partnership building, and they problematized the notion of multiculturalism. It is important to note here that while ACB youth tended to speak about their experiences with race-relations strictly within the Toronto context, many of the Indigenous youth drew from their experiences in smaller, "less diverse" communities outside of Toronto.

I feel like Toronto is more diverse. I feel like everyone is more together as opposed to like you are this, I don't want to hang out with you. I feel like parents are more open to different cultures and races. That's how I feel. (ACB youth, focus group).

My mom cannot wrap her head around the fact that there are Black Indians like she can't get it. We've lived through this entire narrative of being white. It's just so, it's just so baffling to me that this still happens and it took her, and she is still, she has gained so much more of a lens on things but seriously it is embarrassing… she is like my primary source of seeing these things pan out just like how much it is internalized. I have to do that intergenerational work to figure out where they come from… She is totally behind the times but she is just so open with that. But she is still again got to this place where she is realizing as I am what these assumptions and feelings say and what is actually going on and you have huge rifts like that and unstated things that you really got to start talking about… you really do see the systems that it comes from in the experiences with my mother. Right? I can watch her be somebody who experienced that same thing and have absolutely no qualm about turning around [and doing the same thing]. (Aboriginal youth leader, focus group).

People believe that we are living in a post-colonial space and that we decided that we are multicultural and I think it is very dogmatic and I think it is super problematic because, it allows you to be in a place of apathy and it doesn't take action…But I mean, just like anything else, just because it is put out there like an official anything, particularly in this climate, it doesn't match the ground. So a lot of what I see here happening in the city - and I am sure the well intentioned folks who set-up the tables and champion multiculturalism and I like to think that they were carrying their hearts when they had that vision of creating that space. I can feel like that in some of the spaces in Toronto that we are getting at those conversations…[but] as a policy, as a political piece, it's entire, it is one of those fraudulent assumptions. (Aboriginal youth, focus group).

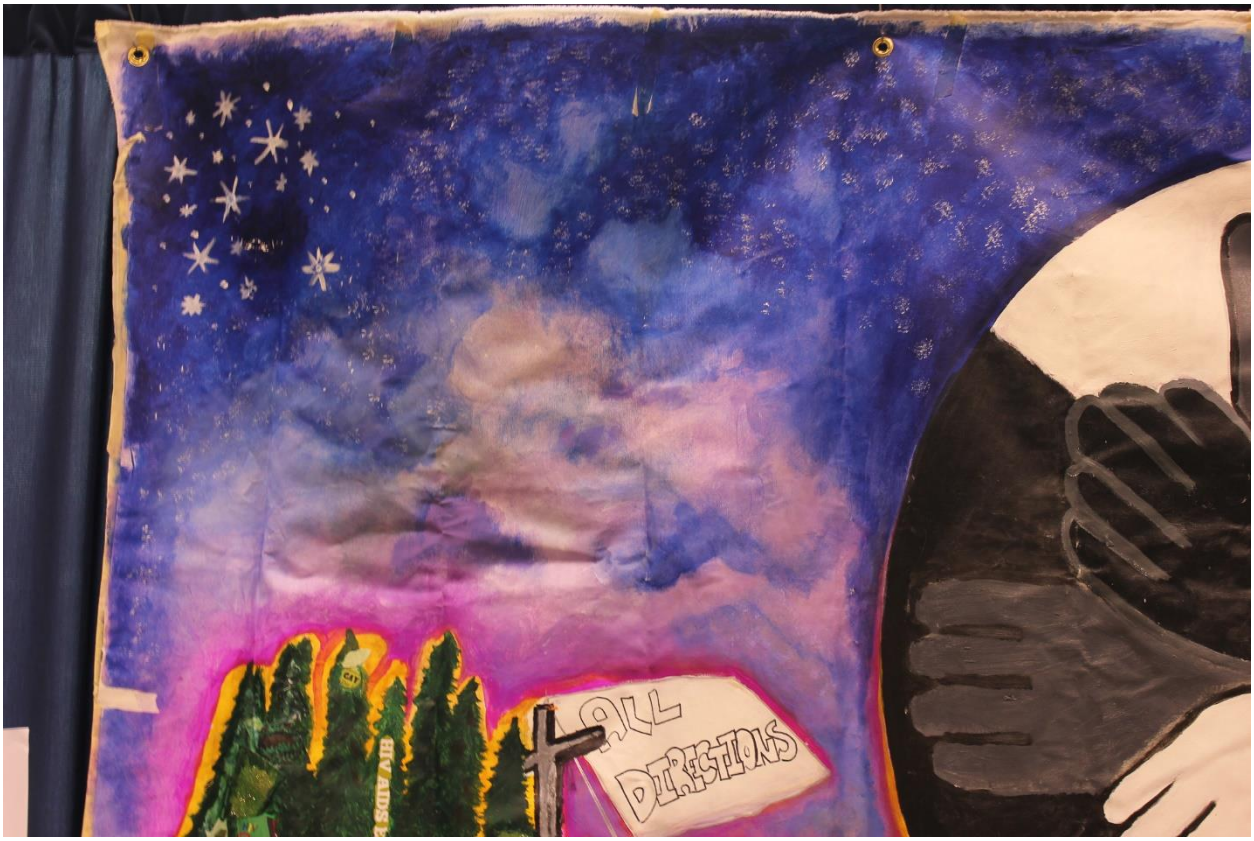

Figure 5: All Directions Mural – Messages. Among the messages represented on the mural through histo-cultural symbols, the night sky in the top left corner of the mural is where one of the Indigenous youth saw a grandfather spirit.

