New Brunswick Women's Council | Conseil des femmes du Nouveau-Brunswick

Submission to the Commissioner on Systemic Racism

About the New Brunswick Women's Council

The New Brunswick Women's Council is an independent advisory body for study and consultation on matters of importance, interest, and concern to women and their substantive equality. Its objectives are:

a) to be an independent body that provides advice to the Minister on matters of importance to women and their substantive equality;

b) to bring to the attention of government and the public issues of interest and concern to women and their substantive equality;

c) to include and engage women of diverse identities, experiences and communities, women's groups and society in general;

d) to be strategic and provide advice on emerging and future issues; and

e) to represent New Brunswick women.

In delivering on these objectives, the Women's Council may conduct or commission research and publish reports, studies, and recommendations. The Women's Council is directed by an appointed volunteer membership that includes both organizations and individual women. The work is executed by a small staff team.

www.nbwomenscouncil.ca

1.844.462.5179 **/nbwomenscouncil** **/NBWomensCouncil**

About this submission

The Women's Council must begin this submission by explicitly naming that while we are an independent agency, we are still part of the settler colonial[1] provincial government. We must also explicitly name the ongoing history of women-focused organizations like the Women's Council marginalizing, tokenizing, and excluding Black women, Indigenous women, and women of colour[2] and treating racial justice and Indigenous rights, wellbeing, and sovereignty as issues to be addressed separate from gender-equality issues. Additionally, we must be clear that the historical and ongoing exclusion of transgender women and the erasure of Two-Spirit persons, non-binary persons, and transgender men by women-focused organizations is entrenched in racism as well as transphobia and misogyny.

Because of this context, our submission not only includes our observations and recommendations for the Commissioner but provides an account of how we understand and strive to apply anti-racism in our work. This is also an opportunity for us to cite the Black, Indigenous, and people of colour scholars, educators, and activists that inform our approach and analysis. It is important we do so, given that the work of racialized people,[3] particularly racialized women, is frequently erased through appropriation and plagiarism.

Additionally, we wish to uplift the fact that the Mi'kmaw and Wolastoqey Chiefs are not participating in the work of the Commissioner. In light of this, our submission's contribution on Indigenous women focuses on providing an account of our understanding of colonialism and supporting the Chiefs' call for an Indigenous-led independent inquiry on systemic racism against Indigenous people in New Brunswick. To offer this support, we explore clear examples of government's[4] ongoing settler colonialism.

This submission begins by outlining key concepts that are foundational to equity[5] and anti-racism work. Next, we provide context on the current state of affairs in New Brunswick. In this section, we focus on: ongoing settler colonialism enacted by the government; rising white supremacy and right-wing extremism; and equity work within the public service. Next, we share data and stories gathered directly from non-Indigenous racialized participants in our Resonate initiative. We conclude with recommendations to the Commissioner.

---

[1] The concept of settler colonialism is explored in the *Key concepts* section of this submission.

[2] While we use the language of Black people/women, Indigenous people/women, and people/women of colour, we do not use the acronyms BIPOC or BIWOC in order to preserve the function of this phrasing, which is to resist flattening all racialized people into a homogenous category. Even with this phrasing, such flattening happens as all non-Black and non-Indigenous people are grouped together as *people of colour*. The language of "people of colour" originates from Black women's activism and advocacy and is meant as a term of solidarity, as race is a social construct (see activist and profession Loretta J. Ross's account of the genesis of this term). The reasons for specifically naming Black and Indigenous people are explored in the *Current context in New Brunswick* section of this submission.

[3] We use racialized as a broad term to include people who are Black, Indigenous, and of colour. This term helps to emphasize that race is a social process (racialization).

[4] Unless otherwise specified, all references to government mean the Government of New Brunswick.

[5] For an overview of the difference between *equity* and *equality*, please consult pages two to four of this document.

Key concepts

Prejudice, bias, discrimination, and oppression

Prejudice is an opinion about a group of people that is not grounded in experiences or facts and is likely based on stereotypes. A person may or may not realize their opinion or belief is prejudiced—they may not even realize they hold that opinion or belief.

Bias is a tendency to favour or disfavour a group of people. It can be held and enacted by individuals, groups, and communities; processes, systems, and institutions can also be biased. Bias can be conscious or unconscious.

Discrimination is unfair treatment of a group of people. Discrimination shows up in interpersonal interactions, processes, systems, and institutions. It can look like explicitly privileging one group and disadvantaging others. It can also look like treating all groups the same way when they face different circumstances and have different needs. For example, failing to account for certain groups' unique experiences and needs in the creation of processes, policies, and programs is a form of discrimination.

Discrimination may be explicit or implicit. It may be intentional, or it may be perpetrated due to a failure to assess and account for bias. It can also be the result of accepting established processes, policies, systems, and institutions without interrogating what assumptions and objectives shaped their creation and evolution, how different groups experience them, or the outcomes they produce.

Anyone can be individually prejudiced against any group of people. Depending on their access to positions of influence or authority in their family, workplace, and communities, they may be able to perpetuate bias or discrimination based on their prejudice. If that person's prejudice is not aligned with a system of oppression, however, their ability to act on it without consequence or to embed it in institutions they are part of will be limited.

Oppression is a system of domination. As such, oppression exists at the societal scale, backed by social, political, and economic power.[6] This means that oppressions show up in institutions, structures, systems, and processes while also being internalized by individuals and playing out at the interpersonal level. Violence is both a feature of oppression and a means through which oppression is upheld. Oppressions include racism and white supremacy; patriarchy; ableism; poverty, etc. Oppressions are interdependent and mutually reinforcing.

Systemic, structural, and institutional racism

The term *systemic*[7] indicates that racism, like all oppressions, is pervasive rather than contained or limited. It also tells us that racism is in the systems that shape our world. Think of the difference between a *systemic* infection or disease and a *localized* one: systemic means it's spread throughout the systems of the body, rather than limited to one part or area.

---

[6] Power is also why measures to address oppressions are not themselves "reverse-oppression." For example, the Government of New Brunswick's Equal Employment Opportunity Program is not discriminatory against white, non-disabled, or non-immigrant people as these groups of people hold social, economic, and political power.

[7] Not to be confused with *systematic*, which describes something being done with a fixed method or plan.

Because racism is systemic, it manifests itself in the structures and institutions of society—this is *structural* and *institutional* racism. Racism may not be a stated principle or objective of these structures and institutions (or, at least, not be at this moment in time) but still be observable in their outcomes. Examples include housing discrimination, medical violence, police violence, as well as poverty and gaps in income.

Naming that racism is systemic does several important things. It makes it clear that it is inescapable and shapes the material conditions of people's lives. It requires us to understand that processes, policies, systems, and institutions aren't neutral. As critical race theory explains, "Racism is ordinary, not exceptional, and it is the usual way that society does business."[8]

Settler colonialism

Colonialism is a system of oppression in which a foreign power acquires control of a geographic territory to exploit its resources. Under *settler* colonialism, settlers occupy the colonized land and force their culture and institutions on its Indigenous People(s). Scholars Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang explain that "Indigenous peoples are those who have creation stories, not colonization stories, about how we/they came to be in a particular place—indeed how we/they came to be a place."[9]

The goal of settler colonialism is for the non-Indigenous population to replace the Indigenous population. As Tuck and Yang explain:

> Settler colonialism is different from other forms of colonialism in that settlers come with the intention of making a new home on the land, a homemaking that insists on settler sovereignty over all things in their new domain… In order for the settlers to make a place their home, they must destroy and disappear the Indigenous peoples that live there.[10]

Settler colonialism also isn't immigration. Tuck and Yang write, "Immigrants are beholden to the Indigenous laws and epistemologies[11] of the lands they migrate to. Settlers become the law, supplanting Indigenous laws and epistemologies. Therefore, settler nations are not immigrant nations…"[12]

---

[8] In *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*, Richard Delgato and Jean Stefancic explain:

> The critical race theory (CRT) movement is a collection of activists and scholars interested in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power… Although CRT began as a movement in the law, it has rapidly spread beyond that discipline… It not only tries to understand our social situation, but to change it; it sets out not only to ascertain how society organizes itself along racial lines and hierarchies, but to transform it for the better.

Richard Delgato and Jean Stefancic, *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*. (New York and London: New York University Press, 2001), p. 7.

[9] Eve Tuck and Wayne K. Yang, "Decolonization is not a metaphor" (Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society 1, 1, 2012), p. 6.

[10] P. 5.

[11] *(Footnote ours)* Epistemology means ways or systems of knowing. In this context, it means Indigenous knowledge systems or ways of knowing.

[12] P. 6.

Settler colonialism also involves enslavement, "the subjugation and forced labor of chattel slaves, whose bodies and lives become the property, and who are kept landless"[13] (Tuck and Yang). This is why not all non-Indigenous persons in a settler colonial state are settlers. There are also *arrivants,* "people forced into the Americas through the violence of European and Anglo-American colonialism and imperialism around the globe."[14] We come to the term arrivant from the work of Jodi Byrd, who adapted it from the work of Kamau Brathwaite, a Caribbean poet.

Settler colonialism uses gendered tactics. In Canada, this has looked like disrupting matriarchal Indigenous cultures and imposing a patriarchal and binary view of gender; forcibly sterilizing Indigenous people and women in particular; physical violence, including but not limited to sexual violence; and administrative systems that systematically sought opportunities to strip Indigenous women and their children of their entitlement to certain recognitions and benefits from the colonial government.