Racial tension was not only discussed in the focus groups, the subject came up repeatedly throughout the collaborative mural-making workshop. For instance, as expressed in his quotes, one Aboriginal youth participant had recently been at an event where he was confronted with sympathy for Indigenous struggles by people of colour. This participant did not appreciate being pitied or victimized, as he mentions that Indigenous communities are addressing their issues with the Canadian government. As a result, this youth expressed his concerns and scepticism of the effectiveness of inter-community partnership building; as he quipped during one particular discussion, *"we should just give up."* On the first day of the workshop this youth had an outburst when one of the young Black men in the group touched him to find out if he was doing ok. He quickly stood up from his chair stating loudly *"Keep your hands to yourself. That should be added*

to the ground rules." For much of the remainder of the workshop this youth opted to be present but he did not wish to contribute to the artistic composition of the mural, until the second day, when he saw what he regarded as a "grandfather spirit" in the mural that he felt was an expression of approval from the ancestral spirits for the collaborative process (see *Figure 5*). Despite this, following the workshop this youth expressed problematic sentiments in his debriefing about how he and the other Indigenous male participant felt about the workshop. Much of his language perpetuates colonial, xenophobic and racist terminology that is important to unpack.

> *The workshop…it didn't work. Me and (name of Aboriginal youth) we were talking about it, the reasons why and I think its cuz you have laid back, civilized youth and really uncivilized, pushy, in your face Black youth … and they are that way because of the community they are from. They just weren't interested in working with us Aboriginal youth who are not as pushy and more civilized.(Aboriginal youth, post-workshop)*

Ironically, this Indigenous participant uses the term "civilized" when differentiating between ACB and Aboriginal youth. Interchangeably used with equally offensive terms such as "barbarian" and "wild," the term "civilized" has roots in colonial representations of Indigenous peoples around the globe as primitive and degenerate, in comparison to Europeans. It is clear this youth has internalized these representations of Black people. Importantly, however, this youth has more recently come full circle. He has since built a friendship with one of the ACB youth from the workshops:

> *I finally get it, I finally see your vision. Me and (ACB youth leader from workshop) hang out all the time and we connect in the way you were talking about, only through film. Me, my cousin, (ACB youth leader) and (name) (an ACB man) were sitting around talking about the history of hip hop and Indigenous hip hop and it just hit me – this is what Ciann saw, I am only just seeing it now and all I kept thinking was, I wish Ciann was here to witness what we were taking part in. So I finally see what you were talking about, I finally see your vision (Aboriginal youth, post-workshop).*

The various tensions and conflicts highlighted by the youth throughout the workshop were also represented quite vividly in the images and symbols the youth chose to include on the mural (*see*

Figure 4). For instance, while many hands were painted on the mural to symbolize messages of partnership-building and working together, broken chains were also painted on and around hands to symbolize not only the histories of enslavement for Indigenous and African diasporic peoples, but also the racial, cultural and socio-historical tensions/conflict between these communities. Ironically, such tensions and conflicts underlie the potential for partnership and solidarity-building. As demonstrated by the personal journey of the young man described above, tension and conflict can be anticipated, and are perhaps a necessary part of the process of healing on the journey towards working together.

Figure 4: All Directions Mural – Many hands. While many hands were painted on the mural to symbolize partnerships, broken chains were also painted to symbolize not only the histories of enslavement for Indigenous and African diasporic peoples, but also the racial, cultural and socio-historical tension/conflict that surfaced throughout the workshop.

Limitations

All of the participants were leaders in their communities. As a result, this sample is not representative of youth more generally, nor was that the intention in this qualitative study. Despite their leadership and activism within their communities, these youth still struggled to come to terms with their feelings around solidarity-building across difference. This makes the reflections offered herein all the more insightful in the larger conversation about Indigenous - Black partnership building for HIV prevention. Another limitation related to collecting data from groups (e.g. during

focus groups and mural making) rather than on an individual basis (e.g. interviews), is that participants did not have an opportunity to expand upon their ideas and opinions in a space free of censorship and surveillance from their peers, which may have unintentionally contributed to the majority of the youth's conformity to the project objectives and process (Hyden & Bulow, 2003; Jowett & O'Toole, 2006). The more nuanced tensions around race and racism were highlighted through candid one-on-one conversations with one youth (Wilson & Flicker, under review). Lastly, this project (by necessity) followed a very tight timeline. More time could have been devoted to unpacking and exploring inter-community tensions in a mixed focus group prior to beginning the creation of a collaborative exercise like the mural making.

Discussion

Very early on in the process of engaging in the focus groups and the mural-making workshop, both Indigenous and ACB youth leaders expressed a lot of optimism at the thought of working together as a form of co-resistance. The youth drew on their justification for the promise of such a collaborative process from the similar experiences of oppression and marginalization faced by their respective communities. For the youth leaders, such collaborative spaces were particularly important for the exchange of art, music, dance, history, culture and knowledge. From such exchange, the youth posited that diasporic and Indigenous models of health and healing could be honoured in the fight against HIV in their communities. For Indigenous youth, such opportunities for exchange were also integral for cultural preservation and for sharing their stories, which are often erased from public consciousness in the nation-state of Canada. In this, creating spaces for cross-community exchange are important sites for place-making, expressing, and remembering

within an exclusionary nation-state built on erasing and undermining Indigenous and African histories, cultures and presence.

Despite this shared optimism, different youth came to this collaborative process at different points of understanding and engagement with the issues around racial politics, colonial history and collaboration. Some youth expressed their "readiness" for engaging with these issues and the process, and had personal or familial experiences with negotiating tensions around racism. For others, cross-community collaborations were spaces heavily fraught with both internal and external tensions, contradictions and conflict. Two of the more salient tensions highlighted by the youth, and which arose in their interactions, were competing priorities or engagement in "oppression Olympics," so to speak. This metaphor highlights the ways both Black and Indigenous people might insist on the primacy and uniqueness of their own oppression and suffering as being so all-encompassing that it challenges the possibility of maintaining relationships of oppression relative to "the other" group (Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009, p. 105). Visually, these tensions were represented on the mural in the collage, which had various images and messages from different social movements (some with conflicting interests given the aforementioned tensions between Indigenous and anti-racist scholarship (Lawrence & Dua, 2005)) relevant to these communities; as well as the broken chains, which symbolized mental slavery and the breaking of connectivity between the groups.