Finally, settler colonialism is not a past historical event, but ongoing. As scholar Patrick Wolfe explains, "Settler colonizers come to stay: invasion is a structure not an event."[15] *Reclaiming Power and Place: The final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*, explains:

> These aren't just things that happened in the past. Viewing colonization as a structure means that we can't dismiss events as parts of the past, or as elements of someone else's history. If viewed as a structure, these colonial pieces aren't things people can just "get over," because many of these ideas–these structures–still exist. We see them in the failure to properly consult with Indigenous groups over environmental or land issues, or in the lack of services in remote communities. We see these structures at play in interactions women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people have with justice systems or with child welfare. We see these structures in the ongoing poverty and lack of resources for addressing violence. Seeing colonization as a structure makes plain the connections between structures of the past–both physical and ideological–and the structures of today.[16]

In the report, Sarah Hunt, a Kwagiulth (Kwakwaka'wakw) scholar, explicitly connects the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ people to colonization:

> Colonialism relies on the widespread dehumanization of all Indigenous people—our children, two-spirits, men and women—so colonial violence could be understood to impact all of us at the level of our denied humanity. Yet this dehumanization is felt most acutely in the bodies of Indigenous girls, women, two-spirit and transgender people, as physical and sexual violence against us continues to be accepted as normal.[17]

---

[13] P. 6.

[14] Jodie Byrd, *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism* (Project Muse, University of Minesota Press, 2011), p. 19.

[15] Patrick Wolfe, "Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native" (Journal of Genocide Research 8, 4, December 2006), p. 338.

[16] National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, *Reclaiming Power and Place, The final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*, p. 233.

[17] P. 248.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is an analytical framework for understanding and accounting for people's experiences of multiple forms of oppression. It asserts that oppressions are *intersecting*, not simply co-existing separately. This means that there is a dynamic interplay between them that produces a unique experience. The framework was developed by American lawyer and academic Kimberlé Crenshaw and introduced in 1989.[18] Crenshaw explains that "Intersectionality is a lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it interlocks and intersects."

Crenshaw's approach centers Black women's experiences. As a critique to both the feminist and anti-racist movements, she wrote: "Because the intersectional experience is greater than the sum of racism and sexism, any analysis that does not take intersectionality into account cannot sufficiently address the particular manner in which Black women are subordinated."[19] Crenshaw cautions that intersectionality cannot be tacked onto other forms of analysis: "Intersectionality is not additive. It's fundamentally reconstitutive."

Crenshaw's work provided a robust framework to concepts and approaches that had been emerging from grassroots activist and advocacy in the preceding decades. In the 1970s, the Combahee River Collective, a Black feminist organization, "articulate[d] an analysis that animates the meaning of intersectionality, the idea that multiple oppressions reinforce each other to create new categories of suffering."[20] In their foundational text *The Combahee River Collective Statement*, they wrote:

> The most general statement of our politics at the present time would be that we are actively committed to struggling against racial, sexual, heterosexual, and class oppression, and see as our particular task the development of integrated analysis and practice based upon the fact that the major systems of oppression are interlocking. The synthesis of these oppressions creates the conditions of our lives.[21]

The *Combahee River Collective Statement* asserted that "If Black women were free, it would mean that everyone else would have to be free since our freedom would necessitate the destruction of all the systems of oppression."

Between the publication of the *Combahee River Collective Statement* and the work of Crenshaw on intersectionality, writer and activist Audre Lorde, a Black woman, also famously said in a 1982 speech: "There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives."

---

[18] Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex : A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Anti-Racist Politics" (The University of Chicago Legal Forum 1, 8, 1989).

[19] P. 140.

[20] Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, *How We Get Free: Black Feminism and the Combahee River Collective* (Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books, 2017), p. 4.

[21] The Combahee River Collective, "The Combahee River Collective Statement" (1977).

Current context in New Brunswick

Ongoing settler colonialism

New Brunswick exists on land that has been colonized and settled. For non-Indigenous New Brunswickers, this can sound like a provocation, but it is simply an accurate statement. The creation of New Brunswick involved the systematic displacement and attempted genocide[22] of the Indigenous Peoples who have been here and stewarded this land since time immemorial: the Mi'kmaq, the Wolastoqiyik and the Peskotomuhkatiyik. The enslavement and forced migration of Africans through the transatlantic trade of enslaved persons is also part of the creation of New Brunswick.

This is why there are calls to address racism against Indigenous and Black people in New Brunswick specifically, distinct from other manifestations of racism. It's not a matter of minimizing racism against other racialized people or assigning hierarchies to suffering. Rather, it's about making sure that we don't lose sight of settler colonialism as a specific institution—and a foundation of this province—when addressing racism.[23] This is critical because settler colonialism is ongoing.

The most literal evidence of ongoing settler colonialism can be seen in the issue of the Wolastoqey Nation's title to its traditional lands in New Brunswick. As the Government of Canada explains,

> Starting in 1701, in what was to eventually become Canada, the British Crown entered into treaties to encourage peaceful relations between First Nations and non-Aboriginal people. Some treaties, like the Peace and Friendship treaties in the Maritimes, were to end hostilities and encourage cooperation between the British and First Nations [...] the Peace and Friendship Treaties did not involve First Nations surrendering rights to the lands and resources they had traditionally used and occupied.

The Wolastoqey Nation is currently trying to assert title through a lawsuit. The issue here is not only that the Wolastoqey Nation needs to pursue this through a colonial legal system, but government's public reaction.

In response to the legal action, the Attorney General issued a memo in late 2021 prohibiting government employees from making land acknowledgements and directing them to instead make "ancestral acknowledgements." An "ancestral acknowledgement" is not a viable substitute for land acknowledgements and is harmful as it fails to acknowledge that the Wolastoqiyik, Mi'kmaq, and Peskotomuhkatiyik are modern

---

[22] New Brunswick was the site of Indian Day Schools, the last of which closed in 1992. Indigenous children were also taken from their communities and sent to out-of-province Indian Residential Schools. New Brunswick also had an Indian Hospital, the Tobique Indian Hospital. Indigenous women were not able to vote until 1963, unless they served in the armed forces (non-Indigenous women in New Brunswick gained the right to vote in 1919). There may well have been forced sterilization of Indigenous women in New Brunswick and no doubt Indigenous children were taken from their families and communities in the Sixties Scoop. New Brunswick only ended its practice of birth alerts in the fall of 2021.

[23] This is why the term *Black people, Indigenous people, and people of colour* is useful in our context. By naming Black and Indigenous people specifically, it is clear that we are talking about people affected by racism *and* settler colonialism. It also holds space for the fact that the concept of race does not map neatly onto Indigeneity and that simply referring to Indigenous people as *people of colour* erases their connection to the land.

Peoples that non-Indigenous New Brunswickers are in an ongoing treaty relationship with. In subsequent media interviews on the memo, government leaders attempted to stoke fears that the lawsuit would result in property dispossession for non-Indigenous New Brunswickers.[24]

A story from Canadian scholar Alexis Shotwell is useful in understanding the significance of this (beyond the impacts of government attempting to foment fear toward Indigenous people and communities):

> When I've taught university classes about Canadian colonial histories, my mostly white settler students worry that if we reckoned for real with the history they're learning about, often for the first time in their lives, they and their families would be kicked out of Canada… My students assume that if Indigenous people were in charge off the geographical place now called Canada that they would expel and expunge all the white people and all the settlers of colour. They assume that the social relations of oppression, violation, and dispossession would merely be reversed, and not transformed. They assume there is no way to reckon with the past that does not reiterate the founding violences that they have learned about for the first time. This tells us something useful about how people, even when they have not reflected on the problem very deeply, view whiteness and settler colonialism—these students see one part of the historical role of white people with accuracy, and it is a shameful role, on that terrifies them to imagine being reversed.[25]

Government's public reaction to the lawsuit reflects what Shotwell observes. Its reaction tells us that it does, in fact, understand the catastrophic and long-term implications of the kind of land dispossession that founded New Brunswick. The reaction also tells us that government does not have a fulsome understanding of reconciliation. As it operates under a settler colonial worldview, government does not understand that alignment with truth and reconciliation would mean finding a new, mutually beneficial, and shared path forward.

We also see settler colonialism when the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs amends a motion in the legislative assembly to state that the "Federal Government of Canada adopted a residential school system in provinces across Canada other than New Brunswick." This amendment attempts to minimize, or even deny, New Brunswick's complicity in the Indian Residential School System on the basis of the federal government's role in the system and the fact that there were no Indian Residential Schools in the province. It fails to acknowledge that Indigenous children in New Brunswick were still sent out-of-province to these abusive facilities or that there were multiple Indian Day Schools in the province. It minimizes and erases the intergenerational impact of the Indian Residential School System on Indigenous people and communities in New Brunswick and serves as public miseducation.

These are only two examples of many instances of settler colonialism enacted by government today. It is clear that despite government's awareness of past reports, plans, and recommendations, it still does not grasp the ongoing impact of settler colonialism.

---

[24] The Women's Council's response to this memo is available here.

[25] Alexis Shotwell, *Against Purity: living ethically in compromised times* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2016), p. 41-42.

Given this, a New-Brunswick-specific, independent, Indigenous-led inquiry conducted at this particular point in time—in the wake of the Idle No More movement, the Elsipogtog anti-fracking protests, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, the trial of the individual who struck and killed Brady Francis and fled, the inquests into the police killings of Chantel Moore and Rodney Levi, and the ongoing recovery of children's remains at former Indian Residential School sites—will be of inestimable value and importance in terms of its process, findings, and recommendations.