One of the most interesting revelations in the discussions and interactions was the nuanced ways both African diasporic and Indigenous youth participated in the oppression of the other. Black youth, who were first and second generation immigrants from continental Africa and the Caribbean, were largely ignorant to the historic and ongoing oppression faced by Indigenous

people on Turtle Island. Lawrence and Dua write that non-Natives, including people of colour, are reluctant to acknowledge the ongoing colonial project and the fact that although we all share the same land base, we have different relationships to this land and the terms on which we occupy it (Lawrence & Dua, 2005). While there are certainly inherent tensions and contradictions in people of colour's connection to the colonial project through immigration and settlement processes, and while for some groups there may be a reluctance to understand the operations of colonialism, among the ACB youth in this project that was not the case. Once made aware of Indigenous realities, the ACB youth leaders became really interested in understanding and were disgruntled that they had not learned this history in school. As such, this is more indicative of the thorough project of erasure of Indigenous presence in wider Canadian society, which is perpetuated through the colonial education system. Relatedly, Indigenous youth participants rightly raised suspicion of and problematized the multicultural rhetoric within Canada. Canada's emphasis on multiculturalism as an asset is used to demarcate its difference from the U.S, while simultaneously denying the prevalence of anti-Black racism and colonial relations with Indigenous peoples within its borders (Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009). Interestingly, Canada's introduction of the *Multiculturalism Act* in 1971, overlapped with the passage of the White Paper (1969) to eliminate "Indian status and Canada's fiduciary responsibility to status Indians" in the same year (Lawrence & Dua, 2005, p. 136). The multicultural rhetoric serves to diffuse and dilute Indigenous presence as just another homogenous "cultural group within a multicultural mosaic" (Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009, p. 115), as Native people are viewed as merely "paler islands floating in a darker multicultural sea" that drowns ongoing Indigenous struggles (Lawrence & Dua, 2005, p. 121).

The significance of decolonization in collaborative processes was reasonably stressed by some Indigenous youth leaders to symbolize a state of thinking about and being in the world that breaks

down the learned propensity for colonial violence and control, ignorance and appropriation of the ways of knowing and doing of others. Decolonization supports the tenets of self-determination (Smith, 1999). Importantly, the need for mental decolonization was also applicable for Indigenous communities, as the Indigenous youth leaders spoke about anti-black racism within their families and some expressed such sentiments in their own interactions with the ACB youth throughout the workshop. This again highlights that different youth came to this process from different points of engagement with the ideas of cross-community collaboration and solidarity-building. For instance, it is only after engaging in these new relationships with ACB youth in the simulated space of this project that one youth discussed above began his personal journey of reflecting on his own feelings around anti-black racism and collaborations with other communities. This highlights that it is not enough to conceive of solidarity building processes as ideal, utopic spaces of co-resistance, art and friendship. These processes are necessarily difficult and the places from which young people engage with these issues should be honoured and respected with patience and understanding in order to realize their transformative, conscious-raising potential.

Black and Aboriginal people share strong interconnections, locally, globally and historically. In seeking ways of working together as a source of mutual empowerment and co-resistance, it is worthwhile to spend some time unpacking what decolonizing cross-community collaborations might entail. The findings of this project demonstrate that genuine collaboration begins by acknowledging that different groups of people have different experiences of white supremacy (i.e. whiteness as slavery, genocide and orientalism), which is effective because the system implicates groups oppressed by it in the oppression of others (Smith, 2006). For instance, all non-Native people are able to join the colonial project of settling on Indigenous lands. Meanwhile, "all non-Black peoples are promised that if they comply, they will not be at the bottom of the racial

hierarchy" (Smith, 2006, p. 69). Strategic alliances are not solely based on shared victimization because these differing relations to the white supremacist apparatus are not equal or equitable to each other. Instead, strategic alliances entail that each ally is accountable for their contribution to the oppression of others; acknowledges their stake in the struggles of the others (i.e. Indigenous sovereignty and land repatriation; anti-black racism and so on); de-centers whiteness; and dismantles the white supremacist apparatus (Smith, 2006; Tuck & Yang, 2012). The colonial system benefits from the fact that Black and Indigenous communities are in "perpetual states of crisis" and struggle for daily survival (Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009, p. 131). These daily battles must be taken into consideration in co-resistance struggles. For some Indigenous youth this meant respecting that they are needed as leaders and healers in their communities first and foremost, a mending process that is ongoing.

Decolonizing processes of alliance building requires mutual education of ACB and Indigenous communities on each other's histories and realities. This means interrogating how "stolen people (i.e. ACB people) on stolen land" can situate themselves in relation to Indigenous peoples who are "struggling to reclaim that stolen land," (Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009, p. 125). This requires reflection on what it means to be an ally to Indigenous and settler of colour struggles, and a discussion of how communities hold each other accountable. Decolonizing processes of alliance building requires valuation and honouring of the process and time required for meaningful relationship building, respect and friendship (Amadahy and Lawrence, 2009), as the Medicine Wheel, The Two Row Wampum, and Ubuntu symbols encourage. It also requires combatting anti-black racism, the constant "erasure of Indigenous presence," (Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009, p. 111) and "exclusionary racial classifications" that ignore people of both Black and Indigenous ancestry (Amadahy & Lawrence, 2009, p. 126).

Conclusion

Decolonizing activism and solidarity building is significant for HIV prevention efforts within and between Aboriginal and ACB communities in this post-Highly Active Anti-Retroviral Therapy (HART) era. "The failed promise that providing treatment could wash away all the injustices and forms of structural violence that lead to new HIV infections" has been realized (Guta et al., 2011, p. 24). Young people are critical in resistance struggles to combat the surmounting issues around Indigenous sovereignty, anti-Blackness, health, intergenerational healing and HIV. Youth can be brilliant leaders in the struggles to de-center the management of disease (i.e. the business of HIV) and refocus on community mobilization, empowerment, and the sharing of stories, resources, culture, worldviews and history, which have been so integral for the embodied health and wellbeing of Indigenous and African diasporic peoples. Their potential in solidarity-building approaches should be supported (financially, emotionally, and socially) in order to create mutually caring, decolonial collectives of resistance that addresses the social determinants of HIV (Guta et al., 2011; Simpson, 2014). Importantly, such partnerships between Indigenous and African diasporic peoples are fraught with tensions, conflicts and contradictions that require decolonization in the form of mutual respect of where communities are at; acknowledgement of the nuanced forms of white supremacy and each community's participation in the white supremacist apparatus; mutual education; accountability; and meaningful relationship building.