Rising white supremacy and far-right extremism

In addressing systemic racism in New Brunswick, we must take rising white supremacy and far-right extremism into account. Literature that examines these movements in Canada suggests that there has been an increase in recruitment and activity in the wake of both the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States and the COVID-19 pandemic. Researchers based at the University of New Brunswick explain:

> The increase in global acceptance of far-right, populist, and extreme nationalist values since 2016 has caused tectonic shifts in the operational climate of Canadian far-right extremist groups. They have become more overt in their online and face-to-face recruitment efforts and political activities, and have successfully leveraged the accessibility and reach of social media platforms to spread their messages [citation omitted] ... There is a real and persistent fear among Canadians that ideologically inspired mass casualty attacks that/specifically target minority communities, similar to the 2017 Quebec City mosque shooting, can happen again in Canada.[26]

These researchers define right-wing extremism as:

> an umbrella term for individuals who hold reactionary worldviews, ideologies, or religious beliefs that espouse racial, ethnic, gender, or religious superiority, and which may lead to behaviours that break the law (e.g., engaging in hate crimes), or that may motivate, justify, or contribute to some form of violent action against individuals or the public-at-large.[27]

The researchers include the following among the "hallmarks" of right-wing extremism: "Advocating for, and the active dissemination of, right-wing inspired conspiracy theories" and "Overt or covert expression, encouragement, and/or condoning of racist, misogynist, extreme anti-immigration, anti-semitic, islamophobic, and/or intolerant views."[28]

[26] David C. Hoffman, Shayna Perry and Brynn Trofimuk, "An exploration of right-wing extremist incidents in Atlantic Canada" (Dynamics of Assymetric Conflict, January 2021), p. 2-3.

[27] P. 4.

[28] P. 5.

In terms of COVID-19, white supremacists and the far-right have stoked blame and animosity in relation to the origins of the pandemic. In an article for *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, scholars Garth Davies, Edith Wu, and Richard Frank explain:

> as for the far-right, a long established trope among white supremacists is the demonization of the Jewish people and, to a lesser extent, "foreigners". With COVID-19, this practice can be seen from attempts to attach labels implying blameworthiness… to attacks on persons of East-Asian descent.[29]

As vaccinations became available, the far-right shifted its focus. In the article "Infected by Hate: Far-Right Attempts to Leverage Anti-Vaccine Sentiment," Liram Koblentz-Stenzler and Alexander Pack explain that:

> far-right extremists have engaged in a concerted effort to link COVID-19 vaccines to existing white nationalist conspiracy theories…
>
> In addition to linking the "Great Reset" conspiracy to the COVID-19 vaccines, far-right users have also attempted to connect the vaccines to the "Great Replacement Theory." This ethno-nationalistic conspiracy theory suggests that non-white/minority cultures are systematically replacing the "white-race" [citation omitted] … With the approval of COVID-19 vaccines, far-right actors have attempted to leverage uncertainty and fear to suggest that the vaccine is part of a "Great Replacement" plot to sterilize specific segments of the population.
>
> As far-right activists continued to disseminate propaganda suggesting that the vaccines would cause sterilizations, they also began a concerted campaign arguing that the plot targeted the white population. Many extremists began to refer to this as a "white genocide."[30]

New Brunswick has not escaped this; evidence of this extremism was on display in Fredericton during February protests against COVID-19 protection measures mandated by government. Language from right-wing conspiracy theories as well as symbols of right-wing extremist groups appeared on flags, posters, and clothing at the protest.

This extremism is rooted in multiple forms of oppression, including racism, xenophobia, misogyny, islamophobia, antisemitism, homophobia and transphobia, and ableism.[31] The 2022 book R*ight-Wing Extremism in Canada and the United States* shares an analysis of extremist texts focused on either men's or white supremacy that supports this. The analysis found that these movements advance narratives that are "based in a 'natural' two-sex system that precludes those deemed deviant (e.g., the LGBTQ+ community

---

[29] Garth Davies, Edith Wu and Richard Frank, "A Witch's Brew of Grievances: The Potential Effects of COVID-19 on Radicalization to Violent Extremism" (Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, 2021), p. 5.

[30] Liram Koblentz-Stenzler and Alexander Pack, "Infected by Hate: Far Right Attempts to Leverage Anti-Vaccine Sentiment" (International Institute for Counter-Terrorism, March 2021), p. 5–8.