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Chapter Five
Conclusion

In the preceding three chapters I explore the potential for and inherent problems with cross-community partnerships for health promotion within Indigenous and African diasporic communities. Colonialism has replaced notions of community with individualism, segregation and division between groups (e.g. Black, Aboriginal, White, Hispanic, Asian etc.) and within them (e.g. Metis, "status" and "non-status" Aboriginal, First Nations etc.). These divisions – or legacies of colonial trauma - limit our ability to build partnerships that are essential for confronting oppression and its impact on embodied health. This is demonstrated by the prevalence of chronic illnesses such as HIV among marginalized peoples across the globe, and among Indigenous and African diasporic communities in the Canadian context. However, there has been a paucity of research exploring the similar and different social determinants of HIV in these respective communities; and the importance of alliance building for social change in the 21st century, a time when the forces of colonization, slavery, globalization and capitalism intersect and continue to pervade the societal consciousness. I ground my analysis of the possibilities for and challenges with such partnerships in historic, anti-colonial, anti-racist, and transnational social movement analysis. I also engage with and reflect on my incorporation of an arts-based approach to engaging Indigenous and African diasporic young people in these conversations. Importantly, my research questions do not end at discussing our colonial narratives of victimization and grief, as exhibited in the high rates of HIV transmission in our communities, but our long histories of resistance, resilience and survival despite insurmountable odds. This is a form of self-determination. It is about moving towards defining ourselves, our

possible futures and our solutions to our problems. In this final chapter, I review the preceding chapters and reflect on their contributions.

Together these chapters offer an examination of the theoretical, methodological and practical possibilities for and issues with building cross-community partnerships for health promotion activism. This dissertation has explored the possibilities of an arts-based intervention and framed it within an analysis of the history of relations between these two groups, as well as Indigenous and people of colour scholarship. This study has linked seemingly disparate scholarship in public health, and health research more generally, with critical theoretical debates around identity and the historic and ongoing societal and colonial determinants of HIV vulnerability. This is helpful in expanding conversations about HIV beyond individual behavioural and biomedical models that do not contextualize "risk," instead contributing to problematic stereotypes of "racialized and diseased" bodies and prescribing solutions aimed at policing the behaviours (sexual and otherwise) of racialized communities. As a result, the top-down, prescriptive models for disease prevention offered by these behavioural approaches are inadequate for Black and Indigenous communities, whose health is framed by a larger socio-historical and geo-political landscape.

In chapter 2, I engaged with bodies of literature that provided the basis for my framework and analysis in this dissertation. First, I offered a historical account of racial formation in the Americas and how it informed the treatment of Black and Indigenous peoples in the establishment of the British North American empire and a western worldview. I then made direct connections between this history built on Black and Indigenous erasure, to contemporary conversations about multiculturalism and racelessness. In connecting these historic and ongoing oppressions, I contextualized their impact on embodied health ills within Indigenous and African

diasporic communities. I then engaged with scholarship recounting the long history of Indigenous and Black relations and resistance in the Americas, linking these social disruptions to the HIV movement. Engaging with anti-racist and anti-colonial discourses, I problematized the romanticism of solidarity building, highlighting the conflicts between these communities and proposing new ways of reimagining what partnerships can look like between these groups.

In keeping with an Indigenous paradigm for research with communities offered by Sean Wilson (2008) in his book *Research is Ceremony*, chapter 3 is a reflective piece on my methodological engagement with arts-based approaches for doing this work of building relationships and communicating complex and nuanced ideas. In this chapter, I began with a personal account of my lived experiences and my reasons for engaging with these research questions and arts- and community-based approaches. I then unpacked the methods I employed in my research, highlighting the benefits and shortcomings of engaging with digital storytelling and mural making. I then interrogated the decolonizing potential of arts- and community-based approaches for research with Black and Indigenous communities, landing on the opinion that these approaches can encourage self-reflectivity, allow for the insertion of community voice into dominant discourse, affirm self-identity; and are dynamic tools for relationship-building, community engagement and health promotion intervention.

Finally, in chapter 4, I engaged with both the theoretical and empirical facets of my project highlighted in both chapters 2 and 3, respectively, to unpack and contextualize the opinions and artistic creations offered by the youth participants throughout the process of working together. From their optimism to their criticisms and conflicts, I contend with the challenges and possibilities for this work. In this project, my goal has been to synchronize the orchestra of

different conversations within and between African diasporic and Indigenous communities, in which I have been enmeshed. This includes conversations between youth leaders and activists in the respective communities (chapter 3); theoretical debates between anti-racist and anti-colonial scholars, as well as scholarship in the areas of public health and community-based research (chapter 1 and chapter 2); and my conversations with myself around my own identity and relationship to this work (chapter 2).

Limitations and Strengths

This dissertation has a number of limitations related to its design. First, this dissertation utilized the arts-based outputs (i.e. digital stories) created by youth participants in two previous projects I was involved in - the *Let's Talk About Sex* and *Taking Action! projects*. The *Let's Talk About Sex* and *Taking Action!* projects explored different research questions - namely the social factors impacting Black youth sexual decision making and the utilization of Indigenous art and culture as HIV Prevention, respectively. As a result, these projects had different frameworks for thinking about HIV and sexual health and this was reflected in the digital stories produced from the projects. For instance, the digital stories produced from the *Taking Action!* project tended to discuss HIV in a much more broad and encompassing sense, linking the impact of the virus on Indigenous communities to larger factors such as colonization, racism, and relationships to land. Comparatively, the digital stories produced from the *Let's Talk About Sex* project tended to focus on more micro-level relationships, linking sexual health to factors such as religion, intergenerational communication and healthy relationships. In addition to the different research questions that framed these respective projects, another contributing factor to the discrepancy in the issues covered in the digital stories is how health and wellbeing, with respect to socio-structural factors, are understood by Black and Indigenous communities. In mainstream

conversations about Black oppression, the large-scale force of colonization and its links to historic and globalizing processes are often simplified in favour of conversations that focus on racial politics, racism and the micro-level interactions Black people are confronted with daily. This tendency to frame Black oppression almost exclusively within race politics stems from the discursive prevalence of African American struggles for civil rights and racial parity, which has greatly influenced the broader Black consciousness. Additionally, the majority of African diasporic people in the Americas are several generations removed from their native land base, traditional cultures, language and so on, factors which add a greater degree of cognitive dissonance to the reality that we are a people with a very proximate lived experience of what it means to be colonized subjects undergoing various forms of intergenerational trauma. As such, it is unsurprising that socio-structural-level determinants of sexual health were not taken up in the same way by Black youth, as they were among their Indigenous counterparts. For instance, the stories by Black youth discussed issues such as teen pregnancy, the pervasive role of religion in sexual decision making, and the exchange of sex for money in terms of their proximate implications, but did not draw connections to larger socio-structural level determinants of health such as colonialism.

The digital stories were intended to create a launching point for discussion about the themes and issues raised in the videos, as well as the similar and different experiences and realities impacting the sexual health of Black and Indigenous youth. As a result, the digital stories selected for screening in the focus groups/talking circles framed much of the conversations, thereby limiting the scope of what was discussed in these shared spaces. In other words, although I selected stories that dealt with a variety of issues touched on by both Indigenous and ACB youth participants, the very act of refining what digital stories were engaged with in the talking circle

discussions reflects a bias. Further, of the videos created in the respective projects, I selected to screen those stories produced by the youth leaders participating in the focus groups and mural-making workshops so the youth could get a sense of each other through their personal videos. In this, the sample was limited by geography and the related costs of travel, as the youth able to partake in the talking circles and workshops were those who lived in the Greater Toronto Area. Relatedly, all of the participants were leaders in their communities; had done some thinking about the needs of their communities; and had participated in previous HIV prevention projects and initiatives. The sample was not representative of youth more generally, nor was that the intention of this small qualitative study. The aim of this study was to spark difficult conversations about cross-community partnership building and the tensions and possibilities therein. Given the evocation of conversations about cultural exchange and issues of settler colonialism and anti-black racism, I'd say that goal was established.

An important limitation related to my use of the arts in this project relates to my reluctance to engage in an in-depth visual analysis of the collaborative mural created by the youth leaders. A huge reason for my reluctance lies in the shortcomings of my training in visual analysis, which has a much shorter, less developed history in the arts- and community-based health research field. Further, there is power wrought into the interpretation of every image and I am unwilling (due to my commitment to centralizing participant voice in the research process and outcomes) to offer a visual analysis or critique of the choices of images and symbols reproduced by the youth in the mural. In-keeping with an arts-informed research approach, in which art is used as a primary basis for qualitative inquiry and a medium for understanding and examining the social world (Cole & Knowles, 2008), I have chosen instead to analyze the images created by the youth in the context of the discussions that transpired during the mural-making process. This utilization

of art as a visual and process tool for social inquiry afforded me the opportunity to contextualize the reasons certain images were selected for incorporation in the mural, as well as the opportunity to grasp meaning from the operation of power in the youths' interactions throughout the production process.

A final limitation related to the study design was the lack of spaces for my engagement with youth on an individual basis. The focus groups and mural making workshops were all collaborative spaces, which were great for seeing the dynamics of collaboration in action. However, these group spaces also limited the opportunities participants have to expand upon their ideas and opinions in a space free of censorship and surveillance from their peers, which may have unintentionally masked the issues some youth had with the idea of solidarity building. It is important to note that the more nuanced tensions around race and racism were highlighted through candid one-on-one conversations with one youth (C Wilson et al., 2015). This suggests that individual interviews would have been a good complementary method to utilize in this project to unpack and explore the opinions of the participants in greater depth. On a related point, because this project was on a limited time-line in terms of both the availability of the youth leaders and the related costs of the project, the focus groups and workshops were done back to back from a Thursday to a Sunday in what I referred to as an extended-weekend. Provided more time, I would have facilitated the two community-specific talking circles, as originally done, and added a third mixed talking circle with both Black and Indigenous youth leaders. Such a space would have been good for unpacking and exploring the inter-community tensions that surfaced prior to beginning the creation of a collaborative exercise like making a mural. That being said, I found insightful the way in which the tensions and "messiness" of collaboration surfaced through the process of making the mural – where anti-black racism

surfaced; deciding on images to include and exclude – where images of movements with conflicting priorities were chosen for incorporation in the mural; and deciding what to name the piece – which was a lengthy process where some Indigenous youth wanted to choose a name that had cultural significance such as "Seven Directions," while some Black youth insisted on a name more representative of the diverse cultures and backgrounds in the shared space.

In spite of these limitations, this dissertation has a number of noteworthy strengths. This project connected the empirical practice and products of arts-based CBR to critical social theory by predominantly Indigenous scholars and scholars of colour to analyze the realities of alliance building for Black and Indigenous peoples. Further, this dissertation contextualizes these relationships, highlighting their historic and contemporary significances and challenges. My approach was to utilize art as a medium for conversation among African diasporic and Indigenous youth leaders about their roles as health promoters in their communities and their opinions on collaboration. While the findings presented here are not generalizable to an entire population, the analysis offered has provocative implications for those wishing to engage in alliance building processes and collectives. This work encourages that we unpack and complicate romanticized notions of solidarity building, as well as our relationship to colonial, racist, orientalist and globalizing processes in our quest to forge such alliances.