[31] More information on ableism, including a definition, can be found in our submission to the Select Committee on Accessibility.

and racial and ethnic Others) from participation in order to restore their rightful place in society."[32] The authors explain that "Both movements are preoccupied with women's reproductive and sexual function and see women as property to own and control."[33] Specific to white supremacy, they explain that reproductive politics are "a primary tenet"[34] of this form of extremism. In relation to the "Great Replacement" conspiracy theory, they explain:

> At the core of these theories is the idea that white birthrates are falling because white women are not having enough children or are "racemixing" with non-whites [citation omitted] … This presents an urgent and existential threat that must be addressed in ways ranging from the extermination of non-whites to the re-education of white women [citation omitted].[35]

This focus on birthrates and controlling women is not just central to white supremacy, but an entry point to it. In "Symbiosis of Misogyny and Violent Extremism," Pablo Castillo Díaz and Nahla Valji explain:

> Once individuals from the dominant group internalize this notion of victimization where feminism and women are to blame, it is easier for them to apply that ideological framing to other categories of "others," and why sexism, racism, homophobia and other forms of bigotry and intolerance frequently go together.[36]

Diaz and Valji also note that there are also "individual personal histories of domestic abuse or documented misogyny in the majority of perpetrators of acts of violent extremism in Western countries."[37] Given this, they "contend that misogyny is often the gateway, driver, and early warning sign of most of this violence, and note the implications that these findings should have for advocacy, policymaking, and further study."[38]

While much of the literature on the gendered aspects of white supremacy focuses on the control and domination of white women, we must be clear that rising white supremacy and far-right extremism pose a unique threat to racialized women.

---

[32] Meredith L. Pruden, Ayse D. Lokmanoglu, Anne Peterscheck, and Yannick Veilleux-Lepage, "Birds of a Feather: A Comparative Analysis of White Supremacist and Violent Male Supremacist Discourse," in Barbara Perry, Jeff Gruenewald, Ryan Scrivens (Eds.) *Right-Wing Extremism in Canada and the United States* (Palgrave Hate Studies, 2022), p. 243.

[33] P. 243.

[34] P. 217.

[35] P. 220.

[36] Pablo Castillo Díaz and Nahla Valji, "Symbiosis of Misogyny and Violent Extremism" (Journal of International Affairs 72, 2 Dynamics of Global Feminism, Spring/Summer 2019), p. 43-44.

[37] P. 38.

[38] P. 38.

Within the Government of New Brunswick

Taking characteristics of individuals and populations like race, gender, and disability into account as well as the impacts of oppressions like racism, patriarchy, and ableism is a critical part of policy-making that seeks to be both evidence- and equity-based. Too often, this doesn't happen; instead, certain identities (i.e. being a white man) are treated as the default for policy-making purposes. The ways that policies may impact people of other identities—the differential impacts—are not taken into consideration or addressed.

There have been significant, albeit still incomplete, strides in institutionalizing consideration of gender in policy-making in Part I of government (i.e. the civil service and departments of government).[39] More specifically, there have been improvements in ensuring that women, and to a lesser extent people of all genders who belong to gender minorities,[40] are considered. The same cannot be said for consideration of racialized people.[41] This can be seen clearly when we look at the departments, agencies, initiatives, and tools of government.[42]

In Part I, there is a departmental body (the Women's Equality Branch) and an independent advisory body (the New Brunswick Women's Council) focused on women. There is also a requirement that Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) be used in policy-based decision-making. There is also a network of GBA+ champions and a GBA+ community of practice. A version of one of the GBA+ tools is even publicly available and in 2021 and 2022 government published a Gender Impact Statement as part of the budget process, becoming the first province or territory to do so.

In terms of entities focused on Black people, Indigenous people, and people of colour, we find only the Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA). The objectives of this department and its processes do not relate to Indigenous people and communities in the same way that the Women's Equality Branch or the Women's Council relate to women. The Women's Equality Branch and Women's Council are focused on issues affecting women's equality. The branch's mandate includes promoting gender equality and reducing systemic discrimination while the Women's Council's includes representing women. As per its mandate, DAA:

> oversees a whole-of-government approach to Indigenous relations and is responsible for the coordination of all of the Province's initiatives with First Nations. DAA is the main point of contact and represents the interests of the Province in multilateral initiatives and negotiations. The department leads the consultation process with Aboriginal peoples and provides research, analysis and policy advice to government on Indigenous matters.

---

[39] We refer to this as *gender equity work*, though we are concerned that the institutionalized processes and tools fall short of what equity work requires (e.g. analyses of power relations, explicitly addressing oppressions, designing policy to achieve equitable outcomes, etc.).

[40] Gender minorities include people who are transgender, non-binary, Two-Spirit, etc.

[41] Similar to gender-equity work, we will refer to this as *racial equity work* and *anti-racism work*, despite the concerns we outline in footnote 39.

[42] While there are no doubt additional areas and teams where racial equity work is being done, it is not institutionalized (i.e. it is not work that impacts the whole-of-government and is both resourced and required).