Future Research and Directions

A number of implications embedded in chapters 1 to 3 offer guides for future research. First, chapter 2 offers theoretical frameworks from predominantly Indigenous and people of colour scholars, for conceptualizing the health and wellbeing of Black and Indigenous communities.

The goal of this chapter was to foreground well-established debates from anti-colonial and anti-racist discourse, and apply them to health promotion research. These critical theoretical frameworks suggest non-prescriptive and non-individualized models of health framed within a sound understanding of historic and ongoing oppressions and the embodiment of such violence in health outcomes. For a future project, I am interested in expanding upon the conceptualization of and interconnections between health, wellbeing, sexuality and intersectional identity, as framed within Black feminist and Indigenous scholarship.

Chapters 3 and 4 demonstrate the great potential offered by community-based interventions that center lived experience, community perspectives and relationality. Chapter 3 also interrogates the methodological implications for employing an arts-based intervention, and problematizes community-based praxis. Future research may further interrogate the connections and incongruence between art- and community-based research, and the project of decolonizing knowledge-making processes. In this, it may be important to interrogate the operations of power in CBR and how these approaches may reaffirm, rather than challenge, dominant discourses and forms of knowledge production (Guta, Flicker, & Roche, 2013). Connectedly, future research may also interrogate and problematize the interpretation of arts-based texts produced within the CBR tradition. There is an absence of cultural-theoretical, representational or visual anthropological analysis in CBR that explores the meaning of arts-based representations, symbolisms and the operations of power and politics in these texts.

Chapter 4 examines the artistically and communicatively expressed possibilities for, and challenges with, cross-community engagement. This chapter encapsulates the practical engagement with the literature on solidarity-building outlined in chapter 2. For a future project, I

am interested in writing and engaging with literature on models (Indigenous and otherwise) for relationship-building between communities – not merely as an intellectual project, but one with practical implications for historicizing and informing activist spaces. I am also interested in highlighting the strengths and challenges of grassroots collaboratives already in existence that bridge Indigenous and African diasporic struggles - as well as transnational struggles opposing violent global systems - such as the Idle No More and Black Lives Matter collaboratives that have sprung up in recent months (Simpson, 2014); or the SisterSong Women of Colour Reproductive Justice Collective, which connects African-, Native-, Arab-, and Asian American women in amplifying their collective voices for human rights and reproductive and sexual health (SisterSong, 1997).

Further, I am committed to expanding upon my exploration of relationships between Black and Indigenous communities in two ways. First, is the possibility of establishing some longitudinal depth to the Beyond the Colonial Divide project by reconvening with the youth leaders engaged in the initial phase of this project to reflect on and co-theorize the implications of the mural-making process. Second, I am interested in extending my inquiry across eastern Canada (i.e. from Ontario to Labrador), which is home to some of the oldest African diasporic and Black-Indian communities in the country. These communities have historic connections to the trans-Atlantic slave trade and Creole communities spanning from Louisiana and the Caribbean to continental Africa. However, very little research has been done to historicize these communities in collective memory, much less understand their health outcomes. This is exemplified in the absence of research on the HIV epidemic within Black, Nova-Scotian and Black-Mi'kmaq communities, a fact that can only be understood as a form of figurative and literal erasure. This work can be extended to provinces such as British Columbia, Alberta, Labrador and so on, as

they have become sites of growing extractive industries, national and international immigration and resettlement. As such, they are important sites for exploring issues surrounding boom industries, sexual relationships, sex work, settler colonialism, cross-community relationships, racism and HIV prevention. Finally, I am interested in exploring African and Indigenous relationships beyond 1492, as research on the ancient history of the Americas suggests interactions and trade between African and Indigenous peoples long before the voyages of Europeans and the dichotomies of Native and slave (Kitossa, 2015). This work would be imperative for historically contextualizing African Diasporic and Indigenous relations outside of a Euro-western ethos and the dominant perspective for documenting all of human history.

Concluding Remarks

My overall goal in this dissertation has been to bridge conversations within the larger HIV response. It is to connect the tracking of the HIV epidemic in public health models of individualized "risk" to the criticisms of such surveillance, control, and biomedically reasoned marginalization as framed by conversations about humanism within social movement, anti-racist and anti-colonial discourse and debate. This project was also intended to encourage the next generation of critical consciousness-raising and activism that has been so integral for the historic strides made in the HIV movement. This is particularly important, especially at a time when the "face" of HIV has changed nationally and transnationally to disproportionately include Indigenous and African diasporic peoples. As such, in this work I've intended to highlight the perspectives, lived experiences and world views of young Black and Aboriginal leaders as they pertain to health promotion in their communities; and their opinions of the possibilities cross-community partnerships present for the fulfilment of community health and wellbeing. These goals are not disconnected from other ongoing youth-led social movements such as Black Lives

Matter and Idle No More, in which young Black and Indigenous leaders concerned with the welfare of their communities are collaborating to critique the white supremacist apparatus in all of its manifestations of systemic violence from racial profiling to the intentional disregard of the survival needs of Indigenous communities on reserve (Da Silva, 2016). Most recently in the Canadian context, Indigenous youth have demonstrated solidarity with Black Lives Matter protesters, who in turn have joined Indigenous Idle No More activists in protesting the Canadian state's ignorance of the colonial and social factors contributing to the alarming suicide rates among Indigenous youth (particularly those youth in the Attawapiskat community) (Da Silva, 2016; Lim, 2016). This kind of collaborative social resistance has and continues to garner public and national attention from politicians and every-day citizens alike (Lim, 2016). This generation of social mobilizers are working across colonially entrenched transnational borders and community divides to pose questions and make demands of the settler state in a play for power and community empowerment not witnessed since the Seminole Wars of 1812 and the Haitian Revolution. This indicates the historic significance and broad scale implications of these moments of solidarity and critical consciousness-raising for forging cross community partnerships and decolonizing the nation state.