While the entities relating to women's equality have mandates tied to advancing issues to benefit women, DAA's role is to manage relations with First Nations and represent the government.

To be fulsome, we also note that the Equal Employment Opportunity Program and the Human Rights Commission both explicitly deal with race and the latter addresses creed as well. Neither of these, however, are explicitly focused on Indigeneity, race, or creed; they are broader efforts to support groups that are historically and currently marginalized and address discrimination. We also note that discussions of immigration occur almost exclusively in the context of population and labour force growth. While the province's 2019-2024 population growth strategy mentions "Aboriginal New Brunswickers" and frequently references immigrants and newcomers, it makes no mention of racism or the need for anti-racism or anti-xenophobia efforts. It is exploitative for immigrants and newcomers to consistently only be discussed in terms of population and labour force growth; this framing is dehumanizing and erases the many contributions that newcomers and immigrants make to their communities and the province.

Returning to discussion of racial equity work vis-a-vis gender-equity work: our intention is not to pit them against each other. Rather, we hope to show how gender inequity is addressed within government and note that there are no comparable structures, mechanisms, or resources to address racism. It's important to highlight this disparity given that, historically and on an ongoing basis, work within organizations to address inequality and discrimination often begins and ends with gender—more specifically, with uplifting white women.[43]

An example of this is the emphasis on appointing women to agencies, boards and commissions (ABCs). There has been an emphasis on gender parity between men and women in ABC appointments but similar measures for the appointment of individuals who are Black, Indigenous, or of colour have not been publicly disclosed. The public fact sheet on ABCs has a section on diversity that only mentions representation from "two official linguistic communities, First Nations communities, visible minority groups, persons with disabilities, etc." while it elaborates on the participation of women.

We conclude this section with our observations on the challenges of doing equity work, both in general and in the context of public service in New Brunswick.[44] To use an engineering metaphor: equity work is often treated like putting an addition on a house. It is something that is tacked on, added to the main building after the fact. It's viewed as a luxury—it's would be nice to have it, but it isn't necessary. The reality is that equity work is actually a matter of addressing structural flaws in the foundation—flaws that have been there from the start and that must be addressed for the home to have integrity. We note that this is our experience of trying to do equity work that is focused on women—the kind of equity work that is typically welcomed in ways that racial equity work is not.

[43] Tina Lopes and Barb Thomas, *Dancing on Live Embers: Challenging Racism in Organizations* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2006), p. 145-150.

[44] While this is our observation, marginalization and delegitimization of equity work in organizations, including governments, is well-documented. Canadian examples are available in *Dancing on Live Embers: Challenging Racism in Organizations* by Tina Lopes and Barb Thomas and *Femocratic Administration: Gender, Governance, and Democracy in Ontario* by Tammy Findlay.

Data and stories from non-Indigenous racialized participants in Resonate

Having outlined key concepts, explored the rise of extremist movements, and spoken to the structure of government, we want to ground our final section before recommendations in the voices of non-Indigenous racialized women in New Brunswick speaking to their daily lives. To do this, with turn to our Resonate initiative.

Through Resonate, the Women's Council heard from more than 1 400 individuals in New Brunswick in 2017 and 2018. Data was gathered through two streams, one for women and one for individuals belonging to gender minorities of any gender (transgender women could complete either version of the survey as they are both women and individuals who belong to gender minorities). All questions were open-ended and participants were invited to speak to the specificity of their lives. The directions and examples provided were designed to make it clear that we were striving to use an intersectional approach. The full findings of Resonate are available at resonatenbresonances.ca. They include stories, ideas, and priorities from participants in their own words as well as detailed information on the initiative's methodology.

In the data collection stream for women, approximately 2 per cent of participants were non-Indigenous racialized women. We have not disaggregated the data further due to small number of respondents and a commitment to preserving their anonymity.

Women who were racialized but not Indigenous named issues pertaining to economic security, work and income, violence and safety, healthcare, and childcare as top issues needing to be addressed to improve their lives. Many noted that they felt the lack of safety they experienced, the lack of access they had to certain services, and the discrimination in their workplaces was due to them being both women and racialized.

Here are stories from three racialized women:[45]

"In my own life, finding a mental health provider that could provide culturally competent services was a challenge. I had to do a lot of education to explain how culture and diversity impacts mental health concerns or can contribute to trauma and play a role in experiences and solutions. I was fortunate to be able to do this as I have the education and background to be able to explain critical theory and how this relates translates to experience in my own life… As well, it took me many years to be able to find an individual who specialized in trauma but could support me in a way that could take into consideration my different experiences because I am not from mainstream New Brunswick…"

"People ask ignorant questions about what makes me qualified to do my job because I'm not Canadian or talk down to me and assume my English is not good enough to understand them. Boss questions whether I am qualified to do something I've done many times before. It's a mix of race, age and gender, but constant underestimation."