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Appendix

Schedule for focus group and mural making sessions

Dream list of goals/outcomes
1. to create space for Black and Aboriginal youth leaders in HIV prevention to communicate, learn from each other's stories and experiences and think about collaboration and leadership in their communities. 2. to compare and contrasts the way young Black and Aboriginal youth leaders think about HIV, sexuality and the possibilities for prevention and health promotion through collaboration and the use of arts-based approaches such as digital storytelling. 3. to interrogate the possibility for, and problematizes the notions of identity and community and the romanticized idea of solidarity/alliance-building across "difference" between these communities. 4. to expand upon the history of social, political and colonial relations as they pertain to health between African diasporic and Indigenous communities in the Americas, Canada and more specifically within the context of "multicultural" Toronto. 4. to imagines new possibilities for health promotion and HIV prevention that incorporates the arts, history, and alliance-building among young people.

Brainstorm list of possible activities		
Ice Breakers	Principles activities	Evaluation
Chores I love and hate to do Introductions; Give/Get game	Sketching ideas Collaborative Mural	Discussion circles for giving feedback Written/verbal comments and questions Heads, Hearts, Hands

Schedule at a glance		
Session 1 & 2: Setting the stage Ice Breakers Elder Opening Explain project Screen Vids Discussion about videos	Session 3 Ice Breaker Get into thinking about Mural Taking pictures and collaging if needed for mural	Session 4 Continue and complete Mural Making

Session 1 and 2 - Praxis Stage 1: Setting the Stage				
TIME	METHOD	DESCRIPTION OF PROCESS	OBJECTIVE	Supplies
5:30 – 8pm 2.5 hrs	Overview	**Focus Group 1 & 2: Setting the Stage** Objectives: Screen digital stories created by the other group of youth. Create discussion about the stories told by the other youth and begin thinking about similarities, differences and the benefits and challenges to partnership building with other communities. Questions explored: What did you all think about the videos? What were some of the main themes or ideas discussed in the videos? Were there things you didn't understand in the stories that were shared? Explain. What things did you relate to in the stories that were told? What things could you NOT relate to in the stories? Tell me what you know about Black/Aboriginal communities. What are the similarities and differences of the issues faced by the youth in videos to the issues youth in your community face? Would building connections with (Black/Aboriginal) youth in Canada be useful? Why or Why not? Does telling stories help or hinder building connections across community lines? What would working with youth of other cultures and backgrounds look like? Is this kind of work useful? Why or Why not? Let's envision a plan, who/what would need to be at the table to make such collaborations possible?		

20 min		Go over consent and demographic forms: have youth fill out as they arrive. Food: Direct youth to table of food		Printed forms Food
15 min	Opening	Elder Opening by creating a space built on safety, respect and listening to each other's opinions and stories.	Setting ground rules for the session.	Lana James & J'net Cavanagh
10 min	Intros	Ice Breaker: Sexy chore Sharing Circle: youth will tell the group a little about themselves	The circle creates community and dialogue and is great for diminishing power dynamics and inequality within the group and between facilitator and participants.	Post-its Pens/pencils Chairs organized in a circle
30	Videos	Screen Digital Stories: Describe that they all focus on sexual health in some way, HIV and AIDS (define), identity and so on.	Use videos to facilitate discussion about HIV, sexual health, teen pregnancy, history and identity in respective communities.	Recorder
40	Discussion	Discuss above research questions. Drawing activity: provide youth paper and pencil to doodle as we brainstorm ideas of how we can collaborate	To initiate discussion around sexual health, clarify definitions, questions and concerns, while garnering the input of the youth on the stories told by other groups of youth.	Paper + pen Recorder
10	Feedback	Garner how the youth feel about the session and their final thoughts on collaborations with other communities.	Reflecting on the topic and Feedback	Paper + pen Feedback forms

5	Tokens and Honoraria	Distribute Tokens and Honorarium + get sheets filled out		Honorarium forms
10 – 4:45pm 6hrs 45 min	Overview	**Session 3: Mural Making** Objectives: To create a collaborative mural that artistically expresses how the youth envision collaboration between the two communities. This mural can express possibilities and challenges, strengths and weaknesses, similarities and differences for such ideas of collaboration. Questions: What are the similarities and differences between the videos made by, and thus stories and histories of, Black and Aboriginal youth? Would building connections with (Black/Aboriginal) youth in Canada be useful? Why or Why not? What are some of the barriers or obstacles to working together or across community lines of Black and Aboriginal in Canada? Is this kind of work useful or important? Why or Why not? What would this kind of collaboration require to make possible? Does telling stories help or hinder building connections across community lines? How can we express the value of such collaboration through art and mural making – another form of stories?		
15	Intros	Snacks: Direct youth to table of snacks available throughout workshop		Food

		Sharing Circle: youth will introduce themselves and something they are looking forward to in the session. Tell at least one other youth in the group something they liked about their digital story.		
10	Ice Breakers	Paper Museum: In different pairs than the previous game, with partner 2s permission, partner 1 acts like a puppet master moving partner 2's limbs and torso like a puppet. After 5 minutes partner 2 must freeze in whatever shape partner 1 has contrived. All of the 1's walk around the room looking at each others sculptures then one at a time, each partner 1 is allowed to bring their sculpture (ie: partner 2) into a frame with the sculpture of another pair. Debrief, discuss and reflect Repeat with partner 2 as the sculptor and 1 as the clay.	Encourages the use of the body in self expression Leads to a discussion of larger topics such as inequality, body, property, respect, control, community and identity. The merging of sculptures can create new meanings, images and build on the idea of team work and collaboration. A prelude to the performative/theatric pieces the group may orchestrate during the workshop	
10	Intros	Review Objectives for the weekend portion of the workshop Discuss mural-making: A slideshow of images and brief intro into the meanings and methods of collaborative community murals.	Overview of research questions and objectives.	- Overhead projector (if available) - Photographs or slides of murals