[45] Quotations are stories women shared about how they, or a woman they know, have experienced the priority issues. They appear exactly as they were submitted.

"In this community, as a woman and an immigrant, you have to prove yourself twice over. Is she good enough? Does she understand what I am saying? There is that initial doubt but it can also be constant…"

Recommendations

An independent, Indigenous-led inquiry on systemic racism against Indigenous people in New Brunswick

The Chiefs of the Mi'kmaw and Wolastoqey First Nations have been clear in calling for an Indigenous-led inquiry into systemic racism against Indigenous people. The Women's Council recommends that the government of New Brunswick answer this call immediately with a properly resourced inquiry that is designed, developed, and led by Indigenous leaders.

Institutionalize racial equity work in the public service

The Women's Council recommends that structures with mandates to address systemic racism be created and resourced within the public service The guiding framework must be racial equity and anti-racism—not diversity, multiculturalism, or sensitivity. These structures and tools must be co-created with leaders and equity experts who are Black, Indigenous, and people of colour. These leaders and experts must be compensated for their labour.

As this must be co-created, we hesitate to be prescriptive in terms of what this should look like. We do, however, suggest that a model similar to the Women's Equality Branch and the Women's Council, in which there is both a departmental entity and an independent entity, be considered. Whether the departmental entity be within Executive Council Office (as the Women's Equality Branch is) or a full department, as well as whether an independent advisory body (like the Women's Council) or a legislative officer is best, should be explored. There should be strong mechanisms for collaboration between any new departments, agencies, or officers and existing public entities, like the Women's Equality Branch, the Women's Council, and the Premier's Council on Disability, as well as non-government organizations.

We also recommend that any departmental entity that is created should include resources and mechanisms to enable the public release of information on how tools it uses (e.g. anti-racist analysis) shape government decision-making and policy development. While general information on the tools and how they are used should be publicly available, this recommendation is about releasing information from specific instances in which the tools are used to inform decisions. This aligns with our longstanding recommendations to government on increasing public disclosure on its use of GBA+. We note that in 2021 and 2022, government made strides on this by publishing a Gender Impact Statement (GIS) as part of the budget. Budget development is one of government's most opaque processes—which means that if a such a statement can be produced for the budget, similar statements could be produced to account for how GBA+ or other analytical processes are used on other decisions and policy processes.

A commitment to equity-based policy

To address systemic racism—and to create the conditions required for resilience and a viable future—government needs to engage in decision-making, policy development, and budgeting that is not only evidence-based but also equity-based. This will require co-creation; access to better disaggregated data; understanding and uplifting the value of qualitative data; and developing standards or principles of rigour and ethics for consultations[46] and public engagement.

As our existing advice on co-creation[47] and disaggregated data is available publicly, we focus here on the latter two aspects of equity-based policy that we've identified: qualitative data and standards or principles.

On qualitative data, we have observed that this kind of information often not valued appropriately. The fixation on quantitative data to the exclusion of all else is both colonial and patriarchal approach. Qualitative data isn't simply anecdotes; the value of qualitative data in public policy work has been well-documented.

Regarding consultation and public engagement, there is an ongoing history of racialized populations being the subject of extractive and at times non-consensual research that has not benefitted them. While government's public engagement and consultation initiatives are not academic research projects, they should still have principles or standards in place to reduce harm to participants, avoid exploitation of communities, and ensure that what is reported back to decision-makers and the public is accurate. These must include:

- Increasing the information that is available to participants on what they are consenting to, how their data will be used and stored, if and how they can revoke their participation, etc.
- Increasing the information available to the public on methodology used.
- Adhering to Mi'kmaw, Wolastoqey, and Peskotomuhkati principles and protocols when working with these First Nations and adhering to other appropriate principles and protocols when working with Indigenous people more broadly.
- Clarity around when someone may be paid for their contributions and when they may not be. We are particularly concerned about instances when a vulnerable or marginalized person or a person with expertise in equity has sustained involvement in an initiative over time (e.g. participating in a task force or working group) and they are not staff of the government or affiliated with an organization that is paying them for their time and labour. People from marginalized identities are constantly expected to provide their expertise and labour to government without compensation; this reinforces their marginalization, contributes to their economic precarity, and shrinks the pool of contributors to those who can provide free labour.
- Using trauma-informed approaches to support the participation of vulnerable and marginalized people and communities as well as to reduce the harm that may come to them through their engagement.

---

[46] We are using this term broadly, rather than specifically in reference to consultations with First Nations.

[47] We must note that, in the past, GNB has used the language of co-creation while approaching the proposed work in ways that do not align with the framework. Co-creation is not simply a new language to apply to existing dominant ways of working to make them sound more inclusive and equitable. It is a specific approach that is rooted in sharing power and requires those in decision-making positions to adopt a stance of cultural humility.