		Discuss objectives for today's workshop: 1) to explore different ways of "visualizing" what working with youth of other cultures and backgrounds might look like; 2) to gather and generate materials to be used in the mural-making process (e.g., contour drawings, preliminary paintings, photographs, found materials, etc.); and 3) to develop a preliminary composition and transfer its basic outline to the canvas.		
15	Drawing	Composition 101: Reverse Contour Line Activity: Group is divided into teams. Each team is given an image of a mural,* a piece of transparency paper, and a permanent marker. Putting the transparencies over their images, the groups will highlight with marker the most important lines in the composition. Using a projector, the simplified compositions will be reproduced writ large. Discuss and reflect on the effectiveness of each. *Instead of images of murals, found photographs that highlight issues that you would like to address and/or stills from the digital stories can be used.	Simplifies the composition process by helping focus attention on key design elements. Helps ease participants into the drawing/painting activities that follow with a straightforward tracing activity. Opens dialogue about effective mural composition, particularly the elements and principles of design, in an interactive and engaging way.	- Photographs of murals, found photographs or stills from digital stories - Transparency sheets - Permanent markers - Overhead projector (if available)
60	Painting	Collaborative Circle Painting: Cover table with craft paper Line up containers of colourful paint	Leads to a discussion of what collaboration means in the context of mural painting.	- Roll of craft paper - Paint - Containers

		Ask participants to stand behind a colour they like Volunteer begins the painting with a circle Build on each other's circles with more circles and lines Switch colours by asking first Post finished painting See example here: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d2mHEgOHrbg	Helps participants practice basic painting skills. Sets participants up for success and thus helps dispel feelings that they are "not artists" or "can't draw."	- Brushes - Tape
12:30pm 20	FOOD	Distribute tickets + sign honoraria forms		Honoraria forms and tickets
15	Discussion	Galley Walk: Reflection on Circle Painting: Distribute sticky notes to participants Ask everyone to view the circle painting, informal discussion of how the painting represents/doesn't represent what working with youth of other cultures and backgrounds looks like. Write these reflections on sticky notes and then adhere them directly to the painting. Ask everyone to view painting for a second time. Discuss/reflect.	How working with youth of other cultures can and cannot look like? Visualizing what they've been doing artistically. Encourages participants to think about how to "visualize" their thoughts on the research questions. Generates text that may be used in the final mural composition.	- Sticky notes (txt to add other layers to collage)

15	Tableau	Warm-Up Activity for Large Group Tableau: Explain objectives of tableau exercise: 1) to "visualize" what working with youth of other cultures and backgrounds might look like and 2) to create photographic material to be used in the mural-making process. Ask youth to create tableaus as a large group (or two or three smaller groups, depending on total number of participants) in response to the prompts below. These tableaus will be created using a 10-count transition. 1. *Use your bodies to create a circle.* 2. *Find another way to use your bodies to create a circle.* 3. Repeat with other shapes as necessary. 4. Have youth draw a "relationship" card from a hat (e.g., best friends, lovers, enemies, parent-child, etc.). *Work together to communicate this idea through your bodies.* 4. Repeat with other relationships as many times as necessary for the group to feel comfortable with the large group process.	Tableau encourages use of imagination, development of aesthetic awareness, expression of self, and collaboration with others. Large group tableau, as opposed to solo tableau, allows for expression of more complex relationships and ideas. Collaboration is foregrounded, thus reinforcing ideas of alliance-building.	
30	Tableau/Photography	Large Group Tableau: Invite youth to create tableaus in response to the questions below. Youth will have 2-5 minutes to create each tableau. *What helps building connections across community lines?* *What hinders building connections across community lines?*	Encourages youth to express their ideas on the research questions in a visual way. Brainstorm possible ideas for the composition of the mural.	- Digital camera

		What would working with youth of other cultures and backgrounds look like? Slideshow performance of each group's finished tableaus. Establish a stage in front of the circle paining* and an area for the audience. [*Since the objective is to use these tableaus to develop imagery for the mural, this positioning will help the youth think about their composition. Audience will close their eyes during transitions.] Performing group will direct this by saying "Open" then "Close" when they are ready to move on to the next tableau. Take photographs of each tableau. Discuss and reflect.	Create photographic material to be used in the mural-making process. One of us needs to take an image	
30	Collage	Viewfinder Activity: Invite youth to sort through collection of found materials to select items that resonates with them. Distribute viewfinders to everyone. Demonstrate how the viewfinder works to focus on part of the image or text that is particularly meaningful. Invite participants to cut out their selections and post them using reusable adhesive onto the circle painting. Discuss and reflect.	Facilitate the articulation of diverse perspectives using collage.	Found materials Viewfinders Reusable adhesive

30	Discussion	Gallery Walk: Reflection and Synthesis: Invite youth to view their artwork again, by projecting the contour drawings over the circle painting and displaying a slideshow of the photographs of the tableaus. Discuss final composition plans with the following prompts: *What ideas have you communicated well?* *What ideas are missing?* *How could you include these ideas?* *Are you satisfied with the composition so far?* *How could we improve it so that you are?*	Reflect on the preliminary artwork produced throughout the day. Develop a clear direction for the composition. Have overarching questions on chart paper in room***	- Laptop
60	Painting/Drawing/Discussion	Development of Final Mural Composition: Work with youth to finalize the mural composition. Using the same contour technique as above, identify key guidelines to be transferred to the canvas. Transfer these lines to the canvas.	Finalize mural composition. Transfer guidelines to canvas.	- Paint - Brushes - Primed canvas
10	Evaluation	Verbal Check-in Q/A and reflection session		
1: 30 pm –		**Session 4: Mural Making** Objectives and Questions: Same as above		

7pm				
10 min	Ice Breakers	Name that tune: I will play or hum a short sample of a popular song, youth will have to guess the tune.		Computer
120		Production of Mural Continue working on layout Painting background		Canvas Paint Brushes Collage materials Overhead projector Tableau photographs
3:30pm	FOOD	Distribute tickets + sign honoraria forms		Honoraria forms and tickets
180		Production of Mural Painting foreground Collaging Detail work		Canvas Paint Brushes Collage materials Overhead projector Tableau photographs

10 min	Evaluation	Verbal Check-in Q/A and reflection session Heads, Hearts, Hands		Scrap paper + pens